

## Chichester District Council

The Cabinet

8 December 2020

### Future Customer Services delivery

#### 1. Contacts

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#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Cabinet approve the proposed remodelling of services provided by the Customer Services Centre (CSC) as set out in the IPPD at Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Subject to approval of recommendation 2.1, Cabinet is asked to note that the permanent shift to this service delivery model will become effective when it is deemed Covid safe to do so.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Since Covid-19 there has been a significant change in the way in which our customers are accessing our services. It is evident that when customers have to access our services differently they will do this. This is extremely encouraging and these proposals seek to build on the changes to date.
- 3.2 The table below shows how customers have been accessing our services. Website and online channel take up increased the most. It is encouraging to note that when the Customer Services Centre closed to the public due to Covid-19 website and online take up increased and telephone contact didn't. This shows that some customers prefer to use online services and will therefore choose to do so. As a Council we need to ensure moving forward that our online services continue to be developed to support increased online service take up. Not only does this help to minimise operational costs but it also provides services in the way in which many people now expect to be able to transact with service providers.

#### Customer services by channel data

Channel	01/04/19 - 30/09/19	01/04/20 - 30/09/20
Telephone calls (presented)	53,921	65,599
Face-to-face	9,489	365*
Website	320,389	440,294
Total	383,799	506,258

*\*relates predominantly to collections for resident visitors permits and taxi licenses*

#### **4. Outcomes to be achieved**

- 4.1. That the Cabinet approve the recommendations as set out above and in Appendix 1 to modernise customer services.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1. To support the Council modernising the way it delivers its services both online and face-to-face. Specifically the following changes will take place: -
  - To encourage residents and visitors who can to self-serve and use the Council's online services freeing up officer capacity to best meet the needs of vulnerable customers.
  - All enquiries to be triaged before appointments are offered and where an enquiry can be resolved online, the customer will be signposted to a self-service PC and provided with digital assistance if required;
  - Where a customer is vulnerable and unable to use online facilities, an officer will help the customer to resolve the enquiry. This will include where appropriate helping customers navigate around the website and complete online forms and obtain information to resolve their enquiry. Where this can be done at the time of their arrival to the CSC it will be. Should it be deemed more appropriate for an appointment to be made one will be. Any appointment made will be as soon as is reasonably practical. Officers are provided with guidance to help them identify those who may need more personalised help, but this is not prescriptive and officers will be trained and encouraged to use their judgement and discretion to support those who need most help;
  - Customer Service Officers will be floor walking and will be available to signpost, help and guide customers who visit the CSC with their enquiry;
  - Self-service scanning facilities are being progressed and in the interim documents can be dropped off in the post-box whilst the building is closed to the public. Customers are encouraged to use the Council's online services and email facilities to provide and upload documentary evidence where they are able to;
  - Active promotion of digital channels and increased signage promoting the benefits of using the Council's online services to aid increased and continuous take up.
  - To use management information moving forward to aid further improvements both to the Council's website, online services and back office service teams thus helping residents to become resilient where possible.

#### **6. Alternatives that have been considered**

- 6.1. That the CSC is re-opened in the format it operated pre Covid-19. This option is not recommended due to losing the changes in residents and member of the public's

behaviour and undermining all the success in maximising online service take up that has been achieved to date.

- 6.2. That the CSC is not re-opened at all. This is not recommended given the need to better understand the consequences of this including greater management information to aid informed decision making over the future of the CSC provision.

## **7. Resource and legal implications**

- 7.1. Savings of £55k can be delivered by adopting these changes.
- 7.2. There are no legal implications from these proposals.

## **8. Diversity implications**

- 8.1 In considering the proposed changes for the CSC, an Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 3) has been undertaken to ensure that any adverse impact to residents who share a protected characteristic has been considered and mitigated where this is possible. The analysis has identified a potential adverse impact on some protected groups who may not be able to use online facilities such as older customers, customers with disabilities and customers whose first language is not English. This impact has been mitigated by the measures taken to ensure that customers who are unable to use online facilities can continue to access services through existing face to face and phone arrangements and additional assistance as referred to in paragraph 2.1 of this report.
- 8.2 There are also positive outcomes arising for protected groups as improved online facilities enable customers with mobility issues to access services from home and those seeking help to use online facilities can access services from the CSC.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1. No specific consultation has been undertaken on the proposals in this report. However customer feedback has been sought from customers using the Council's services during August and September 2020 and has been taken into account when putting these proposals forward.
- 9.2. In addition to the above the Cabinet member for Finance, Corporate Services, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services has been engaged with on the proposals as part of the Council's Organisational Recovery group as have the Councils Senior Leadership Team who all support these proposals.
- 9.3. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee received these proposals at its meeting of 17 November 2020 and made the following recommendations to the Cabinet to consider at its next meeting.
  1. Ensure all screen views and printed documents are in plain English;
  2. The telephone response times are an absolute priority;
  3. Ensure the Council keeps the highest standard of services where people are visiting our offices;

4. Support for people with limited access to IT or limited IT skills.

## 10. Community impact and corporate risks

10.1. The proposed savings from adopting these recommendations help to reduce operational costs and assist in the Council's efficiency savings review.

## 11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		No
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b>		No
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact – EIA attached at Appendix 3</b>	Yes	
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		No
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		No
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		No
<b>Other (please specify)</b>		No

## 12. Appendices

1: Initial Project Proposal document (IPPD)

2: Customer Survey results

3: Equalities Impact Assessment

## 13. Background papers

13.1. None