

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018
Report Subject	Digital Customer Overview
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cabinet adopted the Digital Strategy and agreed the Digital Customer action plan on 21 February 2018. One of the key actions in the action plan is the creation of a single contact centre for the Council.

The key principles in the design of a combined contact centre team are:

- to increase resilience within the team to cope with absence and allow resources to be more effectively targeted when incidents which generate high contact volumes occur;
- to increase Welsh language provision within the team;
- to provide customers and citizens with the choice to access information and services easily online;
- to provide customers and citizens with the ability to access multiple services via their Customer Account in a user-friendly and intuitive way as more services move into the contact centre.

To achieve this, we have created a project plan which focuses in parallel on:

- the creation of a single contact centre team, with staff fully engaged throughout in conversations about their roles and the way the new team will work;
- reviewing and improving web content;
- introducing new online service capabilities which make it easier for Housing and Streetscene service users in the first instance to access information and services online;
- planning the scope of services which will be moved into the contact centre in future phases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the design principles underpinning the creation of a single Contact Centre and endorse the progress made towards delivering the Digital Customer theme of the Digital Strategy.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	DIGITAL CUSTOMER OVERVIEW
1.01	The Digital Customer theme of Digital Flintshire aims to improve the number of services and range of functionality available over the web in order to improve residents' access to services at a time and location that is convenient to them.
1.02	In March 2018 Cabinet agreed to the creation of a single Contact Centre, starting initially with the joining of the Contact Centres serving Streetscene and Housing.
1.03	As these services already have dedicated teams, using contact centre technology to manage customer contacts, it was agreed that these would be best placed to form the foundation of the combined team into which other services would be transitioned.
1.04	A key objective is to build resilience within the combined team, to deal effectively when there are incidents which generate high volumes of call, or when there is staff absence. This will also improve Welsh language resilience.
1.05	As part of improving digital services the Council will upgrade the online capability of the housing software to allow applicants and tenants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• link directly to their housing account details from the Flintshire Customer Account page on the council's website, without entering additional log in details;• view high level rent account details and make a payment;• view logged repairs;• view current applications;• view key account information, such as gas servicing alerts and planned capital works.
1.06	The project plan to carry out this first phase of the combined contact centre is currently being implemented, with action primarily concentrating on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the amalgamation of roles in Housing and Streetscene into a common job description for contact centre agents, and the appointment of a manager overseeing the single service;• the review and improvement of information and content on the Flintshire website to make it easier for customers to find information

	<p>and self-serve;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the implementation of the online Housing capability, fully integrated with the Customer Account on the Flintshire website. <p>Once staff have been confirmed in their roles in the new team, a key priority will be to work proactively with them to create a single team identity, work out how they want to work as a single team and plan for the integration.</p>
1.07	Go live for phase 1 is planned for mid-March 2019, but Chief Officers will review the technical and staff readiness position one month in advance of go live to make the final decision about whether to proceed at that time. This will ensure that they have confidence that services will be delivered with no degradation of quality as a result of the move.
1.08	In parallel to preparing for phase 1, discussions are underway with other services to identify and agree the scope of services from each which will be transitioned into the combined contact centre. A report will be submitted to Chief Officers outlining the suggested scope for increasing digital capability and transferring functions to the contact centre.
1.09	The intention is currently to aim for a fully combined contact centre operating from Unity House, Ewloe from April 2020. In order to achieve this, as each service area is brought into the contact centre, it is likely to be necessary to deliver an initial minimum level of capability, with a plan to build on that capability going forwards. For example in further phases of the digital project it will be possible to book housing repairs on line.
1.10	It is very likely that this approach will be required for all other phases of the project too as services move into the combined contact centre.
1.11	The Internet Use and Digital Skills Survey for Wales for 2017-18 showed that currently 85% of households have access to the internet at home, with high levels of usage by age group, including 89% of 49-64 year olds. However, while usage and confidence figures are only going to increase in future, we recognise that provision needs to be made within our delivery plan and approach to provide adequate support for those who are not yet confident to go online. Service requests will never be refused via the telephone or face-to-face as a result of someone not having the access or skills to go online and this is fully reflected within our project plan.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The Digital Customer workstream has an invest to save budget allocation of £550k. This is funding three new posts, all of whom are contributing to the delivery of the Digital Customer project; namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Customer and Community Resilience Programme Manager; Customer Transaction Officer (responsible for process design and web content review); Income and Marketing Programme Manager.

	<p>In addition to these posts, staff from across the authority are actively involved in the project. The IT team in particular are supporting the development of the Customer Account and integration with core service areas.</p> <p>Staff in Housing, in particular currently, are supporting work to review business processes and design the online experience; while staff in Planning and Environment and Social Services are reviewing the range of processes and services which they think best sit within the combined contact centre in the future. Similar work with Education and Revenues and Benefits is about to get underway.</p>
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Employees who are affected by this change in service provision are being engaged, and will continue to be engaged in future phases, with full HR and Trade Union involvement.</p> <p>The project plan also includes ongoing internal and external communications to raise awareness and encourage involvement as Flintshire's digital service evolves. The detail within the communications plans is currently being developed.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Key risks and mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift to a new service destabilises and affects service performance: We are actively monitoring current service and infrastructure performance to identify and understand any potential high risk areas. This will ensure we can plan for a smooth technical transition which minimises the possibility of disruption. We have no intention for the Housing and Streetscene teams to merge functionally at go live in March 2019, so the service will continue as previously, with the merging of skills and knowledge following on from the initial shift. This significantly reduces the risk of service impact. • Reputational risk of providing a poor online service: We have agreed a number of design principles which will underpin the solution we create online. This is aimed at making the online experience as easy as possible for customers and citizens, and will ensure that as we bring new services into the contact centre, we use the same principles. This will make best use of the technology and ensure that the user experience is consistent across services. • Focus on digital service provision excludes vulnerable members of our communities: As we improve the information available online and make it easier for people to access online services 24/7, we will look to promote the capability and direct people online. However, non-digital services will be retained for those who do not have access or

	are not confident to access services online. This will include support to get new skills if people want to, via the Connects centres and libraries. No one will be refused service access in any way as a result of not being able to go online.
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Gareth Owen, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: Gareth.Legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Digital Customer: a workstream within Flintshire’s Digital Strategy which aims to build the capability for customers and citizens to access our services online, both via improved and easier to use systems, but also through improvements to the information which can be accessed via the website.</p> <p>Baseline capability: the range of functionality which will be available when a service goes live within the new contact centre. This is likely to be less functionality than is required or wanted in the long term; an example being the ability to view a repair that has already been logged as opposed to the ability to log a repair and make an appointment.</p> <p>Scope of deliverables: the range of functionality which it has been agreed will be included for delivery in a particular phase of a project.</p> <p>Invest to Save budget: an amount of money which the Council has agreed to invest in a service or a project, with a requirement to demonstrate efficiencies equivalent to the spend through the changes which are being made.</p> <p>Design principles: principles which will be applied as new functionality is created online to ensure that the experience for users is as easy as it can be and, across different services, is consistent.</p>