

By: Michael Hill, Cabinet Member for Customer & Communities
Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform
Amanda Honey, Corporate Director - Customer and Communities
David Cockburn, Corporate Director - Business Strategy and Support

To: Cabinet, 9 January 2012

Subject: Customer Service and ICT Strategies

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's formal approval of the Customer Service Strategy, and authority for the Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform to formally approve the ICT Strategy, subject to the views of this meeting and of the Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Customer Service Strategy is the critical element of the Council's strategy map that will underpin the transition from organisation-centric to citizen-centric public services, crucial for delivery of the Bold Steps ambitions. The ICT strategy is presented in tandem as technology represents a fundamental component in realising the outcomes of the Customer Service Strategy.
- 1.2 The success of both strategies is reliant upon positive engagement and adoption across the 'one council'. The strategies and their delivery timetables are interdependent; one cannot be delivered without the other.
- 1.3 Investment will be required to deliver the desired outcomes. It is anticipated that in most instances the change in approach will deliver financial efficiencies as well as improved customer service. Business cases will expect to operate to an 'invest to save' profile. To support this approach:
 - The work on consolidation of budgets currently being undertaken by Finance to align with structures implemented through 'Change to Keep Succeeding' needs to be in place by April 2012.
 - Business process change identified by Customer Services needs to be adhered to and the resultant efficiencies released to meet implementation costs.

2.0 Customer Service Strategy

- 2.1 The Customer Service Strategy has been shared with a number of groups who have played a vital role in its development. These include:
 - Customer & Communities Directorate Management Team
 - Access & Assessment Team – 9 September 2011

- Delivery Assurance Team (DAT) – 4 October 2011
- Gateway Programme Delivery Board (members include representatives from all Kent district councils and Medway Council) – 20 October 2011
- Corporate Management Team – 8th November 2011
- Customer & Communities Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 17 November 2011

- 2.2 As well as consulting with our Kent partners, we have also shared the Customer Service Strategy with, and received positive feedback from, both Northamptonshire and Surrey County Councils and from Experian, a private sector partner. Feedback collated from these groups has informed this version of the strategy.
- 2.3 To help managers deliver the priorities outlined in the strategy, a toolkit is being designed using expertise from across the Council. This includes delivery and communications plans, Equality Impact Assessment, a cost- to-serve model and a comprehensive training programme.
- 2.4 The Head of Customer Relationship will be attending each directorate's management team meeting to discuss the strategy.and its implementation.
- 2.5 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and this has identified the need to monitor the progress of projects, particularly those involving channel shift and service redesign, to ensure that they do not adversely impact on customers or particular groups.

3.0 ICT Strategy

- 3.1 The strategy has been shared with a number of groups who have played a vital role in its development of the Strategy. These include:
- Business Strategy & Support Directorate Management Team
 - ICT Management Team
 - Delivery Assurance Team (DAT) – 4 October 2011
 - Corporate Management Team – 8th November 2011
- 3.2 As well as consulting with our Kent partners we have also shared the executive summary of our ICT Strategy with Gartner, a private sector research and advisory company. Feedback collated has informed this version of the strategy.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

(i) Endorse the Customer Service Strategy and agree to its publication, as detailed in this report, and

(ii) Agree that the Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform be authorised to take the final decision in respect of the ICT Strategy after taking into account the views expressed at the Cabinet meeting and the Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is meeting on 11 January 2011.

Contact:

Des Crilley
Director, Customer Services
Customer & Communities
des.crilley@kent.gov.uk
Ext: 7000 6630
DDI: 01622 696630

Peter Bole
Director, Information & Communication
Technology
Business Strategy & Support
peter.bole@kent.gov.uk
Ext: 7000 6174
01622 696174