

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities

CABINET

6 NOVEMBER 2012

CAB12/037

TRANSFORMING CUSTOMER ACCESS (I) TARGET OPERATING MODEL FOR WEST SUFFOLK AND; (II) SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S PUBLIC ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POST-2014 (Key Decision Reference: NOV12/11)

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Delivering effective Customer Access is a key part of the Shared Services transformation agenda. A draft Customer Access Strategy has already been considered by the Shared Services Steering Group and by both authorities' Cabinets earlier this year. Both FHDC and SEBC Cabinet endorsed the draft Strategy in May 2012 and recognised that further development work was required before a final version is considered.
- 1.2 Further work has now been undertaken to identify and articulate what a new approach to customer access will mean in practice for the delivery of FHDC and SEBC services. A Target Operating Model (TOM) (attached at Appendix A) has been developed to support services to undertake detailed business process reengineering work (BPR). Subject to consideration at this meeting, and approval by both Cabinets in November, the TOM will provide the mechanism by which services ensure that their transformational redesign is consistent with the councils' customer access vision. In essence, the TOM will underpin future organisational transformation and redesign.
- 1.3 At the same time that FHDC and SEBC are transforming customer access, Suffolk County Council is considering its options for delivering public access when its contract with Customer Service Direct (CSD) ends in April 2014. As part of this consideration, the County Council is keen to explore opportunities for joining up customer access across the public sector, particularly between councils, to improve customer experience and to identify possible efficiencies. Based on discussions with officers from all Suffolk local authorities, the County Council's preferred option is the delivery of a District Integration Model. This model enables both district/borough and county customer contact to be delivered by the local district/borough customer support function. The report attached at Appendix B provides more detail about the proposed model, whilst also recognising that a more detailed business case is required.
- 1.4 The County Council is seeking an in principle approval from each district/borough to the District Integration Model. If such an approval is made, a more detailed business case would be developed which would include,

amongst other things, set up costs, potential savings, contact volumes, staffing implications and technology model.

- 1.5 Whilst there is more detailed analysis required as to the potential benefits and risks associated with the District Integration Model, it is felt that the proposed model complements the transformational work being undertaken by FHDC and SEBC. In particular, both models have similar design principles and an integrated model may provide an opportunity to share investment costs and benefits. However, the approach being taken by FHDC and SEBC regarding delivery of the customer access model is not dependent on developments across the rest of the county and can continue regardless of the councils' decisions relating to the District Integration Model.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 It is recommended that both Forest Heath District Council's (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) Cabinets:-

2.1.1 Approve the Target Operating Model , as contained in Appendix A attached, as a basis for transforming customer access and service delivery across West Suffolk; and

2.1.2 Agree in principle to Suffolk County Council's District Integrated Model for public access, as outlined in Appendix B to Report X, with a view to a detailed business case being developed for further consideration by FHDC and SEBC at a later date.

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3. How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?

- 3.1 The recommendations help to deliver the following strategic/corporate priorities
FHDC: Being an efficient and effective council

4. Key issues

- 4.1 Contained in Appendix A and Appendix B of this report

5. Other options considered

- 5.1 Not producing a Target Operating Model – It would have been possible to undertake transformational change and business process reengineering in services without a Target Operating Model. However, without a TOM design solutions may have been found in individual services which may not have been suitable in other areas. As such, there may have been fragmented processes and little opportunity to identify co-ordinated services and efficiencies. The development of a TOM provides a clearly defined set of principles against which services can be redesigned and opportunities for joined up working and shared efficiencies can be identified.
- 5.2 Suffolk County Public Access - As outlined in Appendix B, other options are available to the County Council in terms of its delivery of public access. These options will be explored further if districts/borough either (i) do not agree in principle to develop a business case for a District Integration Model, or (ii) the business case does not identify the required benefits for all parties.

6. Community impact

- 6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

- 6.1.1 None

- 6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

- 6.2.1 The approach taken to customer access has a fundamental impact on the way we deliver services to our communities. Design principles are included in the TOM which take into account accessibility and ensuring that a wide range of contact channels are available. Services will have to redesign their processes with these design principles in mind. Subsequent changes to service delivery may require an Equality Impact Assessment.

- 6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

- 6.3.1 An Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the design work to be undertaken with the services.

- 6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

- 6.4.1 None

7. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 Consultation has been carried out with both Portfolio Holders for Customer Access and with joint management team. A range of officers from different services across FHDC and SEBC have been involved in the development of the TOM. Consultation with users of the Planning Service and Environmental Health and Housing Service was carried out in 2011 and helped inform the development of the TOM.

8. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 Staffing resources are required to undertake the detailed business process reengineering in all services. Subsequent changes identified as a result of BPR will require costing or analysis of potential savings. Furthermore, a detailed business case for delivering customer access is required based on the outcome of the business process reengineering work and an understanding of current and future customer demand. It is anticipated that this business case will be completed by April 2013 at the latest.

An in principle decision to develop a business case for the District Integration Model has no financial and resources implications for FHDC and SEBC beyond staff time. Clearly, the subsequent business case, and decisions associated with it, will have financial and resource implications which will need to be considered at that time.

9. Risk/opportunity assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Risk of non delivery of customer services by new or different methods, e.g. access on line and transformational government.	Medium	Continue to work to maximise the investment in ICT.	Medium
Risk that departments and public do not buy into changes and ICT investment is not fully utilised.	Medium	External communication to raise awareness of transactions available on the website. Working with SCC and districts to consider the potential 'post-CSD' delivery of public access services for the county and possible collaboration.	Low
Lack of staff skills and experience could prevent delivery of services and high levels of performance. Failure to have motivated staff.	Medium	Programme of development and support developed to support staff and managers through change agenda in the public sector.	Low

Management structure and uncertainty over shared services likely to have impact on day-to-day operations.		Delivery of Learning & Development Plan with Forest Heath, through shared L&D team.	
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10. Legal and policy implications

10.1 None

11. Ward(s) affected

11.1 All

12. Background papers

12.1 Draft Customer Access Strategy – April 2012

13. Documents attached

13.1 Appendix A: Target Operating Model

13.2 Appendix B: Suffolk County Council Public Access: Post 2014 Delivery Model