

**REPORT TO: AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON 23 APRIL 2008**

**SUBJECT: "EASY ACCESS" PROJECT**

**BY: CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 For the Committee to scrutinise progress of the "Easy Access" Project.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section G(9) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to scrutiny of Council functions.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee:-**

- 2.1 Note Appendix 1 - the time line for the Project; and**
- 2.2 Scrutinises Appendix 2 - the Progress Report and the key issues for the future of this Project.**

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1 In order to implement the further development of the Project and the contact centre in particular the prerequisite steps must be to:-
- Transform the current Revenues call centre into a truly corporate one offering a wider range of other services.
  - Consider the organisational and staffing implications of transferring more services to the centre, including the impact on the back-office functions themselves, the wider context of customer service in general and how it sits with other means of access to Council services like face-to-face contact in the existing Access Points.
  - Create a staffing structure to deliver customer service across all means of contact, located within the Council's organisational structure and staffed accordingly from those services transferring to it.
- 3.2 The call centre will outgrow its current accommodation by May 2008 as more services are transferred to it. Consideration will therefore need to be given as a matter of priority soon to identify new accommodation in advance of this.

- 3.3 One of the important next steps of the Project is to develop a sustainable plan so that it can continue for the foreseeable future using existing resources.
- 3.4 Finally, the next steps will include the implementation of the CRM approach to customer service in access points and libraries to deal with face-to-face access. Further work also needs to be done to continue to develop self-service as this has the potential to lead to significant efficiency savings and will allow resources to be freed up to deal with the more complex face-to-face service requests and queries.
- 3.5 In summary, the priorities for the Project during 2008-09 and beyond will be to:
- Prioritise remaining 24 services for implementation
  - Develop an Implementation Programme for transferring 24 services to the Call Centre
  - Develop a Sustainability Programme for “Easy Access”
  - Transfer 24 services to the Call Centre
  - Consider future accommodation requirements for the Call Centre
  - Further develop Web-Based Self-Service
  - Implement “Easy Access” in Access Points and Libraries
- 3.6 In view of the significance of the “Designing Better Services” Project these priorities have been referred to the latter’s Project Board for consideration, as it is considered there is a direct link between the two Projects.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The background to the Project is covered comprehensively in **Appendix 1** to this Report.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Corporate Development Plan**

The provision of customer focussed services is a commitment in the current Plan.

##### **(b) Policy**

To deliver public services at first contact and to ensure staff can respond promptly and effectively and also to realise the efficiencies or national objectives. This is with a view to a more effective public sector; one which makes the best use of public money.

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

The capital and revenue implications are detailed in **Appendix 1** and future implications outlined in **Appendix 2** to this Report respectively.

**(d) Consultations**

This Report has been prepared by the Chief Legal Officer as Chair of the Project Board in consultation with Alan Kirkwood, Head of ICT Services as Manager of the Project Team.

**6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 Having established the feasibility and viability of concepts such as the contact centre and developed a comprehensive customer service training and development programme for staff, the Council has a strong foundation to build on to continue to find new and improved ways of providing services by;

- Building services around citizens choices;
- Making the Council and its services more accessible;
- Encouraging social inclusion using information better; and
- Achieving efficiency savings.

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Background Papers:

Ref: RDB/CS