

Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 18 September 2017

Additional Information

Agenda Item No. 7 – The Digitisation Agenda

Contact: Iain Tucker, Committee Officer (01793) 463605 itucker@swindon.gov.uk,

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The Digitisation Agenda

Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 18th September 2017

Authors:	Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes, Head of Organisational Excellence and Head of Customer & Business Services
Wards:	All Wards
Parishes Affected:	All Areas

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Digitisation Agenda in Swindon; covering three key areas: Going Paperless, Customer Experience and IT Modernisation.
- 1.2 The Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny committee holds the Resources Directorate to account to ensure that it is working on the right thing at the right time.
- 1.3 The programmes covered in this report will better enable the Council to support Council services and contribute towards the Budget savings required between 2017/18 and 2020/2021.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the progress made by the Resources Leadership Team, recognise the challenge ahead for Swindon, and support the direction of travel for the Resources Directorate and Council.
- 2.2 To make any appropriate suggestions for improvement in delivering the programmes to the Cabinet Member for Digitisation and Corporate Services and the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes.
- 2.3 Note that the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes, Director of Organisational Excellence, Head of Customer and Business Services and Head of Corporate Programmes and Innovation are developing a new Digital strategy for Swindon Borough Council.

3. Detail

Going Paperless

- 3.1 In 2015/16, the Council's on site print volumes were in excess of 15 million pieces of paper per annum. Although a significant proportion was for customer and partner agency interaction, for example Court Papers and Appeals panels;

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much was for internal use only, including printing agendas and minutes for meetings, copies of presentations and printing out emails to place in paper files.

- 3.2 To drive a significant change in behaviour and business processes; an ambitious target of reducing on site print from 15 million to 1 million by 2020 was set.
- 3.3 To enable such a reduction, new solutions have been offered to the business:
- An upgraded fleet of Multi-functional printing devices: managed at a lower operating cost, yet more effective in terms of functionality and speed.
 - An off-site fulfilment solution, offering single and bulk printing and finishing of customer letters; reducing officer time handling paper.
 - An off-site print hub for large printing jobs, eg committee papers
 - A new secure email platform (Egress) for sending information between Partner organisations.
 - Review of the Council's Electronic Document Records Management systems.
- 3.4 Significant work has been underway in all these areas and at the end of 2016/17 the Council had reduced to 12 million copies. The target for March 2018 is 10.5 million copies; and as at August, this target had been achieved.
- 3.5 Reducing by 4.5 million in 18 months is a big achievement; however, to reduce by a further 9.5 million will require significant transformation of all the Council's processes; digitising end to end and removing all paper wherever possible. This has now been incorporated into the Organisational Excellence project to ensure it is aligned to the wider digital transformation work.
- 3.6 The reduction of paper creates a saving in itself but equally importantly creates opportunities in flexible working and property rationalisation through less storage requirements and less reliance on handling paper and therefore being in the same location as the paper, to complete business tasks.

The Customer Experience

- 3.7 The way in which customers currently transact with the Council is restrictive, relying on rigid opening hours, manual processes and limited information to inform self-management of issues and concerns.
- 3.8 Although complaints relating to the ability to interact outside of traditional working hours with the Council are minimal; it is recognised that in this digital age, the

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Council needs to be more accessible and transparent in the way it handles customer interactions.

- 3.9 Current contact is mainly managed through face to face and telephone services, with support from back office administration and semi-professional staff; all which both which come at a cost to operate which is significantly higher than an on-line automated services.
- 3.10 Face to face services have reduced in recent years, telephone volumes are broadly static and on line transactions equate to less than 10% of customer interactions; so to drive a step change in customer interaction, a target has been set to reduce face to face and telephone customer contact and drive at least 85% of transactions on line by 2020.
- 3.11 It is expected this reduction in volumes and shift to on-line transactions will happen by:
- Offering customers an on line portal as a single point of entry into SBC services – My Account,
 - Improving our website to give better information and signposting,
 - Simplifying correspondence that currently drives queries,
 - Changing process which currently force people to visit customer services, and
 - Working with service areas to improve 'right first time' rate – to reduce chase ups, complaints and other failure demand activity.
- 3.12 The first phase of the My Account implementation is underway and by Autumn 2017 customers will be able to register and transact on line for over 80 Council Services; mainly relating to Streetsmart, Highways and Housing. Further phases in 2018 and beyond will see more Council services being offered through this Account.
- 3.13 The My Account Portal will also be the single access point for Complaints, Freedom of Information Requests and Members Hotline.
- 3.14 Detailed analysis is underway to understand why customers visit and call the Council; this insight will inform key projects within the Organisational Excellence Programme within the Swindon Programme.
- 3.15 It is expected that Customer Services as a function will operate very differently in the future; actively working with customers to improve digital skills and promote

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the use of on-line services. To do this it will have to look and feel different and offer a new experience when interacting with the Council.

- 3.16 Customer Services will also drive the reduction in access routes into the Council; for example, rationalising and automating paper forms, reducing the number of published telephone numbers and email addresses; which currently disperse customer interaction in a way that causes double handling and delays in effectively managing customer requests.

IT Modernisation

- 3.17 In order to decrease the reliance on paper processes and systems, customer visits and indeed telephone contact, we need to make the truly digital ways of working with the council simple and more preferable to the not-digital ways. This will drive down the costs to deliver our services to customers who can transact digitally and enable us to continue to afford to help those citizens who need our help most.
- To support a great customer experience the ICT Service needs to provide modern, fit for purpose solutions to our citizens and to those departments who serve our citizens. In this context the ICT service have set out a programme of modernising our core infrastructure and applications to continue to work on improving the council's ICT service. The programme covers:
 - Core infrastructure refresh on components such as our Storage Area Network (the place we hold the organisations digital business data); our server compute capacity (the servers which are needed to run business applications); our WAN and LAN (the networking components that join our telephones, computers and offices together and allow us to share data)
 - Major Line of business Systems replacements (the large computer systems such as Oracle (Finance), SWIFT (Adult Social care), Capita ONE (Children's Data) etc.
 - Tactical change projects feature heavily in the ICT Modernisation to keep the business moving forward. Such as the implementation of new point of sale technology in the museum; Talis Alto upgrades for libraries; email service upgrade; a new legal case management solution; wireless solution for Lydiard; Gas part software on hand held tablets in housing; SEQOL insourcing etc.
- 3.18 In order to modernise the ICT Service so it accurately addresses the needs of our staff we complete a survey administered by the public sector IT professional

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Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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body, SOCITM. This survey was last run in May 2015 and has just been run again in May 2017. The survey provides critical information to the ICT management in several ways. Firstly it benchmarks us against the rest of the public sector local authorities who use the same survey. Secondly it benchmarks us against ourselves at a point in time to measure changes and thirdly it provides a lense on the key things the ICT service need to work on to improve our performance relative to Swindon needs.

- 3.19 The 2017 survey results will be presented to the Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 18th September 2017 and will be distributed with the minutes of the meeting.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to adopt a digital approach to its customer interaction and office practices, however, it would lose all the advantages that come from operating in a modern and efficient way. The reduction in paper processes, not only speeds up processing times and improves audit trails; it also frees up valuable office space, otherwise used for storage
- 4.2 Swindon could decide not to offer customers a My Account portal and continue offering services through traditional channels. These channels are costly and not as efficient as automated 24/7 services. Customers' habits are changing and there is an expectation to access services at a time that suits and be able to track progress.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Digital Agenda will be developed with internal expertise and implemented on a business case bases for each change project covered in existing budgets or with future bids for funding being made.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights
- 5.3 All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)
- 5.4 All other implications have been considered within this report and none found.

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Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been written for the digital programme and another specifically for the Customer Portal project and a copy is available from the report authors. Both recognise there are benefits and risks to digitising services, therefore, a Digital Inclusion Strategy is being drafted to bridge any gaps.

Risk Management

- 5.6 Risks will be managed in line with department risk management techniques and programme management

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) and the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None

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