

**Executive**

11th February 2015

Report of the Director of Customer & Business Support Services

## **Developing On-line Access to Council Services**

### **Introduction**

1. This report presents Executive Members with proposed vision and principles which will drive the design of the new digital customer platform and the council's future on-line interactions with our residents and other customers and which will underpin the programme of work across all council services.
2. It also presents Members with details of the project management delivery arrangements for the expansion of digital services to residents and other service users covering:
  - Governance
  - Plans
  - Priorities
  - Communication Plans.
3. This report also provides a response to the E-Democracy Scrutiny Review Task Group recommendations along with resident survey results.

### **Recommendations**

4. Executive Members are asked to consider the contents of this report and to agree:
  - a) the principles driving the design of the new customer digital platform;
  - b) to endorse the plans in relation to the project for the delivery and expansion of on-line services to residents and other service users; and

- c) the response to the recommendations from the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) E-Democracy Scrutiny Review.

***Reason:** To ensure Executive members have enough information in leading the agenda for digitalisation of services and improved access to services, with associated benefits for residents as well as the efficiencies generated.*

## **Background**

### **Vision and Principles**

5. The vision statement for this work is:

**“CYC’s vision is to be a customer focused organisation placing residents and visitors at the heart of everything we do, supporting customers to do more for themselves by providing high quality and responsive digital services to ensure CYC are always open and available and easy for everyone to use”.**

6. In order to build on and deliver the vision for integrated and seamless transactions both over the web and through other channels of customer choice, the importance of a stable and fully supportive Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is recognised as being one of the cornerstones of digital service delivery alongside the council’s new website and mobile working technologies in operation.
7. The step changes made to the website over the last year have made a significant difference in terms of the customer experience and shifting customers to using the website for digital services. Significant advancements have been made in terms of:
- the search function;
  - a modern, customer focused interface;
  - enhanced information quality;
  - an interface that adjusts to be usable on a standard PC or on mobile devices of different types.
8. The purpose of the CRM project (now known as the Digital Services Project) is to put in place the processes and technology to enable the next step in the journey, which is to place the transactional

elements of the customer's journey online. This work will build on the already successful work on 'doitonline' reporting and provide a richer more integrated offer for the customer with the Oracle system that has been procured and which will integrate with the website, and eventually all resident facing council services.

9. In designing the approach to this project, the following principles will drive all work undertaken within its work streams:

- **Provide digital access to services and ensure digital inclusion for all customers and residents is at the core of service development and improvement.**

This will be achieved by:

- providing information and access to services on-line using best of breed technology;
- building customer and resident skills, connectivity and accessibility.

- **Ensure that CYC and any partners are easy to do business with.**

This will be achieved by:

- customers and residents can rely on the form of contact they choose whether digital, by telephone or for those that need it, face to face service provision;
- high quality outcomes in answering enquiries right first time and reducing failure demand.

- **Take a single organisation and customer focussed approach to service design and provision of services.**

This will be achieved by:

- redesigning services in an integrated way with the customer/resident involved and at the heart of the solution;
- reducing transactions and / or stages the customer has to go through to achieve enquiry resolution;
- stop activity that adds little or no value to the resident/customer.

- **Become an enabler rather than gate-keeper.**

This will be achieved by:

- designing responses, systems and processes to say 'yes' or 'have you tried...?' rather than 'no we/you can't'.
- put the resident/customer first not the process or the line manager.

- **Be flexible and responsive to changes in our customer base to ensure continuous improvement.**

This will be achieved by

- listening to feedback in all its forms;
- telling customers/residents/partners what has changed and why;
- work with customers/residents/partners on joint solutions;
- review what intelligence/data shows about what residents and customers think, feel and need.

10. As such the project is designed to deliver a step change in how the council does business with residents and communities. There will not simply be a focus on the first point of contact, but a root and branch analysis of the business model, the processes that support the model, the organisational structure and the enablers to unlock new ways of working.
11. The specific features of the system and new facilities such as feedback systems and webchat, are outlined in the E-Democracy Scrutiny Task Group report which Executive Members have considered earlier within this meeting's agenda.

## **Governance**

12. The project sponsor is the Assistant Director responsible for Customer Services who leads the cross service Digital Services Project (DSP) Board. The Project Team has a Customer Services Project Manager working alongside an ICT Project Manager with the necessary technical and operational project support. The team are working closely with Oracle's implementation partners, Connection Point, to produce and deliver the Oracle platform and priority digital service implementation plans.
13. The Project Board will feed progress reports into the Corporate Management Team, Executive and any ongoing scrutiny reviews, and will defer to the council's ICT Board on technical decisions.
14. The role of the Project Board is to enable the project sponsor to deliver the project benefits, and in particular:
  - to monitor the project progress and ensure that the interests of the business are best served; and

- to provide a forum for taking strategic, cross-functional decisions, removing obstacles, and for resolving issues.

## Plans

15. The planning of the system implementation and roll-out of on-line services will take place on a phased approach . The objective of Phase 1 is to plan and prepare for the introduction of the Oracle Platform to replace the existing customer system and start the work on delivering the packages of work related to the six priority areas. As shown in the plan at Annex A this work will be the focus for the next six months. The agile nature of this works will mean that priorities will change over time, and the six priorities will be at different stages at the point of go-live during the summer months. A key tenet of the work will be not to affect the functionality that users currently experience but that improvements will be made over time and changes will be well communicated.
16. A project brief is being agreed during the initial engagement with each business area with senior business stakeholders and with the assistance from the project team in order to outline what the principles will be and what the outputs will be.
17. The current business area model is being explored in each service through a series of workshops to produce an “AS IS” model for the business area and then a further series of workshops to produce a “TO BE” model that will be articulated in a business case which will be presented to board for decision / approval. The implementation will be planned as part of the business case. This has already been completed for the Revenues and Benefits work streams.
18. The project board will determine the priorities of the work and this will be informed by a number of factors including customer desire, business readiness, systems readiness, financial savings and practicalities, such as the need to move processes that currently exist in the current CRM solution to new processes in the new Oracle solution.
19. Following the completion of the planning and architecture phase, the construction of the platform for electronic service delivery will commence.

20. A programme for Phase 2 will be populated as Phase 1 starts to be delivered and will plan for the delivery of the digital customer interfaces for the rest of the council's services and, as appropriate, partner organisations.

## **Priorities**

21. The current priority services to transition on-line via the new Oracle system are listed below and have been formed from a combination of the following criterion:

- providing continuity of service for existing on-line services, for example, street issue reporting and on-line payments;
- where high transaction levels point to the ability to move significant numbers of transactions away from more expensive channels (face to face and telephone) to cheaper on-line provision, for example, parking and feedback/complaints;
- where a traditional back-office function can be made more efficient and an improved customer experience is produced by automating processes, for example council tax and other revenue collection activities and benefits.

22. The current priority services as determined by the Project Board are as follows:

- Waste (missed bins, new container/service, bulky collection)
- Highways (highway defect, street light defect, drainage)
- Public realm (litter report, fly tipping, graffiti)
- Revenues
- Benefits
- Feedback (complaints/compliments/requests for information).

*NB* There is a parallel interim on-line solution for parking transactions in development. Whilst this is a necessary short term solution to an existing manual and paper based system and is not being developed within Oracle at the current time, this work is being monitored by the Digital Services Project Board.

23. There is a recognition by the Project team, however, that the priority list may change over the short and medium term, given that there are other major system and service re-engineering changes being undertaken in the council particularly in relation to adults and children's services. As such there may be a need to be agile around timescales should the resulting transformation of the front offices for those services shift to the customer centre sooner rather than later. The Project Board through its cross service membership is monitoring all such developments to ensure an integrated and coherent approach.

## **Communication Plans**

24. The communications strategy and plans for the project are currently under construction but the draft objectives for communications for the project are to:
- Publicise and encourage engagement with the 'My Account' portal for both staff and residents.
  - Give confidence that digital inclusion for all customers and residents is at the core of service development and improvement.
  - Demonstrate that the council is easy to do business with.
  - Demonstrate that the council is flexible and responsive to changes in our customer base to ensure continuous improvement.
25. Draft timescales and actions are contained in Annex B and responsible officers and spokespersons are identified in the detailed version.

## **Consultation**

### **Public Consultation**

26. Residents were involved in the design of the website and continue to feed into this work on an ongoing basis. This approach will also be at the core of the Digital Services Project. This has been facilitated at an early stage by the work of Members through the work of the E-Democracy Scrutiny Review Task Group who have

been conducting a survey relating to on-line services over the last few months. This survey closed on 20th January 2015 and the summarised responses can be found in the Scrutiny report attached to the agenda for this meeting of the Executive.

27. Particularly relevant to this project and the immediate benefits that residents will see once the new system is in place is Question 10 of the resident survey: *Would it help you to be able to track your requests, reports and payments via our website?* 90.3% of respondents said that it would help them.
28. Resident feedback will continue to shape the work of the Digital Services Project on an ongoing basis and road testing with resident groups will precede any service launch.

### **Staff Engagement**

29. Staff in Customer and Business Support Services have been aware of developments over the past nine months or so and at an early stage over 300 staff gave their views as to what they wanted to see from a new website and on line services. In the last few weeks further sessions have been held, again with around 300 staff, to feedback on how their views informed the specification of the new system and to gain views on maximising take-up of on line services and tackling barriers to digital inclusion. Initial meetings have also been held with Directorate Management Teams and further wider engagement sessions are planned to integrate with roll-out plans for the system (see Annex B).

### **Response to Scrutiny Recommendations**

30. The following table summarises the recommendations arising from the E-Democracy Scrutiny Review set up by the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) with a recommended response for consideration by Executive Members:

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
To make the delivery of online services a priority to enable ease of access for residents and lead to potential efficiency savings within the Council.	Agreed as per the recommendations of this report



<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
Identify any potential reasons which would lead to the poor take up of My Account by York residents as these could present a risk to the successful rolling out of the new system.	To continue to manage as a key risk to the project and work with CSMC on solutions.
Carry out market research and public consultation during the My Account design process similar to that carried out for the website	Planning has already started on this work.
Make My Account training sessions available for Members so they fully understand the features and utilisation of the system and are able to pass on this knowledge to residents.	To build into training plans.
Implement a comprehensive online video tutorial outlining the key functionality of the My Account system.	To build into training plans
Explore the strong integration of My Account so individuals can be “tagged” as a result of issue-based contact with CYC so they can then be signposted to the relevant decision session/committee with which they might have an interest.	To consider as part of the design of ‘My Account’
Explore hyperlinking agenda items on CYC’s Youtube channel and the possibility of rolling this out to all webcast uploads for ease of access.	A pilot has already commenced and will be rolled out to Executive and Council meetings initially.

## Options

31. The options available to Executive are:

- a. To agree or amend the principles driving the design of the new customer digital platform;
- b. To agree or disagree to endorse the plans in relation to the project for the delivery and expansion of on-line services to residents and other service users; and
- c. To agree or amend the response to the recommendations from the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) E-Democracy Scrutiny Review.

## Analysis

32. None required for the purpose of this report. Further work will be undertaken to analyse the results of the resident on-line service survey which closed on 20th January 2016.

## Council Plan 2015 - 19

33. The recommendations in this paper provide the opportunity to deliver tangible and measurable benefits to residents and customers in line with the Council Plan priorities and in particular the following:
- **a focus on frontline services** - to ensure all residents, , can access reliable services in an efficient and convenient way but also ensuring that face to face and phone facilities remain for those residents that require greater support; and
  - **a council that listens to residents** - to ensure it delivers the services they want and works in partnership with local communities.

## Implications

- 34.
- (a) Financial** – the direct savings associated with implementing the Oracle system are £340k within the first 18 months with anticipated further savings in future years as channel shift targets are developed, achieved and, hopefully exceeded. These will be realised through individual business plans as services are moved onto the platform.
- (b) Human Resources**
- (i) It is likely that human resources will reduce in line with back office systems efficiencies. Again these implications will be outlined in each business case developed. Using the example of the Revenues & Benefits Business Case, the resourcing strategy has been set in advance of the implementation, as such the service has been able to manage vacancies and use temporary staff in order to minimise the impact on permanent employees.
  - (ii) Risks around being able to secure specialist Business Analyst support for the business change processes are

being managed with ongoing discussions with Human Resources on resourcing strategies.

**(c) Equalities**

(i) Members have the following responsibilities under the public sector equality duty. Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

(ii) Whilst there is not a separate Communities Impact Assessment for this report, equalities implications will be considered as part of each business case considered by the Project Board. Full cognisance of impacts on all communities were built into the development of the website which was designed with residents and with inclusion in mind hence the 'Browsealoud' facility, for example. The same approach will be taken with the design of the My

Account facility in line with the E-Democracy Scrutiny Review recommendations.

(iii) Digital inclusion strategies will be key to the success of maximum take-up of My Account and officers will support the continued work CSMC and of the Digital York Team to ensure that strategies are developed to maximise digital access across all communities to on-line facilities. Barriers to access will be raised as a priority and risk area as part of the My Account work stream of the Project.

(d) **Legal** - There are no known additional implications.

(e) **Crime and Disorder** – All on-line technologies will comply with all required information and information technology infrastructure security standards.

(f) **Information Technology (IT)** – The implications are in the body of the report. All business cases relating to services moving onto the platform will contain the costs of any other required IT investments to re-engineer back office processes.

(g) **Property** - There are no implications

## **Risk Management**

35. The programme of work has a key risk register monitored through the Digital Services Project Board, and the significant (red) risks currently being managed are:

- *Insufficient/inadequate technical resources to deliver the programme* (mitigations in place include: plan/agree resource requirements; identify skills gaps/development requirements; agree roles and responsibilities; improve/increase skill levels if and where necessary).
- *Solution does not meet requirements in terms of fully automated end to end processes within project timescales* (mitigations in place include: engage with all business areas/stakeholders through a business readiness assessment and build a business case; document technical/functional requirements within each work stream; regularly review and update those requirements; adopt an Agile development-delivery approach for Phase 2).

- *Lack of strategic level buy in* (mitigations in place include: identify key stakeholders from each business service area and gain commitment to attend future board meetings).
- *Lack of operational buy in* (mitigations in place include: identify key stakeholders from each business service area and gain commitment to attend future operational project meetings and workshops).

## Contact Details

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<b>Wards Affected:</b> All			√
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## Background Papers

**11th January 2016 CMSC Report of the E-Democracy Scrutiny Review Task Group Report, found at:**

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s102024/Interim%20Report%2011%20Jan%202016.pdf>

## Annexes

Annex A – Digital Services Project Timelines

Annex B – Draft Communications Plan

## **Abbreviations**

CYC	City of York Council
K	Thousand
m	Million
CRM	Customer Relationship Management System
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
CMSC	Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee
DSP	Digital Service Project