



Subject:	Update on Customer Focus Programme
Date:	19th February, 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Finance & Resources
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Customer Focus Programme Director Cormac Quinn, Customer Services Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Members are reminded that, in September 2020, the Committee was provided with an update on the Customer Focus Programme which included an update on further activity in support of Covid 19 Recovery and a revised programme plan.
1.2	A further report was presented to the Committee in October 2020 to provide details of the establishment of the Customer Hub and approval was given to proceed with the proposed staffing structure including application of the relevant staff transfer processes and recruitment of required posts.
1.3	This report provides members with an update on the main components of the first phase of the Customer Focus programme to be implemented from 29 March 2021.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the update on Phase 1 of the implementation of the Customer Focus programme and specifically the planned start of operation of the new Customer Hub function from 29 March 2021; 2. the update on services to be provided for Elected Members as part of Phase 1. This work has been progressing in partnership with the Customer Focus Task and Finish Group for Elected Members; 3. the initial works undertaken to refurbish the reception area of the ground floor of Cecil Ward Building which will form part of the physical Customer Hub; 4. progress with development of missed bins; and 5. progress with provision of enabling infrastructure.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>What we will deliver in Phase 1 of the Customer Hub</u></p> <p>The diagram attached at Appendix 1 sets out the future blueprint for the Customer hub which was presented at the May and September 2020 Committee meetings. As reported in September 2020, the complexity of the customer programme does not support the implementation of all of its elements at one time. Attached at Appendix 2 is a reminder of the high level plan previously presented to achieve implementation of the Customer Hub by April 2021.</p>
3.2	<p>The ‘go live’ date of the Customer Hub has been revised to 29th March 2021. For this phase of the programme, we will have the following in place:</p>
3.3	<p>Customer Hub</p> <p>This new function will deal with customer contact for all departments and services, across all channels (online, mobile, telephone, face-to-face, email, and social media). Initially, the hub will manage all customer contact for cleansing/waste and calls currently through the main switchboard and corporate complaints numbers. Work is continuing on the co-design of processes including the handoff from customer hub to services in other departments. The implementation initially will be on a ‘wide and thin’ basis i.e. a basic level of information and signposting for customers will be provided at the first point of contact for all services across all channels.</p>
3.4	<p>This will provide a platform for on-boarding of services in the future phases beyond April 2021, deepening the information and value at first point of contact as services are designed end to end - thus improving customer experience.</p>

3.5	As reported in October 2020, the customer hub team will grow to up to 20 staff as we on-board services, with 16 staff in post by April 2021. These staff will facilitate all customer contact channels, provide customer support for digital channels and build capability in service performance and analysis, working with departments and the Continuous Improvement team to inform and shape service improvement.
3.6	To achieve this, working closely with the Corporate Human Resources team, a transition plan for staffing and recruitment for the Customer Hub was established and is now nearing completion. Integral to this stage has been the inclusion of staff and Trade Unions in understanding the impact of these changes on current posts and post holders and the plans to transition to the new Customer Hub.
3.7	Work has commenced on training and development of staff who will be in post in time to allow for their training and the building of capacity and support systems and processes for hub operation.
3.8	Members should note that the Customer Hub is being financed by a re-alignment of existing budgets and does not add an additional burden to the ratepayer.
Elected Members' future blueprint	
3.9	The work of the Customer Focus Task and Finish group for Elected Members is continuing with a further workshop scheduled to take place on 24 February 2021. The workshop will facilitate feedback on the products developed and will discuss plans for implementation of phase 1 including members' support and training needs.
3.10	Within the functionality to be provided there will be a dedicated contact channel (telephone and email address) for elected members within the Customer Hub. Additionally we will provide members with information on service delivery so they can be informed of issues earlier, enabling them to be responsive to constituents' queries. Members will also have the ability to track issues they have raised and will have visibility of issues emerging in their areas. A future blueprint for services for elected members can be found at Appendix 3 .
Physical Customer Hub	
3.11	Since October 2020, plans for the refurbishment of the Ground Floor of Cecil Ward Building as the physical Customer Hub have been developed and progressed. Whilst it is unclear when 'face to face' services will fully resume, the plans include a refurbishment of the reception area as a first phase providing a more welcoming customer interface and acting as the physical focal point for the customer service. This work has provided the opportunity to upgrade digital infrastructure and also to deep clean stonework. We anticipate the first

phase being completed by April 2021. A plan of the new reception area can be found at **Appendix 4.**

Missed Bins

3.12 Aligned to the overall Resources and Fleet transition and improvement programme, we have been focussing on how we can improve issues with missed bins including information flows between Elected Members, customers, staff and managers. A prototype of an app to report missed bins has been developed. A pilot to prove that the technology works involving 10 out of 50 collection squads has been completed. We have assessed the outcomes of the pilot and the plan for phase 1 of Customer Hub from April 2021 is to address issues identified during the pilot and, taking full cognisance of current Council policies and procedures around bin collections, to fully embed the processes and procedures contained within the scope of the pilot. Once this has been achieved a plan will be developed to roll this model out further.

Enabling Infrastructure

3.13 The success of the Customer Focus programme is wholly dependent on the delivery of enabling infrastructure and specific to Customer Hub, the technical infrastructure provided via telephony and systems delivered by Digital Services.

3.14 As evidenced through lockdown and now into recovery our telephone solution is one of the Council's most mission-critical systems. Digital Services completed the upgrade of our telephony solution in September 2020. The upgrade simplifies administration, and enhances security and business continuity. The system upgrade also introduces enhanced features and services which will be required to support modern digital workplace requirements and the integrated telephony features needed for the Customer Focus Programme.

- **Contact Centre**

Improves customer experience by ensuring that customer contact from any channel is directed to the right agent with the right skills. It also provides real-time information to improve agent effectiveness.

- Voice, Chat, SMS, Email, FAX, and AI Chatbots
- Built-in Call and Screen Recording
- Built-in Workforce Scheduling

- **Customised CRM integration**

Phone and CRM system integration provides visibility of calls made and received, quick access to customer information and the ability to receive and make calls directly within the CRM.

- Automatically access customer information
- Pre-populate CRM with customer information
- Click to dial – call, text or email customers within CRM

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Softphones Bring all the functionality of a desk phone onto a laptop or mobile phone. This enables the staff working in the Customer Hub to operate remotely or in the office. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ make and receive calls on your laptop, mobile phone or desk phone ○ voicemail integrated with email.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.15	The SP and R Committee agreed in November 2017 that a budget of £500k be set aside for the customer focus project. The operational cost of Customer Hub was reported to October 2020 committee as nil cost to Council and the changes have been reflected in the 2021/2022 budget.
3.16	The cost of refurbishment of the reception area of Ground Floor Cecil Ward Building has been accommodated within the 2020/2021 capital financing budget.
3.17	Staff and Trade Unions have been engaged throughout the programme. As we move to delivery, with Trade Union agreement we have established a sub group of JNCC to facilitate further engagement and consultation on staff implications of the programme in line with agreed HR policies and procedures.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.18	Work on the EQIA for the Customer Focus Programme has been completed and the outcome published on our community engagement platform, Citizenspace.
4.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Customer Focus Draft Future Blueprint Appendix 2 - High level plan showing Key Milestones for implementation Appendix 3 – Blueprint of future services for Elected Members Appendix 4 – Plan of Refurbishment of Reception Area Ground Floor CWB