

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROJECT – UPDATE

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee – 15 September 2015

Report of Chief Officer Corporate Support

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Amy Wilton, Customer Services Manager (Ext. 7208)

Recommendation to Policy & Performance Advisory Committee:

The progress on the Council's Customer Experience project be noted.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that Members are aware of the progress being made on the Council's projects to procure, design and implement a new website and to improve the consistency of its visual identity to help deliver an improved level of service to customers.

Introduction and Background

- 1 During 2014 the Council set out a number of corporate projects that it wanted to achieve to support the commitments it made within its Corporate Plan. These projects included one focused on the customer experience which incorporated the delivery of a new council website and improving the consistency of the Council's visual identity.
- 2 Through the Portfolio and Deputy Portfolio Holders, the Advisory Committee and a Members' Communications Working Group councillors have contributed significantly to the project, providing leadership and strategic direction to ensure that it delivers outcomes that are in line with the Council's aspirations.
- 3 The Customer Experience project is aimed at providing an improved level of service to customers. This will be achieved by delivering a website that provides access to more of the Council's services online and makes them simpler to use. This will enable those customers that are willing, to use a range of self service options at a time that is convenient to them. This in turn will enable the Council to provide greater time and resource to those customers that wish to contact the council either face to face or over the telephone, during normal office hours.
- 4 By improving the Council's visual identity it will give customers the confidence that the information that they see or read is provided by the Council. It will mean we communicate more clearly, consistently and effectively with our customers helping to ensure that they receive the information they need when they use the services

the District Council provides. Using an appropriate tone of voice across our communications will underpin the Council's position as a community champion.

Project Update

- 5 Members have received regular updates over the last year on progress of this project. Since the last update in March this year the Council has implemented a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which is used to run the IT that supports the customer contact centre and the reception area. The new system makes it much easier for customer services staff to access information and address customer enquiries quickly and completely at the first point of contact. In addition the system will provide a more effective platform to integrate with the new website to enable straight forward and simple self service tasks for customers.
- 6 The council is continuing to work with a Kent wide project team to look more in depth at the information available from our current website about how people use it and to help us understand what pages they visit the most. By analysing the way customers use our current website, we will gain a greater understanding of how customers access and view the information and services we provide, which will in turn help us to design our new website in a more customer focused way.
- 7 At the time of the last update to Members a specification had been written for a new website which covered the technical requirements. Since that time the Council has appointed Jadu to provide the new website and a project start meeting was held in August. Two further meetings are planned to determine the design of the new website and to confirm the approach to content on the website. From the very start it is has been clear that the new website will include less information than it does currently and it will be designed with the customer in mind. A project plan is due to be provided to the Council which will set out in detail what is required of both the Council and the supplier to ensure it is delivered on time. It is anticipated that the project end date will not be before 31 March 2016.
- 8 Work to update the Council's visual identity has progressed with the support of the Portfolio Holder and Members Communications Working Group. It is expected that the Council will have a visual identity guide that will inform the design and content of all future Council publications, including its website, before the end of September.
- 9 The Customer Services Manager will provide a short presentation to the Advisory Committee at the meeting to bring Members up to date with the very latest progress on the project.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

None.

Key Implications

Financial

- 10 Costs associated with the customer experience project are met from within existing budgets.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

- 11 A project risk register will be created for the delivery of a new council website which will be completed on receipt of the final project plan from the supplier.

Equality Assessment

- 12 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

- 13 It is apparent that customer expectations and behaviours are constantly changing. Through the progression of the work outlined in this report, we will ensure that developing technology is used in an effective manner to meet these changes. We also aim to encourage customers to use easier, more cost effective methods of accessing services, whilst not disadvantaging those without access to technology.

Appendices None

Background Papers: None

Jim Carrington-West
Chief Officer Corporate Support