

HOW THE PUBLIC CONTACT THE COUNCIL

Report of the Head of Customer Services

1. Introduction and background.

The Council's Business Improvement, Transformation and Efficiency (BITE) strategy aims to support the delivery of efficiency savings and improvements in service delivery.

The Council's overarching Customer Strategy has recently been updated (Appendix 1). Additionally, a new Corporate Customer Charter (Appendix 2) is due to be launched via the autumn edition of the Review, which confirms the standards of service delivery that residents of Stockport can expect to receive from the Council.

At the meeting of the Corporate, Resource, Management and Governance Scrutiny Panel held on 19th July 2011, Members considered how scrutiny activity could align with the Council's transformation projects and agreed to undertake a scrutiny review on "How the public contact the Council".

2. Aims.

2.1 The aims of the review are to:

- identify and evaluate the different methods of contacting the Council and consider whether there are any gaps in current provision or improvements that could be made.
- understand the different reasons that customers contact the Council.
- understand external factors that may influence the demand for access to services e.g. Welfare Reform Bill and the introduction of the Universal Credit.
- benchmark against other organisations to identify best practice and assess current practice in Stockport Council against recognised good practice. This could involve site visits.
- recommend improvements to the means by which the public can contact the Council, thereby improving the customer experience.
- Identify opportunities for reducing unnecessary demand and maximising the use of cost effective channels.

2.2 The aim of this report is not to provide information against each of these aims but rather to provide background information and data to inform next steps in this review.

3. Access channels

The Customer Strategy has recently been revised, and a survey of the Citizens Panel in 2008/9 indicated that:

- The preferred means of accessing Council Services is the telephone (59%), the second preferred means is by internet and email (24%) and the third is by letter (7%). There has been a marked reduction in those who would visit Council offices.
- It is important however to recognise that there are shifts in these figures when considering age and gender. e.g. A higher than average number of women prefer to use the telephone, with a higher than average % of 60 plus preferring face to face.

Customers contact the Council for the following reasons:

- To find something e.g. office opening times.
- To report something e.g. faulty street light.
- To apply for something e.g. apply for Benefit.
- To pay for something e.g. parking fine.
- To get information and advice

Collectively, the Contact Centre, the Direct Centre and the Local Centres are branded as Stockport *Direct*.

3.1 Telephone

Based at Houldsworth Mill in Reddish, the Council's Customer Contact Centre was launched in 2003. In 2005, the Contact Centre was absorbed into the newly formed service, Customer Services. Over a period of time, there has been an incremental increase services that are accessed via the Contact Centre including:

- Street scene
- Traffic Services
- Environmental Services
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Parks and Recreation
- Libraries advice and Information
- Council Tax
- Housing Benefit
- Pest Control
- Housing Standards
- Registration Services
- Elections
- Telephone Payments
- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Schools Admissions
- "Getting it Right"- comments, compliments and complaints
- Council switchboard

In 2010-11 the Contact Centre handled approx 658,000 telephone calls for these services. A further breakdown of these figures is included in appendix 3.

Telephone and email enquiries are also received for services that are not accessed via the Contact Centre. Whilst not an exhaustive list, these services include:

- Animal Welfare
- Environmental Health
- Food Safety/Health Education/Work Place Safety
- Noise
- Licensing
- Planning and Building Control
- Blue Badges
- Education Welfare
- Continuing Education
- Youth Services

Accurate volumetrics data relating to these services is not immediately available. However, approx 201,000 calls come into these numbers per annum.

3.2 Face to face.

3.2.1 The One Stop Shop or Direct Centre was launched on the ground floor of Fred Perry House in January 2011 and is also a part of Customer Services. Hours of opening are 8:30am until 5pm Monday to Friday, and services provided include:

- Reception point for all visitors to Stopford House and Fred Perry House
- General enquiry point
- Signposting
- Telephone access to the Contact Centre
- Private facilities for more complex enquiries i.e. Council Tax and Housing Benefit, Social Care, Client Finance and Taxi Licensing.
- Self service payment machines
- Internet access to Council Services
- Advice services including welfare rights and debt advice
- Shelter (Housing Advice)
- Community Safety
- Access to voluntary services e.g. CAB and Credit Union.

Although the new facility has not yet been opened for 12 months, it is anticipated that it will receive approx 100,000 visitors in the first year. A further break down of data is included in Appendix 3.

3.2.2 Access to services is also achieved via a network of eleven Local Centres throughout the Borough. Managed as a part of the Libraries, Advice and Information Service they are at the following locations, with nine being co located in libraries:

- Reddish, Houldsworth Square (stand alone)
- Brinnington, First House

- Adswood and Bridgehall, Bridgehall Community Centre
- Heald Green, Heald Green Library
- Cheadle, Cheadle Library
- Cheadle Hulme (stand alone)
- Bramhall, Bramhall Library
- Hazel Grove, Hazel Grove Library
- Offerton, Dialstone Library
- Marple, Marple Library
- Bredbury, Bredbury Library

Information and advice is available on a wide range of services including:

- Council services
- Benefits and tax credits
- Consumer issues
- Employment rights
- Environmental issues
- Leisure Key application and renewals
- Money matters
- Planning applications
- Housing advice on behalf of SHL at Reddish, Brinnington and Adswood and Bridgehall

Free telephone access to the Contact Centre is available at each and free internet access is also available except at Adswood and Bridgehall, Cheadle Hulme and Reddish.

Hours of opening vary at different locations.

Data around volumes of enquiry are included in Appendix 3.

3.3 Council web site

Stockport Council has had a web site for a number of years

As the 2nd preferred means of interacting with the Council is online, the Council's web site has become an increasingly important delivery channel. Not only is it a source of information and advice but increasingly a means of generating a request for service as well.

Statistically, since 2004 the website has had an increase in visitors year-on-year. A further breakdown of data relating web site visits is included in Appendix 3.

3.4 eforms and emails.

3.4.1. Email has been a popular means of contacting the Council for a number of years.

3.4.2. An alternative and increasingly popular means of requesting a service is via an e form. A suite of e-forms exist for many services including Street

Cleansing, Anti Social Behaviour, Traffic Services etc. They can be accessed via the front page of the Council's web site. Fields on the form need to be filled in with the required information and they can then be submitted. Technically this could be the most cost effective means of processing a service request, with the e-form being integrated into the appropriate IT system for processing. In reality, this integration does not exist for the majority of e-forms (other than applying for Benefit) and data is manually transcribed from the form into the appropriate IT system by staff at the Contact Centre. Consequently, it takes longer (approx 50% for an e-form and 100% for an email) than to handle a telephone call. However, using fully transactional e-forms to avoid this duplication of work is the way that a lot of Councils are moving, because it removes inefficiency and provides a good service to the customer.

A further break down of data relating to emails and e-forms is included in Appendix 3.

3.5 Social Media

3.5.1. Stockport Council has corporate presence on the following social networking sites;

- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- LinkedIn

Twitter is by far the most engaging site with residents and businesses posting questions about our services directly to the Council on Twitter. Facebook is the next highest site for these types of interaction.

Obtaining accurate statistics from all social networking sites is difficult but in the case of Facebook, in the last nine months there has been a 173% increase in people viewing Council posts/messages, and a 116% increase in feedback to these posts/messages compared to the previous nine month period.

3.5.2. Stockport 'Looking Local'

Stockport 'Looking Local' is the Council's interactive Digital TV service which also delivers content across a variety of other non-PC internet devices e.g. mobile phones (including a dedicated 'Looking Local' application for iPhone and android Smart phones), kiosks, Nintendo Wii game consoles and broadband-enabled Freeview.

Over the past year there has been a general increase nationally in access to digital TV as the switchover grows ever closer and cable and satellite subscriptions increase. Now 56% of homes in the UK have access to interactive TV (this figure is set to rise to 65% by 2012).

The biggest change in media consumption and device ownership over the past year was around mobile phones, in particular smart phones. Over 91% of UK adults now own a mobile phone, 50% of teenagers and 12million adults own a smart phone; their relationship with their smart phone is much stronger and 69% use it to surf the web.

86% of working class people, own a mobile or smart phone possibly driven by the rise of pre-pay options for smart phones. Over 40% of working class people subscribe to either Sky or Virgin (Stockport has a very high Virgin Media uptake).

With the increasing trends highlighted above in both the statistics on ownership and the take up of the Stockport 'Looking Local' service, Social Media will become an increasingly popular means of accessing Council services.

3.6 Mail and written correspondence.

The majority of the Council's incoming mail is handled by the Mail room which is part of Corporate and Support Services, and processes all incoming mail for the Civic Complex i.e. the Town Hall, Stopford House and Fred Perry House.

Some mail is delivered to buildings outside the Civic Complex on a daily basis e.g. Stockport Homes on St Peters gate, Staircase House, Owl House and the Coroners' Office at Mount Tabor.

In 2010-11, the Mail room handled approx 111,000 pieces of external mail.

4. External factors.

It is important to remember that external factors may well have an influence on demand for services. Current examples that we are aware of include:

4.1 Welfare Reform

There are significant changes expected to benefits and tax credits.

It is possible that due to the changes in the welfare system Advice Services can expect increased footfall. This has already begun with the migration of claimants from Incapacity Benefit to Employment & Support Allowance.

Any decrease in income could increase the demand for Advice Services and in certain areas increases the need for appeals from the specialist Welfare Rights Team and specialist debt advice appointments.

4.2 Universal Credit

In 2013, Universal Credit will replace the 6 income related work based benefits, including Tax Credits and Housing Benefits. From October 2013, new working age customers will no longer apply for Housing Benefit via their local council, but instead make an on-line claims or telephone claims for Universal Credit, through the Department of Works and Pensions.

5. Next steps.

It is clear from the data provided that the way the public contact the Council is changing. In addition, technology has advanced and changed at great deal since Stockport Direct was established and earlier Scrutiny reviews were undertaken.

It is therefore suggested that the work of this review should concentrate on the Council's on-line offer and in particular the opportunities that the development of a suite of transactional on line forms would present in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

Additionally, it may be helpful to include the local advice and information centres in this review to understand how they fit into the requirement of the public to contact the Council.

6. Scoping the Review

From the information presented members need to determine:-

- the areas to focus in on to add value to the review
- the aims and objectives for the review
- anticipated outcomes
- the length of the review – scrutiny reviews are typically time limited to 4 months and meet monthly.
- future meeting dates

A copy of the pre-scoping report that was approved at CRMG Scrutiny Committee on 20 September is attached (Appendix 4) for members information.

A project plan has been drafted (Appendix 5), but purposely left blank for the remaining panel meetings to enable members to discuss the future scope and direction of the review. The project plan is a living document and is open to change and developments as the review progresses.

Scrutiny Reviews should avoid duplication and have regard to previous scrutiny reviews that may impact on the focus of the review. Previous reviews include:-

- Stockport Direct: A More Responsive Service – January 2007
- Customer Contact: Street Lighting and Highways – April 2010
- Council Communications Scrutiny review – February 2011.

An initial meeting was held in August on how the public contacts the Council, during which reference was made that following a BITE review in 2010, there is currently a Scrutiny Review of council communications. For that Scrutiny Review, Members have requested that research be carried out on how and why residents communicate with the council. Given the close connection between the two Reviews, questions have been inserted into the Communications research to also help inform the Scrutiny Review about how people contact the Council.

The findings of this will be available in November 2011.

There are 24 recommendations currently being considered and implemented for the Communications Scrutiny Review, and officers will ensure there is co-ordination between the various workstreams to ensure duplication does not occur.

The benefits of undertaking this review are to assist the Council in gaining a better understanding of how the public contacts the Council and if current methods available are in line with customers' expectations and requirements. The review should identify whether there are opportunities to reduce unnecessary demand and maximise the use of cost effective channels, thereby reducing costs and contributing to the Council's savings requirement.

6.1 Suggested Activities

Key activities will be:

- 1) Consideration and discussion of written information provided by officers at Panel Meetings. Including question and answer/discussion sessions between Panel members and invitees (expert witnesses) – to be determined once the focus for the review has been agreed.
- 2) Benchmarking against other best practice organisations providers to examine services provided which may include site visits - members to determine if they feel this would add value to the work to be undertaken
- 3) Undertake evaluation of services being provided to the public - members to determine if they feel this would add value to the work to be undertaken

6.2 Recommendations

The Panel is asked to:

- Discuss and agree the aims, objectives, anticipated outcomes and project activities.
- Agree meeting dates for future Panel Meetings
- Request the lead officer to complete the project plan for the review and circulate to members.

Appendix 1

Customer Strategy - Stockport Council

A. Current Position

1. Background

The aim of this document is to set out the progress the Council has made so far under its previous Customer Services Strategy “Putting People First” and outline how it wishes to develop end to end service delivery for everyone that interacts with Stockport Council now, and in the future. It is a Customer Strategy as opposed to a Customer Services Strategy and applies to all services within the Council and not just the Customers Services function, where services are accessed.

Under the previous strategy the following progress has been achieved:

- The creation of a dedicated Customer Services function to oversee the development and management of initial access to services over the telephone and face to face
- Continued development of the Contact Centre to the point that initial telephone and email access to most of the Council's services is via the Contact Centre
- Improvements in face to face service delivery through the development of the Stockport *Direct* Centre based at Stopford House, supported by 11 Local Centres located throughout the Borough
- The creation and marketing of Stockport *Direct*, which is the one identity for the provision of services to the residents of Stockport. Existing stakeholders include the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Stockport Homes as well as the Council
- Development of a corporate Customer Charter
- Development of the Lagan Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, to the point where many of the service requests in the Contact Centre, are now processed through the system
- The development and implementation of a corporate complaints process using the Lagan CRM system
- The commission of services from other service providers e.g. Family Info Link, FLAG, (For Local Advice and Guidance) SCVS

2. Evidence and Progress

A survey of the Citizen's Panel in Sept 2003 concluded that:

- The majority of citizens that contact the Council (58%) would prefer to do so by telephone.
- 12% would contact the Council by letter
- Only 11% would prefer to contact the Council face to face (primarily for Council Tax, Benefits and Housing).
- 11% would use email

- 8% would use other means e.g. visiting a Councillor.
A survey of the same panel in Dec 2008 has indicated that this has now changed:
- Whilst the preferred means of accessing Council Services is still the telephone (59%), the second preferred means is now by internet and email (24%) and the third is by letter (7%). There has been a marked reduction (only 6%) in those who would visit Council offices
- It is important however to recognise that there are shifts in these figures when considering age and gender. e.g. a higher than average number of women prefer to use the telephone, with a higher than average percentage of 60+ preferring face to face
- The recent economic downturn has seen an increase in demand for services which may distort these figs e.g. a higher number of visitors to Council offices for Benefit purposes
- Research indicates that young people prefer on line communication which includes, accessing the internet, e-mails and social networking sites

Until recently the Council has been capturing and measuring levels of Avoidable Contact for NI 14. This indicator has now been abolished and the system that has been introduced to measure and report levels of Avoidable Contact will be adapted to capture data on new measures e.g. Preventable Demand, Pass on and Pass back. These measures will be used to inform the Council's adoption of a 'Systems Thinking' approach to service delivery, which will be centred on a better understanding of customer need and eliminating waste from the customer's perspective.

It is critically important that the Council continues to build on the good work that has already been done in providing services to the residents of Stockport. The delivery of this strategy will result in improved service delivery and end to end customer satisfaction.

In practice the Customer Strategy is very much a part of the Council's mainstream activity, and whilst this document seeks to bring together in one place the major components of the strategy, elements of it are evident in a range of Council documents such as the Council Plan, Information Management Strategy, BITE (Business Improvement, Transformation And Efficiency) Strategy and of course throughout the Council's activities, processes and culture.

B. Blue Print for New Strategy

1. Purpose of the Customer Strategy

To better understand customer needs and to design services to meet those needs.

For the purpose of this document, a Customer is defined as,
“An individual, business or other organisation to which Stockport Council provides access to Information, Advice or a service and those that are not accessing the services, to which they would be entitled to”

A broad definition of customer needs;

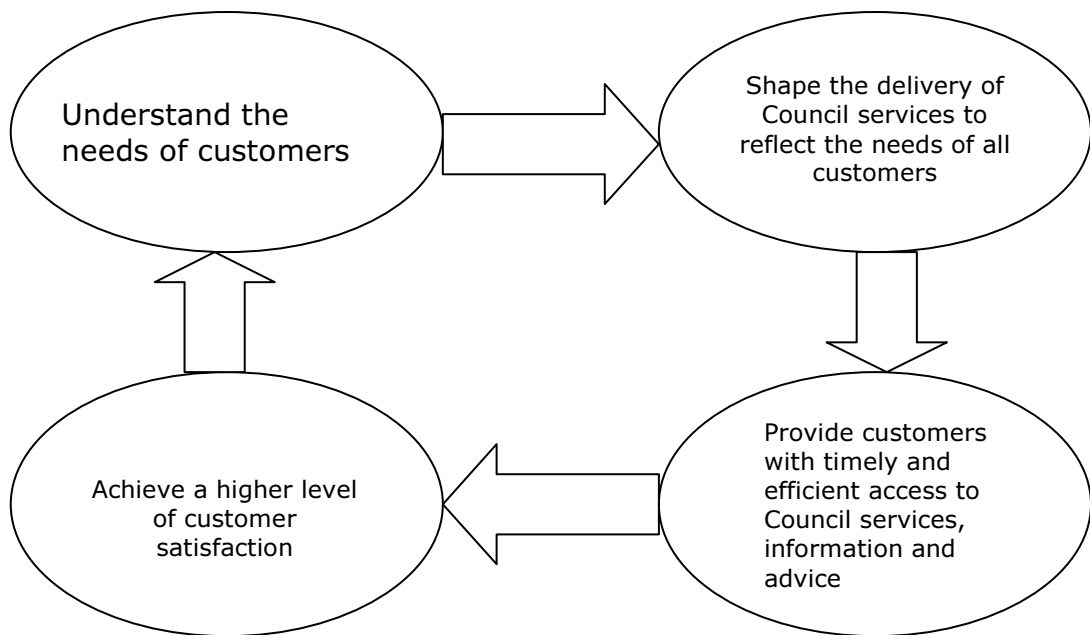
- Information and/or Advice
- Reporting & resolution of a fault
- Request a service (i.e. Social Care Needs Assessment, Application for Benefit, Application for a place at school, Make an appointment to register Birth/Death, etc.)

Strategic Objectives

Within available resources the Council will aim to:

- Understand the needs of customers and citizens
- Shape the delivery of Council services to reflect the needs of all customers
- Provide customers with timely and efficient access to Council services, information and advice
- Achieve a higher level of customer satisfaction

The objectives of the Strategy will be achieved via continuous improvement to ensure that the Council continues to engage with customers and respond to their needs, as illustrated below.



Subsidiary Objectives

- Design performance measures that help the organisation to understand and improve its service to customers
- Resolve customer enquiries following first contact
- Improve collaboration & coordination between services within the Council and Strategic Partners
- Engage customers in shaping the way that services are delivered

Indicative Measures

- Customer satisfaction – timely measurement of service performance from a customer point of view
- The percentage of enquiries resolved following first contact
- Value for money / efficiency in the cost of providing services

Further measures will be designed to help understand performance against the purpose of individual services. This will help to understand customer need and design services to better meet need.

2. Principles

There are a number of guiding principles which underpin the application and ongoing development of the Customer Strategy integrated with the Council's service/business planning process:

2.1 A Corporate and Strategic Approach

The strategy will influence how the Council delivers its services to service users and customers and reflect the priorities of the Community Strategy which are;

- A thriving Stockport
- A safer, stronger Stockport
- A healthy Stockport
- A greener Stockport

2.2 Providing Better Value for Money

The Council will seek to promote, achieve and demonstrate value for money in the way in which it delivers its services. It will aim to demonstrate that all services meet service objectives, and the expectations of customers.

The Customer Strategy will promote the elimination of waste within the systems that currently exist to provide services and reduce preventable demand. This will not only improve cost effectiveness, but will also enhance customer satisfaction.

2.3 Affordability and Funding

The Council has finite resources and inevitably has to prioritise the delivery of its services within the available budget. The evidence generated through this strategy will help the Council to make a more informed choice about how to best direct its resources to meet customer need.

Funding for the various projects within the strategy will largely be on the basis that improvements to service delivery and the savings realised. As such Invest to Save and BITE will be sources of funding for the delivery of this strategy.

2.4 Performance Management

The corporate Customer Performance Management Framework will be further developed to reflect a range of customer focussed measures and performance, based upon the measures identified within major workflows.

2.5 Understanding Customer Need

It is accepted that there is a need to develop improved intelligence and insight about our customers, their needs and expectations. It is necessary to review approaches to consultation and communication, to ensure that the Council maintains a current view of customers requirements.

2.6 Eliminating Discrimination and Promoting Equality

At the time of writing, the Council has legal duties to ensure that it eliminates discrimination and promotes equality when delivering services, in relation to race, disability and gender.

If the Equality Bill is enacted this year these duties will be extended to include religion and belief, sexual orientation, age and socio-economic status.

In line with these legal duties an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on this new Customer Service Strategy to ensure that any potential for discrimination is removed, whilst maximising opportunities to promote equality for all our customers.

The above duties also require the Council to involve and consult the above -mentioned equality groups when reviewing the consultation and communication methods it uses to better 'understand customer need'.

All front facing, customer service employees and managers are required to attend the Council's Diversity & Equality training courses. Additional bespoke training will also be provided to ensure that employees can meet the specific needs of disabled customers and those with poor English.

2.7 Improvement

The Council will seek to improve service delivery, particularly against its agreed priorities. The Customer Strategy will promote and support the achievement of continuous improvements in service delivery and the use of resources in conjunction with the Business Improvement, Transformation and Efficiency (BITE) strategy. Additionally any complaint will be considered an opportunity to improve service delivery and reduce preventable demand.

2.8 Partnership and Collaborative Working

In delivering the Customer Strategy the Council will seek to work effectively with partner organisations within the Borough. It will work with other local authorities (particularly within AGMA – Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) and with relevant regional and national agencies to 'join up' the delivery of public services where there is a demonstrable benefit to the Council and its customers.

2.9 Quality Assurance

There will be a set of minimum service delivery standards that all employees must meet and adhere to.

The strategy will promote a culture in which employees take personal responsibility for enquiries made by customers and seek to resolve them at first contact. In situations where enquiries cannot be resolved at first contact employees will work to ensure that customers are kept informed of progress in resolving the matter.

3. Governance and Delivery

- 3.1 The Strategy will be agreed by CLT (Corporate Leadership Team) and the Councils Executive. The Elected Member Champion for this Strategy will be the Executive Member for Customer Focus.
- 3.2 The Customer Strategy Board, with each Directorate being represented by at least a Service Director, will oversee the communication and delivery of the strategy ensuring that a co-ordinated approach is adopted across the Council.

4. Policies

- 4.1 There are a number of policies which will underpin the application and ongoing development of the Customer Strategy. Examples include:
- Corporate Comments, Compliments and Complaints
 - Freedom of Information
 - Data Protection
 - Diversity and Equality Policy
 - Communication Policy
 - Children & Young People Safeguarding Policy
 - Children & Young People Engagement Participation Policy
 - Adult Social Care Voice Strategy
 - Adult Social Care Putting People First Programme

5. Elements of Service Delivery

- 5.1 It is expected that all employees who interact with customers of the Council, will exercise high levels of customer care and this in turn will lead to;
- Improved customer “end to end experience” and resulting satisfaction feedback
 - Increased employee satisfaction
 - Consistency in delivery across all service areas
 - Improved credibility with residents and businesses
- 5.2 The Council will continue to be committed to both improving services, and making them more accessible. It will give residents and business users a choice of different ways to easily access a wide range of services, information and advice.
- Telephone – The Stockport *Direct* Contact Centre will continue to offer an easy way to access a whole range of Council services by telephone. Additionally, it also handles emails, texts and faxes.

- Face to Face – The Stockport *Direct* Centre will continue to provide face to face access to information and advice and all Council Services in the Town Centre. Stockport *Direct* Local Centres will continue to support the *Direct* Centre, by providing face to face access to information and advice and Council services from a single point near to their own home.
- Online – The Council is working toward a more transactional and interactive service. Accessing information and advice, reporting a problem, requesting a service and taking part in online consultation, will be a few of the facilities that will be available in the future.

5.3 When the Council commissions external providers to deliver services which have a customer focus, reference to the strategy will be included in all service specifications and providers will be expected to respond with details of how their intended service provision will align with the strategy.

6. Linkages

6.1 The Customer Strategy does not exist in isolation; it is a key part of the Council's overall policy framework and will have links to a number of other corporate policies and strategies, in particular:

- Council Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Information Management Strategy
- Human Resources Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- BITE Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Corporate Communication Strategy (One Place One Voice)

6.2 The Customer Strategy will have particular implications for other resources including ICT with regard to e.g.:-

- Development of CRM
- Development of online communications and services

Such developments will be kept under review and remain focussed upon improving customer service.

6.3 Service Strategies

- Adult Social Care Customer Care Policy
- Children & Young People Plan 2009-11
- Economic Development Strategy

C. Next Steps

The Council's Head of Customer Service will act as the Programme Manager for the implementation of the Strategy. An annual programme of activity will be developed and monitored by the Board to further enable this strategy.

Stockport Council Customer Charter



What is the Customer Charter?

The Customer Charter is our commitment to customers and residents and outlines the standards of service you can expect when dealing with Stockport Council.

You said you wanted us to:

- Respond to your enquiry promptly, accurately and in a polite manner
- Explain clearly and concisely
- Refer you to someone who can help if we are unable to assist you
- Let you know what will happen next with your enquiry
- Offer services that are easy to access in a variety of different ways
- Follow up on comments and complaints and learn from them

You can help us by:

- Telling us if you have any difficulty accessing our services
- Advising us if you have any special requirements
- Telling us about any relevant changes in your circumstances as soon as you can
- Asking us to explain anything you are unsure of
- Giving us all the information we need to help you
- Being considerate and polite to our employees and other people using our services

Measuring our Performance

We receive feedback from:

- Customer Surveys
- Customer Consultation & Focus Groups
- Individual Feedback

Information on the performance of Council services can be found on the Council website.



For more information visit: www.stockport.gov.uk/customercharter

Appendix 3

How customers contact us.	Overall volumes 2010-11	Service Volumes	Reasons why	Local cost per transaction	National cost per transaction
Contact Centre	647,874	27,811	Adult Social Care	To be discussed at meeting	£3.21 (Source: SOCITM Insight, Dec 2009).
		59,812	Benefits		
		30,352	Children's Services		
		90,034	Council Tax		
		11,465	Elections		
		102,054	Refuse and Recycling		
		9,694	Street lighting		
		2,720	Grounds Maintenance		
		11,205	Traffic Services		
		4,880	Parks and Recreation		
		143	Anti Social Behaviour		
		18,606	Highways		
		1,313	"Getting it Right"		
		1,628	Housing Standards		
		48,838	Libraries, Advice and Information		
		451	Members Enquiries		
		9,036	Pest Control		
		19,269	Registration Services		
		68,767	Housing Repairs		
		23,228	Telephone payments		
		125,433	Switchboard Services in the Contact Centre – 30% Individual numbers – 30% Stockport Homes – 9% Others - 31%		

Direct Centre, Fred Perry House	38,320 (April - August '11)	19,098	Reception resolved	To be discussed at meeting	£8.23 (Source: SOCITM Insight, Dec 2009).
		2,408	Visitors		
		1,306	Welfare Rights		
		1,388	Taxi Licensing		
		160	Interpreting Service		
		463	Stockport Advice drop in		
		56	Disability Services		
		45	Liability Court		
		9,709	Revs and Bens		
		1,976	Client Finance		
		1,564	CAB		
		147	Asylum Team		
Local Centres	197,845	127,515	Libraries and information Top 3 enquiries 1. Stock enquiries 2. PC enquiries 3. General information	Not available	
		70,330	Referrals for advice (includes onward referrals) Top 3 enquiries 1. Housing Advice 2. Housing and Council Tax Benefit 3. Disability and Sickness Benefit		
Council web Site	752,278 1,694,368 7,276,023		Unique visits Total visits Total page views Top 3 demands 1. A-Z 2. Job vacancies	Not available	

My Care My Choice (Adult Social Care)	30,432 56,127 518,00		3. Refuse collection days Unique visits Total visits Total page views Top 3 demands 1. Living at home 2. Self assessment 3. Health recovery and well being		
e-forms and emails rec'd in Contact Centre	48,348	33,844 – emails 14,504 – e-forms.	Stockport Direct	To be discussed at meeting	£0.39 (Source: SOCITM Insight, Dec 2009).
		10,782	Council Tax		
		686	Pest Control		
		289	Getting it Right		
		4,633	Housing Repairs		
Social media i.e. Twitter, Stockport Looking Local, Facebook, YouTube		224,771 2,387 429 15,297 435	Looking Local Twitter Face book You tube Linked in	Not available	
Incoming mail	110,830			Not available	

Appendix 4

Scoping report agreed at CRMG Scrutiny Committee 20 September

Selected topic: How the public contact the Council

1. Background to the selection of this topic

The Council's Business Improvement, Transformation and Efficiency (BITE) strategy aims to support the delivery of efficiency savings and improvements in service delivery.

The "Corporate and Support" strand of the Council's transformation programme aims to ensure that the financial and business processes which underpin the Council's activities are designed, managed and delivered in the most efficient and effective manner to support the Council as a whole, single organisation. A number of transformation projects have been grouped together under two main headings "Corporate design of Corporate and Support Services" and "Customer Experience". "Customer Experience" includes developing customer services that put the customer firmly at the heart of everything the Council does – looking at how the public contact the council and how the Council communicates and interacts with the Public. Furthermore, the Council's overarching Customer Strategy has recently been reviewed and revised.

At the meeting of the Corporate, Resource, Management and Governance Scrutiny Panel held on 19th July 2011, Members considered how scrutiny activity could align with the Council's transformation projects and agreed to undertake a scrutiny review on "How the public contact the Council".

2. What would be the scope of a Scrutiny Review of this topic?

The aims of the review could include:

- identify and evaluate the different methods of contacting the Council, and consider whether there are any gaps in current provision or improvements that could be made.
- understand the different reasons that customers contact the Council.
- understand external factors that may influence the demand for access to services e.g. Welfare Reform Bill, and the introduction of the Universal Tax Credit.
- benchmark against other organisations to identify best practice and assess current practice in Stockport Council against recognised good practice. This could involve site visits.
- recommend improvements to the means by which the public can contact the Council, thereby improving the customer experience.
- Identify opportunities for reducing unnecessary demand and maximising the use of cost effective channels

3. What are the benefits of doing this Scrutiny Review?

To assist the Council in gaining a better understanding of how the public contacts the Council and if current methods available are in line with customers' expectations and requirements. To identify whether there are opportunities to reduce unnecessary demand and maximise the use of cost effective channels, thereby reducing costs and contributing to the Council's savings requirement.

4. Are there reasons for not doing this Scrutiny Review at this time?

No, the review will help to inform key elements of the Council's Transformation programme.

5. Timescales

1. The first panel Meeting is scheduled to be held on 28th September. Cllr Daniel Hawthorne (Chair), Cllr Ben Alexander, Cllr Philip Harding, Cllr Anthony O'Neill and Cllr Suzanne Wyatt will form the panel.

At the first panel meeting officers will provide the panel with information on the ways in which the public currently contact the Council with supporting data on :-

- Facts & Figures (volumes – calls / emails / texts / IVR tele-payments / visits / referrals etc)
- Contact Centre
- The Stockport Direct Centre at Fred Perry House
- Stockport Direct Local Centres (Information, referrals & advice)
- Post/mail
- Web / Social Media / Twitter
- Services that are not accessed via the Contact Centre

and will provide an overview of the different reasons why the public contact the Council

2. The focus and timescales for the review need to be determined at the first Panel meeting (date to be confirmed) once members have received the baseline information outlined above.

Appendix 5

Date	Meeting/ Event	Purpose of activities at meeting	Attendees	Supporting action or information required	Officer responsible
Wednesday 28 th September 2011	Panel Meeting 1	<p>Panel Meeting One: Setting the Scene – baseline information and Agreeing Terms of Reference</p> <p>Purpose: To receive background information on the methods and reasons why the public contact the Council To determine the focus for the review To agree the timescale and dates of future meetings</p> <p>Outline Project Plan to be completed after the first panel meeting.</p>	<p>Panel Members</p> <p>Corporate Policy Officer</p> <p>Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Corporate and Support Services Heather Edwards Adrian Moores</p>	<p>Note 1 – Background to Customer experience and current position in Stockport</p> <p>Project initiation document – initial scope and terms of reference</p>	<p>Adrian Moores, Head of Customer Services</p> <p>Corporate Policy Officer</p>
	Panel Meeting 2				