
Report to: Council

Date of Meeting: 11 August, 2016

Subject: Putting Customers First - Local Service Provision

Report by: Chief Executive & Head of Strategy & Customer Services

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to Council proposals from the Administration to undertake a community consultation on the development of more responsive, effective and accessible services, particularly at locality level.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a) notes the Administration's vision to improve services and more effectively achieve priority outcomes;
- b) agrees to undertake community consultation as set out at section 5 of this report;
- c) agrees not to proceed with certain previous decisions of Council as set out at section 6 of this report; and
- d) notes that a report outlining the results of the proposed consultation and bringing forward specific proposals to implement the vision will be brought back to the Council meeting in November of this year.

- 2.2 With reference to 2.1(c) above, as agreeing this recommendation would withdraw/alter Council decisions which have been taken within the previous six months, under the Council's Standing Orders this can only be considered if the Provost is satisfied that circumstances have changed in a relevant way. The Provost has been consulted and has stated that he is of the view that with the resignation of the former Administration in May and the appointment of the new Administration in June circumstances have changed in a relevant way.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council needs to ensure that its services and the ways in which they are delivered are fit for purpose so that the organisation collectively is:

- effectively meeting declared priority outcomes for individuals, communities and the area more widely; and
- achieving excellent levels of service performance and service user satisfaction.

3.2 Feedback from various service user and community consultations has highlighted two key areas where the Council (and its Alliance partners) can fall down in terms of meeting service user expectations. These areas are:

- 1) *service design not being customer focussed enough* - Council services can be designed around service processes rather than around the customer. As a result, services can be focussed on a single issue and work in silos which can lead to missed opportunities to maximise the effectiveness of the Council's collective offering. Related to this, bureaucracy and lack of co-operation between services can be barriers to improving services for customers. Similarly, ineffective initial points of contact can be barriers to a positive service user experience and to achieving positive outcomes for service users.
- 2) *lack of locally based provision and access to services* – service users expect services to be easily accessible. While existing local access points provide some basic functions, most other services and supports (particularly for vulnerable people) are only available centrally. This can create barriers between the public sector and its service users and be a deterrent to engagement, particularly for those individuals who might most benefit from support and in those areas where there are the greatest socio-economic inequalities.

3.3 The next sections of this report set out the Administration's vision to address these two related issues, to improve services and to achieve priority outcomes more effectively.

4.0 Vision – A Customer First Culture & Approach

4.1 To achieve:

- better service performance and improved customer satisfaction
- enhanced service user and community relationships; and
- more effective service contributions to meeting outcomes

it is proposed that an organisational approach which promotes a 'Customer First' ethos is pursued.

4.2 This would mean:

- removing cultural silos and barriers and service protectionism so that services act consistently as part of a single organisation
- having a collective, corporate (and multi-agency) outlook and approach to service design and delivery
- focusing on fewer, more integrated processes and avoiding

- having easier access to services through enhanced local presence in communities.
- 4.3 The approach would put the customer first and develop services around service users and communities.
- 4.4 In operational terms, this approach envisages an integrated public sector presence in various localities where Council, and potentially other public services, could offer a single point of access for service users which could offer:
- a) information, advice and sign-posting
 - b) general customer service
 - c) support for applying for certain services
 - d) direct access to certain services
 - e) single point of contact/link person to guide a service user and co-ordinate the input of various services
 - f) facilitation of access to specialist workers
 - g) a system of triage to assess the service user's issue
 - h) direct support by specific workers
 - i) opportunities for wider community development.
- 4.5 It is proposed that a local service offering should be available directly in the following communities:
- Alloa (town centre and Alloa South & East)
 - Sauchie
 - Tullibody
 - Menstrie
 - Alva
 - Tillicoultry
 - Dollar
 - Clackmannan
- with other areas being served on an outreach basis.
- 4.6 One size will not fit all and feedback from community and partner consultation will inform provision in each locality.
- 4.7 It is considered that some existing Community Access Points could be developed to provide bases for this enhanced local offering and also that other available localities could also be used. It may be that in some areas where existing premises may not be suitable for this enhanced offering, more appropriate alternative premises in the locality would be sought.
- 5.0 Consulting With Service Users**
- 5.1 It is proposed that a public consultation on the vision and approach is undertaken between August and October 2016. The purpose of the consultation will be to seek views on the core model proposed, and to understand if there are any additional requirements communities would like to

see incorporated into a new way of working.

5.2 Opportunities for written feedback will be available; however, given the intended strong customer-centred ethos and approach there will also be a focus on face to face communication. The consultation exercise therefore will consist of the following approach:

- online using the CitizenSpace consultation tool;
- suggestion boxes in each CAP;
- public meetings in each of the communities set out at paragraph 4.5 led by local members from the Administration supported by officers
- drop-in sessions in each of the communities set out at paragraph 4.5, with local members and officers on hand to answer questions or receive feedback;
- staff and partner engagement
- any additional consultations as identified by the Equalities Impact Assessment.

5.3 As mentioned above, the consultation exercise will run from August to October 2016, with key milestone dates as follows:

- Public Consultation Opens online/suggestions boxes – 12 August
- Drop-in Sessions – August/September
- Public Meetings – September
- Public Consultation Closes – 17 October
- Consultation Outcome Report to Council - 10 November.

5.4 An important element of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 is that it builds on the basic principles of the Christie review, namely, to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use. The proposed public consultation is entirely consistent with that ethos.

5.5 The Act also introduces the concept of Locality Plans ‘for smaller geographies areas where there are ‘significantly poorer outcomes’ than elsewhere in the local authority area, or in Scotland generally’. These plans must be prepared and published, with progress reported and published annually. It would be possible to base Locality Planning under the Act around the geographies outlined at paragraph 4.5 and it is intended that this can also be tested as part of the consultation process.

6.0 Related Matters

2016-17 Budget

6.1 Certain decisions which Council took in February, 2016, at its special budget meeting are not consistent with the new Administration’s ambitions as set out in this paper. The Administration, therefore, wishes, pending the outcome of the consultation exercise, not to proceed with the following previous Council decisions:

- a) the cluster model framework set out at paragraphs 3.8-3.10 of the report to Council on the General Services and HRA & Capital Budget 2016-17;
- b) the associated Community Investment Strategy which set out at Appendix A to the same report
- c) those specific elements of the approved capital budget relating to that framework, namely:
 - A13 – Sauchie Hall Locality Hub - £81,000
 - A25 – Clackmannan Primary School/Locality Hub - locality hub component of £110,000 (less any costs associated with remodelling the identified hub space for educational use)
 - A33 – Alva Community Campus/Locality Hub - locality hub element of £200,000 (less any costs associated with remodelling the identified hub space for educational use)

6.2 Further to consideration of the results of the consultation exercise proposed in this report, revised proposals will come back to Council in November.

Workforce Development

6.3 To achieve the vision and a realigned customer service approach will require changed organisational ethos and culture. This needs to be underpinned by an active workforce and skills development programme so that:

- officer roles and activities are in keeping with the proposed approach; and
- there is a clear managerial focus on outcomes.

6.4 In tandem with the public consultation exercise set out earlier in this paper, therefore, a staff engagement exercise will be undertaken as part of wider ongoing engagement as part of the Workforce Strategy to consider the workforce development requirements of future proposals. Feedback on that engagement exercise will also be reported back to Council in November.

7.0 Sustainability Implications – N/A

8.0 Resource Implications

Financial Details

8.1 The recommendations in this paper could have implications for the capital budget in that there may be a reprioritisation of the budget agreed in February. Accordingly, alternative proposals may come forward further to the consultation exercise.

Intended capital expenditure of £391k will be put on hold in respect of the previous locality hub proposals set out at paragraph 6.1(c) of this report.

The costs of consultation are minimal and will be managed within existing operational budgets.

Staffing

8.2 There are no specific and direct implications for the Council's establishment as a result of the recommendations in this report.

9.0 Exempt Reports

9.1 Is this report exempt? No

10.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities

The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

11.0 Equalities Impact - N/A

12.0 Legality

12.1 In adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers.

The Community Empowerment Act 2015 places duties on the Council and other statutory agencies to facilitate greater involvement of communities in decisions which affect them and in enhanced participation in decision-making to improve local outcomes. The proposals in this report sit comfortably with these duties and will contribute to the Council's statutory responsibilities.

13.0 Appendices - none

14.0 Background Papers

General Services and HRA Revenue & Capital Budget 2016-17 – Report to Council of 23, February, 2016

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