

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet:

Directorate and Service Area:

Environment and Economy: Oxfordshire Customer Services

What is being assessed:

Customer Service Centre – self service (16EE17)

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Graham Shaw

Date of assessment:

December 2014

Summary of judgement:

The Customer Service Centre proposes to redesign all front end to end to end services that it delivers so that they follow a Digital First approach. The default approach for transactions with the public will be through the public website. Services will be redesigned along the Council's Digital Principles where it is appropriate to do so. Customers who might have difficulty using services in this way will be able to contact the Customer Service Centre for assistance.

Some impacts on service users, council services and providers have been identified. Specific impacts on the following characteristics have been identified: rural, deprivation, older people, disabilities and race. Mitigation actions are in place.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

The Council assess the impact of any proposed budget changes on groups and communities as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and people living in areas of deprivation or in rural parts of the county. We will be undertaking this assessment as part of the consultation exercise and finalising it before any decision is made at Council. We would welcome any representations you wish to make as to the likely impact of this proposal and any possible mitigation measures we could take. Details on how to contact us are on our website:

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Social Value

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934¹ might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

Context / Background:

The Customer Service Centre proposes to redesign all front end and end to end services that it delivers so that they follow a Digital First approach. This will mean that customers are encouraged to self-serve using the public website as a default approach, with an assisted digital offering (Customer Service Advisors using the public website to complete the transaction on behalf of the customer) available for those people not able to access online services. In effect this means 'Do it online or call us and we will do it online for you'. This approach will include the removal of all paper application forms from Customer Service Centre processes and a move away from accepting cheques, postal orders and cash for payments.

Proposals:

The proposal is well developed with the first phase of transformation underway within the Customer Service Centre. Services that will be looked at during 2014/15 include the front door for Adult Social Care, Carers Oxfordshire, the Blue Badge Scheme and improvements to the online environmental reporting tool (Fix my Street). Throughout 2015/16 the other service areas within the Customer Service Centre (Children and Families, School and Social Care Transport and the Environmental team) will be analysed and have their processes re-engineered so that they are fully available online, with a supported offering available for those people who may be digitally excluded.

¹¹ [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

Evidence / Intelligence:

The success of Government Digital Service (lead on the digital transformation of government) and the redesign of the gov.uk website have proven that transforming services and moving to a Digital First approach, with an Assisted Digital (help to get online) offering, has the potential to improve the experience of transacting with the Public Sector for customers whilst also releasing savings.

Alternatives considered / rejected:

Other options that were considered and rejected included the further development of a Digital Post Room for scanning paper applications and supporting documents. The technology costs involved in this were prohibitive and the staff costs associated with processing so much paper could be better utilised elsewhere.

Other options considered included extending the opening hours of the Customer Service Centre (increased cost of operation) and telephone only services (higher cost per transaction).

A Digital First approach was considered the better option as it follows best practice guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Government Digital Services (GDS).

The transaction costs to the Council greatly reduce when customers are encouraged to self-serve and transact digitally.

Impact Assessment:**Impact on Individuals and Communities:****Rural Communities**

Internet availability - Oxfordshire is a rural county and there are areas that either do not have broadband or have poor speeds that mean that people are reluctant to transact online.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

The Better Broadband programme will see internet speeds and availability in rural areas improve. This will mean that more people in rural communities will have access to online services and will be able to engage with the Council through its website.

Areas of Deprivation, Older People, Disabilities, Race

Digital exclusion - there is a mitigated risk that some people will either not be able to access services online due to lack of digital infrastructure or for reasons of safeguarding or incapacity.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

Whilst transacting with the Council through the public website will be the default approach for all services delivered by the Customer Service Centre, there will also be an Assisted Digital offering available. Customers will be able to contact the

Customer Service Centre on one of a number of themed telephone numbers (as is currently the case) and a Customer Service Adviser will either be able to complete the transaction online for them (using the same website based system) or support the customer through completing the transaction online themselves. This approach will mean that there is support available for those people who are digitally excluded and will also help to increase digital literacy amongst those people who might lack the confidence to transact online with the Council.

Children & young adults

Where it is appropriate for Children & Young Adults to interact with the Council the approach of online first should be much easier to achieve due to the fact that a lot of young people already interact digitally as their preferred option. By making Council services fully available online it should be possible to engage with more young people who will see this as the way to transact with the Council as they get older.

Religion & belief, Sex, Gender reassignment, Sexual orientation, Pregnancy & maternity, Marriage & civil partnership

No impact

Impact on Staff:

The full impact on staff will not be identified until detailed service transformation plans have been developed and a greater level of self-service implemented.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

As far as practicable staff impacts will be managed through natural wastage.

Impact on other Council services:

Impact of the proposal on other council services

The redesign of the public facing element of services that the Customer Service Centre is commissioned to deliver on behalf of other parts of the Council could require some changes to the 'back office' business processes that are currently in place to facilitate a greater online presence and to improve the customer experience.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

The Customer Service Centre service redesign will be carried out in conjunction with the commissioning service, with the various interdependencies mapped out and links into other transformation work streams such as those being delivered by ASIP and the Major Programmes team within Environment & Economy Directorate.

Impact on providers:

Impact on providers (local SMEs and voluntary, community & faith sector)

The Digital First approach will extend to all customers, including businesses and other sectors of the community. Services will be redesigned along the Council's Digital Principles where it is appropriate to do so.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

No additional mitigation is being put in place for this.

Social Value

If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?

N/A

How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?

N/A

Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
<i>Review as appropriate</i>	<i>6 months</i>	<i>Graham Shaw</i>

Monitoring and review:

Person responsible for assessment: Graham Shaw

Version	Date	Notes (eg Initial draft, amended following consultation)
1	December 2014	Initial draft