

To: POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: PROGRESS REPORT ON CUSTOMER FIRST AND OTHER RELATED NATIONAL AND LOCAL PROJECTS
From: HEAD OF E-GOVERNMENT & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 21 February 2008	Ref: IG/PT	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on progress to date with Customer First, Shared Services, eCare and other related national and local projects.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is making significant progress in the implementation of a number of customer focussed programmes of work at both a national and a local level. As reported to Committee previously these are grouped under three main headings:

- **Customer First:** intended to deliver efficient and effective core services through a variety of communication channels, ensuring wherever possible that enquiries are dealt with at the first point of contact. In addition Customer First is seeking to put in place a national infrastructure which will allow Local Authorities to share information securely and take advantage of shared technologies.
- **Shared Services:** adopting shared services models is expected to play a significant role in the delivery of long term financial savings.
- **eCare:** the technical framework being developed within this programme enables secure data sharing across agencies like Health, Police and Local Authorities. This means professionals like doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers and the criminal justice system can have access to the same information and therefore join up their services in areas like child protection, care of the elderly etc.

- 2.2 Progress on these programmes of work is being driven by the Customer Service Development Working Group. This corporate working group is chaired by the Head of E-Government & Service Development, with representation from all Services at senior officer level.

3. Key Highlights

3.1 Customer First

- 3.1.1. **Customer Services Strategy:** The draft Customer Services Strategy was approved by Committee in January 2008. The strategy is currently undergoing an equalities impact assessment and will then be released for both internal and external consultation from the 3rd March till the 23rd of May.

- 3.1.2. **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** The required hardware and associated infrastructure has been ordered and will be installed (and commissioned) by mid-February. Lagan, the suppliers of the system, are currently

delivering training through Business Workshops and Skills Transfer sessions, in order to ensure that in-house staff can support the CRM system in the longer term. CRM technology will allow us to measure the 'end to end' service we deliver to our customers and will ultimately replace the current eNquiry system.

The framework agreement now in place allows the Council to benefit from the implementations being undertaken by the four 'early adopters': West Lothian, Inverclyde, Scottish Borders and Aberdeen City. All applications developed within this framework will be shared with participating authorities cutting both costs and implementation timescales for all. The first application for NLC, Corporate Compliments/Complaints, is on schedule for a planned 'go live' date of April '08.

- 3.1.3. **Northline Customer Contact Centre (CCC):** The Housing & Property repairs team located within the CCC have had significantly increased call volumes to handle due to issues with the introduction of new working practices by MPC, our PPP partner. The team were experiencing high rates of abandoned calls and significant waiting times resulting in poor customer service.

The First Stop Shop Manager has taken a key role in assisting this team with identifying and resolving issues around the new business processes and has succeeded in significantly reducing the abandoned call rates and waiting times. In addition, staff have been temporarily transferred into this team from the main CCC staff complement to deal with the additional volumes.

Going forward it is intended that the practice of locating teams in the CCC managed directly by services should be ended, and that all staff delivering front line customer services from the Customer Contact Centre will be managed within the CCC management structure.

The expansion of the 'Keep Well' initiative, approved by Committee in November 2007, is well underway and the number of GP surgeries covered continues to expand. 'Keep Well' is a health improvement program targeted at deprived communities. It seeks to prevent serious ill health by pro-actively targeting those most at risk (i.e. those in the 45-64 age range) and offering basic health checks. Our CCC are making calls to individuals in the targeted age range and arranging appointments for Health Checks with their GPs. The project is fully funded by NHS Lanarkshire.

- 3.1.4. **Motherwell First Stop Shop Review:** The pilot project to review the customer facing arrangements in Brandon Parade, where currently there are three public reception areas (First Stop Shop, Housing & Social Work and Consumer and Trading Standards) is now complete. Analysis of "footfall" and demand concluded that a single reception area and shared support facilities would improve customer service standards and offer opportunities for efficiency savings; however the physical constraints of the leased buildings currently occupied make streamlining the services prohibitively expensive. The pilot did suggest that the Consumer & Trading Standards staff and enquiries could be relocated to the First Stop, which would save the lease costs of the building currently occupied. This option is currently under discussion with the Head of Protective Services.

- 3.1.5. **Northweb – the Council web site:** A project team has been created to take forward the redevelopment of the Council web site and has been meeting on a regular basis to agree the web-site specification and functional priorities. This work is scheduled for completion by the end of February with a tender to follow for the procurement of an Enterprise Content Management system to underpin the new site. Quotes have already been received for the design of the site and this work has been awarded to a Glasgow based company – Screenmedia.

The project team are also working on the creation of a number of standards and policies which require to be defined and implemented prior to the release of the new web site – these include policies on the use of blogs, discussion forums etc as well

as defining the mandatory skill sets for the staff within Council Services who will look after web site content.

- 3.1.6. **Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRMS):** The functional specification for the corporate EDRMS is complete. The tender procedure for a corporate EDRMS had been put on hold awaiting the outcome of the award of the tender for the Scottish Government's On-line Planning Information System – a module within the national e-planning project. The outcome of this national tender has been the selection of the IDOX product as the EDRMS to be used for managing planning applications. The Council's EDRMS team will now undertake a review of both the IDOX application and the Comino system already in use within Revenues and Benefits to assess which of these represents the most appropriate corporate solution for the Council as a whole.
- 3.1.7. **Accredited Training Qualification for Customer Services Professionals:** The Improvement Service is finalising the training and workshop material for the accredited learning and development toolkit for customer services professionals. The Customer Contact Centre will be the pilot area for the qualification and roles and responsibilities have been agreed between Corporate Human Resources and line managers.

Customer Services training (titled 'Enthuse') for staff within the First Stop Shops and Customer Contact Centre was delivered to front line staff in December. 'Enthuse' focused on customer care standards, staff motivation and team work. Feedback highlighted that Customer Service Assistants had found the training both rewarding and beneficial.

3.2 Shared Services

- 3.2.1. **Glasgow and Edinburgh Pathfinders:** These Councils are now moving in to the second phase of their pathfinder projects and have been awarded funding from the Improvement Service to take this forward. We will continue to monitor progress in these areas to assess the relevance to North Lanarkshire Council's ongoing work.
- 3.2.2. **Clyde Valley:** Following the first meeting of the Joint Committee in October 07, joint working arrangements are progressing well. First Aid training has now been provided to 373 staff from throughout the Clyde Valley, with locations for training now provided in North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire. Staff can access any of these venues and no longer have to wait more than a few weeks for a training date.

All authorities have now adopted the online Diversity module and are meeting to discuss next steps in terms of tackling the equalities training agenda. Arrangements for the provision of vocational qualifications are being considered and the group is also focusing on the provision of Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) courses (NLC is an ILM approved centre).

Since this project began, authorities have saved approximately £45,000 across the Clyde Valley by sharing good practice and streamlining procedures.

Future projects will include social care training and senior management development.

- 3.2.3. **Scotland Excel:** The countdown is now on to the formal launch of Scotland Excel on 1 April 2008. Work has been ongoing during 2007 to establish Scotland Excel as the centre of procurement expertise for local authorities in Scotland. The new organisation will incorporate the staff and many of the existing functions carried out by the Authorities Buying Consortium (abc), and its main office will remain in Paisley. The team will work closely with the Scotland Excel staff based in new regional offices in Edinburgh, Inverness and Aberdeen.

Scotland Excel aims to achieve best value in local government procurement by securing significant reductions through increased collaboration, improved performance and enhanced relationships with our suppliers. Membership of Scotland Excel is now available to all 32 Scottish councils, creating a national local government strategic procurement partnership. North Lanarkshire Council's membership was approved by Committee in December 2007. The Scotland Excel web site has now been launched and further information can be found at the following link: www.scotland-excel.org.uk

3.2.4. **e-Planning:** the Council is continuing to work with the Scottish Government's team on the implementation of a number of projects to deliver on line access to planning services. The first two workstreams to deliver the On line Applications and Appeals (OAA) system and also the On Line Planning Information System (OPIS) are well underway with suppliers appointed for both. Anticipated go live dates from the Scottish Government team are August and September '08 respectively; however there are concerns from participating Councils that these dates are ambitious bearing in mind the work still to be done. Following the outcome of the Spending Review, other workstreams which had been 'on hold' have now restarted. These are to deliver On Line Local Plans, e-Consultation and Expert Systems.

3.2.5. **Shared Recruitment and Public Information Notices Advertising:** The implementation date for the Council's Local Recruitment system has moved to March 2008 and we are continuing to work with the providers of the National Recruitment Portal regarding usage of their 'i-grasp' system.

3.3 e-Care

3.3.1. The Council continues to make excellent progress in the sharing of information and the development of integrated processes and procedures within the Lanarkshire Data Sharing Partnership. Recent highlights include:

- On 1st November 2007 single shared assessment was expanded to cover adults with Learning Disabilities, Substance Misuse and Mental Health issues within North Lanarkshire. A date has yet to be agreed for a similar expansion within South Lanarkshire.
- Expansion will commence of Child Protection Messaging into A&E and Children's Wards at Wishaw Hospital (February 2008) and at Hairmyres and Monklands Hospitals (April 2008).
- On-going assistance is being provided to a number of other Data Sharing Partnerships in the implementation of child protection messaging.
- Discussions are underway with the Scottish Executives Technology Transformation Division (who now oversee both e-Care and Customer First) to investigate our contribution to the development of the national data store.

3.4 Business Change

3.4.1. The business change team has been expanded and a number of projects are currently underway. Business processes are being reviewed in the following service areas: Environmental Services (Clerical & Administrative Services), Finance Admin Services Team, Planning (to assess the impact of e-Planning), the Out Of Hours Service in the Customer Contact Centre and Housing Repairs (to assess the impact of the new MPC arrangements). In addition, a number of reviews have been completed and improvement projects agreed. These are currently underway within Home Care Services, Facilities Booking and Planning & Building Control Applications.

3.4.2. The Performance Improvement Group and the Business Change team are working closely to agree the criteria for initiating business reviews. A range of criteria are currently being examined including: performance metrics, service improvement plans and customer service triggers e.g. service failures identified through the Customer Contact Centre, the First Stop Shops or the web site. The aim is to

ensure that business change reviews are aligned with the priorities of the Service & People First initiative.

4. **Moving Forward**

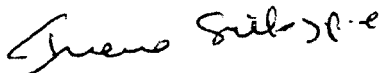
4.1 A number of initiatives are being progressed in the coming months. These include:

- Consulting with our customers on the Customer Services Strategy;
- Developing a core customer services function managing the Customer Contact Centre, the First Stop Shops and the delivery of services via the Web site, with robust operating models for each;
- Developing our corporate customer service/care standards and training our customer facing staff across the Council to deliver them;
- Ongoing rollout of enabling technologies such as the Customer Relationship Management system;
- Procurement of a new Enterprise Content Management System to underpin the redevelopment of the web site; and
- Working with colleagues in Corporate Communications and all Services across the Council to implement new processes, procedures and standards for the ongoing maintenance of our web site content, recognising the web as a key communication channel for the council going forward.

5. **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that the committee:-

- Notes the progress made to date.



Head of E-Government & Service Development