

## **NOTE OF THE SINGLE FRONT OFFICE MEETING – THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Members Present: Councillors Alistair Morwood (Chair), John Dalton, Matthew Lynch, Mick Muncaster and Debra Platt**

**Officers Present: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Customer and Advice Services), Asim Khan (Head of Customer and ICT Services), Alison Wilding (Customer Services Manager – Digital and Ancillary Services), Helen Sutton (Customer Services Manager – Direct Service), Johnathan Barclay (Software Engineer) and Jane Norris (Customer Service Team Leader) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)**

### **Core Infrastructure:**

The Group were informed that the Council have undertaken a huge investment to underpin one of the authority's key aspirations to engage digitally with its residents. There will be a revamp of the Microsoft Agreement this year with the option of implementing Office 365, a cloud based version, initially intended to be rolled out to members. Implementation of the system will be rolled out to staff at a later date as this will be a more complicated process to manage. Many of the Council's current platforms, for example, Revenues and Benefits and Planning rely on other external systems or third party suppliers which do not update as efficiently as Microsoft updates.

### **Website:**

Members were shown a prototype of the Council's new website that would be more icons driven, user friendly and geared around smart technology use. The main page which is currently article paged will lose its current top banner format and be replaced with large key icons for those top key services that residents are being encouraged to access online. There will be a planned migration of online services that can be accessed on the front page. The Council currently received google analytics that monitors what services residents are trying to access on our website and it is this information that drives what icons are needed at this first stage.

Members commented that when using current systems on a smart phone, the icons are too small; making it extremely difficult to access services in this way and there was a general acceptance that some smart phones on the market at present were too restrictive on this front. It was hoped that by improving the design and size of the icons would help and promote greater use of this media.

### **MyAccount:**

The group received a demonstration of the MyAccount system from beginning, what the residents see and input, right through to the various stages of the request and how they are processed by officers. The example shown was the reporting of a litter bin that needed to be emptied.

At the initial log on stage, a case history of anything that the resident has reported is provided and details what progress has been made against each one. Notes are added by officers under the case details. The system defaults to the area in which the resident is registered/lives so the options available are tailored to the area. When residents contact the

Council through the call centre, this customer service staff have a wider range of icons that they can access.

Once the option to empty a bin is selected, a plan of the area is displayed and the user is able to click on the bin and the maintenance schedule for that asset is displayed. If the bin is due to be emptied, the report stops there and is signed off as completed. The complaint is noted but the work will be completed on the 'said' scheduled date. If the bin is not due to be emptied the request will be directed to the appropriate service for action.

Members queried what would happen if the scheduled date was four days away and if such reports were monitored in case the schedule for emptying the bin needed to be changed. They also felt that the message conveyed to the resident at this point needed to better reflect the action that would be taken, so they did not just get the impression that they were being ignored. Assurances were given that the information received would be monitored and analysed that would help to shape the service by amending maintenance schedules to better meet demand and improve services. This process has been developed over the past 12 months and the system now runs data analysis reports that can be monitored on a regular basis and used to develop the service.

at the start of the project, the Council had to individually upload and flag over 9000 assets so that they could be analysed. Members queried how residents could report those assets that were missing on the system and how and when these would be added. It was explained that any member of the public could request for an asset to be added through the general enquiries tab that would be picked up by the GIS team for tagging, in addition, all Street Scene Operatives had received training on how to update the assets records individually.

All requests are forwarded to the Team Leader who will allocate the job to a member of their team. All the requests are logged and displayed at a central point that the whole team has access to, this is so that if an officer is already in the nearby vicinity, they can allocate the job to themselves for greater response.

Once a job is completed, the officer will update the job status and provide details of the action taken. The system then generates and sends an email updating progress to the MyAccount user. The Group received a demonstration on the internal system for managing calls in the back office and the MyWork system that the officers use to action the requests. The system also provides information on all the outstanding jobs for each day, anything that has not been carried out on a team's schedule for that time period is automatically carried over to the overdue schedule.

All relevant staff have been allocated with iPads so that they can access the requests out of the office and provide updates immediately as they are actioned. This in turn promotes greater efficiency and use of the system. The system is now also more transparent as all officer notes are displayed. This is particularly advantageous when residents can see that the asset is not ours, for example, the responsibility of Lancashire County Council.

The Group discussed some possible improvements to the service that included, better detailed information on action taken for those jobs that are contracted out, for example, tree cutting, and for those customers who try to report jobs that have already been previously reported and action is in progress.

The Group were also shown the MyChorley (Parish) version of the system that displays a raft of information specific to the parish area like scheduled maintenance lists, Council Tax bands, refuse collection rounds, Councillor's details and play area locations. The user can tick what service they are interested in and a filtering system has been developed so that the users device is not overloaded or take up too much memory. The Planning Weekly List is now available and includes plans and links through the planning system/portal for more information. Members were informed that the authority was working on migrating passwords so that systems could be better tied together.

**Members thought that it would be a good idea to invite an officer from Streetscene Services to talk to them about their use of the system.**

E-Citizen:

The system was being further developed by implementing online services for certain services for example Revenue and Benefits customers that would help to drive down costs and provide greater efficiencies. A dashboard allows the customer to make various requests online that include, a change of address, the setting up of a direct debit and has a search facility so that they can view details of payments made etc. this particular service also has a Landlord view.

This year the team are targeting business rate e.billing and have already moved all landlords within Chorley on to this system. Staff in the Contact Centre are encouraging customers who contact the Council to sign up to the service. The service has seen a 20% take up. Out of the 12,000 emails that the Council have registered on their system, 9000 have registered for e.billing out of approximately 45,000 properties.

**The Group considered that a Member Learning Session on the back office systems would be advantageous for all Members of the Council.**