

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Customer and Digital) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Customer and Advice Services)	Executive Cabinet	30 June 2016

EXECUTIVE CABINET RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REVIEW OF THE SINGLE FRONT OFFICE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide the Executive Cabinet's response to the O&S Task Group on the Review of the implementation of the Single Front Office undertaken in 2015 and reported to Executive Cabinet in February 2016.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- It is recommended that Members accept the recommendations made by the O&S Task Group Review of the implementation of the Single Front Office as outlined in the table contained in the main body of the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a task group in June 2015 to review the implementation of the Single Front Office.
- The task group reported its findings and recommendations to the Council's Executive Cabinet in February 2016 and this report provides the Executive response to those recommendations.
- All recommendations are accepted and this report outlines the actions which will be taken to address each of the recommendations and also any progress already made to date.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Reason Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

6. To provide a response to the recommendations made by the O&S task group review of the implementation of the Single Front Office.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

9. The Single Front Office project was approved by the Executive in January 2014. The project aim was to create a Single Front Office where services are delivered end-to-end as far as possible at the first point of contact
10. In June 2015 an The O&S task group was established to:
 - a. Ensure that the implementation of the SFO is successful and meets all the principle objectives of the project;
 - b. Ensure that the customer experience, response times and productivity and performance targets continues to improve; and
 - c. Maximise the use of technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.
11. The task group took evidence from a number of sources which included a wide range of performance data and they also met with officers to discuss their use of the My Account system and shadowed staff in the Council's contact centre.
12. In the final report the O&S task group concluded that the implementation of the Single Front Office contributed to the work that the Council is currently undertaking to create efficiencies. In addition the Single Front Office was found to have many examples of good working practices and the recommendations endorse the expansion of the principles into other service areas across the Council.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The table details the Executive Cabinet response to each of the recommendations made by the task group and the actions taken and planned.

O&S Task Group Recommendation	Executive Cabinet Response	
	Actions completed	Actions planned
1. Member Learning Session to be delivered to all Members of the Council on the Single Front Office to help Councillors understand what the Council are trying to achieve and the reason why.	Agreed.	A member learning session will be arranged to communicate the objectives, principles and successes of the Single Front Office.
2 The implementation of the Single Front Office, agreed by Executive Cabinet and finalised in March, although only part way through has already demonstrated improved efficiencies and has had an impact on productivity. The Group endorse the current approach being taken by the authority and support its expansion in other areas.	Agreed. The recent senior management restructure has more closely aligned our customer-facing services of Planning, Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance with the Single Front Office. The Planning Support project is nearing completion and the changes put in place will support productivity in this area.	A thorough understanding of the other service areas and collection of detailed baseline performance data will need to be acquired. Following this an action plan will be developed detailing how the approach will be taken forward in other areas.
3. That the Group supports the continued development, implementation of and migration of accessible services online.	Agreed. Council tax applications for single person discount and certain reliefs and exemptions can now be made online. The Planning Support project has moved the planning application process online.	Further on-line forms are being developed and are being acquired as part of software contract renewal such as DHP applications. Further software is being tested which will allow improved access for customers to council tax and business rates accounts and to their housing benefit claim information.
4. That the Council continues to engage with those residents who need additional support to access services online	Agreed. The Council's Digital Inclusion Officer post now sits within the Single Front Office and is better placed to work with the frontline team to encourage more residents to access services online Introductory sessions to support people to get online are now being held on a regular basis out in the community and take up is increasing.	The Digital Inclusion Officer will work directly from the Customer Services Centre and One Stop Shop on a Tuesday, actively helping customers to access services online and sign up for My Account.
5. That online tutorials are made available for residents to help them make effective use of the My Account system.	Agreed. A tutorial has already been developed for the planning weekly list to help customers access this online and this is in use.	An online tutorial for My Account will be developed and made available on the website and social media.
6. That dialogue on the My Account system be improved at	Agreed. Staff using the My Account	The wording for all stages of

the necessary stages to provide better information to residents regarding assurances on the status of jobs and the transfer of requests to other partner organisations.	system have been reminded that notes on the service requests are visible to customers where the customer and also of the importance of keeping customers up-to-date with progress.	the My Account workflow and processes is under review to ensure the information made available to customers is as clear and accurate as possible.
7. That the process for requesting the addition of an asset to the Council's Asset Register be better promoted to residents using the My Account system.	Agreed.	Consideration be given to adding a service request type to My Account specifically for the addition of assets to the Council's asset register or redirect to existing enquiry form.
8. That My Account training be made available to Parish Councils.	Agreed. A training session has been held for Parish Councillors.	Where further interest is shown additional sessions will be held.
9. That an option be considered on the My Account system that will allow customers to enter service requests when that specific option is not available to select.	Agreed.	A review will be carried out of the enquiries received through the 'General Enquiry' service request. This will indicate where there is a need for an additional form for a specific service request or further information for customers about where to report issues.
10. That a Suggestion Box be considered on the My Account system that will allow customers to feedback and promote ownership of the system by the residents of the borough.	Agreed. There is a service request type for the website which is what customers currently use to feedback to us about online issues.	Consideration will be given to how this could best be facilitated within the current configuration of the My Account system.
11. That the Task Group supports the Council's review of all its correspondence with the aim of improving this method of communication to its residents and details of how to register on the My Account system be incorporated into its design.	Agreed Work has already been undertaken on the review of correspondence in planning and Housing Benefits. As part of this review consideration has been given to the most effective way to promote online access to services.	Review of correspondence will continue to take place as part of the SFO development plan. Consideration will be given to the development of an icon for My Account which could be easily incorporated into the Council's corporate templates used for customer contact.
12. That the Council looks at ways to improve the process of customer call backs across the authority.	Agreed. Staff have been encouraged to monitor call backs and to keep customers better informed generally by information on The Loop and in Core Brief.	A more targeted approach will be developed with managers to help focus on the areas of most concern.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

14. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	✓
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

15. The Executive Cabinet responses to these recommendations have no additional budgetary implications for the Council over and above what has already been agreed.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

16. There are no comments.

ASIM KHAN
DIRECTOR (CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL)

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Single Front Office	December 2015	http://mod/documents/s61339/Final%20Report%20-%20Single%20Front%20Office%20Review.pdf	Mod Gov

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Helen Sutton	5449	15/06/16	OandSRRecommendationsEC30062016