

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Customer and Digital)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	30 March 2017

**REPORT TO PROVIDE A MONITORING UPDATE FOLLOWING THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REVIEW OF THE SINGLE FRONT OFFICE**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- To provide the final update on progress made to implement the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group inquiry into the Single Front Office.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- It is recommended that Members note the final update 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. Findings were reported to Executive Cabinet in February 2016.
- This report provides the final update on the outstanding actions from the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group inquiry into the Single Front Office.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**  
**(If the recommendations are accepted)**

- To provide a response to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny task group review of the implementation of the Single Front Office.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- None.

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 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

8. 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
9. In June 2015 an the Overview and Scrutiny 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.
10. 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.
11. In the final report the Overview and Scrutiny 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.
12. The task group reported its findings and recommendations to the Council's Executive Cabinet in February 2016. All recommendations were accepted and this report provides the Executive response to those recommendations.
13. All recommendations were accepted and this report provides the final update on the outstanding actions.

## RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

14. The table details the recommendations made by the task group and the corresponding final update on progress made to date.

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY Task Group Recommendation</b>	<b>Executive Cabinet Response</b>	
	<b>Actions completed</b>	<b>Actions planned</b>
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.	A Member Learning Session was held on 1 February 2016 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 customer-facing services of Planning, Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance with the Single Front Office. The Planning Support project for development control has been completed. The changes put in place have improved efficiencies and maintained productivity in this area.	The principles implemented for the development control service are planned to being replicated in enforcement and building control. A thorough understanding of the other service areas and collection of detailed baseline performance data is being undertaken. A new Streetscene and Grounds Modernisation Strategy 2017-20 was approved by Executive Cabinet on 19 January 2017. Action plans 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. A Second Adult Rebate form for housing benefit is also available online. Connect and Serve software has been live since July 2016 allowing improved access for customers to council tax and business rates accounts and to their housing benefit claim information. The Planning Support project has moved the planning application process online. The new garden collection service can be applied for online.	Further on-line forms are being developed and are also being acquired as part of software contract renewal such as Discretionary Housing Payment applications. iApply will be rolled out for BC & DC closely integrating the online application process with LOB applications. iApply will be enhanced to include other areas of online transactions such as TEN's for licencing.
4. That the Council continues to	Agreed.	Further digital training is planned including as part of the

<p>engage with those residents who need additional support to access services online</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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. Hard to reach groups are targeted by delivering training sessions in Tatton Community Centre, Clayton Brook Village Hall.</p> <p>The Digital Inclusion Officer is working 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.</p> <p>There are now 18 digital access locations in Chorley.</p> <p>Introductory tablet training sessions have been held targeting older and disabled people.</p>	<p>Chorley inner East project, Whittle Village Hall, drop in support at Galloways Society for the Blind, Briary House Sheltered Housing Scheme and Union Street offices.</p> <p>Further engagement will take place with Parish Council Clerks to improve digital access and support for more of the parishes.</p> <p>Support will be given to partners exploring the idea of setting up Cyber Cafes in the borough.</p>
<p>5. That online tutorials are made available for residents to help them make effective use of the My Account system.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>A tutorial has already been developed for the planning weekly list to help customers access this online and this is in use.</p>	<p>The My Account system is under review. An online tutorial for My Account will be developed if appropriate and made available on the website and social media.</p>
<p>6. That dialogue on the My Account system be improved at 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.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Staff using the My Account 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.</p>	<p>The wording for all stages of the workflows and processes will be reviewed as part of the general review of the software to ensure the information made available to customers is as clear and accurate as possible.</p>
<p>7. That the process for requesting the addition of an asset to the Council's Asset Register be better promoted to</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>As part of the overall review of My Account, consideration will be given to adding a service request type to accommodate the addition of assets to the Council's asset register.</p>

residents using the My Account system.		
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 any additional forms 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.	As part of the review of the My Account system, consideration will be given to how this could best be facilitated within the current configuration of the 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. As part of the review of My Account, consideration will be given to the development of an icon for 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. Call back performance is regularly monitored by Senior Management Team.	A more targeted approach will be developed with managers to help focus on the areas of most concern.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

15. 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

16. 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

17. 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	<a href="http://mod/documents/s61339/Final%20Report%20-%20Single%20Front%20Office%20Review.pdf">http://mod/documents/s61339/Final%20Report%20-%20Single%20Front%20Office%20Review.pdf</a>	Mod Gov

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Helen Sutton	5449	15/06/16	OandSRrecommendationsEC30062016