	One Council **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** 13 October 2010 **Report from the Director of** **Housing and Community Care**
	Wards Affected: ALL

Personalisation - Customer Journey Project

1.0 Outline of the project

1.1 The Personalisation – Customer Journey Project will significantly improve the end to end assessment process for adult social care. This is the central process within the Community Care department which is followed by the vast majority of citizens who are clients of, or request services from the department.

1.2 This project will build on and improve the work that has already been done by the department, by focusing on refining the operating model to reflect the new operational leadership, and the lessons learnt over the last year (from the implementation of Frameworki financials, the restructure of OP/PD Assessment and Care Management and the introduction of Self Directed Support).

1.3 The project will deliver:

- **Improvements for citizens** - through a simpler and quicker process which is fair and proportionate to their needs. Minimal hand-off points within the department, and the increase of knowledge and expertise at the front door will ensure that citizens receive the right answer at the first point of contact;
- **Improvements in performance** - aligned to the first benefit and measured through key national performance indicators and newly defined outcome measures for customers;
- **Financial savings** - driven by the realignment of staff resources to the new processes (the right staff in the right places), improved processes and practice relating to assessment and allocation of resources for customers with ongoing social care needs, and an improved financial assessment processes. These are estimated at £1,165,000.

1.4 The project also addresses a number of key agendas: a number of key agendas:

- **National strategy and policy** – the national policy agenda for transforming adult social care was clearly outlined in Putting People First and over the last couple of years has been fully integrated into the Care Quality Commission's performance management regime. Although this performance regime may change, the new government has confirmed its commitment to the roll out of Personal Budgets and the principles which underpin this project;
- **Corporate strategy** – Brent's Improvement and Efficiency Plan 2010-2014 set out a clear case for change, the strategic benefits of that change and an approach to managing that change. This project clearly addresses all of those strategic benefits
- **Improving departmental performance** – the department is struggling to deal with a number of key operational issues at the moment, which are impacting on financial control, service performance and customer satisfaction. These issues are being addressed in this project as part of a positive agenda for change which staff will be able to buy into.

1.5   The department considered three options to address the challenges it faces;
- Option 1 – Do nothing
- Option 2 – Tackle priority areas
- Option 3 – Implement the Customer Journey Project

The first option was not considered sustainable in the medium to long run as it will make it difficult, if not impossible, to improve service performance and outcomes for individuals, and is likely to lead to service deterioration if further savings are required. The second option was rejected based on evidence of previous attempts by the department to deliver a number of individual projects, which has led to uneven development, and some discontinuities, along the customer journey. Also, many of the key changes that need to be made are crosscutting and underpin all elements of the customer journey, for example, improved social work practice, and a performance management framework and culture. The department has decided to implement option three.

2.0   What has happened so far

2.1   We have established a project team, resourced primarily with council staff, who are responsible for the design and delivery of the outlined improvements. In addition, we have secured corporate support to contract external specialist resource, who will work alongside the council project team, bringing expertise from similar projects in other authorities, and transferring knowledge and skills to our staff. This approach will ensure that we build our internal capacity and expertise in these areas to enable us to continuously improve our services in the future.

2.2   We recognise the utmost importance of staff buy-in to the proposed changes to ensure that they are effective and sustainable in the long run. To this effect we have engaged with all staff impacted at the earliest opportunity. At the All Staff Quarterly Meeting, all participants were briefed on the project, given the opportunity to share their comments and views, and asked to put themselves forward to get involved in the project. This was followed by further

communications, to give the same opportunity to those who were not present. We now have over 40 staff members who are actively involved and make part of the extended project team, responsible for the delivery of the project activities.

2.3   In addition, staff are participating in design workshops, participating and engaging in the design of the changes to the processes and systems, which will enable the project benefits to be achieved. These changes will be rolled out as part of a comprehensive training programme to ensure a consistent and high-performing approach to dealing with citizens.

2.4   We also understand the importance of ensuring that these proposed changes take into account the impact on our customers, improving service delivery, and ensure that our services are high performing and easily accessible. We have developed a comprehensive communication plan, for both internal and external stakeholders and our customer groups. We will utilise the extended network of focus groups to communicate the changes that we are prosing. At the same time, we will use focus groups to design and test needed changes to the current forms and letters used by customers and staff as part of the assessment and service provision process.

3.0   Difficulties and risks

1.1   This is a significant transformation project, which is closely linked and impacted by other challenges faced by the London Borough of Brent. The two main risks for this project are:

- Lack of suitable council resources to deliver this project – we have secured some external support, however support and involvement is required by council staff, both for their operational expertise, as well as to ensure the proposed changes are sustainable. This project will be in addition to the day-to-day job, therefore increasing their workload in the short term.

- Impact from other corporate projects – there are a number of significant projects and programmes in the council, which will impact on both skilled staff availability and the design of this project, for example corporate Customer Contact project. We are working closely with other stakeholders to identify these links at the earliest stage and ensure that what we put in place is in line with corporate requirements.

4.0   Next steps

4.1   The new project support resources will start work on the 4th of October.

4.2   The design of the new processes and system changes are in progress through a series of design workshops, attended by staff across the department. System changes are being built in parallel to the process workshops, therefore reducing the development and the overall project timescales.

4.3   We will start to develop the new organisation structure and align the existing skills and resources to the new proposed process to ensure that we have the right skills at the right place in the right number to address customers request for service.

4.4   Three roadshows have been organised with all staff, to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the progress of the project so far, and gather their views and comments.

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