



Executive
17 August 2011

General Purposes Committee
18 August 2011

**Report from
the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and
Improvement**

For Action: Yes

Wards Affected: ALL

**Future Customer Services: Delivering change to the way
Brent residents access the council**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The One Council Programme is aimed at transforming the way the council organises itself and delivers services in order to meet the financial challenges facing the council while enhancing our ability to deliver ambitions set out in the Administration's policy programme.
- 1.2 One of the flagship projects in the One Council Programme is designed to improve the way that customers access council services and the level of service they receive. Historically, through the development of One Stop Shops, Brent was a leader in this area. However, as described in the Chief Executive's report to the August 2010 Executive on Reshaping Brent Council, the fragmented nature of council structures and processes, means that the council has not been able to keep up with developments that other councils have achieved in this area. As a result, the customer experience is not as good as it could be and costs are higher than they need be.
- 1.3 By the summer of 2012 the council aims to deliver an improved, coherent customer services offer to our customers, whilst also delivering improved value for money. The Corporate Customer Services approach will make it much easier for customers to get answers quickly to the problems that most commonly concern them. The council's telephone and face-to-face service will be restructured so that trained staff are able to bring decision making and expertise to the first point of contact. The website will be redesigned to deliver more services online, freeing up resources for those services which need to be delivered face-to-face or by telephone. Brent's customers can expect a consistent standard of customer service and an easier, more open system for them to navigate to receive services.

- 1.4 This report sets out the changes that are proposed as part of the One Council Future Customer Services project. A key element of these changes is the establishment of a new division, Corporate Customer Services, which will bring together the existing One Stop Service and Revenues and Benefits service. There will then be a phased transition of customer contact from within other service areas into Corporate Customer Services. As a first step, the Assistant Director for the Corporate Customer Services service area needs to be appointed and this report seeks approval for:
- the creation of this post
 - the deletion of the Head of Revenues and Benefits post
 - the implementation and timetable arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to:

- 2.1 note the proposed changes to improve customer access arrangements as part of the Future Customer Services project;
- 2.2 agree, subject to the outcome of consultation with staff, the creation of a new Assistant Director of Corporate Customer Services post and the deletion of the Head of Revenues and Benefits post;
- 2.3 note that further changes to structures needed to fully implement the Future Customer Services arrangements will be carried out in accordance with the council's Managing Change Policy.

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

- 2.4 agree the implementation timetable as set out in section 4 and Appendix 1, table 1 of the report;
- 2.5 agree the job description for Assistant Director of Corporate Customer Services as set out in Appendix 2.

3. FUTURE CUSTOMER SERVICES

- 3.1 This section of the report explains how the Future Customer Services project will deliver these improvements, how customers will see the changes, the implementation timetable, and the management of risks. Section 4 deals with the processes for implementing the new Corporate Customer Services organisational structure.
- 3.2 Through the development of One Stop Shops, Brent became a leader in customer service. Since then, piecemeal changes have been made to enhance the service such as increased use of web transactional services, the development of telephone payments, Kingsbury and Harlesden Library Plus arrangements, reallocation of resources to meet changing demand for services, and improved internal processes in the One Stop Service. More recently, end-to-end reviews of the customer journey for

benefit claimants and adult social care users has involved significant changes to initial customer contact arrangements.

3.3 However, the fragmentation of services within the council, with customer contact managed in various places, means the council has lagged behind other authorities. Customer access is not as easy as, and the cost greater than, it should be. Issues with the current way of organising customer contact include:

- a. Arrangement for customers accessing services is complex and can be confusing. Customers may have to contact several service units before getting to the right place and there are inconsistencies in the way in which different service areas operate. This can lead to customers perceiving that they are dealing with several organisations instead of one single coherent organisation.
- b. Customers are not always able to have their enquiries resolved when they first make contact with the council. Front line staff are not always empowered to fully resolve enquiries and frequently enquiries are delayed as they are passed to service delivery areas for resolution.
- c. Customers cannot usually have enquiries relating to different service areas resolved in one contact and frequently have to contact separate service areas for responses, even if the enquiry relates to the same or a similar issue.
- d. The council currently has high levels of telephone calls abandoned (13% in One Stop Services and 20% across service units) meaning that customers have to contact the council more than once before they get through to the person who can resolve their enquiries.
- e. There are very high levels of face to face contact which can be inconvenient for customers and costly to the council but only 1% of transactions are via the website which is often the most convenient, cost effective means of transactional service delivery.
- f. The impact of the current arrangements can mean that customers are not easily able to navigate their way around the system and can be frustrated in their attempts to access services. This leads to poor perception of services and inefficiency.
- g. Many online services are not fully automated and require manual input from customer services and finance staff to complete transactions.

3.4 The Future Customer Services project is using certain design principles that inform the changes that are being made to customer contact arrangements. These are aimed at improving the quality of service customers receive and also to allow the council to make savings. The principles are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Design Principles for Future Customer Services

1. A better customer experience
a. The customer experience is <u>straight-forward and responsive</u> whether the customer uses the web, phone, face to face contact, e-mail or letter
b. Customer services should be configured to enable customers to ' <u>Tell us once</u> ' about changes in their circumstances and need
c. <u>Consistent services</u> are provided to customers regardless of whether they use the web, phone, face to face contact, e-mail or letter
d. Customer <u>expectations are clearly managed</u> (e.g. response times, next steps etc)
2. Improved understanding of our customers
a. Customers are encouraged to use the <u>most cost-effective channel</u> to meet their needs and that they have ability to access
b. An understanding of groupings of <u>customers requiring similar services</u> and of capability to access services ('customer segments') is used to help design services
3. Increased focus on customer needs
a. Services are <u>designed to meet customer needs</u> , with organisational and professional boundaries having minimal impact
b. <u>Consistent standards</u> of professionalism and performance are set and service performance is actively managed to achieve them
c. Resources are <u>scheduled and deployed</u> as most appropriate to meet the needs and demands of customers
d. Hand-offs (where a customer is passed from one person to another) and repeat contacts should be minimised
4. Improved information available to customers
a. Information is <u>accurate and up-to-date</u>
b. A <u>single source of information</u> is kept and displayed in a number of ways ("repurposing") dependant on channel and audience
c. Information must be <u>fit for purpose</u> and presented to meet the customers' requirements: simple and easy to read and understand
5. Effective use is made of technology
a. Technology is utilised fully to <u>maximise customer self-service</u>
b. There should be better use of <u>existing investments</u> in technology (e.g. Automated Call Distribution, the client index and the Customer Relationship Management system)
c. Technology and information will be fully utilised to both <u>improve performance and customer services</u>
6. Locations

a. Customer service locations should be consolidated unless this means multiple moves in the progression towards the Civic Centre and Willesden Green

- 3.5 These design principles have been used to determine what improvements need to be made to customer services in Brent in order to deliver the vision of a coherent, improved customer services offer, as well as the new model for Future Customer Services that needs to be implemented. The model will not be fully operational until the council has moved into the Civic Centre in 2013 but a significant number of the changes will be implemented before then to begin improving customer services:
- a. All initial customer contact will be brought together into a single organisational structure – Corporate Customer Services – to ensure that consistent, customer focused standards and processes are developed. The first stage of this involves integrating the One Stop Service and the Revenues and Benefits Service, which accounts for 80% of face-to-face customer contact. The Future Customer Services project will deliver a phased transition of customer contact in other service areas into the new Corporate Customer Services.
 - b. The new Corporate Customer Services will have responsibility for all access channels (face-to-face, telephone, web, and post). This will enable gradual consolidation of in-coming and out-going contact, ensuring the application of consistent standards, increasing the effectiveness, attractiveness and ease of use of on-line services, and driving out operational efficiencies (for example, by consolidating scanning processes).
 - c. The new Corporate Customer Services will ensure queries from customers will be addressed or acted upon following the first contact – this will be achieved by a combination of getting the right staff mix, training and better use of technology linking back office and front office systems.
 - d. The telephone numbering system will be rationalised, and over time we will reduce from 140 published numbers to 10 or less numbers which will be in logical groupings, providing access to the full range of council services and making it easier for customers to get through to the right department first time.
 - e. From 2013, face to face contact will be delivered from the Civic Centre and Willesden Green although opportunities to rationalise face-to-face contact will be taken in the meantime (for example, parking shops when the parking contract is retendered).
 - f. We will be part of the roll-out of the national Tell us Once project which will allow dissemination of accurate and up-to-date information about births and deaths that impact on people's entitlement to services. This will mean that people will be automatically registered for entitlements such as child benefit and will not be burdened with unnecessary correspondence (for example, debt recovery procedures for unpaid council tax). In addition, because this is being implemented on a sub-regional basis, it will ensure that Brent residents who give birth or pass away in hospitals in neighbouring boroughs will be covered.
 - g. Staff in the Corporate Customer Services area will have broad roles, enabling them to work across two or more service areas and there will be flexibility of customer care staff across all access channels (face-to-face, telephone, post and e-mail).

This will enable the council to respond to demand flexibly, and will optimise the use of staff time.

- 3.6 The proposed changes are both about improving customer service and delivering savings through increased efficiency. Target savings of £3.4m have been set for the project in the next financial year (2012/13), rising to £3.6m per annum from 2013/14. The savings will come from a combination of rationalised management structures, removal of duplication in what staff do, managing peak and lower demand to increased staff utilisation, increased take-up of online transactions, reducing unnecessary contact from customers (reducing hand-offs and repeat contact), and detailed analysis of end-to-end customer processes in Housing and Children and Families. The project is expected to be budget neutral in 2011/12, with costs of implementation matching savings.
- 3.7 There are a number quick wins which have been delivered in advance of the more fundamental changes set out in paragraph 3.5. These are as follows:
- a. Tell Us Once arrangements, whereby people registering a birth or death will be able to arrange for other council services and other agencies to be notified of the birth or death, will be live from early October 2011.
 - b. From the end of September 2011, the switchboard will be automated using a voice recognition system. People will be able to ask to be put through to the service or person they wish to speak to or general enquiries without having to go through the switchboard. This service works well in other authorities which have introduced it. At the moment over 25% of switchboard time is taken up by staff requesting internal transfers. In future, staff will be expected to use the intranet to access numbers and call directly.
 - c. In order to better fit the peak times residents wished to use them, One Stop Shops are now open from 9am to 5pm five days per week. Previously all One Stop Shops were open for four full days and one half day on weekdays and Brent House One Stop Shop was also open on Saturday mornings. The change has removed inconsistency in opening times and has made cost savings as a result of not having to pay overtime for Saturday opening at Brent House.
 - d. The One Stop Service contact centre now operates from 9am to 5pm on weekdays instead of 8am to 8pm. This is in line with arrangements for the Benefits service and Housing Needs and it allows more efficient use of staff during 9am to 5pm when the majority of calls are received. Emergency contact arrangements are available outside those hours.
- 3.8 Implementation arrangements for other aspects are as follows:
- a. Assistant Director for Corporate Customer Services and senior management team in post by late September 2011;
 - b. Remainder of Corporate Customer Services structure, combining One Stop Service, Revenues and Benefits, Environment and Neighbourhood Services customer contact functions, and elements of Adult Social Care and Children and Families implemented by January 2012;

- c. Review of web and post functions across the council completed by December 2011 and implemented by April 2012;
- d. Further services, including Housing and Planning, incorporated in the new structure by May 2012;
- e. End-to-end review of customer processes in Housing implemented by April 2012;
- f. End-to-end review of customer processes in Children and Families implemented by June 2012;
- g. Identification of location for face-to-face access in south of borough during redevelopment of Willesden Green Library Centre by December 2011;
- h. On-going development of web and other improvements leading up to move to the Civic Centre in June 2013.

3.9 There are significant risks associated with the project which the Project Board is actively managing. These include proposed organisational and structural changes and considerable cultural change in the way that staff work, with an acceptance of a more scheduled and planned environment. There will be new working procedures and whilst the council has most of the technology it needs in place, a considerable amount of work needs to be done to ensure different systems are integrated with each other. The scale of change planned, may temporarily impact on call abandonment rates, through the transition period.

3.10 The council will also need to work with residents to promote the benefits of increased use of the website rather than contacting the council by telephone or by visiting customer contact points. The project management approach being taken to deliver this project, and the resources put in place to support the change, are aimed at reducing the potential impact of these risks. These will be closely monitored through the Future Customer Services Project Board and the One Council Programme Board, which will take action to mitigate them.

3.11 The proposed changes above will enable the council to implement a radical new approach to customer services which will deliver a better, more coherent way for customers to contact Brent. Customer Services staff will have increased decision making authority and will be able to make decisions on a wider range of service transactions at the first point of contact, enabling staff to resolve enquiries as early as possible.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

4.1 This section of the report deals with the proposal to create a new post of Assistant Director of Corporate Customer Services. The new post will be accountable for developing the council's corporate customer services strategy and delivering customer services operations. Transforming the way that customer services are delivered involves a complex set of activities involving the re-design of processes and the implementation of a programme to configure the council's technology suite. This will

impact on our staffing and structures across the council which will require a significant change management programme. We are planning an extensive training programme for staff, many of whom will be in new roles, working to new procedures and with new systems. There are crucial business reasons for appointing a strategic lead to enable the council to enter into meaningful consultation with our staff about new ways of working and the implementation of a complex set of transformational activity.

- 4.2 The process for appointing to this post is governed by the council's Managing Change Policy. This is designed to support a continuous process of planned, strategic and co-ordinated change which gives the council increased flexibility within its organisational structure to deploy its staffing resources to best effect to meet its vision, values and performance objectives and deliver excellent services to the people of Brent. Critically, it also enables the council to avoid redundancy and to retain and develop its most talented staff by focusing on the transferability of skills and competencies between old and new roles to enable people to be matched to new posts.
- 4.3 The creation of this post will impact on all existing Heads of Service in the merged service areas. Confidential Appendix 3 sets out the posts that are affected by this change.
- 4.4 Consultation with staff regarding proposals to restructure has started on 3 August 2011 and it is intended that a decision on the management structure will be made by 31 August 2011 and that the senior management team will be selected by 23 September 2011. The new organisational structure is set out in Appendix 5.
- 4.5 There is a separate consultation process on the wider staffing implications of setting up Corporate Customer Services which also commenced on 3 August 2011 and a decision on the overall structure is expected by 10 October 2011, with implementation by January 2011. Overall 124 people will be affected by the creation of the new service and therefore this consultation will be for 90 calendar days in accordance with the managing change policy. There will be an overall reduction of 41 posts and 24 vacancies have been identified within the service teams affected by the change.
- 4.6 Management and governance of the Future Customer Services Project has been through the Future Customer Service Project Board which has reported on project performance to the One Council Programme Board. Following the creation of the customer services division, it is intended that there will be dual reporting and governance of service delivery and project performance through a Customer Services Board which will be chaired by the Director of Customer and Community Engagement. The new customer services division will include management and service delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service which has significant impact on the council's finances and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services will have an ongoing role in operational governance. An outline of the overall governance arrangements is attached in Appendix 4.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposed appointment to a new Assistant Director for Corporate Customer Services and deletion of the Head of Revenues and Benefits Service post is the first stage of a much wider set of proposals to change customer service arrangements. Overall the changes proposed are planned to contribute £3.4m to savings in 2012/13 and £3.6m per annum from 2013/14. The detailed business case setting out how these savings are to be achieved is currently being updated. The proposals relating to the setting up of Corporate Customer Services to replace the current One Stop Service and Revenues and Benefits, and the transitioning of some Environment and Neighbourhood Services and Children and Families services are expected to yield savings of £1.5m per annum. Other savings will be achieved from transitioning other services into the Corporate Customer Services function and end-to-end reviews in Housing Needs and Children and Families.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The report proposes the deletion of the post of Head and Revenues and Benefits and the creation of the post of Assistant Director for Corporate Customer Services. In light of these changes, a period of consultation for staff is necessary. However, due to the limited number of staff affected, the timeline for the consultation would need to be a minimum of 15 days. The council's Managing Change Policy will be followed for all those staff affected by these proposals, as will the further reorganisation proposals affecting the setting up of the new Corporate Customer Services structure, which will be subject to 90 days consultation.

7. DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A predictive equality impact assessment will be undertaken on the staffing proposals in this report to coincide with an interim review of the overall implementation of the new structure, which is expected by 23 September 2011. In addition, a predictive equality impact assessment is being carried out to inform the likely impact of the proposals customer contact arrangements on Brent residents and this is expected by mid-August 2011.

8. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 These are set out in Section 4 of the report and Appendices 1 to 3.

Background Papers

Held by Jenny Dunne on 020 8937 2459

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PHIL NEWBY
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPROVEMENT

CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

Table 1: Timetable for implementing senior management posts

To Whom	What	Dates	Method
All staff affected Trade Unions	Consultation launch	29 July 2011 and 2 August 2011	Group meetings
All staff affected	Proposals placed on intranet / posted to absent staff	3 August 2011	Consultation paper outlining proposals
Trade Unions	Discuss comments and questions	Weekly	Meetings
All staff affected	All staff affected and vulnerable to redundancy advised	3 August 2011	Letter
All staff affected	Receiving and responding to questions and comments	3 August 2011 to 24 August 2011	One-to-one meetings for staff affected. Questions and answers published on the intranet
Executive Committee	Agreement on Assistant Director post	17 August 2011	Report
General Purposes Committee	Confirm grading of Assistant Director post	18 August 2011	Report
All staff affected	Deadline for voluntary redundancy applications	19 August 2011	On-line applications
All staff affected Trade Unions	Final response on consultation	31 August 2011	Report
All staff affected	Notification of voluntary redundancy applications	31 August 2011	Letter
All staff affected	Assimilation / interviews	1 - 23 September 2011	
Staff selected for redundancy	Notices to dismiss issued	26 September 2011	Letter
	New structure in place	26 September 2011	

Table 2: Timetable for implementing full restructure

To Whom	What	Dates	Method
All staff affected Trade Unions	Consultation launch	29 July 2011 and 2 August 2011	Group meetings
All staff affected	Proposals placed on intranet / posted to absent staff	3 August 2011	Consultation paper outlining proposals
Trade Unions	Discuss comments and questions	Weekly	Meetings
All staff affected	All staff affected and vulnerable to redundancy advised	3 August 2011	Letter
All staff affected	Deadline for voluntary redundancy applications	19 August 2011	On-line applications
All staff affected	Notification of voluntary redundancy applications	31 August 2011	Letter
All staff affected	Receiving and responding to questions and comments	2 August 2011 to 16 September 2011	One-to-one meetings for staff affected Group meetings for staff affected Questions and answers published on the intranet
All staff affected Trade Unions	Formal comments considered and interim response issued	23 September 2011	Report
All staff affected Trade Unions	Final response on consultation	10 October 2011	Report
All staff affected	Assimilation / interviews	6 October 2011 to 14 November 2011	
Staff selected for redundancy	Notices to dismiss issued	Week commencing 14 November 2011	Letter
	New structure in place	2 January 2011	

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE	Assistant Director of Corporate Customer Services
REPORTS TO	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
JOB HOLDER	
GRADE	HAY 4

1. JOB PURPOSE:

To support the Director in securing the continuous development, improvement, efficiency and success of the Department as a whole through transformational leadership, strategic direction, planning management and governance.

To lead the development, planning and delivery of a portfolio of services to meet the current and future needs of users within available resources.

To lead on and support cross cutting corporate initiatives.

Responsible for the strategic direction and operation of Corporate Customer Services including Revenue and Benefits Service and related activities across the council.

To work with the Director and other service areas to meet key objectives through the strategic and innovative use of resources to deliver continuous improvement and efficiency.

The role will involve active and on-going engagement with internal and external partners and stakeholders.

To lead on the development and implementation of policies and strategies for the service meeting performance targets in compliance with policy frameworks and legislation

2. DIMENSIONS:

Financial responsibility

Annual budget responsibility

Estimated benefit expenditure 11/12 = £350M

Estimated Council Tax collection 11/12 = £99.27M (in year) + £1.5M arrears collection

Estimated NNDR collection 11/12 = £103.54M (in year) + £ 1.5M arrears collection

Estimated HB overpayment recovery 11/12 = £4.3 M

Total Council Tax arrears =£40M

Total NNDR arrears + £3.4M

Total Overpayments outstanding = £ 18.43 M

Directly controlled Revenue Budget:

£11m

Staffing responsibility

Approximately 200 fte total staff group

3. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:

The post holder must:

Carry out his/her duties with due regard to the council's policies, including customer care and equal opportunities incorporating the council's core competencies;

Take reasonable care for the safety and health of themselves and others;

Understand the value of information to the council and contribute to good information governance by keeping information safe, accurate, up to date and available to those who need it

As a member of the Departmental Management Team (DMT), work collegiately and make a proactive contribution to:

- the formulation of strategic direction, policy and planning
- communicating and building commitment to the council's vision and strategic objectives
- building a shared and cohesive organisational culture and ethos
- promoting positive interaction across internal and external organisational boundaries to address organisational priorities
- robust corporate governance and risk management
- leading on, driving and supporting corporate and departmental initiatives
- representing the council externally with key stakeholders, acting as an effective ambassador and advocate for the organisation
- deputising for the Director as required

Manage the process of customer focused service development, design and delivery including:

- engagement and consultation across service user, partners and stakeholders to understand their needs and aspirations
- forward service planning, ensuring that it identifies and takes account of service need in the light of current and anticipated demand
- ensuring that barriers to accessibility of directly provided and commissioned services are identified and overcome
- the translation of strategy into ambitious and achievable service plans within available resources and with clearly defined targets and accountability for outcomes
- working closely with finance to ensure that resource requirements of plans are accurately reflected

in departmental budgets

- meeting requirements for submission of statutory plans and related returns

Foster a consistent cross council culture across by ensuring:

- that the council's overall vision, values and ethos are central to the approach taken
- effective cross council working in the interests of achieving key objectives and improving operational effectiveness
- a shared understanding of and compliance with the councils approach to managing performance, quality and risk; its operational management systems, practices, processes and ways of working and its governance arrangements, constitution, schemes of delegation, financial regulations, rules, policies and procedures
- councils equality, diversity and inclusion objectives in relation to both staff and service users
- compliance with statutory frameworks including those relating the health and safety
- high standards of public service including openness, fairness, honesty and transparency

Manage teams to achieve high performance and effective operational delivery by:

- putting robust governance arrangements in place to manage performance, risk and business continuity, including operational systems and processes
- using benchmarking and target setting to drive continuous and sustained performance improvement
- tracking action against plans to deliver performance targets within allocated resources
- taking prompt action to manage and mitigate risks and barriers to operational effectiveness and areas of under performance

Manage the effective use of resources by:

- planning, controlling and deploying financial, staffing and physical resources to best effect to deliver agreed service priorities
- working closely with finance to align monitoring of budgets and service delivery
- ensuring that staffing establishments and recruitment and retention plans and activity support effective service delivery
- being closely involved in the commissioning of services to deliver improved outcomes for service users, including input to the specification and procurement process
- ensuring that contracts are managed, monitored and reviewed to secure optimum value for money

Provide leadership and management to staff teams by:

- gaining ownership of and commitment to the councils overall aims and values
- building a high performing, proactive, customer focused culture which welcomes change
- creating an inclusive environment which fosters innovation and improvement
- maximising the potential of a diverse workforce
- ensuring that staff are motivated and developed to improve their capability to deliver
- recognising excellent performance and ensuring that under performance is tackled

Working closely with the Director to support effective working relationships with relevant portfolio holders by:

- providing clear, balanced and accurate advice and guidance on the strategic issues facing the portfolio of services managed
- ensuring that they are briefed and kept up to date on service developments including highly sensitive matters likely to have a major impact on the council

Supporting the Director on partnership working by:

- identifying where strategic partnerships have the potential to deliver long term service improvement and cost effectiveness
- building relationships and working collaboratively with agreed partners to this end

Act as an effective ambassador and advocate with external organisations as agreed with the Director including:

- representing the department externally to promote and protect the councils interests
- leading and supporting negotiations with contractors and partners on contentious issues
- managing effective preparation for conduct of and follow up to audits and inspections
- assisting in the management of the interface with the media

4. JOB KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Qualifications, knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrable experience of managing contracts in a Revenues environment
- Relevant IRRV professional qualification or extensive experience of working in a Benefits and customer services environment

Track record of achievement at a senior leadership level in a similarly large, complex, political organisation including:

- Working collaboratively across organisational boundaries to shape and deliver strategic plans
- Providing clear strategic direction and management, promoting customer care and equality of opportunity
- Translating strategy into cost effective plans within tight resource constraints
- Ensuring the effective delivery of service/business plans to meet performance targets, managing and mitigating risk
- Developing practical, innovative, creative and tactical solutions to the management of complex problems
- Securing ownership and commitment to key objectives from professional staff and building capacity and capability to deliver
- Commanding the confidence of stakeholders and partners and building positive relationships in support of key objectives
- Developing and delivering major projects to deliver service wide improvements in relation to key

organisational priorities

- Commissioning and contract management

A broad based knowledge of systems and issues associated with the collection of council tax, national and non-domestic rates and the administration of local and council tax benefit.

Key skills and abilities

Strong leadership abilities including the ability to:

- lead and motivate staff
- develop an inspirational vision
- set high standards and gain ownership and commitment to them
- create an inclusive environment
- deliver cultural change
- forge alliances with stakeholders
- communicate vision and give a clear sense of direction
- influencing others to support your objectives

Ability to develop and implement strategy including:

- Clear analytical thinking
- Intellectual agility to be able to think and act strategically
- Analysing complex evidence and develop practical, innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to the management of strategic and complex issues
- Development of objectives, targets and practical plans to achieve them
- Use of performance management systems
- Integration of partners into plans and working across Departments and networks
- Methods to achieve continuous improvement of services

Strong communication skills including:

- Confident and accurate use of the written and spoken word
- Ability to translate complex technical work concisely into presentations that focus lay persons' attention on key issues in an easy to understand way
- Openness and honesty in dealing with Staff, Clients and partners
- Inspirational presentation skills
- Strategies for communicating with a diverse customer base and listening and responding to what they have to say

Well-developed managerial skills including:

- Managing in an environment that offers multiple services via various channels
- Getting the best out of people and dealing with under-performance
- Implementing equality programmes and managing a diverse workforce
- Team Building and commitment from Staff.

- Building high performance teams
- Developing and implementing a learning environment

Directing Services and delivery on Service objectives including:

- Making Services responsive to customer needs
- Ensuring the needs of a diverse population are properly served
- Developing a continuous improvement culture

Ability to control a budget and financial management skills

Ability to manage contractual relationships with external providers including:

- Procurement skills
- Contract monitoring
- Service delivery through contractors

Personal characteristics

- A strong role model who demonstrates a personal commitment to high standards of public service, honesty, integrity and professionalism
- A collaborative, corporate player with a strong team spirit and respect of others
- A customer focused individual with a personal commitment to service improvement, equality, diversity and inclusion
- A dynamic, committed individual with the resilience and drive to cope with the demands and pressures of the post including the ability to cope effectively at times of crises.

6 JOB CONTEXT:

- Wide range of internal and external contacts including directors, senior managers, elected members, professional bodies, partner organisations and government functions involving the use of a wide range of interpersonal skills.
- Partner other local authorities, public sector organisations and agencies, local businesses, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders.
- Developing partnership working with key external stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- High level of work related pressure in terms of deadlines, conflicting priorities etc.

- Lead role in the development of the Council’s services in this area.
- Operates within a framework set by Corporate and Departmental Management teams but with considerable freedom to shape services.
- Leads on policy and development and ensures implementation of new legislative requirements.
- Ensures high professional standards.

7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The post operates within a framework set by elected members but with considerable input to shaping services and has a lead professional role in ensuring high professional standards.

The post holder works with a wide range of internal contacts including assistant directors, directors, senior managers, elected members and key external stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors including professional bodies, inspectorates, government functions, other local authorities, public and voluntary sector partners and agencies, local businesses, contractors and other stakeholders.

This is a politically restricted post.

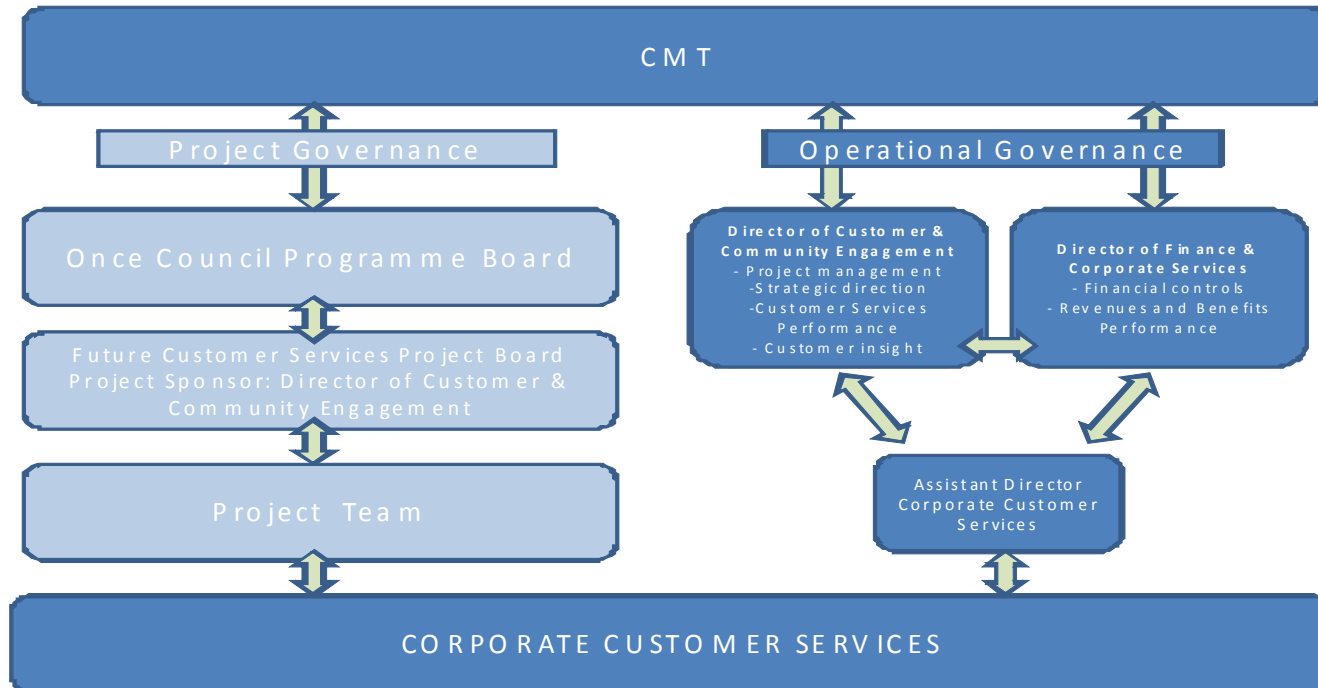
SIGNATURES:

After reviewing the questionnaire sign it to confirm its accuracy

JOB HOLDER: _____ **DATE:** _____

MANAGER: _____ **DATE:** _____

Customer Services Governance



Corporate Customer Service - Proposed Structure

