

Communities & Customer Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee

Date:	4 March 2019
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Cabinet Member Update - Customer Services & Digital
Report of:	Councillor Paul Swaddle Cabinet Member for Customer Services & Digital
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Customer Services & Digital
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for All
Report Author and Contact Details:	Julia Corkey and Ben Goward Ext. 3411

1. Cabinet Member Priorities

- 1.1 In January 2019 the new portfolio was created to oversee the Council's customer services and digital transformation programmes. The portfolio also includes responsibility for the Council's information and technology services, and broadband connectivity, working in partnership with the Gig Economy and Broadband Champion. Deputy Cabinet Member, Councillor Emily Payne, has been tasked with the important remit of reviewing our approach to call centres.
- 1.2 In continuing to deliver the Leader's vision for a City for All, I want to provide the best customer experience for our residents, making it as easy as possible to access local services. As a Council we will take responsibility for dealing with problems in full the first time and working with people and families to prevent more complex issues developing.
- 1.3 My goal for the Customer Services and Digital portfolio is for the Council to be the leader in local Government for customer satisfaction and ease of engagement. As part of this vision, I want to work to drive down costs for the Council and strive to make digital the customers' channel of choice through automating back office integration and workflows.

1.4 Since assuming the portfolio, my key priorities are:

- Improving the customer experience with a new approach to customer services handling;
- The establishment of a **Customer and Digital Standards Board** – to provide member and officer oversight of significant Council initiatives which will impact customer experience, which includes a high-level overview of wider Council customer and digital projects;
- **Short-term improvements to the Council's website www.westminster.gov.uk** – setting out the approach and overview of the forthcoming planned improvements with a view for a complete overhaul; and
- **Developing an application (app) strategy** - to improve the customer experience and the Council's digital offer.

2 Customer and Digital Standards Board

2.1 The way the Council approves new customer access channels is currently under review.

2.2 Westminster City Council has formally adopted the Local Government Digital Service Standard (LGDSS – see <https://localgov.digital/service-standard>). This offers a common approach for local authorities to deliver good quality, user centred, value for money, digital services. It builds on the work undertaken by the Government Digital Service (GDS), widely seen as a model for best practise and has an understanding of user needs at the core.

2.3 It is proposed that all future digital initiatives of significance¹ to our customers will be required to demonstrate adherence to these standards at key stages.

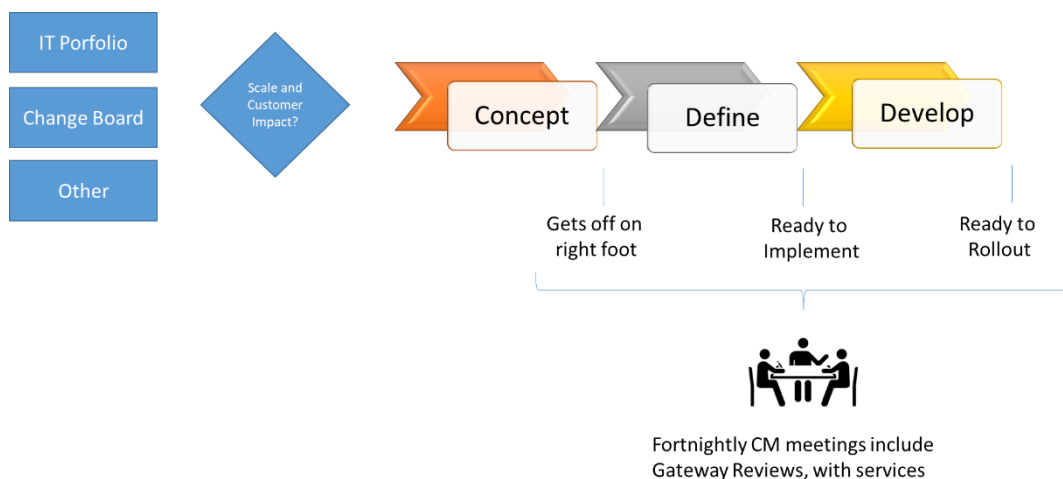
2.4 Before a new service is made live through the Council's customer access channels (web, telephony, face-to-face etc.) there should be formal approval that our target service standards are met. A Customer and Digital Standards Board has been established to carry out this function.

2.5 Project sponsors will present to the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Digital, and appropriate officers when:

- A concept has been developed but the definition phase has yet to commence (budgets not committed/procurement route not established);
- A project has been defined, including budget and procurement approvals but when build work is yet to commence; and
- A solution has been developed and service is ready to commence rollout to customers.²

¹ The governance is targeted at significant new services which impact our customers, rather than enhancements to existing, precise criteria to be developed

² Deployment approach including Alpha and Beta testing is likely to vary per project.



- 2.6 In addition to LGDSS, Westminster City Council has recently become a core member of the London Office of Technology Innovation (LOTI), a group of 13 Councils who are investing £30k per annum for two years to pool digital expertise and capacity as well as deliver better technology solutions through a broader collaborative approach.
- 2.7 The Customer and Digital Standards Board will be supported by officers from the shared IT service, digital communications, and where appropriate LOTI to ensure that LGDSS standards are met and thereby, to significantly improve the quality and cost effectiveness of customer services.
- 2.8 The Board will consider the Council's wider customer and digital programme and architecture, including but not limited to:
- Call centres;
 - CityWest Homes' customer and digital offer;
 - Customer Contact Centre Interface (CCCI);
 - MyWestminster/ReportIt;
 - Campaign Management (MS Dynamics);
 - Web Content Management System;
 - eNotifications;
 - Effective Neighbourhood Working;
 - Noise SMS;
 - FamilyStory;
 - Special Educational Needs (SEN) System;
 - Access to Services (Children's Services); and
 - Adults' Transformation.

3 Westminster City Council's website

- 3.1 In 2018 the Council commissioned customer research in the following five areas of the Council's website:

- Homepage;
 - 'Find It';
 - 'Apply and Pay';
 - 'What's New in Westminster'; and
 - 'Life Stage – Moving into Westminster'.
- 3.2 This research has resulted in a proposed new look and feel for the website homepage and recommendations to improve the existing navigation and page designs. It has further provided some evidence-based recommendations to inform future enhancements to 'Apply and Pay', 'What's New' and 'Moving into **Westminster**' functionality.
- 3.3 Work is now underway to scope out a timeline to deliver improvements, refreshing the site appearance and address some of the most significant identified issues with user experience. Longer term work is ongoing to deliver further improvements to the functionality of the website.
- 4 App Strategy**
- 4.1 In conjunction with implementing a new website and web hosting platform, we will be reviewing the integration of MyWestminster, Report-It and the wide range of existing third-party web applications which currently comprise westminster.gov.uk.
- 4.2 A more strategic governance and architecture approach is being developed which will provide a more consistent and better-quality experience for our online customers, making the best use of responsive web and mobile application features.
- 5 Call Centres**
- 5.1 The key focus for the coming months is the replacement of the current Lagan customer relationship management (CRM) system with a Microsoft Dynamics platform. The current system (Lagan) used by the Agilisys call centre will be replaced by our new Microsoft Dynamics platform. This will support the contact centre by providing operators with a greater accuracy of data to inform their responses, enabling the customer to receive a more effective service.

APPENDICES:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.