

Communities and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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Title:	Cabinet Member Update
Report of:	Councillor Paul Swaddle, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Digital
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Customer Services and Digital
Wards Involved:	All
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Report Authors and Contact Details:	Julia Corkey and Gerald Almeroth Ext. 3411

1. Cabinet Member Priorities

- 1.1** As mentioned in my previous report to this Committee, 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 strive to make digital the customers' channel of choice through automating back office integration and workflows as well as working to drive down costs for the Council.
- 1.2** To this end, this report provides an overview of the progress against my priorities since my last update to the Committee in September 2019.

2. Customer Experience and Digital Strategy and Programme

- 2.1** The Customer Experience and Digital (CED) Programme was established in Summer 2019 and has been working across the organisation to understand what the areas of priority need to be and how best the Programme can support service areas to deliver their digital ambitions. There are a number of workstreams which have been agreed and the plan for the Programme will be finalised in the coming weeks. The work is being overseen by the CED Board and the Customer and Digital Standards Board (CDSB).
- 2.2** One of the initial deliverables of the programme was the creation of a CED Strategy. The team have been engaging with internal and external stakeholders to make sure we understand what is important to our customers and have an evidence-based approach for the document. This is currently scheduled to go to Cabinet in the coming weeks.
- 2.3** A review of the Council's Contact Centres was one of the first projects to begin under the programme. The project has undertaken a piece of discovery work across our ten Contact Centres (four internal – Housing, Adult and Children's Social Care, School Admissions and the rest external contracts) to review demand, levels of satisfaction, cost and contracts. This intelligence is being used to develop recommendations for the future operating model to achieve highest levels of customer satisfaction.

Through its audit of contact, it also identified a large number of phone numbers and email addresses on our website which are not managed by the Contact Centres. This is an issue as this contact is not always the best route for customers (e.g. some listed numbers were no longer live), is not visible in our contact statistics and is not an efficient way of handling customer contact. The numbers and email addresses have been shared with service areas for review, with the ambition of significantly reducing the number of phone and email contact options on the website to improve customer satisfaction when customers contact us.

3. Westminster City Council's (WCC) Website

New website project

- 3.1** The Council website overhaul project has reached the end of a successful two-month discovery process. This involved in-depth internal and external

research, a deep-dive analysis of the existing WCC website, and engagement with residents (including live user testing).

- 3.2 This has resulted in robust recommendations to deliver a user-centric, seamless new website in 2020. We are in the process of confirming direction of travel from these recommendations, ensuring synergies with business requirements. A more in-depth delivery timeline for the new website will be available soon.
- 3.3 Meanwhile, strong progress is being made on two connected workstreams, running in parallel. The procurement process for the design phase of the new website (Alpha stage) is underway.
- 3.4 Also, a new, dedicated team to support the delivery of the new website's vastly-improved content has hit the ground running. Additional, focussed content specialists have been in place since November, and have already audited hundreds of pages.

Website top-level redesign

- 3.5 Members will be aware that a top-level only, Council website redesign project went live in Summer 2019. This provided 'quick win' visual changes to modernise our offer while we prepare for the bigger upcoming website overhaul.
- 3.6 The updated designs have presented an unmissable opportunity to test a different approach, and this has been invaluable during the Discovery Project. Analysis of the new homepage, as well as updated menu pages (e.g. for apply and pay, licensing and planning) has helped provide a clear, robust direction for testing during the Alpha stage.
- 3.7 There has been positive feedback to the new templates with regards to providing a cleaner, more contemporary look and feel that better reflects the WCC brand.
- 3.8 The Digital Communication team has also been switching the order of tiles and content in response to data (e.g. having seen that a proportionately larger number of users were clicking on a menu page option towards the bottom of a page, the tile was moved to the top for an easier user experience).
- 3.9 However, as expected, the new designs have highlighted areas for improvement, having been live for several months. This has fed into ideas for Alpha testing and will be addressed in the new website.

Website Re-platforming (Content Management System) Project

- 3.10** Alongside the discovery project, we are running the website re-platforming Content Management System (CMS) project - to ensure the Council has the best technical platform to support our future ambitions for our digital front door and that we are able to meet customer needs and interact with other social media channels.
- 3.11** High-level, bi-borough requirements around what a new CMS should do have been gathered. Both WCC and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) have contributed to this from the perspective of security, technical architecture, functionality and more.
- 3.12** The most-used CMS systems across the public sector have been analysed, and research carried out with leading councils, looking at the benefits and drawbacks of their platforms as well as analysing them against our own high-level requirements. From this, a recommendation of Drupal 8 was put forward, and ratified.
- 3.13** Procurement will begin imminently to find an agency to help us put together page designs and overall 'look and feel' for the new Westminster site. We will also be investigating the option of using already finished basic designs from other local authorities. Once this design phase is underway, we will begin a separate procurement exercise to find a partner to build the designs within Drupal 8, as well as host and support both council sites.

4. Westminster City Council's Social Media Strategy

- 4.1** An ambitious, 12-month social media strategy and action plan is being developed for the Council's corporate social media channels, which is to be finalised shortly.
- 4.2** The plan is broken down into three, six- and 12-month targets, to achieve overall objectives including boosting follower numbers across platforms, hiking up post engagement, continuing to transform content planning and quality, and being positioned to test innovative, and different approaches (including live streaming).
- 4.3** Much like the WCC website, there is concerted, strategic work ongoing to ensure social media does not sit in isolation. A user's full online journey (from social media to website, and beyond) will be increasingly considered

and reflected in cohesive and recognisable content across all digital platforms.

5. Council-wide Digital Projects

- 5.1** The Council has progressed a number of digital projects which intend to improve the customer experience with a new approach to customer services handling. I have provided highlights of projects that have been through the CDSB below:

Access to Services (Children's Services) - eFamilyHub and Multi-Agency Assessment and Referral Form (MAARF)

- 5.2** The eFamilyHub will be a digital portal created to support integrated working in the Council's Family Hubs and will be accessible to practitioners, partner organisations and families. Family Registration, Referrals, Family Plans and Plan Reviews will all be created online and be accessible to any professionals supporting the family, while the family themselves will be able to see their own Family Plan and any meetings to which they have been invited.
- 5.3** Creation of a new Multi-Agency Assessment and Referral Form (MAARF), providing a more accessible and more consistent referral route into Child Social Care and Early Help for external professionals. Integration of the form with Mosaic will also improve data quality and reduce time spent internally on data entry.
- 5.4** Both products will integrate with MyWCC accounts to provide Single Sign On (SSO) authentication. However, accounts will be distinct from those used for other Council services (such as parking permits or refuse collection) because of the sensitivity of the data.
- 5.5** Testing and training on the solution is underway with go-live to key users in the coming weeks. Access to eFamilyHub will be rolled out incrementally to families and partner agencies over the following weeks after go-live.

Active Westminster

- 5.6** The Active Westminster website will be revamped in the coming weeks with Book and Pay elements, enabled with Active Westminster discounts in Spring 2020.
- 5.7** Meanwhile, design work has progressed on the integration of the Active Westminster membership with the MyWCC account. Once deployed in Spring, this will allow customers to apply online for membership, potentially using a link to their online Council Tax record to automatically validate their

entitlement. We intend to implement this online application alongside the deployment of a digital card, thus removing the need for someone to keep a physical membership card on their person.

Customer Single Sign On (SSO) and Interface for Hope

- 5.8** This project follows on from the implementation of an online self-assessment form for customers who wish to complete a housing advice request and use a portal for continued access to the request. This service is accessed via the MyWCC account on our website. Furthermore, the solution will enhance the customer journey and user experience by allowing a single set of credentials to be used.

Libraries Volunteer Management System

- 5.9** The publication in April 2019 of the 'Connecting Libraries' review, identified the importance of the voluntary service in achieving the aims of the service moving forward. This project is the first small step in changing our Bi-Borough Library service, with a further programme of work being developed for approval early in the coming weeks.
- 5.10** The Bi-Borough Library service have previously been managing external volunteers through data population of excel spreadsheets and processing of paper applications. With the use of volunteers becoming a growth area for the business, current processes are outdated. There are currently over 450 volunteers across the Bi-Borough Library service.
- 5.11** 'Better Impact' will provide the solution, which is both secure and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant. The system is expected to go-live in the coming weeks and will enable and empower volunteers to take direct responsibility for recording hours and activities.

Lisson Grove Server Migration

- 5.12** In support of our strategic evolution towards Cloud-based services, we will replace our on-premise servers at Lisson Grove with cloud-based Azure servers.
- 5.13** Cloudreach will lead on the implementation of the Azure servers, whilst providing guidance to our IT Infrastructure Team. Once the Azure environment is in place, we will update the Netloan and OneLog applications as well as deploying the 'next generation' of multi-functional self-service kiosks. This is expected to go-live in the coming weeks.

Live Streaming Planning Committees

- 5.14 The installation of new equipment and cloud services to enable live streaming and archive viewing of Planning Committee meetings, linked to Committee papers, establishes corporate capability for potential reuse for other Committee meetings.
- 5.15 The technology has been delivered; with officers currently testing, training and undergoing final configuration activities with a proposed go-live date in the coming weeks.

Mobile Working

- 5.16 This project will implement changes that will allow Council officers across a range of services to receive tasks, inspect and update cases on site using mobile capability. In doing so, this will reduce the administrative burden on officers, increasing productivity whilst improving service delivery.
- 5.17 The services include as part of this project are: Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs); Noise (Noise complaints; Smoke and Pollution); Health and Safety; Environmental Health; Environmental Sciences; Highways Licensing; Environmental Health Consultations; Residential; Food; City Inspectors and Trading Standards. This will be achieved via the deployment of handheld mobile devices and the use of Dynamic Resource Scheduling (DRS).
- 5.18 The contract to provide the solution has being awarded to Kirona. Kirona will deploy their application into the cloud and inter-connect to WCC via Virtual Private Network (VPN).
- 5.19 Each of the over 200 street-based operatives will be equipped with a handheld mobile device. The device will allow a user to process a case using only the mobile device, with no need to return to a Council office. DRS will ensure operatives are efficiently assigned tasks, based not just on skills sets, but their actual real-time locations.
- 5.20 The first deployment of handheld mobile devices and the use of DRS will be for the FPNs service, expected in February 2020.

Review of Evolve

- 5.21 The aim of the Evolve project is to replace the evolve form designer with the Dynamics 365 (D365) out of the box capabilities due to technical difficulties and problems with the supplier. Evolve provides the capability to create web-based forms that allow customers to report or request various services from pot holes to a missed bin collection.

- 5.22** The Evolve platform was implemented in January 2018 by Pythagoras as a form builder/account portal function interacting with D365. Its implementation was challenging with the resulting set of forms delivering a poor user experience and generating significant negative feedback from both internal and external stakeholders.
- 5.23** As part of the review of Evolve, in Phase One, the FixMyStreet (FMS) solution replaced many of the forms in August 2019. It also reduced the dependency on Evolve and is more cost effective.
- 5.24** Recently, as part of Phase Two of this project, all internal Evolve forms used by our Agilisys Contact Centres were replaced with D365 forms in late November 2019. This was followed by Drop One on Monday 2 December 2019. Drop One replaced all public-facing Evolve forms, including Noise, Food Safety, Recycling Bags, with D365 forms.
- 5.25** There has been a delay from the Idox team to direct the Planning Application form from 'Identity Server' to 'Active Directory Business-to-Consumer (B2C)', however this has not prevented user accessibility. We are therefore going to keep one component of Evolve running until the end of January 2020 to allow the Idox Team to complete the work.

6. Contact Centres

- 6.1** Since my last report to the Committee, I have now included a breakdown on Contact Centre performance (see Figure 1). This will be built upon over the coming months to give a more comprehensive view of performance.

Figure 1: Contact Centre Performance (November 2019)

	Volume of Calls Answered November 2019 (+/- since last month)	Percentage of Calls Answered November 2019 (+/- since last month)	Target Calls Answered	Average Wait Times November 2019 (+/- since last month)	Target Wait Time	Average Handle Time November 2019 (+/- since last month)	Target Handle Time
Agilisys (in-hours)	18,606 (+ 0.04%)	96.60 (+ 0.40%)	95%	28 secs (+ 1 sec)	No target	4 mins 45 secs (- 27.3 secs)	No target
Agilisys (out-hours)	5,915 (+ 9.7%)	95.6% (- 2.2%)	95%	22 secs (- 12 secs)	No target	4 mins 13 secs (- 3 secs)	No target
Capita	17,166 (- 14%)	98% (+ 0.02%)	84% (+ 5.7%)	-	-	-	No target
Westminster Housing	18,417 (- 18%)	89% (- 6%)	92%	137 secs (+ 88 secs)	70% (in 30 secs)	8 mins 57 secs (- 15 secs)	No target
Parking (NSL)	13169 (- 859)	97.44% (+ 2.35%)	80% (in 30 secs)	22.24 secs (-15.08 secs)	0.12 secs	4 mins 56 secs (+ 28 secs)	No target
Housing Solutions (RMG)	5,466 (+ 15%)	93% (+ 23.5%)	89% (KPI is calls resolved, not answered)	1 min 2 secs (- 3 mins 26 secs)	No target	3 mins 41 secs (- 1 min 12 secs)	No target

Agilisys (In and Out of Hours)

6.2 In our Agilisys (in and out of hours) contact centres, our service levels are being met and both contact centres are performing well. Since November 2019, both in and out of hours Agilisys contact centres have been performing above target in terms of percentage of calls answered.

6.3 The replacement of the Evolve forms with the new D365 forms took place on Thursday 28 November. These forms have already made a positive difference to call handling for agents as they are much quicker to complete.

Westminster Housing

6.4 In November, the first phase of contact centre refresher training programme for agents were delivered with the following areas of focus: customer service – active listening, tone of voice and use action language; and knowledge – leasehold system navigation including swordfish, Graphical User Interface (GUI) account, and navigating existing service requests, product knowledge including service charges, major work and lastly roles and responsibilities. In the coming weeks, refresher training will resume with a focus on both empathy and Repairs knowledge.

- 6.5** Whilst the refresher training sessions were underway, percentage of calls answered, and average waiting times were impacted – this was due to a reduction in staff resource. At the same time, the Westminster Housing contact centre also saw a number of internal promotions with staff successful for other roles across Housing. Recruitment is underway to backfill these posts.

Housing Solutions (RMG)

- 6.6** A review of the RMG contact centre is underway following the implementation of the interactive voice response (IVR) in February 2019. The review will look at the impact of the IVR on the number of calls received by the call centre and how they can be better handled to reduce wait times, calls abandoned and improve customer service. It is part of a wider review of the call centre which is due for completion in Spring 2020.
- 6.7** There was a technical issue at the contact centre on Wednesday 23 October, wherein agents could not log on to the call centre system or were dropped off the system. This impacted negatively on the overall stats as only 54% of calls were answered on that day. Within the working day, the technical issue was resolved.

7. Broadband and Connectivity in Westminster

Council Housing Stock

- 7.1** In August 2019, the Council adopted a citywide wayleave approach to broadband for Council stock, with implementation subject to technical approval on a site by site basis. To date, we have connected 6,851 units across Westminster with work underway to install fibre infrastructure at Maida Vale Towers, Townsend, Wellington and Barrow Hill Estate. Once these works are complete, this will result in connectivity to 39% of Council housing stock.

Local Full Fibre Networks

- 7.2** Working alongside several partners and led by Transport for London, we were part of a successful bid for funding from the Local Full Fibre Networks Fund, to connect publicly owned premises across London through use of the tube network. A fibre network will be deployed in the Underground Tube tunnels to selected stations before being connected to public sector buildings.

- 7.3** WCC will be able to support the project through our other initiatives including the coordinated street works programme, Connect Westminster scheme, citywide wayleave and the existing dark fibre already in the ground.

Connect Westminster

- 7.4** Connect Westminster is a £2.8m scheme part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, which launched in August 2017. The scheme provides up to £2,000 towards the capital costs of upgrading Small and Medium Enterprises' (SME) broadband connections to superfast levels. The scheme is set to issue vouchers until the end of December 2020 or until the funding runs out.
- 7.5** To date the scheme has allocated just over £1.8m of the allocated funding to 151 registered suppliers to help upgrade their broadband connections to superfast levels across 761 businesses in Westminster.

Digital Street Markets

- 7.6** In November 2018 we applied for further European funding to run the Digital Street Markets Project which will provide free WiFi for all market traders on the Council run markets.
- 7.7** The project will run for three years and will provide WiFi networks at each street market run by WCC for the market traders. Alongside this, a digital skills training programme will also take place to support market traders and SMEs within Westminster to learn and develop the skills needed to make the most use of this new connectivity.
- 7.8** Subject to approval the project is expected to start in January 2020 and end March 2023.

National Gigabit Voucher Scheme

- 7.9** The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is part of the Local Full Fibre Networks programme, which launched nationally in March 2018 offering vouchers worth up to £2,500 to businesses across the UK.
- 7.10** To date the national scheme has delivered 862 vouchers to Westminster businesses totaling £1,734,273. Out of the 862 vouchers awarded, 461 Westminster businesses are now connected to broadband, with the other 401 businesses in the pipeline for connection. There have been 252 residential premises connected as part of this scheme with the other 610 being for businesses.

5G

- 7.11** In 2018, the Council awarded Ontix the Small Cell Concession contract for delivering connectivity through council street assets. Ontix are building 5G ready infrastructure for small cells, including a high capacity yet low latency Metrohaul transmission network to deliver 5G-ready connectivity for all operators. Ontix are also planning to deploy over 100 small cells in and around Trafalgar Square and Victoria during the 2019/20 financial year. This will put WCC at the forefront of small cell deployment.
- 7.12** In addition, Ontix have also recently deployed a point to point wireless solution on Berwick Street. This was a location that has proved difficult to serve by fibre providers due to the active street market. However, numerous small businesses are now in receipt of 300Mbps symmetrical services. This is an approach that will be replicated in hard to serve areas as it is capable of delivering services of up to 1Gbps.