

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	14.
Date:	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	Status	Open
Category	2. Decision within the functions of Executive		
Subject:	Channel Strategy 2011-2013		
Report by:	Head of Customer Service and Performance		
Other Officers Involved	Extended Management Team. Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager. Head of Democratic Services. Head of Joint ICT. Various Officers in CSPD.		
Director	Chief Executive Officer		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor E. Watts, Leader of the Council		

#### **RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS**

The Channel Strategy contributes to the following corporate plan aims:

**CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES** – Providing excellent customer focused services

**SOCIAL INCLUSION** – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning.

#### **TARGETS**

It is specifically related to the following target in the approved Corporate plan:

Design services to meet the needs of customers

- Produce a strategy detailing customer contact methods and implementation plan by December 2011.

#### **VALUE FOR MONEY**

The strategy details the broad principles for the ways in which we will deliver our services through a range of contact channels that provide better value for money, are more accessible and are designed with the citizen in mind.

## **THE REPORT**

Since 2010 there have been a number of national reports produced encouraging Councils to address the issue of channel shift and customer contact. By 'channels' we mean the methods by which public services are delivered and by which the public has contact with us, (be that via telephone, online, in person, or via other means). These channels are a critical part of public service provision. There is also an ongoing impetus for these channels to be managed effectively and efficiently to drive both continuous improvement and savings.

In particular the Local Government Contact Council\* produced a strategy template for use by Councils addressing channel shift. Surrey County Council acted as a pilot authority to produce the first strategy using the agreed model. The template has since been adopted as the industry model. The draft strategy attached has been developed using the Surrey model. Some areas have been streamlined to remove duplication and make it more manageable.

The concept of developing a Channel Strategy is being explored by the three authorities within the Joint ICT arrangement and by Chesterfield Borough Council. However all the authorities are at very different stages and it has been agreed that it is not appropriate at this point to have a joint strategy. Once approved the Bolsover strategy will be shared with our partners to aid learning and the sharing of knowledge.

The strategy provides clarity on the ownership of different channels across the Council and sets out improvement actions over the next two years. The strategy will need to be kept under review as technologies change and the implications of the Strategic Alliance become clearer.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on the strategy. No adverse impact has been identified as the strategy is strong on accessibility and social inclusion. The views of local equality groups will continue to be sought as the strategy develops.

The draft strategy was shared with Extended Management Team on 27.10.11. It has been to ICT Strategy Group on 2.11.11 which was attended by three Cabinet members. It has been to Strategic Alliance Management Team on 3.11.11. The draft strategy was presented to Improvement Scrutiny Committee on 21.11.11 and no amendments were requested.

\* The Local Government Contact Council reports to the Local Government Delivery Council and Cabinet Office Contact Council. The Local Government Contact Council meets monthly and has senior representatives from customer service departments in local government from all UK regions as well as from key sector and central government groups. The remit of the group is to share best practice, form a link between local and central government in matters relating to customer contact and to have oversight of local government customer contact activity.

## **ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The contents of the draft Strategy.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: Any additional financial requirements which emerge as a result of this strategy will be built into an appropriate business case for consideration.

Legal: None

Human Resources: Any development implications will be built into learning and development plans.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Executive receives and approves the Channel Strategy 2011-2013.**

## **REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION**

Decision within the function of Executive.

ATTACHMENTS: Yes

FILE REFERENCE: Channel Strategy 2011-13 (final)

SOURCE DOCUMENT: Channel Strategy 2011-13 (final)