Contents

Annexe 1- Customer Insight

Information obtained from the office for national statistics website shows that across all age groups and all sectors of the population, more of us are using technology to conduct our business – personal and professional. 86% of the UK's population now accesses the Internet compared to 82% in 2011.

1.1 Digital Exclusion

People who are digitally excluded are those that potentially would not be able to access online services either because they don't have access to a computer or Internet through a mobile device or because they have never used the Internet before for other reasons.

It is important to know information about the residents of Huntingdonshire in order to understand whether or not migrating services online has the potential to digitally exclude residents depending on their age or personal situation such as income or disability.

Although the fastest growing age bracket, with an increase of 10% from 2011, the most significant group of people who are potentially excluded is the over 75's, as in the first quarter of 2013, only 34.5% of this age group had accessed the internet before, so we need to consider this when considering moving services online.

1.2 Digital inclusion

More people are using the web – and more people are using different devices to use it.

This makes the web more accessible as you don't need a PC and using the web is easier (usually by using touch-screen devices).

In 2012, 51% of adults used a mobile phone to access the Internet. This is more than double the estimate of 24% for 2010. The two youngest age groups (16 to 24 and 25 to 34) both reported mobile phone Internet use above 80% in 2012. While still reporting the lowest usage, those aged over 65 have shown a four-fold increase in mobile phone Internet use from 2% in 2010 to 8% in 2012.

Annexe 2 - Breakdown of customer channels

1.2.1 Primary Channels

1.2.2 Web

The web channel includes all services requested, reported, and submitted on line. It also includes all information provision provided on the website. This is managed by IMD.

The website is arguably the most important customer channel with an average of 4000 visits every day. As per Socitm's[1] 2012 rating, HDC's website is amongst the top 12% of District Council websites in the UK. It is a powerful tool for customers to gain access to services immediately, when they want them, 24 hours a day. It is the main channel that customers use to gain information from us, but it could be utilised more for transactions as it is the cheapest customer channel. Customers are becoming more digitally competent and increased usage of mobile devices means that more people are getting online and expecting us to deliver services in this way. IMD has a strategy for the website, and we will link in with this to help the website to deliver services to the public.

Customer Services key objectives for supporting the website channel 2013-18

- Work with the web team and web authors to ensure that the content of the Council's website is written in plain English, making it concise and simple and use 'top tasks' based on real search volumes and trend data.
- Encourage services to comply with a corporate approach to ensuring the information on the website is of a high quality, relevant, up to date and can be easily found and utilised by the public.
- Analyse volume/ trend information to ensure that most widely used pages/ most searched for services are prominent.
- Customer Service Advisors are fully confident in using the website and it becomes their primary tool when dealing with customers. This will enable to them to pick up on errors quickly and will also then give them the confidence and knowledge to 'sell' the website more to customers.
- Once we have achieved integration of our online services and more services available on line, we will launch a large scale marketing campaign highlighting the services available online. (We may be able to target customers that are likely to take up the service based on customer insight data).
- Consider partnership working to help customers use online services via libraries and other government organisations.
- Ensure the website works well on all forms of device, including phones and tablets as all good websites work well on all devices.
- Look into how we can utilise the website and emerging technologies to engage with customers and help them to use online facilities such as web-chat.

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[1] Socitm is the membership association for all ICT professionals working in local authorities and the public and third sectors, and suppliers to those sectors.

- Consider having a resource within Customer Service dedicated to helping services develop customer-focussed content for the website and on-line transactional services and becoming the link between the Customer Services team and the more technical web team.

1.2.3 Telephone

This channel includes all calls received within the Call Centre and directly within Council service areas. This also includes answer phone messages and automated phone lines.

Some generic service telephone numbers are directed straight to the call centre are: Switchboard, Housing, Planning, Operations, Elections, Pest Control, Street name and numbering and Payments.

- The Call Centre deals with over 140,000 calls per year. The calls that are received within the Call Centre are measured, reported and recorded, with appropriate quality assurance assessments.
- Approximately 65% of calls are resolved at the first point of contact.
- The average length per call has increased from 130 seconds in 2010 to 166 seconds in 2013.
- Leisure also has its own call centre.
- Customer satisfaction for the year 2012-13 for the Call Centre reported an overall satisfaction rate of 97%

Automated lines

Automated phone payment line dealt with 19,563 payment calls in 2012/13.

Other Telephone Calls

There are also a substantial amount of additional calls that are received within the Council spread amongst other service areas. It is more difficult to measure the volumes and abandoned call rate for these calls. We do not know the cost per call for these contacts and there is no speed of answer targets for these additional volumes. There are also areas within Council where mini call centres have been established using hunt group technology.

Key Objectives for telephone channel 2013-18

- Continue with integration of services into the Call Centre where appropriate to maximise the amount of enquiries that are resolved for the customer during the initial phone-call without needing further calls or transfers. This will relieve the burden on other Council service areas and create efficiency and capacity.
- Create a business case for integrating more systems into the CRM system to reduce the amount of systems used by advisors. This would reduce call lengths and enable the call centre to take on more services as they would have less IT systems they would need to use. Advisor training programmes should also take less time. These benefits would need to be balanced with the cost of integration.
- Consider a single published telephone number for HDC or routing all calls to the call centre via different numbers. If the call centre was empowered to deal with more enquiries and simple enquiries and transactions were directed to the web, there could be a strong argument to move to a single published number for all HDC services that would direct customers to the call centre. This would improve customer service due to the technical infrastructure the call centre has - all calls would be answered and a good percentage dealt with first time by the call centre. The call centre staff receive significant training and are monitored to ensure consistency and excellent customer service at all times.

- Telephone customers will be told about alternative methods of contacting the Council which could save them time and money. This will be completed via 'cross selling' of services e.g. if a customer calls for a transaction that is also available online or via the automated phone line, they will be made aware of this fact for the next time they wish to conduct the transaction.
- Investigate technology that allows home-working for telephone advisors. This may enable us to have a more fluid workforce and react quickly to peaks in demand.
- Consider again combining face to face and call centre operations to maximise the efficient use of staff resources and manage peak customer demand effectively.
- Work with Leisure to look again at whether a separate call centre is the right option for Leisure calls.

1.2.4   Face to Face

This channel encompasses all of the face to face Customer Service Centres and Leisure Centres.
- Customer Service Centres are utilised for the most complex customer enquiries such as Housing and Benefits. We need face to face services to speak to customers in person about personal issues and options that are imperative for quality of life. They also need to gather evidence and information from customers to support claims.
- The Customer Service Centre in Huntingdon deals with 3330 visits per month. This is primarily Council Tax, Benefits and Housing customers but also takes payments and deals with Licensing and Planning enquiries.
- The remote Customer Service Centres (St Neots, Yaxley and Ramsey) deals with these services but also a wide range of other services. St Neots deals with 1016 enquiries per month and Ramsey and Yaxley deals with 437 per month.
- The average length of a single visit in Huntingdonshire has increased from 10:35 in 2010 to 13:15 in 2013.
- Problems resolved at first point of contact is not currently measured at the Customer Service Centres, but as our face to face facilities deal with less services than the call centre, they tend to offer a more holistic service to the customer and first time resolution rates for customers can be estimated to be very high.
- We have leisure centres at Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives, Ramsey and Sawtry.

Face to face service through our CSC's is the most expensive customer contact channel so we need to ensure that they are reserved for the more needy residents of Huntingdonshire and to deal with complex cases. There is less scope to migrate face to face customers to cheaper channels due to the complexities of the enquiries, but there is still some scope for efficiencies such as migrating simpler transactions to self-service, such as checking in to see an advisor and making a payment. There is also potentially more we could do to use insight data to determine where in the district face to face services are most needed and then look at what technology we could use to provide face to face services in community buildings in these areas.

Key Objectives for face to face channel 2013-18

- Roll the CRM out to the Customer Service Centres.
- Investigate technology which could be made available in outlying locations to deliver services in the community. This could include self-service computers and touch screen pods in existing public sector buildings such as libraries, leisure centres, community centres and GP surgeries.
- Face to face customers to be informed of the most efficient methods of contacting the Council to save them time and money. This will be completed using self-service computers and

telephones within existing face to face facilities where customers will receive demonstrations of how web and telephone services can be accessed.

- Research ways of reducing staffing needs on reception such as self-service check in computers and/ or payment kiosks.
- Investigate alternative, more customer focused premises for our Customer Service Centre in St Neots and Yaxley.
- Investigate feasibility of integration of partner services into the Huntingdon Customer Service Centre to make it a multi-agency facility, rather than principally delivering Council services. This will encourage inter-agency working, which is more efficient for the customer and the organisations involved.
- There are no plans to close any of the remote Customer Service Centres as we are a rural district and therefore recognise that customers who live far away from Huntingdon who require face to face services need to be able to do so.

1.2.5 Home visits

It is not currently possible to provide appropriate technology for all staff that complete home visits to allow them to complete their work while on the move due to constraints with the 3G network (as Huntingdonshire is a rural district). This is something that may change in the life of this strategy and should be reviewed if the 3G network is upgraded.

1.3 Other channels

1.3.1 Email

The email channel encompasses all emails received into the Council, whether to the generic email address received by Customer Services or directly to a Council Service Area. We receive 17,307 emails per year into the three main generic mailboxes.

- Ensure that a high proportion of customer service advisors are trained to deal with emails coming into HDC.
- Conduct detailed analysis of the emails we receive into the generic mailboxes to determine how best we can serve customers I.e. create e-forms for popular email requests, add more information to the website according to requests or make information more prominent.
- Improve the service level for emails to introduce more consistency between service levels for the different contact channels.
- Explore opportunities for improving the way we deal with emails in the new CRM system including moving to a more e-form email environment where customers will need to be more specific about what an email is regarding in order for us to route it more quickly/ accurately and offer FAQ's instead of emailing.

1.3.2 Social Media

The social media channel includes all services that are accessed via a social media outlet such as Facebook, Bebo or Twitter. Social media is managed by the corporate office who have recently released a social media policy. Internationally, corporate use of social media has evolved over the past few years and is no longer purely a marketing tool for communicating with customers. For HDC, It is becoming a channel that some customers are choosing to use to do business with us. It is in our best interest to react and embrace this shift as it is an on-line channel that we can use to engage with customers, and it is also gives us an opportunity to advise customers to self-serve on our website if

they need to find information or complete a simple transaction. This will be especially useful as we increase our on-line provision of services over the life of this strategy.

Customer Service's key objectives for supporting the social media channel 2013-18

- Work with corporate team to make the most of social media. Understanding the uses of social media:
    - to market and promote council activities,
    - to market and promote on-line services,
    - to respond to customer service enquiries,
    - to consult with customers,
    - to proactively communicate with customers to reduce avoidable contact.
- Create a business case for customer services to share the monitoring of social media accounts with the corporate office and look after some of the generic HDC social media accounts. Customer Service staff can then respond instantly to requests from the public and/ or advise others from back offices to reply to posts. This could involve integrating social media sites into the CRM system.
- Increase reputation of HDC by proactively using social media to post information about topical issues and signpost customers to online resources.
- Proactively market and promote new on-line services and features of our website.

1.4 Social media may give us an opportunity to engage with on-line users of our services which could give us resource in terms of testing new on-line provision of services and gaining valuable feedback.

1.4.1 Text Messages

This encompasses all inbound and outbound text messaging within the Council. This is not a channel that is widely used at the moment, but could be utilised further to deliver real-time updates to customers on their outstanding service requests and to issue reminders.

1.4.2 Post

The post channel includes all inbound and outbound post received and distributed within the Council. Incoming post is a mediated channel that requires human intervention. Some of our outgoing post now does not require human involvement, but is costly to the council due to postage charges.

Post has been dealt with more efficiently at HDC since 2008 with the launch of our off-site document centre and improvements in the ways we electronically store our data. Outgoing post in particular has become streamlined as processes now involve outgoing documents to be processed by the document centre and posted out automatically with vastly reduced human contact.

This channel is impacted when the council makes improvements to processes and successfully migrates them online. For example, since the council stopped advertising post as a method of payment, we receive 10,000 less cheques per year through the post compared to 2009/10[2].

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[2] In 2012/13, HDC received 20510 cheques through the post compared to 31974 in 2009/10.

1.4.3   Smart Phone Applications

This channel includes all Council services accessed through devices such as Iphones, BlackBerrys and Androids.

1.4.4   Fax

This channel incorporates all customer facing fax facilities operated within the Council.

Annexe 3 - Key Activities/ Deliverables

1.1 Understanding our customers – customer insight

Customer Insight is understanding the organisation's customers based on their behaviour, experiences, beliefs, needs or desires.

Councils that understand their customers are better placed to be able to meet their needs. This leads to more satisfied customers and lower costs, including 'getting it right first time' which reduces unnecessary demand because of avoidable or unnecessary repeat contact. A better understanding of our customers will also help us to remove any barriers which result in some sectors of our community being harder to reach and not being able to access services. In order to fully harness the power of customer insight we must first understand the value of the data we hold. Data and information is available from a range of different sources which can be used to find out more about the customers we serve. Some key information about our customers can be sought from a range of sources, for example;

- Council data. This comes from the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and other back office systems and can then be layered on GIS mapping to show patterns and areas of demand.
- Cambridgeshire Insight. (www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk)
- Front line staff in all departments are a key source of customer insight. They speak to customers every day and receive feedback on the services that are accessed or those that are not available. This includes staff working on face to face, telephone and web basis.
- Surveys and consultation exercises.
- Customer journey mapping. This can achieved through the tracking of real customers journeys, noting durations and applying costs to each stage.
- Complaints and Compliments. These provide direct feedback that relates specifically to the delivery of council services. It is key that the Council learns from complaints and compliments when developing services for the future.

In order to ensure that customer insight is used effectively to drive the future development of the Council, it should be built into all decision and planning processes. By embedding customer insight in the processes and procedures that surround Council service developments, we can ensure that change is driven by the needs and desires of customers and not based on assumptions and perceptions of staff.

1.2 The Customer Service Delivery Model

This delivery model shows how Huntingdonshire District Council plans to deliver services for its customers. The demand element of the graphic illustrates customer contact. A channel is the name given to the various ways in which customers can access the Council's services e.g. by telephone, face to face, through the website. The size of the channel's rectangles depicts the comparative volume of contacts we aspire to achieve through each channel. The Council's channel annexe document aims to encourage customers to use the most efficient and appropriate channel to access the service they require. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Marketing a range of access channels.

- Letting the customer know about other ways of accessing services e.g. when a customer calls the call centre they are made aware that the service they have requested is available online so that they could choose to use the web site in the future.
- By making sure that services are available on appropriate, efficient and easy to use access channels.
- By ensuring that customers have confidence that the same level of service is available through each channel and that requests are dealt with consistently.
- By ensuring that customers receive appropriate and timely feedback and confirmation that their request has been received. This is particularly important with self –service channels e.g. in online transactions.
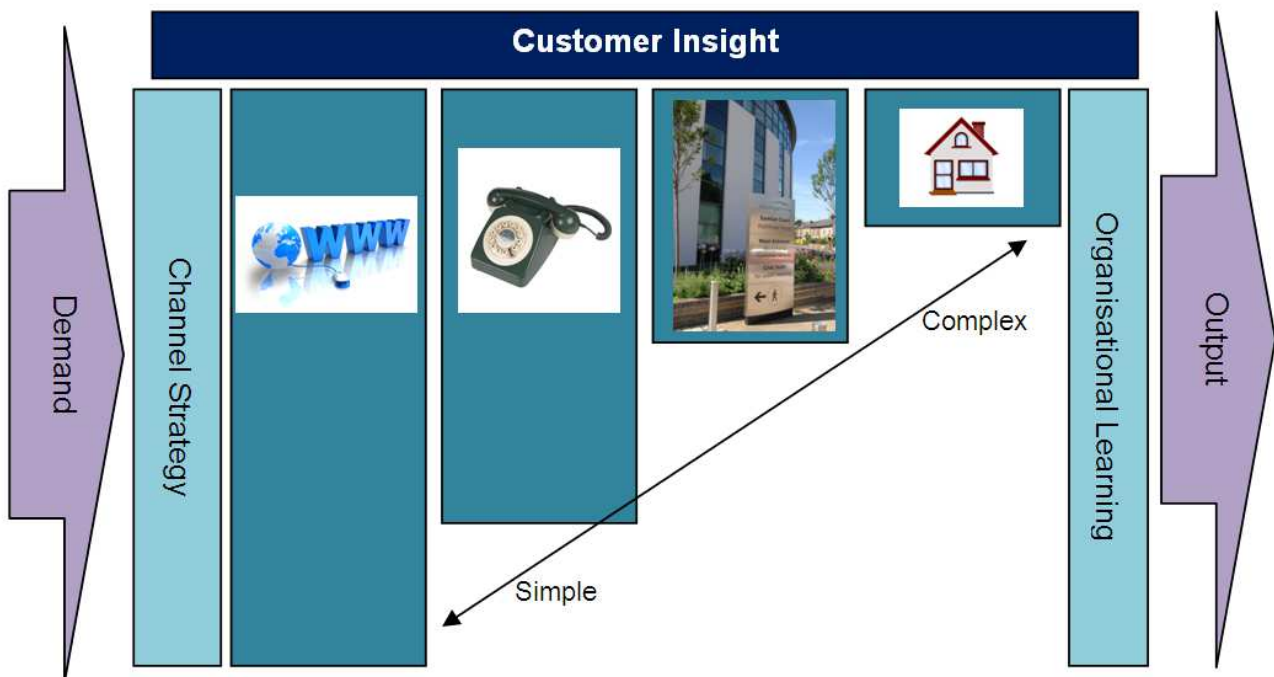
For the majority of customer transactions the most efficient and appropriate communication channel will be via the Council's **website**. As the transactions become increasingly complex they will be more suited to the **telephone**, then **face to face** at one of the council's Customer Service Centres and finally in a resident's **home**. Underpinning this delivery model is Customer Insight, which informs all elements of the process. It has the potential to improve customer satisfaction by tailoring services to customer need and also helps to determine which customers will have the ability to move to more efficient channels.

Through the implementation and further development of the delivery model, the council anticipates a shift in customer demand from mediated, to non-mediated channels. Mediated channels require a level of staff intervention and include the call centre, face to face contact, email or letter. Non-mediated channels are generally self-service by the customer and include the website, external websites and the automated phone payments line.

This will provide significant benefits to the customer and the Council. In the majority of cases the customer will be accessing services in a way that best suits their needs, saving them time and money
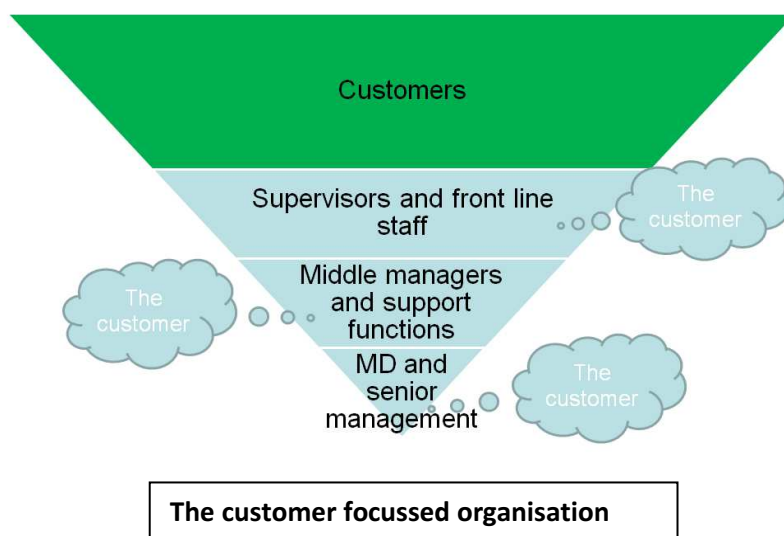
(in phone bills and travel costs). It will also save the Council money, as self-service channels are significantly cheaper than the mediated equivalent. More information about this can be found within the channel migration section in annexe 4.

Through the shift to more cost effective channels, the Council has the potential to make significant savings. In addition to the financial benefits associated with the move to non-mediated contact channels, there is an additional environmental benefit. Increasing online services will reduce the amount of paper coming into the Council as well as reducing the need for customers to travel to access Council services, thus creating a 'greener' footprint.

In order for the delivery model to be work efficiently each customer access channel must be developed appropriately. More information and a development plan for each key channel is outlined in annexe 2.

1.3 HDC staff are the key to delivering good quality customer service

Quality customer services cannot be provided to the public without quality HDC staff. Highly engaged and empowered staff perform better at work and also have reduced sickness levels which benefits the entire organisation and the customers.

Customers

Supervisors and front line staff

The customer

Middle managers and support functions

The customer

MD and senior management

The customer

The customer focussed organisation

There are some key things we can do to help our people perform as well as they can at work.

- Set clear objectives for staff to work towards. The aims and values of the organisation and service are clear and embedded.

- Continue to provide a great environment to work in and look after our staff the way we expect them to look after our customers.

- Encourage staff to view potential threats as opportunities and coach them to see the positive results of potentially negative situations.

- Engage with staff when making decisions so that they can form part of the solution and take ownership of them with managers.

- Empower staff according to what motivates them. Trusting capable staff to do more is mutually beneficial.

- Strive to remove stressors from the workplace. E.g. if there is too much work to do, help staff to prioritise workloads.

- Provide effective training and support to all staff.

- Recognise staff for great work and when they come forward with ideas for improvement.

1.4 Bringing together services

While it is important that customers appreciate the distinctions between providers of services, increasingly they are looking for simple or single points of contact. The Council already shares some elements of our customer service delivery for the benefit of our customers. Where practical, we will engage with partners and other agencies to try to deliver an improved service. This will mean customers can access a number of services in one location. The Council will need to share information with partners, and this will be encouraged.

Annexe 4 - Channel Migration

1.1 Introduction

At a time of financial austerity, Channel migration offers opportunities to save money and/ or cope with increasing demand without increasing resources. It also makes business sense to look at all customer processes and transactions to determine whether simplifications and improvements can be made as well as becoming more automated for the customer and the council.

Our vision is to move towards where our services will be not only be accessible online through computers and mobile devices, but customer will chose to use self-service channels first when contacting the council. We will prioritise the services which offer us the greatest savings and deliver against customer needs between now and 2018; recognising that our customers are already requesting for more services to be online. The rollout of superfast broadband across the district by 2015 will ensure that more residents have access to acceptable Internet speeds which will no doubt contribute to the success of this plan.

We will put our customers at the heart of all changes ensuring that they are as user-friendly as possible. At the same time we will not forget those who find it difficult and challenging to use the internet and strive to make provision for them to access services.

1.2 Purpose

- To outline broad principles for the ways in which Huntingdonshire District Council will provide services through a range of contact channels that provide better value for money, are more accessible and are designed with the customer in mind.
- To provide an action plan that will put this into practice and eventually become business as usual. To encourage all staff within the organisation to think about how they can provide their services online; including up-to-date online content and information and publicising their online channels first.

It is important to bear in mind the target audience's access to technology, the type and complexity of the contact, their personal preferences as well as their skill sets when selecting channels. There is information about volumes of customer contact through different channels within Annexe 2.

This document acknowledges the Council is not starting from scratch; there are many good examples where channel migration has already been achieved with great success. This strategy provides an opportunity build on those successes and endorses a corporate approach for what can be achieved in a more systematic way that:
- delivers consistency,
- supports our values and behaviours,
- drives down costs and
- is sensitive to the needs and preferences of our customers.

1.3 Key Considerations

The need for insight

The process of developing and implementing a channel strategy needs to be guided by insight specifically relating to:

- The customer.
- The services HDC is providing and each service area in question.
- The current delivery channels at our disposal as well as those that may be available to be/ need to be used in future.

It is also important to understand the wider online services market, as expectations of online services are driven by customer experiences of using similar services of other organisations.

- Different services can require different channels due to their nature. Different service and processes need to be looked at objectively and sensibly to decide what can be migrated to other channels.
- Channel migration and integration of systems costs money. Careful cost benefit analysis should be undertaken which will include looking at volumes and complexity. More information about integration of systems can be found in Appendix 1 of this annexe.
- Channel migration is ever- evolving; it requires continuous improvement and it needs to be constantly reviewed and monitored as well as keeping abreast of emerging technologies and developments.
- 'Channel migration' is a technical business term that may not resonate with customers. We will refer to channel migration as 'self-service' when promoting migrated services to customers.

Encouraging customers to use self-service

Making services available on-line so that customers can self-serve costs money but it does have the potential to help the organisation save money as integrated processes do not need human intervention. However, savings can only be realised if we achieve the uptake we require to realise the return of investment. It is crucial that online facilities are marketed and promoted and that customers are actively encouraged to use these channels to ensure that they are worth-while.

1.4 Organisational challenge

In considering a channel strategy, there is often a considerable challenge and change to existing organisational practices. HDC has already experienced this as several improvement projects involving channel migration have already been undertaken and benefits are being realised. This channel strategy is fundamentally about coordinating these efforts, understanding the benefits, learning from what we do and ensuring that we move forward in a clear and consistent manner. The channel strategy needs to become an integral part of the structure of the organisation and the way the objectives of the organisation are realised. It cannot be retro-fitted onto existing practices and so is likely to require or precipitate organisational change.

It may also require questioning current uses of existing channels and challenging this to get the most out of them. For example; social media is an emerging customer contact channel and is becoming the preferred method of contact for some customers to interact with the council, rather than to just receive information from us. It is therefore important that over the life of this strategy, we consider sharing responsibility with the Corporate Team for social media and we work together to get the most out of this important channel.

The action plan for channel migration can be found within Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 - Integration

Integration is the key to web transactions (not providing information). You will often hear customer channel costs quoted, with a substantial difference between face to face (traditionally the most expensive) and web (potentially by far the cheapest.)

In 2011 SOCITM[3] released the following cost per transaction figures. These figures are widely used and accepted by government and local authorities and are also quoted by the DCLG.
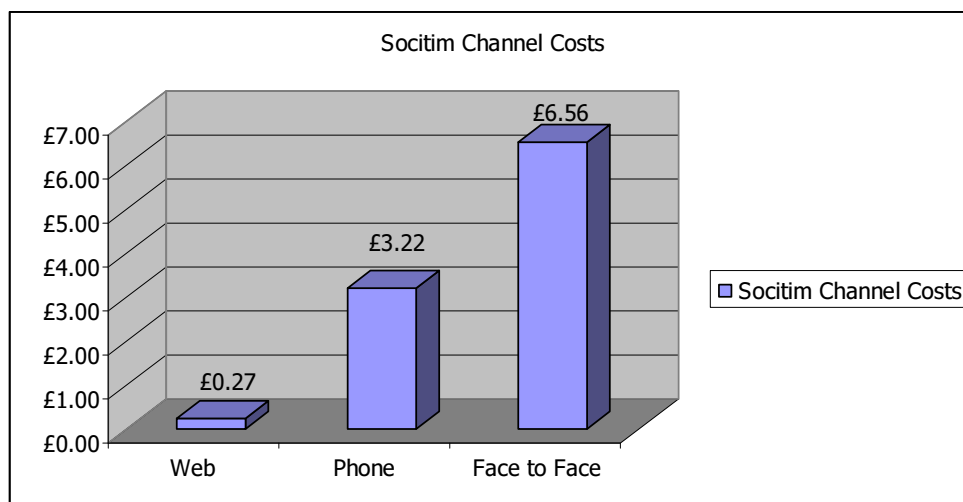
However, the web figure is only this cheap if full integration is achieved with back office systems and there is no manual intervention required. If there is no integration, costs for web transactions will generally be the combined cost of web and telephony (so £3.49 in the case of SOCITM's example costs). Integration is expensive, so this will need to be carefully weighed up compared to the projected benefits we would realise.

Therefore the channel strategy's purpose is to ensure that there is a clear drive and plan within the organisation to widen and improve the choice of channel access to citizens, make sure there is a widespread awareness of the additional and improved channels and reassure customers of the efficiency and convenience of the new forms of service access.

If the strategy is implemented successfully then customers will have the ultimate choice in how they would like to access their services and if trust and awareness are built correctly then in the majority of cases customers will choose the efficient and convenient methods, which will also be the most cost effective.

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[3] Socitm is the membership association for all ICT professionals working in local authorities and the public and third sectors, and suppliers to those sectors.

Appendix 2 - Channel Migration action plan 2013-18

Objective	Action	By whom	By when	Result
Understand where we are now in order to baseline and learn lessons	Collate baseline information about what channel migration work has been undertaken and what benefits have been realised. Monitor and manage these to ensure they continue to deliver and keep improving and continue to meet customer needs	Customer Service Manager	December 2013	
Create a business case for a channel migration project	Content: • Use case studies from HDC and other authorities to demonstrate how savings can be achieved through channel migration. • Submit an invest to save bid for project • Project team to be established • Initiate/ continue phasing out extremely manual processes where possible (e.g. postal application forms, cheques). • Look into what processes we could make digital by default. For example, parking fines, residents permits • Utilise the new CRM to introduce e-forms that are integrated with back offices to reduce re-keying. • Assess which processes we could offer online as an end-to-end customer transaction. • Investigate cost/ benefit of introducing self-service kiosks in CSC centres. Could be purely payment kiosks or also for booking in and other services. • Strive to become digital by default for all operations/ streetscene contacts. • Payments – reduce the amount of mediated payments we take at HDC	Customer Service Manager/ IMD	July 2014	

Objective	Action	By whom	By when	Result
Increase customer choice about the way they contact us by assessing each customer process against the different channels and actively promote the most appropriate channel(s) for each one.	Re-visit and resurrect the benchmarking work undertaken in MyCouncil work looking at all customer processes and volumes for each to assess: a) What channels are currently used for each process. b) Identify potential channels for each process that will improve the customer journey and make the process more efficient. Volumes will help here (80/20 rule). c) Baseline and then continuously monitor so benefits/ savings/ achievements are visible.	Channel migration Project team	December 2014	
Increase customer satisfaction whilst reducing costs by efficient customer service to the public. Improve the customer journey and experience when contacting the council. a) By striving to resolve interactions at the first point of contact. b) By providing self service (where appropriate). c) By making each contact as efficient as possible.	Work with all managers of customer facing teams to get buy-in and support for this strategy and agreement to participate in activities. Critically assess each service that is dealt with by Customer Services and investigate as to whether the hand-off point can be moved to improve customer service and increase resolved at first point of contact. (Currently at about 60%, target tba). Encourage CSA's to occasionally use e-forms when logging SR's rather than internal CRM so that they have first-hand knowledge of what a customer uses when using e-form so they can make recommendations for continuous improvement and also gain the confidence to promote forms to customers to self-serve.	Channel migration Project team	June 2015	
Utilise social media channel as a customer service channel	• Work with the corporate team to decide a direction for how we utilise social media together. • Recognise social media as a customer service channel and	Customer Service Manager	June 2014	

Objective	Action	By whom	By when	Result
	monitor some accounts from Customer Service.			
Create business case for MyCouncil phase 2 project – which will include using authenticated accounts for customers to access secure information.	This could help deliver: • On-line annual canvass, even for changes. • E-billing for council tax. • Digital By Default - Housing benefit landlords – payments statements and letters. • Pre-populated fields in e-forms. • Proactive alert system. • Reporting system. • Reviewing status of outstanding SR's. • Relevant local information. Investigate joining up with CCC to offer a holistic MyCouncil service that would include county services as well. E.g. school admissions, library books renewals, reporting pot holes.	Customer Service Manager/ IMD	April 2015	
Maximise the website by critically assessing the whole site.	• Ensure all information is accurate, up to date, easy to understand (plain English) and easy to find. • Analyse volume/ trend information to ensure that most widely used pages/ most searched for services are prominent. • CSA's are fully confident in using the website and it becomes their primary tool when dealing with customers. They will also then have the confidence and knowledge to 'sell' the website more to customers. • Keep a close working relationship with IMD's web team. • Utilise the Socitim 'Better Connected' report to improve the website. Use the report as evidence to show managers to encourage them to improve their own areas of the web. (IMD do this).	IMD/ Customer Services staff	Ongoing	
Significantly reduce avoidable contact	Critically analyse avoidable contact reports and identify trends and address these by: a) Identifying areas and/ or services with high levels of AC and work	Customer Service Manager/ All	December 2014	

Objective	Action	By whom	By when	Result
	with these services and IMD to address the problems. b) Deciding on what is considered acceptable AC. E.g. If someone calls to speak to specialist EH officer but needs to leave a message due to the specialist being out on site, is that acceptable customer service/ avoidable? • Avoidable contact reports – give advisors an opportunity to comment on them before they are published so they contain more precise information – useful for management input and decisions about AC. • Do more to get involved in all written information that is communicated to customers from back offices. Ensure that letters are written in plain English, benefit statements and bills are understandable etc. • Investigate whether more services – or more of existing services, can be done within customer service to prevent having to attempt to hand off calls to back offices that are not available to take the call. Regularly review the operational agreements to assess whether hand-over is at the right place and what benefits we cold get by shifting this.	HDC Managers		
Become far more proactive with our customers to either prevent them having to contact us, or by encouraging the use of other channels during their contacts with us.	• Investigate ways to proactively contact customers with updates on their service requests and reported problems to avoid progress chasing. • Web – introduce a screen at call centre which shows google analytics – real time information about what customers are searching for at any one time so we have information about what customer's needs are and respond proactively in the appropriate way.	Customer Service Manager/ IMD	December 2015	
Make the most of opportunities generated by projects and initiative within the council.	• Keep a close working relationship with IMD to keep abreast of all projects within IMD's programmes and champion channel shift activities. • Customer service representatives must always be a part of	Customer Service Manager/ All HDC Managers	Ongoing	

Objective	Action	By whom	By when	Result
	projects that involve customers throughout the council and encourage channel shift.			
Promotion of self-service	Standardise the HDC email signature to ensure that they all look the same (professional) and also include the MyCouncil link for promotion of this online facility.	All HDC Managers	June 2014	
Acknowledge, catalogue and learn from past channel shift experience and manage these going forward.	• Ensure that all channel migration is managed, continually improved and monitored to ensure that we are still making the most of the infrastructure and channels we have put in place. • Ensure that not all effort we put into channel migration is centred around implementing the technology. If we are going to reap benefits, we need to continually promote online facilities and persuade customers to change their behaviour – which can be the most challenging element of channel migration.	Customer Service Manager/ IMD	Ongoing	

Annexe 5 - Achieving the customer service strategy 2008 – 2011

Huntingdonshire District Council Customer Service Strategy, approved in 2008, has been successfully achieved. In the past five years the way that customers can contact the Council, obtain services and information has been significantly improved –

- The 2008 strategy brought together the "front-office" services – Customer Service Centre, Call Centre and Community Information Centres under the management of the Customer Services Manager.
- The Call Centre provides access to many services such as Streetscene, Payments, Council Tax enquiries, Elections, Switchboard and many other services. As more services transfer to the call centre, direct dial volumes have decreased and these calls have become more focused on the complex, specialist calls, best dealt with by service experts.
- Face to face – The new purpose built Customer Service Centre in Huntingdon opened in February 2010 and is the first point of contact for all visitors to Pathfinder House. The Centre responds to enquiries about Payments, Planning, Building Control, Housing, Benefits, Council Tax and Electoral Services and many other services. There are also Customer Service Centres at St Neots, Ramsey & Yaxley which also provide a similar service. The range of services and information between these centres has been brought in line during the last few years.
- Budget savings – Customers Services like the rest of HDC have been through a budget saving exercise which involved analysis of the number of customers accessing services and the type of service used. Following this review St Ives Customer Service Centre has now closed and we have reduced staffing levels in St Neots and reduced opening hours in Ramsey & Yaxley.
- Customer Service Excellence award has been awarded to the whole Customer Service Team in recognition of continuous improvement, customer focused change and value for money.
- Levels of Avoidable Contact reduced from 1 in 3 in 2008 to 1 in 5 in 2010. (In 2012 though, it was once again 1 in 3).
- Mobile/flexible working has improved significantly with the roll out of My Office and Citrix which allows officers to access the network from most internet connected PC's, laptops and Macs and HDC have a mobile working strategy in place.
- Continuous improvements have been made to the council's website as a means of obtaining information about services. The Website has been developed to accommodate transactional services such as paying for services online, as well as providing access to a host of other information. Our website scored the highest customer satisfaction level of all District Council Websites in an independent survey in 2011. We've brought together information about a property or location into a single web page and this is called MyHuntingdonshire. This web page brings together information about planning applications, bin collection days, local councillor details and many other services that currently customers have to look across the site to find. 'Top tasks' have been implemented across the site, allowing speedier access to frequently used services. Also customers can 'rate this page' and feedback directly to officers how useful they've found the pages they used.