

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Decision Maker/Committee/Panel:</b>	Policy and Resources Select Committee
<b>Date:</b>	5 March 2020
<b>Title:</b>	The new approach for Improving Customer Contact
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Corporate Resources

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview to the Policy and Resources Select Committee on the approach being taken to improving customer contact within the County Council.

### Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Select Committee note the approach being taken to improving customer contact within the County Council.

### Contextual Information

3. Hampshire County Council is responsible for the delivery and provision of a wide range of services across the whole county, many of which are supported by Hantsdirect, a Council operated customer contact centre based in Fareham.
4. Hantsdirect was created in the year circa 2007, with the intention of providing the residents of Hampshire with a simpler way to contact the County Council, and to generate economies of scale from centralising a number of the councils services in to a single contact centre, thereby freeing up capacity within the front-line services.

5. Hantsdirect currently manage the vast majority of initial in-bound contact received by telephone and email for the County Council. However, the way in which Departments deliver their front-line services has changed over time, with more services and information, which Hantsdirect has traditionally provided access to, now being available and accessed on-line.
6. As this shift in channel choice and contact behaviour increases further (as residents make greater use of the digital channels and services which continue to be made available to them), this will change the current nature of their interaction with the contact centre. Hantsdirect is increasingly becoming the first point of contact for more complex enquiries and transactions, many of which then need to be handed across to the relevant department for resolution, thereby reducing the value the contact centre offered when it was originally created.
7. Seamless integration of 'first points of contact' into the council, with each department's service delivery model is important for a number of reasons; to enable the further achievement of efficiencies within their end-to-end processes, providing an opportunity to re-design contact services around each departments developing digital service offer, whilst also recognising the increasing expectations of our customers and the desire to drive an improvement in customer satisfaction.
8. It is therefore key that the County Councils contact model is fit for purpose for a changing future environment, and able to respond flexibly to the meet the differing requirements of each department.
9. It is also important to note that technology now available to support the provision and efficient management of each departments contact channels has changed (e.g. improved digital on-line transactions, telephony, email and web chat channels). Available functionality is now more advanced and agile in terms of how it can be deployed and supported, providing increased opportunities to consider alternative approaches to delivering contact services which sit around and across the Council.
10. Following the completion of a research-based project completed in 2018 (supported the consultancy arm of the Institute of Customer Service), the Corporate Management Team agreed a number of design principles that would underpin our future contact model. Further to this, it is proposed to disaggregate the Hantsdirect contact centre, and to reposition these contact services into each department's respective management structure, providing the foundation for them to redesign their broader contact strategies and operating models in the future.
11. A General Enquiries function would be retained within Corporate Resources to triage and support the redirection of these types of enquiries to the most

appropriate service. This approach will help the County Council to better understand demand failure into the new contact model, and further develop the insight available to inform further potential opportunities to improve customer satisfaction.

12. Employees within the Hantsdirect team are currently being consulted on the proposed changes, with the view that this would be implemented during May 2020.

## REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

### Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

### Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

It is not expected that the changes being introduced will have any impact on groups with protected characteristics.

*Name of project or proposal:* New approach for Improving Customer Contact

*Is this project a Transformation project? (required):* Neither T19 or T21

*Name of accountable officer (required):* Steph Randall

*Email (required):* [stephanie.randall@hants.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.randall@hants.gov.uk)

*Department (required):* Corporate Services

*Date of assessment (required):* 21/02/2020

*Is this a detailed or overview EIA? (required):* Overview

*Describe the current service or policy:* Hampshire County Council is responsible for the delivery and provision of a wide range of services across the whole county, many of which are supported by Hantsdirect, a Council operated customer contact centre based in Fareham.

*Geographical impact (required):* All Hampshire

*Describe the proposed change:* It is proposed to disaggregate the Hantsdirect contact centre, and to reposition these contact services and staff into each department's respective management structure. This change will not impact the way in which users currently contact the County Council.

*Who does this impact assessment cover? (required):* Service users

*Has engagement or consultation been carried out? (required):* No consultation has been undertaken with regard to the changes proposed as these will not impact the way in which users currently contact the County Council.

*Age (required):* Neutral

*Disability (required):* Neutral

*Sexual orientation (required):* Neutral

*Race (required):* Neutral

*Religion or belief (required):* Neutral

*Gender reassignment (required):* Neutral

*Gender (required):* Neutral

*Marriage or civil partnership (required):* Neutral

*Pregnancy and maternity (required):* Neutral

*Poverty (required):* Neutral

*Rurality (required):* Neutral

*Neutrality statement (required):* The changes proposed will not impact the current service provided to users, or the way in which they will contact the County Council.

*Any other brief information which you feel is pertinent to this assessment –*  
N/A