

Our Customer Transformation Strategy:

Re-imagined front doors for public services.

Customer centred delivery in a digital world: our re-imagined front doors

1. Purpose

- (i) Establishing our core principles for meeting customer needs
- (ii) Define, set and discuss our range of current front doors for public services
- (iii) Setting our foundations: identify what we really need in the future
- (iv) Gap analysis: defining what it will take to move from present to future delivery
- (v) Enabling the move from present to future – roadmap

2. Context

2.1 Our Councils recognise that there is a compelling need to rethink how we engage with our residents and businesses in a digital world by adopting consumer centric principles for effective customer service to support the delivery of our Corporate Plans. These principles are:

- A. **Re-imagined front doors** – our service engagement points are easy to use, designed around our residents and businesses and their needs, not our organisational structure
- B. **“Once and done” or “right first time”** – right outcome achieved without repeat referrals and the need for the customer to chase
- C. **Safeguarding** – we never compromise the safety of those for whom we are providing services and we meet our statutory obligations
- D. **Efficient and environmentally positive** – delivered in the most cost effective way for the councils whilst helping to tackle the Climate Emergency
- E. **Transparent** – how we deliver services is clear and understood by our customers
- F. **Accountable** – we take ownership of service fulfilment and ensure complaints and follow-up on commitments are dealt with quickly and properly

2.2 Currently, we engage with our customers in three main ways:

- Through our voice channels, mainly the various customer contact centres we have in our services and delivered on our behalf by our service providers (for instance Biffa for waste services or Greenwich Leisure for health and leisure services)
- Face to face through our public buildings, other physical points of presence (bus stops, street furniture) and via partner locations
- Digitally through our mobile, web and social media channels

2.3 Our residents and business also engage with us through more traditional channels (email and post) but we expect these to be picked by the services running the main customer

channels.

- 2.4 The digital story from other partially comparable industry sectors (finance, retail, transport) tells us these routes must not be explored in isolation to achieve effective service fulfilment on a “once and done” or “right first time” basis. They must be considered as part of the single customer journey to achieve exactly those outcomes driven by user centred service design.
- 2.5 To support this design process there are some foundations against which we can re-imagine our front doors using customer and digital principles, defined as:
- Voice services – setting our simple and complex services
 - Points of presence – matching geography with service demand and people
 - Digital – keeping it simple, clear, easy to use, accessible and relevant

3. Voice and Contact Centre Services

3.1 Current situation

3.1.1 A voice and contact centre is defined as a remote access point where a resident or business can complete a transaction with the councils or one of their delivery partners or gain information, advice and guidance using digital telephony. This can include automated as well as human interaction and covers both fixed and mobile platforms. This can include monitoring services and both push and pull engagement.

3.1.2 The council has a number of different contact centres:

- The main switchboard delivered by Capita
- The Revenues and Benefits service delivered by Capita
- The Councils' own customer service centre
- Biffa's contact centre
- Greenwich Leisure's contact centre

3.1.3 Each centre operates on a combination of corporate and discrete voice technology platforms and there are hand-offs between them some of them, based on complexity of service (Contact Centre to Revenues and Benefits for example).

3.1.4 These services provide a wide range and depth of provision, ranging from simple reporting through to complex assessments to provide support for our most vulnerable residents. For many, voice-based services remain the best method of engagement for reasons of accessibility and digital capability.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 There are a number of myths around what voice services actually are. The first of these is that this is about telephony. In fact, voice service provision now includes in-home and other device based interactive solutions (Alexa, Siri, Cortana), robotic process automation (RPA), voice to text and back again and smart TVs. The range of voice-based activities is only set to grow with more Internet of Things (IoT) based products coming to market.

3.2.2 The second myth is that voice is the preferred method for customers. This is entirely dependent on the quality of other services in terms of usability, availability and accessibility. Many contact centres now use RPA to stream calls and tackle the easy questions and they also integrate with other communications methods like web chat and Instant Messaging (IM) which tackles the third myth: that contact centres are call centres. Contact centres are in fact unified communications hubs that span the full range of digital capabilities and commonly provide two-way communications services, with monitoring and follow-up activities included to maximise the productivity of the staff during quiet periods.

3.2.3 Focussing on those capabilities and to maximise the effectiveness of a contact centre, the unified communications solutions should be a single technology platform spanning a number of physical services. This will ensure a consistent experience and provides the ability to seamlessly support customers without the organisation getting in the way, whilst maintaining the centres of expertise needed for more complex workloads.

3.2.4 In terms of which services should be handled by a contact centre and what the most efficient route for a customer should be, the customer principles need to be applied across

all service lines but not in isolation. This needs to be done as part of user centred service design to test that the offer actually meets the customer need in the most effective way.

3.2.5 To aid the process and avoid over-engineering the design work, individual services can be pre-categorised as:

- a) Simple transaction – straightforward request for an item or service (including fault reporting) involving minimal eligibility assessment
- b) Registered service – those that require registration based on pre-defined criteria that can be actioned automatically
- c) Facilitated service – those that require engagement with professionals to guide the applicant or user through the process
- d) Advocacy service – those where someone is acting on behalf of the customer
- e) Information provision – requests for standard information that can be addressed through Q&A processes

3.2.6 Those categorised as a), b) or e) offer significant opportunities for RPA or forms driven processes and offer the potential to consolidate and standardise the council's contact centres - "once and done".

3.2.7 Those in c) and d) require more specialised support and therefore lend themselves to having centres of excellence integrated into the relevant services - "right first time".

3.3 Action

- (i) Consolidate all contact centre technologies onto a standard enterprise level platform and deploy across all existing contact centre services
- (ii) Categorise council services as once and done or right first time in baseline assessment
- (iii) Service redesign the contact centres to consolidate once and done services for efficiency and improved customer experience
- (iv) To establish a single view of the resident or business across technology platforms via the deployment of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution and enable the application programme interfaces (API) with other systems to deliver a summary view.

4. Points of presence

4.1 Current situation

- 4.1.1 A point of presence is defined as a physical location where a resident or business can complete a transaction with the councils or one of their delivery partners or gain information, advice and guidance. This can be a building (open to the public) or a digital connection point (like a kiosk, notice board, bus shelter or internet connected device). It can be staffed or accessed on a self-service basis and it can be owned by the councils or another organisation with which the councils have an agreement to provide their services.
- 4.1.2 Our councils, like many others, have a civil estate which has grown with the Districts and our services, but does it meet the needs of our communities today?
- 4.1.3 In parallel with our estate, there are those of the NHS, County and Parish Councils, Education, the Police, central government and a variety of other public service delivery partners.
- 4.1.4 A longstanding criticism of public services is the need for residents to go to more than one office to transact with each agency. A resident and business perspective of where to place our points of presence is driven by where they need to go to help them with:
- What they need for a good quality of life
 - How they can learn, access knowledge and improve their life chances
 - working together to build and sustain their communities
 - sustaining and growing their businesses, creating jobs and wealth
 - being looked after when they are vulnerable and in need of support
- 4.1.5 Today's technology no longer requires dedicated buildings for public sector organisations outside of very specialised provision (hospitals, waste recycling and treatment, transportation, crime prevention and management).
- 4.1.6 The planned new office headquarters for the councils is an ideal opportunity to embrace collaborative working and a face-to-face point of presence which supports multi-agency working and there is scope to develop this model through the Beacon and Cornerstone sites.

4.2 Discussion

- 4.2.1 IT Networks allow secure multi-agency working and cloud-based technology services provide full access to business resources for staff. Banks, as an example, have fundamentally redesigned their points of presence to successfully provide a mix of confidential and public spaces and enable multi-service use driven by demand. The public sector can do the same.
- 4.2.2 There is a distinction to be made between office space for a mobile workforce and public points of presence to meet the needs of our residents and businesses. The former will only reduce in demand as home-based working continues to become the norm for most, but recent research has highlighted the need for teams to come together and for recognised workspaces for staff to support work/life balance.
- 4.2.3 This can be met by the provision of more generic and high quality work and collaboration spaces which can be open to all businesses on locations, rather than separating out

different sectors (Regus, WeWork). Why can't public and private sector organisations share the same space, especially where collaboration is already happening? As well as releasing excess public estate, such provision can add to a location's economic growth prospects and reduce travel, all positive benefits for local communities and the climate. Often the blockers to this are cost in terms of investment required (don't build cheap), ongoing charges and sharing benefits from asset disposals. All of these can easily be resolved through transparent commercial models between involved parties.

4.2.4 Points of presence aren't just about offices and public buildings. Oxfordshire and within that our Districts have access to a significant physical footprint through the transport network, including bus stops and other street furniture as well as via delivery partners across the private, not for profit and wider charity sectors. These are all deeply embedded channels for information dissemination and in the digital world they can be real-time, interactive and more tightly targeted than before.

4.2.5 So if public services are able to co-locate with each other and those in the wider business and community arenas, share points of presence to engage with residents and businesses, what does this mean for the current buildings estate and what do we really need going forward? Alignment between local service demand, resident and business locations and the types of points of presence needed to meet that demand can set the physical front doors required. A gap analysis with that and the current estate will identify:

- why residents and businesses need to visit a building
- what services can be delivered through alternative means (digital, service redesign)
- Where the locality demand is (access, concentration, pattern)
- which locations are no longer required
- where new sites may be needed

4.2.6 Points of presence determined by local service need and near to those who need it will improve productivity and customer experience as well as supporting more fundamental service redesign based on user need and not constrained by organisational boundaries. Productivity gains and customer experience improvements will be achieved by reducing repeat activities in line with the once and done and right first time principles. Efficiencies will be achieved by reducing estate costs through multi-agency working and the resulting reduction in overall property provision.

4.2.7 The Oxfordshire One Public Estate Programme is ideally placed to support this element of the strategy, working with public service partners across our Districts to ensure we all have the most effective face to face services, delivered in the places they're needed and under a transparent and fair commercial model.

4.2.8 The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally challenged organisation centric thinking around points of presence, demonstrated by the successful collaboration with partners through community hubs, and we can continue to build on that success going forward.

4.3 Action

- (i) Integrate the customer and digital principles into a Property and Estates Strategy
- (ii) Complete a data alignment exercise spanning type of service delivered, service demand, service delivery location and population profile of service users

- (iii) Engage Oxfordshire One Public Estate (OPE) in the gap analysis as well as the location identification
- (iv) Assess location needs based on workspace, public engagement, economic development and access to information
- (v) From the location needs identify where shared sites could be facilitated through collaboration with delivery partners
- (vi) Establish a technology enterprise architecture across the points of presence that ensures effective service delivery across the Districts
- (vii) Engage with the core principles across OPE partners to underpin points of presence use for shared locations

5. Digital

5.1 Current situation

- 5.1.1 A digital service is defined as a fully automated internet based delivery system where a resident or business can complete a transaction with the councils or one of their delivery partners or gain information, advice and guidance. It is accessed through all communications media (worldwide web, mobile platforms and entertainment channels) and is integrated with business delivery systems to ensure end to end transaction completion.
- 5.1.2 The councils have recently overhauled both main web sites and are making use of a variety of digital engagement tools (mobile apps and smart forms) but they have been built around specific transactional services and as such are not aligned to customer as residents or businesses, instead they are driven by very specific process completion.
- 5.1.3 More widely the councils have several cross cutting organisational strategies and plans currently in flight or in the early stages of development:

Strategies	Status	Position
Corporate Plan and Recovery Roadmap	Both agreed	Corporate Plan adopted, Roadmap to be developed
Finance transformation and investment strategy	Agreed in Corporate Plan	Approach to be agreed
Technology and digital strategy	Approved October 2021	Being implemented
Data and intelligence strategy	Not started	Not started
Resident and business engagement strategy	Not started	Not started
Joint local plan	Principle agreed	Individual local plans are adopted
Economic plans	Agreed	To be reviewed under Recovery Roadmap
Property and estates strategy	In development	Under discussion

- 5.1.4 All of these include an element of re-imagining customer service as well as driving the adoption of digital solutions to support the transformation effort. There are also several unique features within each of these programmes which will provide new capabilities for service delivery (spatial redesign, tackling climate change, full mobile working and next generation connectivity to name a few) and support radically different ways of meeting resident and business needs.

5.2 Discussion

- 5.2.1 The core digital capability is currently weak, and the councils need to do more to unlock the wider digital capabilities available:

- Enabling the inherent digital capability of the whole workforce by using the tools available
- User centred service redesign, building on the recent success around supporting vulnerable people during Covid-19, for effective and targeted information, advice and guidance
- Applying the full range of digital tools available, driven by user preference and demand
- Unlocking the knowledge available through analytics to better inform decision making
- Adoption of new place-based technologies to better manage our Districts in terms of connectivity, service demand, economic growth and quality of life

5.2.2 The adopted Technology Strategy addresses each of these areas in detail, contains a set of core principles for the adoption and use of technology and sets out 4 delivery programmes to ensure best value from the investment. These must be aligned to the Councils' Corporate Plans to minimise duplication of effort and make the most effective use of the resources required and the strategy should be adopted as an enabler, alongside the customer service principles, to ensure our re-imagined front doors to service delivery are the most efficient and effective routes to delivering services on a "once and done" or "right first time" basis.

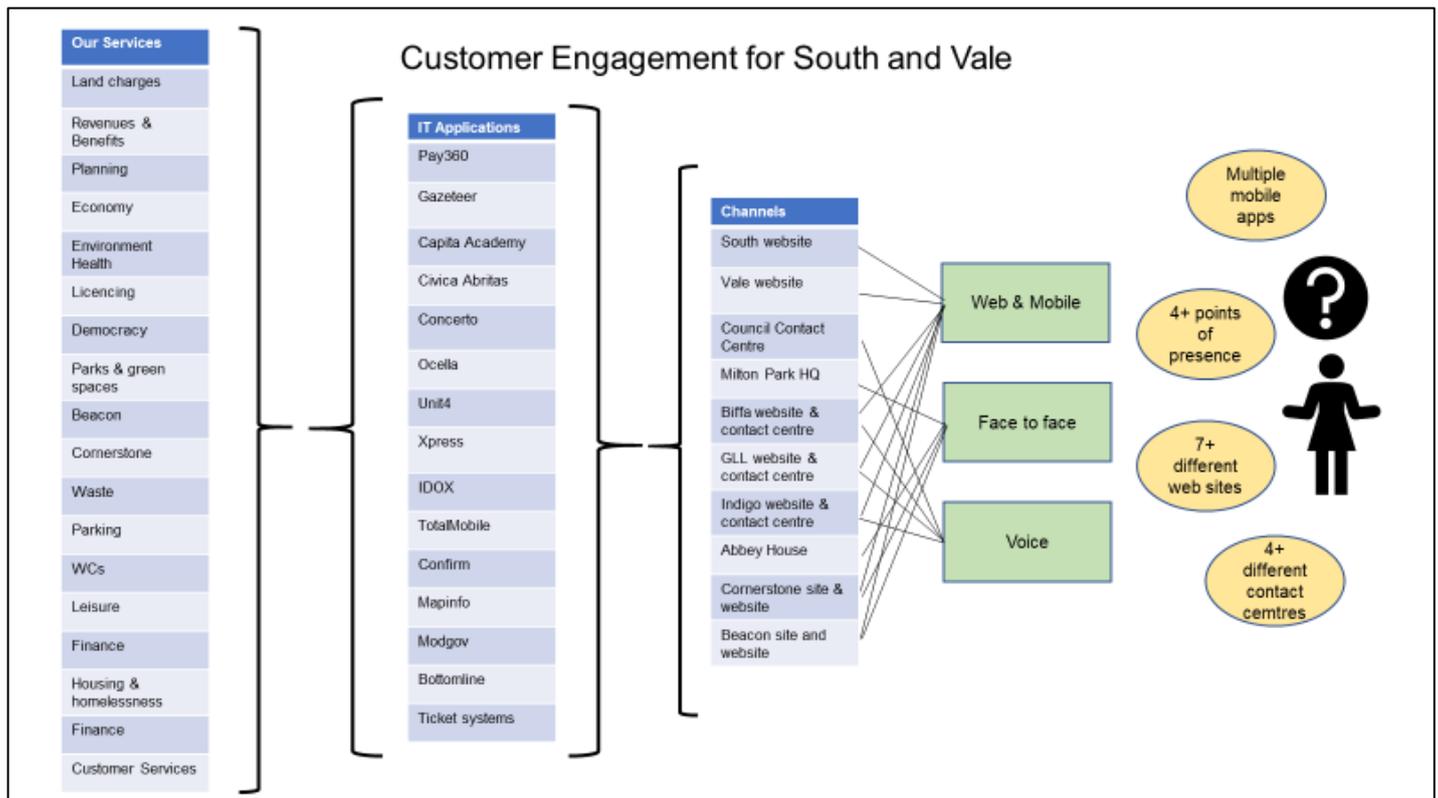
5.2.3 The valuable lessons learnt in service redesign, customer engagement and communication with residents, delivery partners and businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic must be sustained for the future of service delivery, fundamentally reshaping how residents can access advice and guidance based on their needs and not the organisation's structure and the where the digital engagement tools used for volunteering and resource mobilisation can redefine how best to meet community needs.

5.3 Action

- (i) Embed the technology and customer service principles in all service transformation projects
- (ii) Apply the lessons learnt from Covid-19 response and recovery to future customer service design and delivery
- (iii) Review all service delivery methods across all front doors against the technology and customer service principles to minimise duplication of provision, considering access to services for the digitally excluded
- (iv) Establish the single view of the resident/business through the CRM and APIs with other business systems

6. The baseline for redesigning customer services

6.1 The journey between customer and service fulfilment can best be described as complex and confusing, illustrated below, and requires a complete baseline assessment of services against the principles in the strategy to understand the size of the gap between the current position and future model.



6.3 Knowing where services are physically accessed and delivered is more valuable if it is also known how much of the population can reach those services and this will need to be mapped against the geographies of the councils to support better alignment with resident and business needs.

6.4 The significant range of entry points for services also needs to be baselined with a view to streamlining their provision, joining up the customer experience and reducing hand-offs to others in the delivery chain.

6.5 The completed baseline exercise covering services against principles, points of presence and channels will support the development of the roadmap for customer transformation.

7. What does good look like and the need for a gap analysis

- 7.1 The high level findings from the proposed baseline exercise on all services will show how we are delivering against the principles set. We can also compare our performance with other similar councils to define our ambition for service transformation.
- 7.2 So what does good look like? One of the exemplar councils in England is Cornwall and its high level of customer service delivery was achieved from a combination of fundamental service redesign driven by structural change (moving to Unitary Council) and a significant new investment in technology (£17million over 3 years). That said, the clear focus on customer centred service design and the adoption of the same principles as those being applied in South and Vale councils means that we should look to benchmark against Cornwall and the other high performing councils in our ambition for the future.
- 7.4 The technology strategy has already identified the systems investment required to ensure the councils have the right IT tools to support the move to customer centred service delivery. What we now need to do is understand how far the gap is between where we are now and what it will take to transform our services in line with the customer service principles. Exemplars for comparison will be Cornwall, Guildford and Cheltenham.

8 Bridging the gap

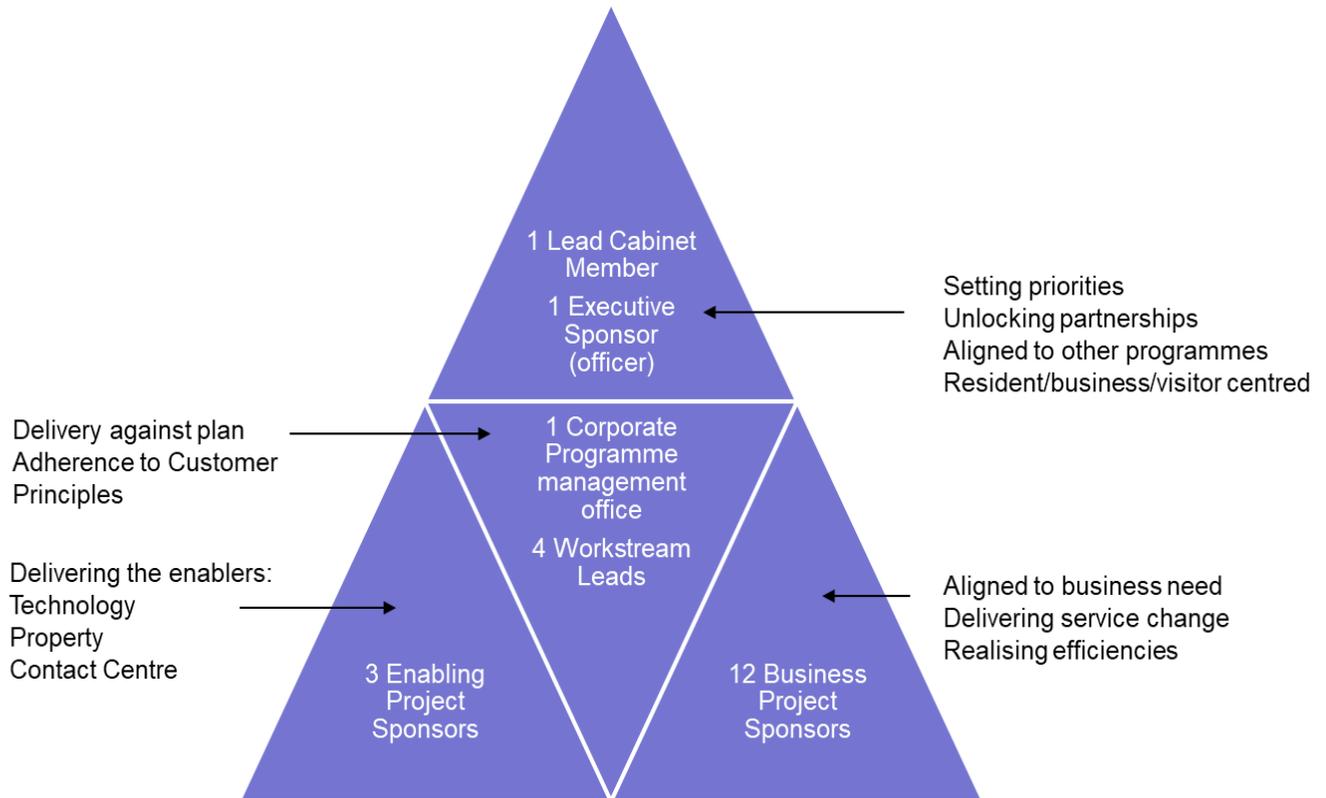
- 8.1 The exemplar councils have achieved good customer centred service delivery based on the same principles we are applying and they have remodelled (or are planning to) both the service processes and the access method end to end to meet customer need in complex multi-agency environments across many services which exists in the County/District/Health/Economic local government model.
- 8.2 On points of presence, the shared ambitions of the public agencies in Oxfordshire in terms of future estate offer significant potential to consolidate services around the once and done and right first time principles and move away from building dependent delivery which often fragments the customer journey, especially where more than one agency is involved. Using these we can challenge whether we are delivering services from the most accessible and efficient locations which will in turn inform future estates needs to meet the needs of our communities and businesses.
- 8.3 Our contact centres continue to be significant service delivery channels and here the advances in digital delivery and communications technologies offer real opportunities to automate further and drive up self-service. The implementation of a single contact management system combined with the increased deployment of end to end digital once and done services will unlock those.
- 8.4 Focussing on the end to end services delivered on a once and done basis, there is significant scope to both simplify and automate many of them in terms of customer access and fulfilment.
- 8.5 On the services delivered on a right first time basis, these are typically more complex, longer term and often delivered with partners. The focus here must be taking out duplication or redirection by building customer journeys based on successful outcomes and not individual service/institutional obligations.
- 8.6 So, to address our gaps we need to:
- Ensure ALL digital services deliver an end to end experience, not part way there
 - Consolidate services around defined service groups with an agreed outcome that meet the customer need and not individual service obligation
 - Ensure the right channels are made available for services, based on customer capability, reach and most efficient methods of delivery
 - Standardise and consolidate our technology platforms by channel, ensuring they can deliver on a right first time or once and done basis (voice services, single view of the customer, applications integration or interoperability, public access to digital, user centred web and mobile access)
 - Build on the lessons learnt on customer engagement through the Covid19 pandemic
 - Engage with delivery partners to streamline services and remove duplication and redirection
 - Automate information giving services through voice and digital capabilities, including digital points of presence
 - Close down services no longer in use or being delivered by others

9 Roadmap and governance

- 9.1 The customer transformation roadmap at **Annex A** will enable a sustainable transformation of services over 3 years, implementing and maintaining the customer principles and ensuring the core elements of customer service delivery are in place to support the necessary service redesigns to achieve those “once and done” and “right first time” outcomes. It also addresses all the actions identified throughout this review and recommissioning work.
- 9.2 The roadmap comprises 4 workstreams to:
- Confirm the principles and establish the ground rules
 - Bridge the gap between current service delivery and the 2 core principles
 - Create the enablers for transforming services
 - Identify and roll out service redesign opportunities
- 9.3 The principles and ground rules will ensure the programme stays focussed on outcomes and aligned to the findings from the baseline assessment and recommended direction of travel.
- 9.4 By bridging the gap between where our individual services are and where they should be in terms of once and done/right first time, this workstream will drive some immediate changes to delivery by completing the implementation of end to end digital experiences where more fundamental service redesign isn’t needed and streamline what we have to take out failure demand through duplication or unnecessary hand-offs, delivering early efficiencies whilst improving customer experience.
- 9.5 The enablers for transforming services will ensure the foundations are solid for digitally enabled service redesign, ensuring the technology platforms and applications are fit for purpose, our future points of presence are capable of meeting the changing needs of residents, businesses and visitors now and in the future and our contact centre is efficient, well equipped and delivering solutions. The enablers will require investment and whilst they will not deliver efficiencies in their own right, they must be designed efficiently through standardisation, consolidation, ease of use and inbuilt resilience.
- 9.6 The service redesign workstream takes forward the business specific projects needed to deliver in line with the principles, efficiently, coherently and in many cases in partnership with others. These projects will deliver the greatest efficiencies through consolidation, retirement of legacy activities, wiping out failure demand and better use of our resources (people, property, technology).

9.2 Governance

- 9.2.1 The roadmap for the future of public service delivery will need to be taken forward as a single programme with an Executive Sponsor as it impacts all council portfolios in depth whilst also establishing standards across all projects and utilising shared enabling resources. The proposed governance structure is as follows:



9.2.2 The decisions needed to initiate this programme are to:

- a) Appoint the lead Cabinet Member and the Executive Sponsor
- b) Confirm the corporate programme management function as the central co-ordinator
- c) Appoint the workstream leads
- d) Appoint the project sponsors for the enabling and delivery projects

9.2.3 Once completed the programme needs to be aligned with the other initiatives in play to ensure strong alignment going forward. Ongoing reporting and management accountability for programme delivery should be delegated to the South and Vale Senior Management Team to provide cross council visibility as the body best placed to resolve issues as they arise and keep the programme on track.

10 Summary and Next Steps

- (i) Approve principles and strategy
- (ii) Approve roadmap
- (iii) Approve governance
- (iv) Ensure alignment with Corporate Plans to embed customer and technology principles
- (v) Execute plan and roadmap (from January 2022)

Customer Transformation Roadmap

Workstream	Services & Project	Jan-Mar 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	Jul-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Funding	Lead
Principles	Service group and customer definition	Approved & operational	Complete			Invest	Customer Svces
Principles	Core principles baseline	Approved & operational	Complete			Invest	SMT
Bridging the gap	Once and Done digital by default	Complete baseline of services	Amend services		Complete	Invest to save (consolidate)	Customer Svces
Bridging the gap	Right First Time centres of excellence		Customer journey maps	Implement redesign	Complete	Invest to save (consolidate)	Business Services
Enabling front doors	360 degree view of the customer	CRM procurement commenced	Services aligned for migration	Align to service redesign/review projects	Deployed	Invest to save (GW)	Corporate Svces
Enabling front doors	Our points of presence	Baseline & define PoPs	Community Hubs identified (FBCs)	Community Hub model deployed	Services aligned	Invest to save (Property)	Customer Svces
Enabling front doors	Contact centre & Voice services	Design & approve	Consolidate		Complete	Invest to save (consolidate)	Customer Svces
Service redesign	Garden Waste	Service redesign	implement	Complete		Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Service redesign	Property and asset mgt	Service redesign	Implement		Complete	Invest to save (transform)	Service Owner
Service redesign	Housing	Mobile homes redesign	Implement		Complete	Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Service redesign	Technical services, grounds maintenance	Service redesign	Implement	Complete		Invest to grow (commercial)	Communities

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Customer Transformation Strategy

Workstream	Services & Project	Jan-Mar 2023	Apr-Jun 2023	Jul-Sep 2023	Oct-Dec 2023	Funding	Lead
Service review	Waste management	Integration with service provider	Implement	Complete		Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Principles	Core principles applied to delivery partners	Contracts review		Implement	Complete	BAU	Finance
Bridging the gap	Once and Done digital by default	Customer feedback on new services	Amend services as required		Complete	Invest to save (consolidate)	Customer Svces
Service review	Leisure	Integration with service provider	Implement	Complete		Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Enabling front doors	Our points of presence	Align to new Office Plan and mobile councils		Implement	Complete	Invest to save (Property)	Customer Svces
Enabling front doors	Contact centre & Voice services	Design & approve new voice services	Implement		Complete	Invest to save (consolidate)	Customer Svces
Service review	Planning Operations	Service redesign	Implement		Complete	Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Service review	Land Searches	Future model defined	Service redesign	Implement	Subject to contract timescale	Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Service review	Help for businesses, grants	Reprocure new service	implement	Complete		Invest	Service owner

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Customer Transformation Strategy

Workstream	Services & Project	Jan-Mar 2024	Apr-Jun 2024	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Funding	Lead
Enabling front doors	Future state Digital Services		Service design for 2025		Complete	Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Principles	Core principles applied to delivery partners 2	Contracts review 2		Implement	Complete	BAU	Finance
Bridging the gap	Once and Done digital by default	Customer feedback on new services	Amend services as required		Complete	Invest to save (consolidate)	Customer Svces
Service review	Licencing	Service redesign	Implement	Complete		Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Enabling front doors	Our points of presence	Redesign to meet new Office Model		Implement	Complete	Invest to save (Property)	Customer Svces
Service review	Revenues & Benefits	Future service model definition	Service redesign		New model from Sept 2025	Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Service redesign	IT and Digital	Future service model definition	Service redesign		New model from Sept 2025	Invest to save (transform)	Service owner
Service review	Regulatory Services		Service redesign	Implement	Complete	Invest to save (transform)	Service Owner
Service review	Democracy TBC						
Service review	Communications TBC						