



Agenda item: 9

Summary

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	29 May 2014
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Revised Web and Customer Access Strategy
Contact:	Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Author/Responsible Officer: Shane Flynn, Assistant Director (Performance and Projects)
Purpose of report:	To seek approval of an update to the strategy to incorporate: - the partnership arrangement with Northgate in respect of Customer Relationship Management and Channel Shift; and - developments in the Council's own work streams regarding Customer Focus, Digital Inclusion and Web improvement.
Recommendations	That Cabinet recommends to Council that the revised strategy and appendix be approved.
Corporate objectives:	The strategy supports all five of the Council's strategic objectives by increasing access to Council services. It has a particular relevance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Community Capacity through the digital inclusion initiative; and • Dacorum Delivers through the use of technology solutions to promote efficient ways of working
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value For Money Implications'	The initiatives included in the strategy have been incorporated into existing budgets. This revision has no new financial implications.

	<p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Face to face contact has been estimated to be 21 times more expensive than access through digital channels. Where information can be provided by digital means or simple transactions completed without the need for face-to-face contact this can reduce costs to the council and/or ensure that capacity is transferred into dealing more fully with those who require face to face contact, thereby improving the customer experience. Achieving these gains is dependent, however, on maintaining the right balance of resources as existing channels are replaced with digital ones.</p>
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed as part of the Northgate contract negotiations and reviewed monthly at operational Board meetings
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment carried out as part of the original edition and reviewed during the development of this update. There are no required changes to the original equalities impact assessment.
Health And Safety Implications	None
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Deputy Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>An effective and properly implemented Web and Customer Access Strategy is essential if the Council is to continue to meet the diverse needs of its customers and ensure that it meet its various statutory/regulatory duties and responsibilities.</p> <p>Deputy S.151 Officer</p> <p>There are no new financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.</p>
Consultees:	
Background papers:	Web and Customer Access Strategy report to Cabinet 13 September 2011
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>CSCG: Customer Service Centre and Gateway</p> <p>LGID: Local Government Improvement and Development</p>

Background

1. Dacorum Borough Council is committed to improving access to services for residents and Council customers. The principles of the Web and Customer Access Strategy describe the Council's vision for how customers will have improved choice on accessing and being informed about the range of services that the Council provides.
2. The strategy defines the Council's aims and objectives for customer contact and channel shift. It outlines the design for an approach which will make customer interactions with the Council both convenient and appropriate and deliver improved value for money. It therefore provides a framework within which changes delivery mechanisms can operate.
3. Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) best practice advice (2011), states that a channel strategy should set out an organisation's approach to customer contact management and that real success will be reflected in :
 - improved experiences for citizens as they use public services
 - greatly increased value for money in service delivery in times of economic constraint
 - a clear demonstration that the public sector is a confident operator in the new digital age.
4. The Dacorum Web and Customer Access Strategy is based upon this national advice.
5. The strategy was first approved by Cabinet in September 2011. Since then the Council has introduced a number of initiatives to move forward in respect of web access and Digital Inclusion, including the twin projects incorporated into the Northgate Customer Service Centre and Gateway contract: Customer Relationship Management and Channel Shift.
6. This revision incorporates these changes and, in particular, includes as Appendix A, a digital delivery strategy agreed jointly with Northgate as part of the CSCG contract. Delivery programmes have been shared between the Northgate Channel Shift and Customer Insight officers and the Council's Web development team to ensure that joint work programmes are in place and that appropriate resources have been identified for each key stage of the project.