

CABINET – 18th March 2010

**Supplementary report of the Deputy Director of Programmes and
Resources**

ITEM 15 Future provision of Information and Communication Technology
Services

Purpose of Supplementary Report

As part of all Service Reviews the Council is required to undertake formal consultation with staff and trade unions.

The attached comments were received from members of the ICS Service as part of the consultation period.

The timeframe for production of Cabinet Items did not allow for these comments to be included in the original report.

Recommendation

I. That Cabinet note the responses from staff in relation to the consultation on the review.

The following comments are from the Head of Service ICS

Dear Geoff,

Re:- Staff Consultation — Review of ICS

Please find enclosed my comments in relation to the current consultation process.

I have categorised my response into General, Personal and Future Observations in order to highlight the various elements of my concern. These are not prioritised at all as I believe all my comments and observations are relevant to the proposals.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and I trust that given my post has suddenly become at risk a final decision will be reported back to-me as a matter of urgency.

Yours Sincerely,

Steve C Homer
Head of ICS
Charnwood BC

General Observations

At 5.3.1 b) Incorrect Post Number

At 5.3.1 c) Incorrect Post Number

There is no over-arching management reporting structure described (i.e. Above the structure in Appendix 1) — who is the next line manager up and what Directorate?

There are no Job Descriptions or Person Specifications available for anyone to consult on in terms of their new roles and responsibilities. How can people make accurate observations if they can't clearly understand precisely what roles they will be expected to undertake?

The proposal is almost an exact copy of that prepared by myself and Aymen Khan of the Programme Office that we had agreed with one major exception — the deletion of the Head of Service post. The original report content was written on the basis that it needed a Head of Service to achieve the desired outcomes but this has obviously now been excluded without any consultation with myself beforehand. Therefore it is not the paper I agreed with at all. Furthermore it fails to explain where the previous duties and responsibilities of the Head of Service will be done —there is simply a line stating the post will be deleted.

The consultation talks about “engagement” between ICS and Heads of Service and Senior Management, interestingly not Members. Also that “the role of ICT delivery becomes increasing(?) important and critical” and yet you propose to delete the Head of the Service — it doesn't sound like the Council believes the role is increasingly important given the proposed actions. The strategic value of IT (6.1) is undermined by the failure to recognise the need for leadership of the service which again undermines the acknowledgement (6.3) that staff have a wide range of skills and experience and are highly regarded by their colleagues.

The proposals talk of a Lead Member for ICT (Appendix 3 Point 1). There has never been a Lead Member identified to me and the Acting Chief Executive, himself, is confused as to whom it may be. (KIT meeting 1 March 2010).

The proposals talk about “commissioning and managing projects based on PRINCE 2 methodology under the guidance of the Programme Office” — precisely what role will the Programme Office have in the future overview of ICS Service Delivery?

The fact that we are able to make savings in line with demands in the next financial

year is a direct result of the service having vacant posts as a result of an embargo on recruitment. This in itself has led to decreased customer satisfaction and increased staff frustration and stress which sit uncomfortably with the “suggested improvements” in Appendix 3, many of which will require further resource commitment that will be “reported on later”? Is this an interim review?

There is no mention in the proposals of any period of time which is to be given to the service to redesign itself into an “improved” position except that the “structure” will take 4/6 months to complete (4.1) and therefore, in itself, the proposals provide no more reassurance to staff that there might not be another review in 9/12 months that states something different again. Surely there should be a more clear commitment here about timescales regarding cultural and service change.

There is no clear indication as to what is proposed to happen with the vacant (?) post of Information Technology Delivery Manager — is this to be advertised externally, ring fenced or something else. I would suggest an improved title for this post of IT Business Service Manager. Furthermore, has the holder of post M079 - ICT Project Manager been formally told through interview with his Line Manager and HR that his post is at risk? Is that not an issue for a separate consultation regarding a review of the Programme Office as that post is not in the establishment of ICS at all?

The “Owner” of virtually all the “draft list of suggested improvements” is TBC. Surely this is something that needs identifying before any changes are implemented or actions will end up sitting in “no man’s land” and people will be told AFTER consultation what is expected when they need to know before. Again, most of these actions should clearly sit with a Head of Service if they are to be managed and realised appropriately.

Personal Observations

In respect of my personal position as existing Head of Service:-

For a post to be redundant there HAS to be no or little future need/requirement for the duties of the previous post to continue. That is clearly NOT the case here, in fact quite the contrary.

There is no hierarchical explanation of reporting lines in terms of future position of the service within the Council as a whole — responsibility/accountability.

An employee has a legal right to disclosure of information (e.g. Reasons for redundancy) — no reasons have been supplied to me and therefore I feel I have been selected unfairly — especially given the evidence of the way the situation has been handled. Friday 19th February my post was secure — Tuesday 23^d February it is proposed to me that my post is to be made redundant — meetings with David Platts. Furthermore you confirmed to me at our KIT meeting of 1 March that you had had a report stating my post would be put forward for redundancy approximately 2 weeks

before that date so it is quite clear that not only had (not been appropriately consulted but deliberately deceived. To treat any employee in this manner is totally unacceptable and very poor practice. I have been employed by CBC for nearly 24 years.

Prior to Mr Hayes being appointed CX of the Council my views were regularly sought by senior management and received well when I offered them. I have been responsible over the years for every IT improvement the Council has made including the initial setting up of the Contact centre which has barely expanded since it was taken away from my overview — in fact quite the opposite has occurred. I also introduced a revolutionary cabling system when the office building was erected in 1990 which was before it's time and has saved the Council thousands of pounds ever since. I was also responsible for introducing e-mail and Internet access when I self-funded and ran a pilot project behind the scenes many years ago. Mr Hayes never asked my opinion once and when I occasionally offered it or made suggestions I was told every time to do it how he wanted (e.g. Last local elections — “do we really need to buy all elected members new laptops” — “Just do it Steve”).

All previous “consultation exercises” were proved to be tick-box exercises just to demonstrate that the formal process had been carried out. I hope this consultation proves worthy of the name.

I have conscientiously prepared and submitted countless E-Government statements resulting in large funding awards in support of IT at the Council and prepared an IT Strategy or equivalent that has always sat comfortably with the other corporate strategies and policies of the Council. My Service and Team Plans have always been drawn up based on Customer's requirements following consultation. I also drove through a programme of ITIL Training that was essential to the future delivery of IT at the Council. I was very much looking forward to having a period of stability within which I could once again effectively manage IT without the turmoil of Outsourcing over our heads and a CX who constantly demanded his own way in spite of professional opinion being offered when necessary.

There has been no notification to me that I have in any way failed to carry out my duties and responsibilities effectively or due to any issue of inability or lack of capability.

Given all these considerations it is likely that I would wish to raise a Grievance should the process continue as proposed post consultation.

The consultation paper makes no suggestion of any ways that dismissals could be avoided or the method of calculating the amount of any redundancy payments to be made to those that are dismissed. These are legal requirements. An employer should give an employee a written statement of how the redundancy payment is calculated.

It is clear the work I have always done, as well as I have been able, will continue to be needed.

Without job descriptions this consultation process is fundamentally flawed — I have nothing to compare my current duties and responsibilities against any new proposed posts. How is that fair or reasonable? This is non-disclosure of essential information. Therefore it is virtually impossible for me to objectively state where my current duties and responsibilities are “disappearing” to and which will remain and need to be carried out as before.

I would however like to highlight the following points in my existing Job Description and state that given these points my post is not redundant. The fact that they are not covered in the consultation process deems them all still necessary and therefore my post is not redundant.

Working Relationships:

Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team, Cabinet; Scrutiny; Elected Members; local, regional and national partners and other community representatives and service users.

Primary Role

To lead Information & Communications Services and ensure that an excellent and accessible service is provided, within available resources, and to bring about continuous improvement year on year.

Participate fully as a member of the Directorate’s Management Team and Corporate Management Team, working with the Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Elected Members to promote, develop and achieve the Council’s service objectives.

Manage the financial and operational performance of the services provided within the agreed service delivery plan.

Contribute to the Council’s overall plans, processes and organisational development.

Work with, advise, and support the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Elected Members on all corporate and operational aspects relating to the Council’s aims and objectives.

Support and encourage partnership working with Government Agencies and Leicestershire County, City and District Councils, where to do so will produce a more efficient and cost-effective level of service to the public.

Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment.

Take strategic responsibility for the development of the service delivery plan to ensure it meets corporate aims and objectives and manage the financial and operational performance of the service within that plan.

Lead on cross cutting projects that deliver corporate aims and objectives as required.

I could in fact list all the duties and responsibilities of my existing post. The whole emphasis of “leading”, “building”, “planning” and “directing” a service is a management function and accountability and responsibility are clear. Very little is clear in terms of leadership and accountability & responsibility in the consultation paper. There is no “leader” of the service and no proposed hierarchy to the suggested structure.

Without clear, appropriate and accountable IT management the Council runs the risk of becoming a “ship without a rudder” in a very important area. I consider it an honour to have been able to have done what I have over the years and the support on the “shop floor” of my staff has been admirable. The possibility of now having a future option to see what the organisation can become rather than see it as it is was something I was looking forward to with relish. My role would have included identifying options in all sorts of new technological areas as well as Shared Services and then making recommendations. Exciting times once again. My clear targets for improvement are:

Alignment with corporate policy
Improved customer satisfaction
Driving business change and
Increasing stakeholder value.

Future Observations

There is very little emphasis if any on the future delivery of a Strategic IT Service to the Council. The paper talks briefly about operational and service improvements but nothing about the strategic importance of IT to the Council and where it sits in the wider framework of Council Operations or the future Strategic Management of the service itself.

Taking a strategic approach to ICT means that the technical infrastructure (the network, the servers, the desktop systems), the service applications (the software systems that support the individual services of the Council) and the customer delivery systems (the web, the customer relationship management systems, and the links to the back office systems) can all be planned to suit the future needs of the organisation.

I have a personal management Vision of the future of the Service post-Outsourcing

that would improve and re-align the Service to achieve a lot of the planned improvements that the Review raised. I list below some of the intended improvements that would be achieved through the engagement of **an effective IT Steering Group**.

A quarterly “progress document” showing on-going achievement against the Service’s Team Plan, targets and specific areas of Project Work.

A Review of the Service’s PI’s to ensure they match the expectations of all Stake holders.

*The chance for a the Group to be informed and play a leading role in the future adoption of appropriate technologies to assist with the adoption of new ways of working in support of more effective CBC operations, service creation and service delivery. This would realise higher levels of accountability and improved corporate engagement with IT. The existing service has suffered badly over the last 6/7 years, firstly with the lack of engagement at Senior Mgt Level with professional opinion rarely sought and when offered regularly dismissed, and secondly by being “trapped” in an environment of out-sourcing considerations that have prevented the service from redesigning itself or recruiting replacement staff when people have left. It is vital that the overall responsibility for improving the situation rests with an **individual** who can prioritise demand, plan capacity and manage the portfolio of services and initiatives.*

An emphasis on Business Service Management within the Service — supporting adopted corporate policy whilst improving customer satisfaction, assisting business change processes and increasing Stake holder value in order to better fuse the goals of IT and the organisation is needed. This would ensure CBC is more able and capable of tightly aligning IT Service Management with organisational issues and priorities. Indeed this could effectively become the Terms of Reference for an IT Steering Group. Business/IT alignment is a desired state in which an organisation is able to use information technology (IT) effectively to achieve business objectives

Offering SM’S to all Services in line with an agreed menu of options with the intention of improving the end-user experience and expectations of the Service.

The Group will enable the IT Service to better understand end-user impressions and corporate expectations — and a Head of Service is accountable for co-ordinating and managing these across the different elements of the whole IT Service.

Effective IT Governance requires a framework for leadership, organisational structures and business processes, standards and compliance to these standards, which ensure that the organisation’s IT supports and enables the achievement of its strategies and objectives. An essential and critical role in this is that of the IT Manager who provides the leadership required to achieve the desired outcomes and the Key Role of setting the climate for the development of the team.

Information Technology Management is concerned with exploring and understanding IT as a corporate resource that determines both the strategic AND operational capabilities of the Council in designing and developing services for maximum customer satisfaction, corporate productivity, efficient front line service delivery and corporate advantage. This needs a point of ultimate accountability and responsibility if it is to prove effective in delivery.

The Council still needs an IT Manager. An IT Manager wears many hats, deals with different personalities and needs a broad skill set. Basic knowledge to start: Understanding of IT department functions (i.e., service desk, operations, development, quality, infrastructure support, maintenance and client/customer relations); basic accounting/finance; and strong communication skills. In addition to technology and project management, people/soft skills are required including leadership, motivation, and conflict resolution. An IT Manager must also be prepared to handle difficult situations such as discipline and schedule/cost recovery and focuses on the “big picture” rather than get deeply involved at project level. There is clearly still a requirement for this.

The Review talks of 5 specifically tasked teams. These are clearly themed work groups which in themselves may function. However, unless there is effective overview management of these work groups by a person accountable and responsible for them (the IT Manager) then there is a real danger of enhanced silo-working rather than improved openness and engagement.

Work groups tend to be task-oriented and characterized by members who follow their own personal agendas whilst teams are goal-oriented and members work towards the achievement of the team goals and agenda, rather than pulling in different directions.

Work groups tend to be autocratic and hierarchical in nature. Teams, on the other hand, tend to be participative and self-steering within the goals of the team.

Work groups tend to avoid risk and maintain the status quo. High performing teams tend to accept risk.

The Council needs a continued focus on working with its partners and I have built up solid working relationships with the IT managers of all the other 8 Council's in Leicestershire. Progress has been made with North West Leics in particular and other developments are being considered that include a joint or even County-wide network.

Shared resources have already started to occur in IT and will continue. My post has been integral in not only achieving this but in building the environment within which it is happening.

The Acting Chief Executive and I have spoken about initiatives that are actually taking place and there are other future developments which will only enhance our ability as a Council to be better informed and make the future correct choices, many of which I am the only one with an overview of:-

These include:-

The Government Cloud (G-Cloud)

This will enable public bodies to host their ICT systems from a secure, resilient and cost-effective service environment. Multiple services will be available from multiple suppliers which will make it quicker and cheaper for public sector bodies to switch suppliers if they face service or delivery issues. The G-Cloud is a key enabler of the £3.2bn savings per year outlined in National Government's Operational Efficiency Programme as it provides the access point for ICT services, applications and assets.

Public bodies can host their specific computer systems on a shared common infrastructure, and source capacity on an 'on demand' basis, avoiding the costs and delays involved in purchasing and running their own hardware and software. The concept can be compared to changes in the electricity industry during the early part of the 20th century as organisations moved from buying their own generators to procuring electricity as a utility.

Shared County Networks

Apart from the City/County project currently being undertaken between the 2 bodies in relation to a new County-wide network being established based on options being prepared through the East Midlands Broadband Consortium (see the following County Council Cabinet Item

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00002687/AI00023108/\\$LEMBC.doc.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00002687/AI00023108/$LEMBC.doc.pdf)) there are also other options and initiatives available to the Council which will need proper and appropriate consideration if Shared Services are truly to become efficient and effective.

These include the investigation of options relating to the potential use of the academically established JANET (Education and Research) network (see <http://www.ja.net/services/connections/janet-sites/mans/index.html>) that is largely underutilised and at the moment only used by Higher Education establishments (also see <http://www.emman.net/>).I understand The County Council are in discussions with Loughborough University as we speak.

In addition to these considerations there is the matter of whether CBC could use the nationally established and available “**Dark Fibre**” links that are in place very close to Loughborough and so far remain unused to date — in fact they follow the M1 motorway. This option may be a very cheap way of enabling connectivity not just between our fellow Leicestershire Councils but also our other partner organisations.

As far as I am aware at the moment Loughborough University are talking with various suppliers about this and none of the Leicestershire Council's have yet considered it. I know that Logicalis, for example, have achieved a wide area network across the whole of Wales relating to Education, the NHS AND Local Authorities. (see <http://www.channelweb.co.uk/crn/news/2243863/logicalis-eyes-shared-services>).

Dark fibre is optical fibre infrastructure (cabling and repeaters) that is currently in place but is not being used. Optical fibre conveys information in the form of light pulses so the "dark" means no light pulses are being sent. For example, some electric utilities have installed optical fibre cable where they already have power lines installed in the expectation that they can lease the infrastructure to telephone or cable TV companies or use it to interconnect their own offices. To the extent that these installations are unused, they are described as dark. Here is an example of a provider of Dark Fibre services (see <http://www.vtesse.com/service-coverage.asp>).

I list these examples for the future as an indication of the professional nature of IT as a service in the same way as Accounting or Legal Services are considered. IT is not solely about local service provision and mending and installing computers but requires professional experience and knowledge of the industry to know where there are initiatives that may prove of value to an employer. Then, of course, there is the need for general management skills and I am professionally qualified - obtaining a Certificate in Management Studies at Nottm Trent University in 1997.

I hope I have demonstrated that without professional IT experience, accountability and responsibility the Council will be in a much weaker position than it is today and that a Head of Service for IT is not only essential but critical. Given the original paper drawn up by Aymen Khan and myself included the post as essential I am wondering what changed, by whom, and whether there were other as yet unexplained reasons for doing so.

Finally, I would like to ask you a question. If the Head of Service post is to be deleted and all the existing ICS staff ring-fenced to new posts perhaps you could tell me of all those staff that remain who would have the capability to present you or the Councillors with a returned report of this quality?

Comments are from other members of the Service:

The proposed structure shown on Page 7 with the Service Design shown on Page 2, I find it difficult at this stage to imagine how it will work, without knowing the proposed changes to individual job descriptions. The reporting structure at top level is not indicated and until the position of what is happening with the current Head of IT, seems to be preventing any progress in starting the implementation of change for the remaining staff.

Has a timescale been set for the project?

How long will it take for job descriptions, job evaluations to be agreed?

The review identifies some critical areas of change which involves – ICS engaging with its Customers, identifying current services received and investigating what might be required in the future. In my opinion, this is an easy task to be started at Departmental Level, but six months since the initial finding, ICS Management has still to begin planning the process.

The current Service Desk Function. Have funds been identified for either the current Help Desk software to be upgraded or replaced with a new solution? Will an experienced Service Desk Manager be employed, either on a Consultancy or Agency Base, to implement a solution and new working practices?

The current problem of new staff which ICS has inherited over the last few years, integrating with the standards that some of the established ICS staff have been accustomed to in the past.

Will the current staff be willing to change to new practices of providing better service, especially as a number could well be at the stage of finishing within the next few years, thus continuing the current problem of leaving ICS short of resources to provide.

The question has to be asked has our Service gone past repair. Would it have been better for existing staff and CBC to bring in an outside solution with a proven track record of delivery?

General comments

Loss of Revenues and Benefits will not reduce the Technicians fault calls by more than 10% and they don't create a lot of calls. The Helpdesk tool 'Touchpaper' can verify.

The loss of one Technician (User Support Analyst) since September 2008 has already increased the workload of the other 3 Technicians by 33%.

The loss of one Helpdesk Analyst whose responsibilities also included the management of the telephone system has increased the total Helpdesk workload by 25% spread over the 4 Staff members (one Helpdesk Analyst and 3 Technicians). The loss of 2 Operators will increase the Helpdesk's workload even further.

With the office moves and Staff holidays we have even less resource capacity.

New appointees at top of the ICS Structure will not put any more 'manpower' at the service deliver elements of the Helpdesk structure, resulting in extending service delivery levels on all our areas of work.

Page 1, Item 2

Service Design

The proposed changes are budget lead. As a service lead environment the deterioration in service to our customers is an anathema and an ever increasing

workload being put on the Helpdesk to meet any unrealistic deadlines will not increase efficiency.

Page 1, Item 2.1 & item 2.3. i.

In my view most of our customers want a fast efficient service and reducing our resources and training will not meet their requirements.

Extending our service deliver levels, will not meet our customers needs.

Page 1, 2.3iv.,

Again, reducing our Staffing level 'at the grass roots' will not produce an 'effective service delivery'.

Page 1, Item 2.3v.

The Service, I feel is divided and a 'them and us attitude' exists between certain areas of the service.

The Helpdesk is self motivating and further pressure being put on the Helpdesk to meet unrealistic deadlines will not increase efficiency

My primary concern of this review is the Service Desk. I realise until we see how the new structure works and given new job descriptions it is a little hard to comment on something concrete.

Please see my comments below.

Mandate for Change -
Review of the Service Desk - 2.6.3 -

The Help / Service Desk as I have already stated in the past has a dual role - it deals with both Operations work and the Service Desk facility - up to this point this has not been recognised in the review.

Savings
Staffing Implications - 5.3.2 -

Please clarify the sentence "it is proposed that the function is reviewed with an aim". Are you aware some cash processes are unable to be started until after 5.30 in the evening? Does this mean once the Operators post has been deleted and you are unable to offload their duties onto other Services will the Service Desk staff be expected to stay after hours to complete these tasks?

I agree there are areas in need of improvement on the Service Desk but we should also be given the staff to carry it out. Proposing to delete the other help desk analyst post will in my view further reduce the efficiency and quality of the service. I realise

budgetary savings are the top priority in this review but it seems to me the Service Desk is the scapegoat.

Having read the consultation document, I have tried to be as objective as possible and hope you will read my comments with that in mind?

1. It is said that the commitment to change requires two way engagement between ICS and Heads of Service and key users. With the new proposed structure who will take this forward in the future? There should be a top level representative from ICS, with an in-depth technical knowledge of the department, who is able to engage with key users. It is not clear from the new staffing structure who that is going to be?

2. Being asked to comment on a new structure, without having any access to proposed new Job Descriptions is not reasonable. Staff need to know that they are not just being asked to cover extra work for posts that are being deleted, without proper consultation as to what extra work they are being asked to do. As a result of this there looms the spectre of Job Evaluation again!

3. A lot of the changes seem to be based upon the reduction of requirements from the Service due to the outsourcing of Rev's and Ben's. As any reduction has not yet been identified, how can it be possible to look at reducing some areas of ICS based upon such presumptions? Surely it would be better to wait until Revs and Bens have been fully integrated within Capita before proceeding with any ICS changes? This is especially pertinent in the area of the Computer Operations and Service desk staff.

Having worked for over 40 years within IT and having been through a number of such reviews in that time, it is my opinion that these reviews (if not done properly) can have a hugely detrimental effect on staff moral. I would suggest that with the ICS department being subjected to speculation over its future for the past 3+ years this is something that the CBC should avoid at all costs? They should not expect staff to be loyal to CBC if they are to be treated badly, because, as has been seen over the last few years, ICS staff are highly skilled and can obtain alternative employment elsewhere, even in these times of recession. To loose any experienced CBC staff, when ICS is so short staffed, I am sure you would agree, could be disastrous for the service?

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Savings

5.1

No training budget/reduced budget will not facilitate the Helpdesk's efficiency

5.2 Revenues and Benefits

Can the wording 'with some provision and support from ICS' in this paragraph be clarified please.

Page 6, Benefits for Service Delivery

Item 6.3,

The phrase 'highly regarded status', I hope our reputation remains so if service levels begin to extend even further than the already extended service times we offer now. Whilst the Helpdesk have tried to absorb all the additional work I again feel the resulting effect will be extending our service delivery levels to unacceptable levels.

I support the motives of the Review but cannot emphasise enough that our service to our customers will suffer and I feel the Technicians and the Helpdesk will take the brunt of the user's complaints and frustrations.

In response to the ICS review I would like to offer my feedback regarding the conclusion of the report and the proposed structure.

I would like to start by stating that I am delighted by the fact that a review is being conducted and that changes to the service are being proposed. Since joining the department there have been numerous obvious areas that could be improved to which I have historically offered proposed solutions. These solutions, however, have often been met with an attitude of, "*This is the way it's always been done, and this is how we shall continue to do it*". This attitude has been imposed at higher levels within the department. I would like to feel optimistic that this review process will receive the required "buy-in" from the department at all levels and improve our efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction going forward.

There is however a concern that I would like to bring to your attention:

The report states that the review was conducted between July – October 2009. Since that date a further customer-facing resource (Carol Hardy – Service Desk) has left the service and has not been replaced.

Given that the report was conducted and compiled at a time when the Service desk was, what could be considered as "fully manned" (2 Operators), the report emphasises numerous areas for improvement directed at the customer-facing side of the ICS department and in fact dedicates a complete section of the Service Improvement plan (section B) to enhancements in the Service desk area. Also worth noting is section C (Customer Relationship) in which, dictated by ITIL, the Service desk will play a fundamental role.

The report also highlights the importance of the Service desk as a single point of contact and states that the service as a whole becomes more customer-focused.

This is fundamental to the success of the proposed review. I am confident that the proposed actions relating to the Service desk will enable us to fulfil the objective becoming increasingly customer focussed however, the proposed structure makes no attempt to address the conclusion of the report in terms implementing, or in fact replacing the frontline resources that are highlighted as being critical to the success of the service.

On a more positive note and irrespective of resource allocation, I am very pleased with the areas for improvement and the corresponding proposed actions that have been identified in the Service Improvement plan. I am of the belief that these actions will alleviate years of frustration for the department and I would be extremely interested in getting involved in the implementation of these points. I am conscious of how addressing these areas would be a great benefit to the service and the Council as a whole.

The following comments received from ICS in relation to Appendix (B) of the Item at the time this report was originally produced.

Response to the “Review of Current Service Delivery”

Following the publishing of the review document to our ICS staff there is a concern that the document provides an insight to the service that is not an accurate statement of fact. The results gathered are based on a series of correspondence sessions with groups of end users that were encouraged to express their opinion on the performance of the service.

These comments have been compiled and represent the concerns of all of the members of ICS where they have expressed an opinion. Those that have not expressed an opinion are in agreement with the content as provided by others. Whilst this method of obtaining feedback from our users is a valid method of assessing the users experience of the service it appears this is the sole basis for which the report is based.

End users will report back on their experience of the service from their own personal point of view and quite often will compare their experience with their expectations. Whilst valid, the end users expectations are not a true measurement of how the service performs and can provide no realistic point of reference to which it can be measured.

As a simple analogy the patient who calls their doctor expects to be able to contact the doctor immediately to respond to their ailments. If the patient is unable to contact the doctor but is filtered by the receptionist who records the message to pass to the doctor, then the patient’s perception of the service performance is likely to be negative because they are unable to meet their expectation.

However, the reality of the situation is that the doctor may be actively serving his patients and is scoring highly in the numbers of patients he attends and conditions he treats.

To use the same methodology to judge the performance of a service is highly flawed and not representative of the facts. The service review document represents a perception based review of the service with a small layer of factual data which to the reader could be easily misinterpreted and in turn be treated as a factual based situation of the reviewed service, where this clearly is not the case.

This is not to say that the review does not make clear areas for improvement that have been identified by our end users and ICS staff themselves. But it does further the concerns that a review by a third party using a perception based methodology, at a time where any observations made are also criticisms the service would also make of itself, but have been for a number of years unable to act on, are untimely, unfair and damaging to the service.

To put such a document in the public domain offers a view of the service that is highly critical and appears to support the belief that it is underperforming and not value for money. It does not make any factual comparison with other real world services operating with similar resources or budgets and as such cannot offer any support to any such claim.

Further concerns arise when you consider the lack of breadth of the user base invited to provide the feedback on which the report is based. To canvass 40 people including all of the full time employees within ICS leaves a huge gap in ability to use any such feedback as a viable means for analysis.

As the service comprises of 18 members of staff that leaves the number of users canvassed at only 22 people. This is hardly a representative basis on which to compile such a report. The number of people canvassed represents only 3% of the Southfield staff of 650 people. To express this as a large number of Charnwood staff is highly misleading. It also further demonstrates that the inclusion of Directors, Heads of Service and Application Administrators only goes to diminish the number of end users of the service such that it actually becomes far less representative and narrowly focussed.

There is also some confusion with the purpose of the document. There are as stated three stages to the process and where this document is intended to be the “As-Is” definition and claims to describe the current I.T. Service Delivery. It then oversteps the boundaries of this when it begins to make recommendations when the process of establishing the “To-Be Service Design” has not yet been established which would negate the validity of any possible recommendation at this stage.

It is further misleading to state that many of the recommendations are straight forward and easy to implement. As yet the action plan is being developed and the writer of the report is in no position to make any such statement. No assessment of processes, resources, funding or technical requirements have been made at this time to suggest that there is such a straight forward and easy solution to any problem identified.

In regard to the commentary on the staff within the service whilst it may be valid to criticise or complement individuals within the scope of the service, I feel it is highly emotive and extremely unnecessary within this forum.

The review must be in regard to the service and the roles that operate within it, so to identify individuals within it is grossly unfair and unnecessary when presented in this manner to its intended audience. The feedback from the staff is that this is probably the most damaging of statements within the document and whilst the document itself makes reference to low morale it then goes on to further alienate and demoralise staff through its own ill chosen statements.

Errata

With the above statements in regard to perceptions used to compile the overall report ICS have compiled a response to the factually incorrect data it contains or has been omitted.

Performance Management - ICS2 Resolution within agreed timescales - (Page 13)

"The method of calculation should be revised to; Total number of incidents (all calls recorded on the helpdesk system) *100 / Incidents resolved in SLA"

This is a recommendation which is outside the scope of this document. It also dismisses our previous responses where we have explained that this formula would not provide a valid representation of performance within a given timeframe. Of primary concern is the fact that it is not possible to determine if an incident or RFC has breached its SLA timeframe until it is completed. There are detailed reasons for this which have been explained but dismissed.

Service Desk / Service Request Management

The paragraph omits many of the actions of the Service Desk and seems to focus only on those duties that involve end users with computer related problems. The Service Desk Operators have a dual role - it isn't just about call logging and managing incidents they also deal with operations management. This entails managing and checking batch printing (input / output) after run requests are received from Service Teams for execution by our Operators. This includes the production of Job Sheets and management of the stationery log (database) system to accompany these.

Number of Incidents per week - (Page 18)

"Between 800 and 900 incidents are logged on Touchpaper per week"

This is obviously a typo and should read per month.

Lack of first time resolution. (Page 18)

"Users were concerned by the lack of first time resolution"

This statement may be perceived by the readers of the report as there being no first time resolution.

A relatively brief analysis of the Monthly Service desk statistics that were provided for the compilation of the report derives that the Service desk regularly resolves 1 in 4 incidents. In fact the latest available report for August 2009 shows that the Service Desk resolved 326 of the 952 incidents created or to put it another way: 1 in every 3 incidents that were recorded in Touchpaper were resolved by the first-line during August 2009.

First time resolution at the Service desk is heavily criticised on numerous occasions within the report and it has been identified as an area by for improvement by ICS prior to the Service Review. Remedial actions are in place to rectify the issue such as the training of the Service desk on frequently occurring incident resolution such as blocked Email release and remote Firepass connections.

Helpdesk is not manned (Page 18)

"They felt that the Helpdesk were unable to help with even the simplest of calls and that there were times when the helpdesk is not manned"

Perhaps this was the view expressed by the small number of representatives of our user community that participated in the compilation of the report and agree that efforts should be made change users perceptions. However, the Proteus phone statistics show that the ICS Service Desk answers 96% of all phone calls within 30 seconds even at times outside the SLA.

Taking that further, in August 2009 the service desk extension 4777:

Total Calls	Percentage	Answer Time
1307	-	-
1290	98.7%	Within 30 seconds
5	0.38%	After 30 Seconds
11	0.8%	User cancelled call within 30 seconds
1	0.07%	User cancelled call after 30 seconds

From this, maybe what could have been reported in the Service review is that, "Although the user(s) surveyed felt that there were times when the service desk was not manned, in fact the statistics show that Service desk consistently answers 98% of all phone calls within 30 seconds.

SLA targets "ICT team site" (Page 18)

Incident Management - "These targets are held on the ICT team site on the intranet"

For clarity as this implies or may be misinterpreted such that this information is not available to our customers and held within our teams own area. The SLA targets are in fact held on the ICS Service Desk site which is accessible to all service customers.

When an incident is closed the user is rarely informed (Page 19)

Whilst we agree communication could always be improved, this criticism is unfounded and merely a speculation. It is undoubtedly a perception based assessment and may not be representative of all those canvassed. It certainly is not an accurate statement of fact.

Touchpaper is not populated with resolution information (Page 19)

This is factually incorrect; Touchpaper will not allow an analyst to close an incident without some form of resolution information. Whilst an uninformed glance at the helpdesk system would mislead someone into thinking that resolution closure information is poor, common sense dictates that the repeatedly typing the same resolution information into the closure field of commonly occurring incident is neither productive or a sensible use of the resources available. What has been adopted, in the absence of a suitable knowledge base, is a series of documents in a common location which can be transferred into a knowledge base of any proposed new service desk system upon implementation and approval of funding.

When a user hands in an item of equipment to ICS a receipt is not provided, so there is no audit trail of where equipment sits. (Page 25)

There is a significant audit trail comprising of: move sheets, configuration sheets, stock allocation book entries and offsite equipment sheets that provide an audit trail that satisfies the requirements of Woodside audit that was carried out earlier this year. This assessment is not supported by any factual assessment and treats with contempt the efforts that ICS have invested to satisfy both external and internal audit requirements. If this statement is made to senior management or released to the public domain it would undermine all of our efforts to resolve a serious and previously identified issue that has conclusively been satisfied.

Appendix 4 - Analysis of helpdesk calls for Revenue & Benefits

A lot of attention appears to have been given to Revenues and Benefits, details of call analysis and estimates of time spent by individual support staff. Whilst appreciating that this is a service that might be out-sourced it should show the full ICS call analysis. The Revs/Bens portion would then not be seen in isolation.

This leads us to believe that this review is to be used as a basis for indentifying our interactions with only services that are being outsourced when the scope of the report states no such limitation. It should not be so narrowly focussed unless this is clearly stated in the scope of the document.

It is worth noting that approximately 50% of the Revs/Bens calls are for Operation's which do not cross the desk of the support teams and therefore without clear explanation are misrepresentative and potentially misleading. Excluding the Operations calls the actual percentage for support of calls would be down between 4%-7%.

Omissions

GIS

GIS (a member service of ICS) is involved with and plays a pivotal role in many council wide projects such as creating detailed maps for the Compulsory Purchase Order of land at the Eastern Gateway, maps for Loughborough Fair, Emergency planning, Cleansing Contract, maps for the courts for anti-social behaviour orders, Charnwood's interactive mapping, ENLIS, My Charnwood and providing information to Leicester County Council for the creation and maintenance of the National Street Gazetteer etc. Requests for maps and/or digitising data, extracting of specific addresses from the LLPG are often made 'last minute' where GIS has sometimes only a few days or even hours before deadlines are reached. GIS provides a 'bureau service' that has proven to be successful in delivering timely and accurate maps and plans when requests are made.

It is one of the most advanced District Council facilities in the country and has proven to be priceless in terms of more efficient resolution to corporate problems (eg. Refuse contract).

Charnwood's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) is a record of nearly 86000 addresses comprised of residential, industrial, business, utility and other non-postal addresses such as bus shelters, advertising boards, monuments etc. etc. It has been matched (and maintained so) to Street Naming & Numbering, CTAX, NDR, Electoral Register, Housing, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Customer Contact Centre, Student accommodation, Customer complaints, Garden Waste and Bulky Items collection etc. etc.

Charnwood's LLPG is one of the largest in the country and currently ranked by Intelligent Addressing, who act as the central 'Hub' for all local authorities as being 1st in the midlands region and 22nd nationally. This 'Hub' collates all the LLPG's to create the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) that is now used by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) as the preferred address database for creating the 2011 Census. It is also scheduled to be used in 2011 by the Police, Fire and Ambulance services following the restructure of their control centres, helping them locate to properties in times of emergency.

GIS is a corporate success story that we should be commending as part of the ICS service.

Officer Response:

The Council has followed the agreed Terms of Reference for all Service Reviews. The ICS team and Trade Unions were all consulted.

There were no comments received from the Trade Unions

There are no specific comments suggesting that the recommended option not be followed.

Many of the comments question how the operational and technical day to day aspects of the service might function under this proposal. If Option D is accepted by Cabinet, then all these points will be clarified.

There are some comments about strategic and line management responsibilities. These issues are expected to be addressed as part of the envisaged Senior Management Review.

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