

# Herefordshire Council PIDA Investigation: Review of Customer Relationship Manager Implementation

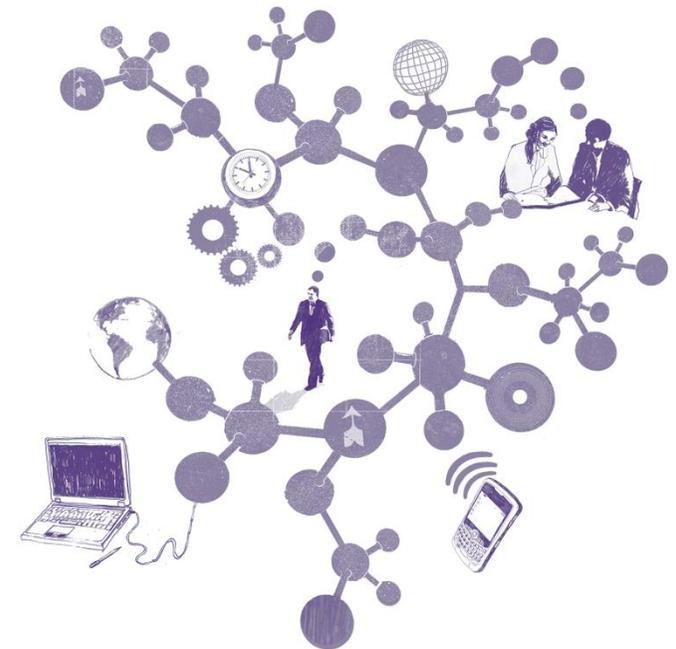
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**Year ended 31 March 2014**

June 2014

**Phil Jones**  
Director  
T 0121 232 5232  
E [phil.w.jones@uk.gt.com](mailto:phil.w.jones@uk.gt.com)

**Terry Tobin**  
Senior Manager  
T 0121 232 5276  
E [terry.p.tobin@uk.gt.com](mailto:terry.p.tobin@uk.gt.com)



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# Section 1: Executive summary

**01. Executive Summary & Introduction and Background**

**02. Detailed Findings**

**03. Appendices – Action Plan**

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# Executive summary

Grant Thornton received a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) from a member of staff of the Council in January 2014. The disclosure concerned the implementation of the Council's IT-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which went live in December 2011. The Council has spent around £1m on the implementation of the system to date.

We have carried out an investigation of the matters covered by the disclosure focussing principally on (a) the procurement arrangements for the contract and (b) the implementation of the CRM system and future strategy.

Our investigation suggested that the Business Case for the project was very ambitious and not fully owned by all parts of the Council. The estimated cashable savings of £1.6m identified in the Business Case were not supported by robust analysis and were premised on centralising services and therefore reducing back-office costs in departments. In reality the project did not subsequently extend to all of the services envisaged within the Business Case, so it is unlikely that key elements of the cashable savings were realised.

Our review of the procurement of CRM suggests that the Council appears to have carried out an appropriate tendering process with sufficient safeguards built in to ensure fairness and transparency. We also found no evidence to suggest that the tendering process was not carried out properly.

Following this, the Council implemented a shared front office and this is still in operation and working reasonably effectively, but the project did not, as envisaged by the Business Case: extend to all council services and partners; provide complete visibility of all customer information or allow proactive or 'intelligent' action in response to customer data which were all key planks of the original plan.

The project has delivered benefits but the Council's own post-implementation review concluded that it has only been partially successful and that momentum has stalled for a number of reasons:

- the world changed: the PCT was abolished and other services were divested and key providers no longer contract with the Council
- the impact of Austerity meant that the Council could no longer fund the full implementation of the project and the back-office savings which were supposed to be delivered by CRM were probably delivered by other means
- the Council's model (on which CRM was based) of seeking to provide services to meet all customer demand has changed to one of seeking to constrain demand and enable self-service where practicable
- there was insufficient corporate and departmental support to extending the project further

It is difficult to gauge whether the £1m spent on the project provided value for money. The Council needed to replace SAP system and the budget of £1.5m appeared commensurate with the scale of the project. The budget was subsequently underspent by £0.5m due to not fully implementing the original Business Case. It is unlikely that CRM delivered all of the costs savings on which the Business Case was premised and the system is possibly over-engineered for its current use.

Perhaps the more important question is where the Council goes next. Going forward the Council needs to be clearer about the scope and ambition of its customer vision and what this means for the way it engages with all customers in future and the digital and other channels it needs to deploy to support that vision.

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# Introduction & Background

## Introduction

Grant Thornton received a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) from a member of staff of the Council in January 2014. The disclosure concerned the implementation of the Council's IT-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which went live in December 2011. The Council has spent around £1m on the implementation of the system to date

## The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Auditor's Responsibilities

The Audit Commission's 'Whistleblowing and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: Internal Policy and Procedures' (updated August 2013) document sets out the role of the Audit Commission and its appointed auditors in relation to the handling of disclosures made under the PIDA Act. In short the key principles are:

- the appointed auditor is a prescribed person for disclosures relating to 'the proper conduct of public business, value for money, fraud and corruption in local government and health service bodies'
- the obligation of the auditor is confined to the receipt of disclosures
- PIDA neither requires nor empowers an auditor to carry out an investigation into the subject matter of any disclosure or to report the results of any investigation undertaken, but the appointed auditor should consider any information received as a result of a disclosure and determine what action, if any, to take in the context of their existing statutory professional powers and duties
- neither the Commission nor its appointed auditors have powers to discipline local authority officers; disciplinary action, where relevant, can only be taken by management and/or any professional bodies. Allegations of criminality are usually investigated by the Police.

- PIDA does not confer a responsibility upon the auditor to protect the identity of the discloser but the general principle guiding auditors in relation to information received from members of the public is that they should not reveal the identity of a discloser without their express permission

## Main Areas of Concern raised by the PIDA Disclosure

The main areas of concern raised in the disclosure related, in summary, to:

- the effectiveness of the procurement
- relationships with the Company contracted to deliver CRM
- the implementation of the CRM system
- the cost and other benefits delivered by CRM
- the extent to which the Council has been able to use and exploit the full functionality offered by the system
- the future of CRM

## Auditor Response and Scope of the Work Undertaken

Having considered the concerns raised by the PIDA disclosure, Grant Thornton concluded that it was appropriate to carry out further work to:

- establish the facts relating to the matters raised by the discloser; and
- determine if there were any weaknesses in the governance and oversight of the CRM implementation which should be reported to the Council, pursuant to the auditor's powers and duties.

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# Introduction & Background

The investigation focused principally on

- the procurement arrangements for the contract
- the implementation of the CRM system and future strategy

Our investigation has involved a document review and an interview of key staff who had knowledge and understanding of the project. The Council has afforded us every assistance in carrying out the investigation. A number of key players who were involved in the procurement and delivery of the project no longer work for the Council. Accordingly, we have shared this report, with the agreement of the Council, with Ciber Ltd (UK) and the former assistant director for customer services, and have taken of their comments where appropriate.

This report sets out the finding from our work. The scope of our work was not confined to the matters raised by the discloser. In addition, the report does not comment on all of the matters covered by the disclosure; in particular we have not referred to those matters which we consider on balance not to have merit or relevance to the governance or effectiveness of the implementation.

An Action Plan is appended at the back of this report.

**Grant Thornton UK LLP**  
**June 2014**

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## Section 2: Detailed Findings

01. Executive summary

**02. Detailed Findings**

03. Appendices-Action plan

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# Detailed Findings

## Objectives and Scope of the Project

Customer Service Transformation was at the heart of the Council's corporate strategy from 2000 onwards. In 2001 a programme of change was instigated through the creation of a Customer services function, which included establishing 'Info Shops' and the 'Info by Phone' Service. In 2005, following the introduction of the SAP Back Office project, a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) was implemented-SAP CRM- which was intended to be at the centre of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) model, which was not subsequently pursued.

Following the adoption of the HPS Customer Strategy, a review of the SAP CRM system was undertaken as it was perceived to be expensive in terms of the licensing model, support and infrastructure costs. as a result, an options paper was presented to the HPS Transformation Board ('the Board') in November 2009. Following this an outline business case was presented to 'the Board' in February 2010 which was accepted. The Joint Management Team approved the Customer Strategy in May 2010 and the business case was approved with a benefits model in October 2010.

A key change was that the coverage of services expanded beyond the council services already covered by the extant CRM system to all appropriate council services in addition to any NHS Herefordshire Service which would be applicable.

The objectives of the project as originally conceived in the 'System Specification' document at that stage were as follows:

- integrating front office service functions from all areas within scope into a single function
- making front office service delivery as efficient, convenient and accessible as possible
- demonstrating VfM and delivering efficiencies
- improving customer and citizen satisfaction

The scope as defined in the 'System Specification' covered three phases:

- **Phase 1:** *broad service area coverage with 'shallow' integration* based around existing customer service processes; strategic housing and revenues and benefits. There was to be system integration with the Local Gazetteer, Civica APP, Capita Academy, Morse Wisdom, Email and an Integration Platform was to be established to allow web self service. The system was to be populated with data from revenues and benefits, the Gazetteer and Electoral Register
- **Phase 2:** *targeted service area coverage with 'deep' integration and front-to-back business process re-engineering* to deliver further efficiencies. This would involve extending service coverage to: benefit and exchequer; children's services; provider services; legal & democratic; public health; NHS switch. A further acceleration of web based self service was envisaged along with enhanced customer profiling.

# Detailed Findings

- **Phase 3:** *further transformation and re-engineering of services*, extending service coverage to environmental and cultural services; environmental health and trading standards; highways and sustainability; economic and community services and planning and transportation.

## Business Case and Benefits Appraisal

The preparation of the business case was overseen by the then assistant director for customer services and communications, who acted as Project Executive for the project, supported by a Senior Supplier and day-to-day Project Manager who prepared the detailed Project Initiation Document (PID). The document re-iterated the scope of the project set out in the 'System Specification', based around a three phase implementation.

The PID argued that through integrated channel management and innovative service re-design, savings of around 10%-20% per service area could be conservatively achieved. A 'Net Benefit Model' ('NBM') was included in the PID as a table (see table opposite), which set out the estimated net cost savings which the project would deliver. It is unclear from whence the cashable and non cashable benefits were derived, although the PID defines the nature of the benefits as follows:

- **Cashable:** actual baseline revenue reductions in the cost of service of in the cost of project work already planned
- **Non Cashable:** savings that can be made through avoidance of future costs or those quality or productivity gains that cannot be equated to a direct revenue reduction

NET	BENEFIT	MODEL	TABLE		
<b>To Be Projection</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Costs</b>	£	£	£	£	£
Set Up Costs	165,060	983,783	-	-	1,148,843
Annual Costs	260,868	123,949	143,362	143,362	1,820,383
<i>Total Costs</i>	425,928	1,107,732	143,362	143,362	1,820,383
<b>Benefits</b>					
Cashable	-	321,311	448,878	448,878	1,219,067
Non Cashable	-	35,106	17,106	17,106	68,424
<i>Total Benefits</i>	-	356,417	465,984	465,984	1,287,491
<b>Net Benefits</b>	425,928	751,315	322,622	322,622	531,988

# Detailed Findings

On the face of it, the Net Benefit Table showed a cumulative Net Cost to the Council of £0.531m by Year 4 of the Project; but this was on the assumption that cost reductions of £1.2m would be delivered by Year 4.

The 'Business Case (Creating a Customer Organisation) sheds a little more light on the financial drivers for the project. The 'financial case' is projected over 5 years from 2010/11-2014/15 in similar format to the NBM included in the PID, but instead of projecting a cumulative net cost of £0.53m by 2013/14, it shows a net deficit of £0.122m and a cumulative surplus of £0.12m by 2014/15. The authors of this document appear to be the same as for the PID so it is unclear why Business Case presented a more optimistic view than the PID.

The Business Case has more detail to support the anticipated cashable benefits; so for instance the largest items (making up nearly £1.2m of the anticipated cumulative benefits of £1.614m by 2014/15) include:

- Termination of SAP software licenses	£0.291m
- System Support FTE reduction	£0.513m
- Cost reduction for integration	£0.113m
- Reduction in service costs as result of BPR	£0.195m
- Council Tax telephone payments into front office	£0.195m
- 5 FTE saving from transfer of services to self-serve/web	£0.325m

It is therefore clear that the bulk of the cashable benefits were seen to arise from reducing head count by centralising services and therefore deriving savings in back-office costs in departments; a switch to self-service and a

a reduction in system support costs. It does not appear that the relevant service departments, where the reductions in staff costs would arise, were properly consulted on the efficacy of the proposals or the robustness of the calculated savings, according to the staff we interviewed.

Certainly the figures were premised on delivery of all 3 Phases of the Project and therefore extending to services such as Children's Safeguarding and Children's Improvement and Inclusion. In reality the project subsequently did not progress much beyond Phase 1 and therefore key elements of the cashable benefits to be derived from reduction in staff costs due to the implementation of CRM (as opposed to changes which were subsequently delivered as a result of other drivers and initiatives) would not have been delivered, or at least not in the way envisaged.

The extent to which the project delivered cashable benefits will be considered later in this report, but certainly such benefits could only have been delivered in full had the Council secured buy-in from all service departments at the outset. This does not appear to have been the case.

In addition there does not seem to have been any independent report or cost-benefit evaluation of the project carried out by the Finance department, although there was Finance input into preparation of the financial information. The project was IT-led and therefore the robustness of the business case was lessened. Clearly the project promised non-cashable benefits but those benefits needed to be weighed against the costs and savings arising from the project. This was not possible as the financial analysis was neither transparent, owned by all parts of the Council, nor fully realistic.

# Detailed Findings

## Procurement Process

The Council carried out the procurement process using the Open OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) procedure for amounts over approximately £156k (at 2011 values). This route was chosen to seek to ensure maximum choice and best value. A detailed specification was prepared which set out a programme for the ITT to be issued 28.2.11; closing date for tenders 15.4.11 and contract award 16.5.11. The original anticipated budget for the project was £1.5m

Tenders were received and opened in the presence of Legal Services representatives. From an initial 60 expressions of interest, 56 suppliers dropped out due to failure to meet the mandatory requirements. The Scoring Panel were given the Tenders to review individually and they entered their responses on a pre-formatted score sheet to aid the group scoring session. The process was overseen by the Customer Organisation Programme Manager. Scores were awarded over a range of categories:

Area	Weighting
• Financial	50%
• Qualitative:	
-Capability	24%
-Innovation	15%
-Quality	10%
• Demonstration	1%
Total	100%

Individual scores were agreed by the Group as a whole. The financial assessment was based on awarding the maximum marks for lowest price or best discount in each area in the score set (eg Firm fixed price; Weighted Average Daily Rate) with the other suppliers awarded a percentage of those marks based on their pricing submission.

Four suppliers submitted compliant tenders. Following the completion, it was recommended that Ciber Ltd (UK) be awarded the contract with a score of 73,292 points (the next best score was 71,235 points).

The financial audit of the previous two years accounts was deemed acceptable for all companies. However a query was raised by the Council about the cash-flow of Ciber Ltd (UK) and its relationship to its parent multinational company. The audit found that the UK company's balance sheet was weak and that whilst the company was profitable, all profits passed to the parent company. A guarantee however existed between the parent multinational and Ciber Ltd (UK) to provide support around cash flow. Following discussions with the Ciber Ltd (UK) Finance Director; Ciber indicated by an email statement, that this guarantee would remain in existence for the duration of the contract with the Council and options were given for a break/escape clause, in the event it were withdrawn.

To what extent the results of the financial audit was appropriately taken into account as part of the overall tender scoring is difficult to judge, but in reality, the financial standing of the company did not prove to be an issue in the subsequent delivery of the contract.

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# Detailed Findings

Our review of the tender assessment process has been largely confined to a review of documentation and discussion with Council staff who had some knowledge of that process. Many of the key players involved in the tender specification and award have now left the Council. However, based on the review carried out:

- the Council appears to have carried out an appropriate tendering process with sufficient safeguards built in to ensure fairness and transparency
- we have found no evidence to suggest that the tendering process was not carried out properly

## Implementation and Post Implementation Review

Following the award of the contract, the Council and Ciber embarked on an 'aggressive' (Ciber's expression) implementation plan, with a view to a 'go live' date of December 2011, which was achieved. This was overseen by a Project Executive, which had overall responsibility for delivery of the project, reporting to a Project Board. The Council was quoted in Ciber's contemporary press release of 17 May 2012 as stating:

'We had an opportunity to make significant savings by switching off our existing system and moving onto the new platform by end of 2011. Our implementation plan was aggressive but we were determined to achieve that goal and the fact that we went live on schedule is testimony to good planning, combined with the close working partnership and commitment from the joint Herefordshire and Ciber team'

Did the CRM deliver all that it was originally intended to deliver? It appears to be the case that the project partly delivered the Business Plan's key objectives. Again in the press statement of 17 May 2012 already referred to, the Council was quoted as stating:

'We wanted to create a customer organisation that offered a shared front office, for all council service and partner, and to establish a single point of contact where shared intelligence and complete visibility of customer information would enable our customer service personnel to provide and informed and proactive engagement for any interaction.

In practice whilst the Council implemented the shared front office implementation, and this is still in operation and working reasonably effectively, the project did not move much beyond Phase 1 of the original 'Systems Specification'. In relation to the preceding quote of 17 May 2012, the CRM has not extended to all council services and partners and does not provide complete visibility of all customer information or allow proactive or 'intelligent' action in response to customer data.

This is in part due to the fact that the project momentum stalled. From the outset the project deliverables were split into Products but mixed or little progress was made against a number of the Products, in part due to the ongoing funding of the Project being constrained. Of the original £1.5m budget, the Council's project spend to date is £1.01m, due largely to a number of Products not being taken up by the Council.

# Detailed Findings

The Council's own overview of progress against Product delivery in its 'End Project Report' (effectively a post implementation review) at March 2013 assessed progress as follows:

Product	Overview of Progress
Product 2: CRM Replacement & Integration Foundation	Generally successfully achieved in Dec 2011
Product 3: Single Citizen View foundation	Intended to use demographic data to predict & respond to needs, developing single view of Citizen. Not fully used for technical reasons & lack of clarity over which data systems would be integrated
Product 4: Digital Channel Service	Roll-out has been constrained by need execute a governance go-live plan & creating work-arounds for mapping discrepancies between Council & Amey.
Product 5: Citizen Account	Not fully used. The functionality was created to provide a Citizen log-on, but not fully used.
Products 6 & 7: Further Services (integrations)	Took a year to develop interface between CRM and Civica. Amey no longer Council's Highways contractor.
Product 8: Business & Change Management	Optional service: assistance provided by Ciber to support Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) creation, but decided not see through to fruition
Product 9: Systems Hosting Provision	Optional service was not exercised.
Product 10- Maintenance & Support	Annual support contract in place.

The Council's own view of the implementation is one of only partial success. However as was noted earlier in this report, the efficacy of the original Business Plan was premised on delivering all of the Products and all 3 Phases of the Project. CRM has not to date extended to most of the services included within the original business proposition (i.e. those included in Phases 2 and 3) and therefore key elements of the cashable benefits to be derived from reduction in staff costs due to the implementation of CRM would not have been delivered. Cashable savings were delivered in Libraries.

In addition, one of the original objectives of the Council in replacing the SAP system, was not only to realise savings on licensing and other costs, but also to develop intelligent systems which could link up corporate data systems. At the outset of the project, the Council estimated that it had 1,500 activities that it needed to capture, so that customers could navigate through any transactional service requirement. But in reality services subsequently changed or were divested so it is likely that the cost and time invested in configuring systems in this complex way, exceeded what would have been required to deliver a system working as it currently does.

Similarly, the acquisition of DataHub, under Product 3, was intended to enable the Council to take personal details and meld into a single view of the citizen, to enable services not only to respond to need but also to predict need. For instance, if a person is making repeated calls for a particular service, it may indicate a wider need and a different response. This has not been used to any degree, partially because of technical issues, but also due to a lack of clarity about which data systems would be integrated. Other IT projects, such as GIS, needed to be completed to enable the full functionality to be exploited. This did not happen.

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# Detailed Findings

At a more detailed level, the Council produced a 'Dynamics-Lessons Learned' document which identified a number of other areas where benefits had not been fully realised or where lessons had been learned:

- difficulties were experienced in deploying the call centre technology in relation to 2 staff with visual impairments
- the Council realised late in the day that Amey had developed an in-house solution around the Infor system which resulted in an integration requirement not previously known
- there was late commitment to procure Ciber support which impacted on the implementation team having to provide support whilst also being tasked with new streams such as CIU, Reporting, Infor development
- communications needed to be improved as teams were now working on sub projects and communications were more ad hoc than the previous formal governance arrangements

There is also evidence to suggest that the aggressive implementation may have impacted on staff working particularly in the Contact Centre and that this resulted in tension between management and staff. This did not assist the implementation. These issues were eventually resolved. Some staff also expressed concerns about system functionality and effectiveness although views of staff varied on this. Some staff reported the system freezing and other technical problems but this concern was not universally shared by all staff.

## Why was the project not fully implemented?

There are number of reasons why the Project was not fully delivered, some within the Council's control, some not. We asked officers the reasons for this; their views were:

- *the world changed*: the original business plan envisaged that CRM would be extended to a range of services including for instance the PCT, but PCTs were abolished on April 1 2013, and the successor CCG did not wish to be included within the joint arrangements. A number of services were also divested and other providers (eg Amey) no longer contract with the Council
- when the project was first conceived in 2008/9 *the full impact of Austerity* on local government had not either impacted or been envisaged. This meant that the ability of the Council to fund the full implementation of the project became more constrained, and the back-office savings which had been envisaged would be delivered by CRM, were implemented as a result of other drivers, such as the need to deliver efficiencies to balance the budget
- Austerity has also driven a *change in philosophy* from one where the Council provides services to satisfy all customer needs to one where the Council seeks to enable customers' needs to be met by a portfolio of options including self-service
- officers also stated that they thought *the implementation had been achieved in a tight timeline* but as a result many of the service departments which needed to be bought into the vision of the project (as they would effectively be ceding budget and staff to a central customer department) did not fully share the vision. This meant that any further development of the project, without corporate pressure being applied, would be unlikely. Given the budget situation and the other changes happening in the internal and external environment, such corporate drive was not forthcoming.

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# Detailed Findings

In short the Business Plan was very ambitious at the outset and the wider Council was not bought into it. When Austerity arrived, and 'the world changed' any commitment to deliver the original plan dissipated. The Council has a functioning system which delivers a unified call management system, but there does not appear much appetite to extend the system further. Elsewhere, Ciber has stated that similar systems have been delivered successfully to the full specification.

## Has CRM provided value for money?

This is difficult to gauge. The Council needed to replace SAP but the system envisaged by the Business Plan was far more ambitious than the system currently in operation. However, the budget was underspent by £0.5m (£1m v £1.5m) and it is the view of the IT professionals that a £1m+ was a not unreasonable provision for the scale of IT project envisaged.

It is however inherently difficult to judge the cost effectiveness of this type of project, where the bulk of the spend represents the provision of expert advice and assistance (i.e. staff time) rather than tangible hardware or software. Payments under the contract were tightly controlled and monitored.

It is unlikely that CRM delivered all of the costs savings on which the Business Plan was premised and the system is possibly over-engineered for its current use. Perhaps the more important question is where the Council goes next.

## What are the Council's plans going forward?

The Council is at a crossroads in a number of respects, not only in relation to its approach to customer services, but also more broadly in relation to corporate strategy in light of significant budget challenges.

A report entitled 'Root and Branch reviews- Phase1' was presented to cabinet in October 2012 which set out proposals to carry out fundamental reviews of a number of service areas including Customer Services. The Root and Branch programme formed an essential element of the Council's medium term financial planning in order to establish future direction and address the financial challenge ahead.

In relation to Customer Services, the review recognised that the extant model, designed to provide accessible and timely response to customer queries had served the Council well to date, but a step change was required 'to dynamic management of a locally based network of contact' that also manages demand and prevents the need for services'. A companion paper on the future of Customer Services noted that a completely new perspective was required; recognising:

- the limit to the level of savings to be achieved through the extant customer services model
- the need to root a new approach in demand management and self-service
- the limited scope for large-scale council-specific telephone based services
- the need for end-to-end process change

Cabinet subsequently received a report in April 2013 entitled 'Digital Strategy' which, inter alia, outlined a fundamentally different vision of digital engagement with customers by achieving channel shift, such as a gradual conversion from for instance, phone communication to on-line engagement. One aim would be to 'achieve less dependence of physical technical infrastructure.' This was seen as an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process.

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# Detailed Findings

Subsequently a formal consultation document 'Customer Services and Libraries: Redesigning Services' was issued in October 2013 which established a new set of principles; to:

- continue to integrate customer services and libraries as the front facing delivery of local authority and partner services
- design face to face services around citizens with the greatest need
- improve the interface between front and back office services
- extend the role of centres as community hubs
- involve communities in designing services
- deliver efficiency through the application of these principles

It has taken some time to integrate customer services and libraries. The Council will also need to determine going forward where CRM sits within the changed landscape of its new approach to dealing with customers and revised digital strategy. In part this may need some wider thought about where Customer Services, as it is currently defined within the Council, fits within the wider vision that the Council has for all of its customers and citizens, for instance social care and children's services largely sit outside Customer Services as currently defined, yet those services deal with key Council customers.

Going forward the Council needs to be clearer about the scope and ambition of its customer vision and what this means for the way it engages with all customers in future and the digital and other channels it needs to deploy to support that vision.

## Did the Council deal with the complainant's concerns effectively?

We have received every assistance from the Council in conducting this investigation. The Council has also, from our perspective, treated the complaint with considerable seriousness.

The complainant, who we cannot name, raised a number of concerns informally about the procurement and implementation of the project with senior officers and members of the Council over a period of time. It is alleged that these concerns were not followed up in all instances by senior members and officers. The complainant was reluctant to share the relevant email and other evidence relating to the raising of their concerns, as this would have compromised their anonymity. It has therefore been difficult to verify the validity of the concerns expressed. Nonetheless, going forward, the Council may wish to ensure that its own internal procedures to deal with informal complaints raised internally are well understood and remain robust.

An Action Plan is attached at the back of this report which we will discuss with the Council's officers.

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## Section 3: Appendices: Action Plan

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Appendices: Action Plan

# Appendix A: Action plan

## Priority

**High** - Significant effect on control system

**Medium** - Effect on control system

**Low** - Best practice

Rec No.	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Implementation date & responsibility
1	The Council should ensure that any future major project has detailed input from the Finance department around the projected costs and benefits of the Business case.	H	Accepted. The Finance Team are responsible for completion of this element in any business case.	Ongoing. Chief Finance Officer
2	The Council should seek as far as possible to future proof major projects or contracts and be clear about the external circumstances which could change during the life of the project or contract.	H	Accepted. The lessons learned exercise completed by the Council in relation to this (and other major change programmes) are used to inform future programme development and implementation, and future commissioning.	Ongoing. Chief Finance Officer/Head of Commercial Services
3	The Council should ensure that any Council-wide initiative has full buy-in from all parts of the Council as part of preparing the Business Case.	H	Accepted.	Ongoing. Management Board
4	The Council should develop a clear view about the scope and ambition of its customer vision and what this means for the way it engages with all customers in future and the digital and other channels it needs to deploy to support that vision.	H	Accepted. Recent cabinet reports relating to customer services and digital strategy outline the clear direction of travel. These will be supported by additional communications to ensure this direction of travel is consistently communicated to customers, members and employees.	Ongoing. Head of Community and Customer Services
5	The Council should ensure that its internal processes to deal with complaints raised informally are well understood and applied consistently.	M	Accepted. Information on the processes to be followed for both formal complaints and informal concerns raised by staff will be provided to all members regularly and included in new member induction. All managers are periodically reminded to the processes to be followed when concerns or complaints are raised by members of staff or members of the public. All staff are reminded periodically of the appropriate processes to be followed when raising concerns whether informally with managers or formally through the grievance or whistleblowing processes.	Ongoing. Assistant Director, Governance



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