POLICY FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

28 September 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

UPDATE ON PLANS FOR WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To advise Members of the plans to improve and update the Council Web Site as requested at the last PFA meeting.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 For Members to be aware of the plans to improve and update the Council Web Site and to comment.

3.0 **BACKGOUND**

3.1 Responsibility for the Web site transferred to Communications Service in July 2011.

3.2 Through the Customer Services Task Group a 'critical friend' exercise was carried out in April 2011 to identify user feedback on the current web site. The feedback has been used to indentify issues and make changes to the web site where appropriate.
Generally the feedback was positive however it is acknowledged that the web site requires further development to be able to facilitate 'channel shift' i.e., fewer calls and more on line transactions and to meet requirements of customers

4.0 **KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The Council Web site requires updating and it is the intention to encourage customers to use the Web site rather than telephone or face to face services where appropriate. The Web site is a more cost effective method of serving customers compared to telephone or face to face contact. Better on line services increase choice for customers.

4.2 Reducing customer telephone contact to the Council by 5% is a Communications Service standard.

4.3 Reduction of calls will enable services more resources to be focused on those customers who have more complex needs and are more vulnerable and would benefit from face to face contact.

4.4 In order to achieve this 'channel shift' the Council must provide services on line that people will access and use effectively.

4.5 To date there are several transactions on line. These include reporting a missed bin, ordering a replacement bin and checking the waste collection days by address. These transactions on line have been available since late 2010.

4.6 Further transactions on line are being identified through the use of customer insight information.

4.7 Once identified the transaction process will be built on the CRM and marketed. The marketing will also use customer insight information to target those groups of people who are more likely to use the transaction on line options.

4.8 In order to improve the customer experience and encourage the use of transactions on line, the web site will be reviewed and updated with focus on the relevance and content of

the information, ease of use for the customer and a system to keep information up to date and relevant to customers.

4.9   The web site will be developed taking into account the Customer Services Strategy that is being developed currently by Leicestershire County Council with partners. Melton Borough Council has been actively involved in the development of the strategy and progress has been communicated through the Customer Services Task Group.

4.10   In terms of testing the principles of the Strategy and linking with the original vision from the Varney report there are a number of emerging projects that Leicestershire plan to pilot that are relevant to the Web site development project in Melton, in particular the development and testing a single website portal for public services at the district level and exploring how we can move towards having a single view of customers.

4.0   **NEXT STEPS**

4.1   An Officer group has been identified to undertake the Web site work and it will comprise of Head of Communications, Customer Services Manager, HR and Communications Manager, CRM Development Officer and Customer Insight Officer.

       An ICT resource will be required to make changes to the web site and to enable the transactions on line to be fully operational. This is in addition to the Officers identified above.

4.2   The Group is scheduled to meet on 26 September 2011 when an action plan will start to be developed to deliver the project.

5.0   **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1   The project is being undertaken within current budgets.

5.2   In order to integrate systems and further improve efficiencies and performance there is an option to purchase IT that will reduce dual keying in transactions on line. This option will be explored at the appropriate time through normal channels.

11.0   **CONSULTATION**

11.1   As part of the project customer insight and consultation with users will be undertaken to inform decisions.

12.0   **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1   ALL

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Date: 15 September 2011

Appendices :   None

Background Papers:

Reference :   X : Committees\PFA\2011 12\280911