Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Customer Access Strategy

Breaking down the barriers between our customers and our services

CONTENTS

Customer Access Draft Strategy 2008 – 2012

Introduction and purpose of the strategy

This document sets out the council's strategies for improving customer access to its services, information, facilities and business opportunities. It is intended to set out a means of managing service delivery channels that balances the wishes of customers against the business requirements of the council providing a coherent, consistent, high quality experience for people dealing with the council. It brings appropriate technology to bear on the problems of ensuring everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or location, has the same opportunity to deal with the council and get what they need in ways that suit both them and the Council's capacity to deliver.

This strategy builds upon the Customer Research and Exit Surveys carried out in August 2007. It makes full use of geo-demographical information enabling us to define access and deliver a cost effective, meaningful service to the communities within our district.

Its primary object is to increase the degree to which the council is accessible and seen to delivery value for money. Its three principle aims are

- To understand as completely as possible our different customer groups, their needs and preferences in terms of services and ways of accessing them.
- To identify and implement ways of working – including the use of technology – that maximise all customers' opportunity to know about and access what they need in the context of value for money
- To provide consistent, equal access to the council throughout the district, including those areas most difficult to serve.

Timeframe of strategy

This is a medium-term strategy covering the period April 2009) to March 2012.

Strategy Review and Performance

The strategy aims, objectives and actions outlined in this document and action plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis taking into account new policy developments and changes in local requirements, areas identified for improvement and national policy initiatives and ensure these are reflected in new actions as required.

Performance, in terms of implementing the action plan, will be reviewed by officers on a quarterly basis as part of the Customer Services and Information Services Team's service plan.

Strategic Vision

Cherwell District Council wants to make it as easy as possible for people to know about and access public services, participate in decision-making, do business with the council or carry out a business in the District, and use our buildings, in a culture that promotes equal access for everyone, whatever their circumstances. At the same time the council is intent on making sure that it gets value for money from its own resources, identifying and stripping out wasteful activity and inefficient processes that impede customer contact.

Strategic Aim

This strategy is directed at delivering the vision: making the right services available in the most accessible ways to the appropriate customer group, identifying and removing barriers to access, and maximising the council's use of resources.
It is anchored in the council's strategic priority 4: an accessible, value for money Council

- Be easy to contact, approachable and responsive
- Always treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Deliver value for money by achieving the optimum balance between cost, quality and customer satisfaction
- Reduce the financial burden to local taxpayers
- Work with others to provide local services

Strategic Objectives

Our objectives are to:

> To be a gateway to as wide a range of services as possible

> To push our services closer to our customers

> To balance customer needs and preferences against efficient delivery and value for money

> To make available, and remove barriers to accessing

> > relevant and timely information about the council and its services
> > engagement and involvement
> > business relationships with the council
> > engagement and dialogue with the council
> > our buildings and facilities
> > equal treatment

What is access to services?

We provide a range of opportunities to allow the customer to interact with us, whether it is to seek information, guidance or service delivery. (Where appropriate this extends to partner organisations). We recognise that our customers want to use different channels for different purposes at different times and that some contact is more appropriate to some channels than others. It is important therefore that we provide multiple service channels but that the same high level of service is delivered through all of them.

We have already reorganised our face to face to delivery to ensure equal hours of opening in all locations. Both phone and face to face contact is handled by the same team, ensuring consistency of service. The same information systems are available to customer service staff wherever they are, so again, consistency is ensured whatever route customers choose to come to us. This provides a sound basis for starting to dismantle other barriers to customer access in a measured, consistent way, to maximise the value of the customer service resource now in place, and ensure the most open access for customers.

Our customers – who is accessing our services, and how?

We recognise four broad categories of service "interaction" type.
- Information enquiry. When are you open, Do you need a parking permit?…A simple question answered and finished with there and then.
- Accessing a service. Making an application, buying a bin…. Something the customer can complete the first stage of there and then but may require some subsequent activity, scheduling, etc before the service can be considered delivered.
- Paying a bill. Council Tax, business rates… This involves a reference number or account number and paying for something distant from its delivery.
- Paying for something there and then: an application, pest control, a bulky waste collection, bus pass….

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We *refer to three main channels of access:*

According to the combination of service content and interaction type, some access channels are more suitable
- Face to face: one stop shops, partners, exhibitions, talks, visits, surgeries…
- Phone – current mix of contact centre, DDI and switch. This will extend to text messaging.
- Online – information and transactional, self service and mediated, in home and at access points

(Reference pack pg1)

Our face to face channel and its customers

Hard-pressed, older and disabled residents favour "face to face". This has service access implications for how we setup our buildings, compliance with DDA and Building Regulations PartM; where our facilities are actually located, their opening hours and the groups of services we make availble to personal visitors.

But we must also ask: Why is this the channel of choice for these groups? And why not for other groups? What can we do to make it easy for those who clearly prefer it, without disenfranchising those who maybe don't feel it's "for them".
There is a mismatch between the services required by the customers who *prefer coming to our local offices* in person, and the services customers *prefer to access face to face* – or indeed services that can only be delivered face to face – local land search, registering as homeless, planning issues for example. These services and others are currently only available to personal visitors to Bodicote House.
What can we do to make our service delivery buildings attractive to customers of all for those services?   How can we get those services delivered through those offices.
Over the next three years plans are in place to re-invent our service delivery in Kidlington, providing a co-located multi-agency service point. In Bicester completely new civic buildings provide a similar opportunity to examine how we can take our services into the heart of our key communities. (Reference pack pg2)

This strategy sets out the route to delivering the services most face to face customers want (not just our local office customers), at locations near them.

Our phone channel and its customers

Telephone remains the most popular route to service delivery. The annual satisfaction survey shows more than half the people who contacted us in the previous twelve months did so by phone. As a whole organisation we receive well over half a million phone calls a year, around 120000 of which are directed through the phone contact centre operated by Customer Service. More than 90% of these calls are completed at that first contact, as the team has the training and information to hand to deal with those services for which contact centre numbers are published. In addition, these calls provide a wealth of management information about how long people wait, how quickly their call is dealt with, reasons for contact and so on.
But we currently (January 2009) publish many dozens of numbers for different services.

This strategy sets out the route to delivering more services through the telephone contact centre so that more customers have their enquiry or request satisfied at first contact

The telephony strategy that sits alongside, sets out in detail the route to giving customers a simple choice of just a handful of numbers to call to get hold of key groups of services.

Looking at the actual usage of our phone channel in 2008/09, a similar question is posed as came up when looking at the face to face usage: How come so many "online people" still ring us up? We know that online usage is high in "urban prosperity" group
They do much of the rest of their life online – shopping, arranging holidays and so on.
We know that a key barrier is the availability of the services they want, online. In January 2009 it was clear from customer feedback on the phone and via the website that information about seasonal bin collections was a key service wanted for self-service. In response, an online address search for bin collection day has been implemented. This service is clearly not just for customers to use themselves but ensures consistency of information as our customer service advisers use the same facility when talking to customers on the phone or in person.
(Reference pack pg3)

Our online channel and its customers

We deliver a growing range of services over the internet. We take bill payments; we accept planning applications via "The Planning Portal" national service, and people can submit their comments and responses to planning consultations; all publicly available documents can be downloaded; complaints and compliments can be submitted; council meetings can be viewed; reporting of highways issues (potholes, street lights etc), a wide range of environmental issues (fly tips, graffiti); and access to many dozens of information types available to be presented on maps showing "my nearest". (*for evidence pack pg 4*)
However, we are only now, at the start of 2009, beginning to develop online forms that will allow customers to request services such as a bulky refuse collection, additional bin purchase, pay for it and have the date/time confirmed without the intervention of a customer service adviser. Making it possible for customers who want to, to access services they need themselves, will free customer service resources for other services not suited to online delivery, and other customers not able to access online delivery

This strategy sets out the route to delivering the services our online customers want to access themselves, and proposes the means to persuade customers to change from phone to online.

Our resources – are they deployed efficiently?

We need to promote cost effective ways of accessing services and to ensure that we make the connections between various access channels. Around half the customer service team work in a face to face environment and half in the contact centre. Approximately half a full time post is given over to handling email and online enquiries which are directed to "customer service". The team rotate around all the offices and the contact centre. Looking just at their use of time, not at building costs and so on, we can calculate the "cost to serve":

- phone costs (5 min customer service team member): £2
    - (national benchmark £3.76)
- face to face costs (15 min exc. building costs): £6
    - (national benchmark £9.34)
- Our estimated self service costs: £0.25
    - (national benchmark £0.27)

The benchmark figures are provided through the Society of IT Managers who have calculated through liaison with hundred of local authorities. Cost per transaction is not necessarily a "real" cost but it provides a useful numerator to put a value on capacity. (Reference pack pg 4)

Currently around a quarter of all contact could be avoided and our customers saved the trouble of having to ring, email or visit us. That is a key element of the cost to serve, tying up resources that could be better deployed elsewhere. Detailed breakdown for our most used channel, the phone is as follows:

Avoidable contact – National Indicator 14

Around 50% of our current phone contact is currently avoidable, as categorised by NI14 – when:
Customers don't understand what service to expect
Customers don't know the timeframe within which something can happen
When we make a mistake or omission

Stripping out avoidable contact will free customer service resources to handle more service contact at no increase in resource. Combining this with a migration plan that moves customers between channels, makes best use of our resources:

This strategy sets out the route to taking this information and using it to improve service delivery, ultimately reducing the amount of contact we handle that is classified as "avoidable" in the definition of NI14. (Evidence pack pg 5)

Our services – are they optimally designed?

To help reduce avoidable contact it is necessary to look at the way we organise our services and present them to our customers. If they are not finding it easy to understand what service to expect, how can we make it clearer and reduce the need for customers to ring us up and ask us what we meant.

This strategy sets out the route by which NI14 data, customers' own feedback through GovMetric, complaints and compliments, mystery shopping and customer consultation, can be applied to our service processes to improve them so that the customer need be less proactive and the Council can make best use of its resources – principally staff time.

Our systems – are they optimally configured?

Channel	Current
Face to Face	Through our offices in Banbury Town Centre, Bicester and Kidlington. All of our offices are open Monday to Friday 8.45am (10am Wed) until 5.15pm. Through the one stop shop at our headquarters at Bodicote House, open Monday to Friday 8.45am until 5.15pm. The offices are staffed by the Council's customer service team, and offer a developing range of surgeries with the Council's service delivery partners such as CAB and Sanctuary Housing.
Telephone	Most high volume services are accessed through the council's contact centre, staffed by our customer service team who handle a significant part of the Council's customer contact. Services handled as at Jan 2009: Waste and recycling, Council Tax, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Abandoned vehicles, Noise complaints, Food safety, Pest control and general enquiries. More services will be transferred. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony has been installed at the Bicester and Kidlington offices which allow the customer service team members there to "plug in" to the contact centre phone system and take calls when personal visitors are few in number.
Self Service	Self service computers at all the local offices and at Bodicote House, providing access to a limited range of websites for customers to access services including online reporting, payments, downloads and webcams of council meetings.

Many of our services are managed through the use of computer systems. Access to those systems, the information held in them can affect the ease with which customers get the services they need.

Some of our services have not yet been able to take advantage of the investment the Council has made in improved information storage and retrieval such as our Geographical Information Systems, to improve the speed, reliability and efficiency of their service delivery, or to present a self-service option to customers.

We know from others' experience that there are significant efficiencies to be achieved through being able, for example, to take a service request such as for a bulky refuse collection, direct from a customer using a form on our website and generating a job in an individual team's work calendar, without the need for customer service intervention. Taking such a step towards "deep integration" can be expensive but it can mean fewer people are needed in the long run. For some services the initial investment will not be able to recoup sufficient long-term efficiencies, but for others the return could be rapid and significant. (Reference pack pg 6 *Current Model of service delivery (January 2009)*)

Underpinning principles to our approach to service improvements

Channel	Future
Face to Face	Developing the range of services provided by Customer Services and integrating with the CRM will result in increased resolution of enquiry at first point of contact.
	Developing the range of services offered through the CRM will allow service experts to deal with more complex issues.
	Provide more joined up services in collaboration with other partners, both in surgery form and through direct service delivery.
	Expand and improve access to services in Kidlington.
	Smartcards have been described as a personal, portable and highly secure means of accessing facilities and paying for goods. In practice they are cards containing chips (or integrated circuits) which have the capability to store data. More advanced cards contain data processing facilities. A wide range of functions could be supported by Smartcards. Some authorities' smart cards also offer discounts for local shops and services to local residents. The cost required to produce and the resource required for delivering and maintaining the Smartcard system is high some larger council's are using a phased approach as current Library/Leisure cards expire.
Telephone	Implement much more sophisticated telephony to remove the bottleneck of switchboard and give customers a simple choice of a few numbers to access all the main areas of service, bringing resolution to their query closer and quicker.
	Ensure equal cost of phone access to customers wherever they are in the District – or beyond.
	Bring about consistent telephone response standards across the organisation including individual service phones, so whether or not the customer come through the customer service team they get the same standard of service.
Self Service	Develop services available online to include service requests for high volume services (particularly in environment and amenities) and a booking facility for Leisure and Amenity services.
	Interactive Digital TV (iDTV) gives customers the ability to interact online and access services through their TV, making communication, transactions, information and news available to citizens at their convenience. Advantages are that potentially there is greater population reach as nearly all homes have a television (albeit not digital as yet).
	Where appropriate implement local access points, bringing the online channel to locations and communities less well served with other access channels. Investigate mobile service delivery first through the use of the Health Bus and then in partnership with others.

This strategy sets out the route by which potential efficiencies and improvements to service processes can be identified, the investment to achieve those efficiencies identified, and decisions made about realising those efficiencies and improvements. (Evidence pack pg 7 A model of complete "deep integration")

Summary of Access to Services barriers and how they may be resolved

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
Our local LinkPoints are predominantly used by older people making payment in person. This ties up resource and may make other customer groups feel the face to face channel is not for them: they continue to travel to Bodicote House for, for example, planning services	• Be pro-active in promoting alternative routes to payment of bills and make it easy for people to change • Be pro-active in communicating the range of services available locally to customer groups who continue to use Bodicote House •
A large proportion of the District population are online-savvy and entirely at home using online channels to book holidays, buy goods etc. However, they continue to make up a large part of our telephone customers thus using resource that could be better applied to other customers.	• Develop a timed programme to make available online access for a wide range of services according to identified need. • Look at and plan for integrating self service routes (online forms, largely) into service delivery computer systems to reduce the double or triple handling of service requests. • Ensure the availability of online access is promoted strongly to those best placed to take advantage of it and who currently use other access methods. • Establish targets for reducing the volume of contact for online-available services that is made by phone and increasing the volume via self-service. • •
People are not expert at distinguishing the various responsibilities for different levels of local government and a proportion of our customer service resource is spent signposting to other suppliers rather than delivering services.	• Bring more service providers into our local LinkPoints • Deliver more services on behalf of other providers •
The cost to serve varies greatly across channels. Currently around 38% of our customer contact is through the phone contact centre and represents about 42% of the cost to serve, while 32% is through our face to face locations but represents almost three quarters of the cost to serve.	• Ensure those services that most benefit from face to face delivery – where there are complexities and different circumstances to consider, and where the opportunity to "bundle" services would be beneficial – are prioritised for this route, and alternative channels for other services are promoted. •
At the end of 2008/09 approximately a quarter of the customer contact handled by customer service is classed (NI14) as "avoidable". This can be quantified as around 330 man-hours a month, or £95,000 per year. Reducing this will enable the team to do more,	• Electronic forms ensure the right information is collected, and greatly reduce errors and omissions and the need to prolong contact. • Embedding the principle of the improvement loop so that causes of avoidable contact are fed into services for them to resolve. • Process review of all services whose contact is handled by customer service to

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
within the same resource.	identify potential causes of unnecessary contact. • Establish targets for reducing the volume of contact defined as avoidable (NI14) . • Improve first time resolution so customers need not make repeat contact. • Develop and publish a programme of monthly satisfaction surveys (phone), mystery shopping, GovMetric reporting • Ensure all service information is clear and unambiguous so customers do not need to call us for clarification. This to include achieving crystal mark for the website. •
Volume of phone contact into the contact centre is volatile, varying according to service "triggers" (letters to customers, advertising campaigns, news coverage etc.). Generating avoidable peaks in calls prevents people getting through and to call back several times, thus preventing more customers from access.	• A coordinated calendar of outward-bound customer contact will help remove peaks of contact, and customer access for one service being disrupted by those of another. • Real time information into the contact centre about activities occurring that will provoke customer contact. • Establish a reducing wait time target for contact centre callers that leads to us achieving a "five minute" ring to resolution target within three years.
A third of our population live in rural areas, away from where our local LinkPoints are located.	• Implement local access points. • Promote PayPoint through the community contract in place with the Council • Improve access to services in Kidlington. • Investigate mobile service delivery first through the use of the Health Bus and then in partnership with others. • Home visits? •
There are channels popular with our customers that we currently do not use, and others that will emerge in the future such as smartcards (via National ID Card)	• Look at what services and communication can be implemented through texting SMS • Examine the case for iDTV (interactive digital television) • •
There are a large number of contact numbers published for services, making it probable that some calls will go unanswered, many have no management information associated with them, and customers need a directory to find an appropriate number.	• Review and reduce the number of phone numbers so that customers have a simple choice of a handful of numbers associated with main service areas. • Remove the access bottleneck that is the switchboard. • Exploit the flexibility of the contact centre system to manage calls and provide management information. • Implement a timed programme of transferring clearly identified customer-handling aspects of as many services as possible to the customer service team, with

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
	associated process review, automation, and self-service development where appropriate. • Ensure equal cost of telephone contact for all customers • Bring about consistent telephone response standards across the organisation including individual service phones, so whether or not the customer come through the customer service team they get the same standard of service. •
Some service delivery processes are not well designed and generate avoidable contact	• Review processes from a customer perspective, map and analyse end to end to identify inefficiencies and the impact on our customers
The potential benefits of deep integration of some services have not yet been quantified	•
A simple and accessible online complaints system	• Setting up a simple form for integration into the councils CRM system allows customer advisors on behalf of customers and customers to self serve and complete a complaints form online. This enables a prompt response to be made to customers and enables us to use the information which we gain from complaints in an intelligent way to further improve our services

Accessing Information

Producing clearer, simpler, quicker communications for Cherwell residents and staff

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
Print, letters - info in writing	• Revisit the language we use, making our publications easy for people to read and understand. Eradicate nonsense words which could mislead our customers. Promote plain English in all communications • Increase recognition of the Cherwell logo and its brand values. Clarity on this will help residents feel more closely associated with Cherwell as a district and with the council as a service provider they can identify and trust
Service information eg bin collection schedules, info in tables etc	• Our website provides comprehensive information on services. Downloadable pdf's are available for environmental services calendars and information on leisure activities in the district. Local view provides our customers with a range of service and public sector information about the place they live, ranging from local democracy to information on schools and hospitals
Online channels – need equipment and reading	• Screen reading software • Crystal mark
Translation, interpretation and format	• We offer translation services from all of our LinkPoints and over the telephone. Our written information is available in other languages and formats such as large print, audio tape on request. • A translation service for our web pages is in development`
Queue messages on the contact centre phones Proactive – tell me when, and tell me in this way	• Improve telephony technologies • Introduce automated response on services with high telephone traffic to alleviate customer wait time

Accessing engagement and involvement

How we consult and engage with local people and communities, including residents, people who work in the district, local businesses and the voluntary and public sectors....

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
Consultations	The Consultation and engagement strategy sets out a broad framework for consultation and engagement. This framework will be used as the basis for a medium term action plan to guide the work of the Council in this area during the period 2009-2012. As part of the strategy a charter will be developed that clearly and concisely outlines what members of the public and other stakeholders can expect from the Council in terms of the consultation and engagement activities that we undertake. Guidance, training and 'toolkits' will also be developed to ensure that Council employees have the necessary support and training to meet the objectives in this strategy.
Why we consult	- The main purpose of consultation and engagement is to ensure that our services reflect the needs of the local community. This requires us to actively undertake consultation to inform strategy, policy, service development and the allocation of the council budget. Key requirements include: - To support the role of Councillors in understanding the needs and wishes of the Cherwell community - The need to inform the community strategy and provide a solid knowledge base for developing services and service strategies - To measure customer satisfaction and opinion in relation to service delivery and be able to track changes over time and in relation to service changes - To measure issues around quality of life, such as the fear of crime - To measure Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and other performance indicators - To improve the delivery and take up of our services - To support bids for resources or the allocation of resources
How we consult	We are committed to using consultation and engagement methods that are inclusive and appropriate for the target audience. The council is also keen to consult in partnership with others and works with partners to jointly commission consultation. We

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
	recognise that there may be people or groups that are less likely to take part in consultations for a number of reasons for example they may have language or other accessibility requirements, they may not use many council services, they may be busy or spend a lot of time outside the district. These groups are often called 'harder to reach' and different approaches are usually required to establish and maintain contact with them, so that their views are not overlooked.
Planning	• We ensure that all sectors of the community have the opportunity to have their say in how their community is planned and developed irrespective of age, sex, ability, ethnicity, background or disability. Consultation techniques set out in this SCI will therefore be tailored to meet the specific needs and characteristics of all people in the District interested in planning for their area.
Who do we consult	• The people and organisations that the Council will consult as part of the planning process are defined by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as: • Specific Consultation Bodies - bodies that the Council is statutorily required to consult as part of the planning process; and • General Consultation Bodies - individuals or organisations whose support or opposition to development may be significant, or who have particular expertise. • We understand that, given the range of issues to be addressed by Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and the wide range of Consultation Bodies that the Council will involve during the Local Development Framework (LDF) preparation process, it is important to tailor consultation arrangements to meet the needs of specific groups. In particular, efforts will be made to ensure people who traditionally have not been involved have the opportunity to have their view heard. These people include the elderly, the young, disabled, ethnic minorities and residents of deprived areas. The Council will work with people from these groups to design consultation methods they can engage with.

Accessing our buildings and facilities

It is essential that all of our corporate buildings are maintained to a high standard to ensure the properties are safe and accessible for our staff and customers and our property assets retain their value

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
Maintain regular DDA Audits Part M compliance and codes of practice	• The resource is no longer available in house so the provision of DDA Audits will be outsourced • The Councils Property Team work closely with Building Control to ensure all of our properties meet required building regulations. Providing regular monitoring and servicing of all water systems to ensure compliance with the Approved Code of Practice L8 – the control of Legionella via an external provider. In-house inspections for asbestos to ensure compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 and ACoP

Access to doing business with the council

Supporting economic development at a local level for businesses and residents of our district

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
Buying and selling Services	• In October 2008 Cherwell District Council convened a Local Business Liaison Group whose key objective is to provide direction and facilitate action for the Council's proactive engagement with local businesses with a particular focus on SMEs. This objective is based upon the principles of the Small Business Friendly Concordat (launched by the LGA and the DTI in March 2005).The following support is provided via our website to local SME's: • A Guide to doing business with the public sector. • A Contracts Register listing contracts with a value of more than £10k p.a. - i.e. indicating forthcoming opportunities. • A page containing adverts on forthcoming opportunities. • Information on other sources of tender opportunities - particularly the Supply2Gov website that lists opportunities across the public sector for contracts worth under £100k p.a. The group is made up of officers from across the Council, including Business Development, Communications, Community Planning and Procurement and also has Member representation.
Enforcement	• All contractors are pre-qualified and encouraged to abide by best practice, Equal opportunities and Diversity guidelines
Support and economic development	• We host the Oxfordshire Business Enterprises service www.oxonbe.co.uk - helping residents to start-up their own businesses (and offering specialist help to tackle problems). This service is accessible by phone, email and from our website and the service is provided face-to-face at 9 venues throughout the County. (Venues list evidence pack separately). • We help businesses find new sites and premises in and around Banbury, by co-ordinating the Cherwell Investment Partnership (CHIP) - www.cherwell-m40.co.uk This service is available by phone, email and from our website.

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
	• We help local businesses to establish a Local Employer Network to help businesses work with each other for mutual & wider community benefit. Accessible through the new CHIP website. • We work closely with Banbury Chamber and business groups. • We co-ordinate the Banbury Job Club and produce a redundancy guide to help employers and employees. "Help for residents facing redundancy". http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/t/7/Redundancy_Guide.pdf • We sponsor the local business awards, innovations awards and expos to recognise and promote success.

Access to equal treatment

Issues of efficiency and impediment	Routes to resolution
Equality Standard Changing demography?	The OSS (and other) EqIA

Impact Assessment

There is potential for positive environmental impact from this strategy, as the more we can deliver through local offices the less travel up and down the district there can be.

There is also significant potential for positive financial impact as the principle of clearing wasteful and unnecessary contact to make room for meaningful contact means we do more for the same.

Risk Assessment

What are the risks associated with managing contact and access? First thoughts (without controls or mitigation, likelihoods or impacts) and only from a customer service perspective – there will be others associated with the other strands, I'm sure:

Operational

Professional – will vary by service; customer service may suffer if resource not released through successful channel migration and avoidable contact removal
Financial –target resource release may not be achieved so doing more with the same resource may not be achieved; costs associated with integrating online forms with service deliver computer systems may be significant and won't be revealed til projects are scoped.
If we are not providing a good access route to the market we risk failure in achieving value for money with our contacts. A robust and continually developing access strategy when it comes to doing business with the Council ensures that we receive the best value for money and in turn stimulates the local economy.
Legal – delivering services on others' behalfs will require SLAs which carry some legal standing
Technological – integrated self service may not be quickly achievable; project scope will reveal costs in financial and time terms

Strategic

Political – we don't achieve the targets in this strategy
Economic – growth in benefits applicants and requests for other services related to current external economic circumstances may compromise capacity
Social – again, current economic climate, known changes to the population demographic etc. result in service demand that compromise capacity

Technological – new channels come into being at a pace the council is unable to keep up with and so customer choice is compromised and opportunities for efficiencies missed
Legislative – we may be prevented from delivering services on behalf of some partners