

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - 1 December 2020

Subject: New Customer Service Centre Delivery Model

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

Summary

This report outlines the proposed new delivery model for face-to-face services currently delivered by the Customer Service Organisation (CSO).

Recommendations

It is recommended that members note the content of this report and endorse the proposed approach to developing and implementing a new operating model for face-to-face Council Services. This will include the following next steps:

- Strategic timetable
 - Work programme to support move towards the new model
 - Communications and Engagement strategy
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Implementing a customer service offer within local hubs such as libraries will reduce the need for residents to travel into the city centre in order to conduct face to face appointments. This reduction in footfall will contribute towards carbon reduction and improved air quality.
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Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Supporting residents and businesses to self-serve or to interact with Council services through the introduction of improved digital access channels alongside more traditional channels.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	

A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Council services will be made increasingly accessible and inclusive for our communities through offering a greater range of access options.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	A reduction in unnecessary short journeys into the city in order to conduct face to face interactions
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The introduction of new access channels using video conferencing technology, allowing residents to connect with Council services using their own technology, or that provided within local hubs.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Corporate Core Budget Options 2021/22 – Executive 11 November 2020

1. Introduction

This report provides

- An overview of the pre Covid Customer Service Centre (CSC) offer,
- Current arrangements as a result of the pandemic; and
- Further detail on the piece of work to look at what a future operating model could look like and deliver for the Council and our residents.

2. Scope and Terms of Reference

The scope of this review and the new proposed delivery model relates to the offer for services delivered by the Customer Service Organisation (CSO) within the CSC.

To compliment this, engagement with partners and services who also occupy space within the CSC floorplate has taken place. This is to understand and determine any planned changes to their service offer and the impact on support from the CSC staff and space requirements within the CSC floor plate.

This paper sets out the future space requirements for these partners and services as a result of this engagement. It does not provide specific details of their wider service offer and these will be subject to separate papers as part of their' normal business planning.

3. Background

The Customer Service Centre (CSC) has historically provided residents with the ability to access on demand face to face support and assistance across a range of agreed Council services, including signposting to partner organisations and services which also operate from within the CSC floor space based in the town hall extension.

The CSC has been situated on the ground floor of the Town Hall Extension since 2013, following the refurbishment of the Town Hall Extension. The Rates Hall is the principal entrance point for residents who want face to face access to agreed Council and partner services operating from the CSC.

4. Customer Service Centre Offer

4.1 The Offer up to March 2020

Prior to its closure in March 2020, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, the CSC was open between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, providing the following Council services:

- Reception and meet and greet (signposting and issuing queue tickets for CSC services)
- Council Tax (detailed enquiries and document validation/drop off)
- Housing Benefits (detailed enquiries and document validation/drop off)

- Elections (document drop-off)
- Homelessness triage
- Planning Applications (drop off of documents/samples, plus vault viewing)
- School Admissions (general advice and document validation/drop offs)
- Taxi Licensing (document validation/drop offs)
- Lost Property Returns (Hackney Carriages)

On arrival, residents were greeted by Customer Services staff who would triage the enquiry/reason for visit. If the resident's enquiry was related to a Council Service delivered within the CSC (listed above) staff issued a ticket to the resident who then joined a queue within the CSC to see a member of staff.

Documents related to the services listed above could also be handed in to Customer Services staff who would also provide a receipt and validate and then scan and index the documents to the service area (in the main this related to benefits and council tax activity).

Residents visiting the CSC to access a partner service (listed within section 4.3) were signposted to the appropriate partner service operating within the CSC floor plate.

In addition to the services from the Town Hall Extension, the CSC provided a Customer Service staff presence at Longsight Library every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to provide residents with support with council tax and benefits document drop off and validation and general council tax and benefits enquiries.

In addition to residents dropping in and queuing to see an advisor, residents could also phone or email for an appointment.

4.2 Activity volumes

The number of visits to the CSC has been declining year on year. Throughout 2019/20 the CSC handled 52,384 resident interactions. This compares to 55,980 in 2018/19 and 64,974 in 2017/18.

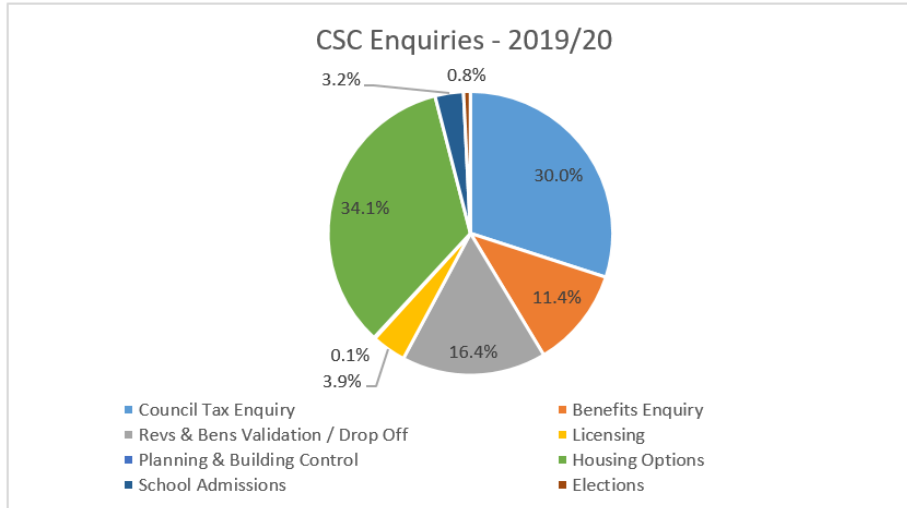
When the volume (52,384 interactions) is compared to other contact methods it represents only 3.65% of enquiries made. This compares to 692,857 telephone calls and 690,702 online transactions through 2019/20.

When the number of enquiries is broken down further it shows that of the 52,385 enquiries made to the CSC in the period, 21,683 were face to face support relating to Council tax and benefits enquiries, with the remainder being simple document drop off and signposting/triage. These 21,683 enquiries represent only 1.51% of resident interactions across the wider CSO.

While the number of CSC interactions only equates to 3.65% of the total across all channels, including the web, telephony, face to face, the cost of the CSC equates to 14.1% of the CSO total operating budget.

It is worth noting that the Council does not hold any qualitative data on why residents who use the CSC choose or need to do so. The ideal situation would be that expensive face to face meetings are provided to those residents that really need them and those that can self-serve and use other more cost-effective access channels do so.

The following chart shows the proportional demand for each service area:



Housing Solutions (homelessness) triage/enquiries generate the greatest demand within the CSC, while the volume of document drop off and validation in relation to Council Tax and Benefits has reduced significantly since 2017/18.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Council Tax Enquiry	14,010	14,584	15,719
Benefits Enquiry	9,716	7,843	5,964
Revs & Bens Validation / Drop off	20,647	12,806	8,600
Taxi Licensing (document validation/drop offs)	5,519	3,580	2,052
Planning & Building Control (documents/samples drop off, plus vault viewing)	125	104	71
Housing Solutions (homelessness triage)	13,411	15,269	17,877
School Admissions (advice and document validation/drop offs)	1,148	1,564	1,692
Elections (document drop off)	398	230	409

Total	64,974	55,980	52,384
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4.3 Partner Provision within the Customer Service Centre

In addition to those services offered by Customer Services staff, there are a number of services and partner organisations that provide their services from within the Customer Service Centre space, these are:

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Employer Suite / DWP
- English to speakers of other languages (ESOL)- via Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES)
- Manchester Volunteer Advice Partnership
- Revenues & Benefits Fraud Team used for resident interviews
- Homelessness Outreach/Inreach team (Rough Sleepers)
- Taxi Licensing
- M4 Translations

5. Post Covid activity

On 18 March 2020, the CSC was closed due to the risks associated with offering a face-to-face service during the pandemic. Since the closure, alternative delivery models have been in operation and have been working well. Details follow.

5.1 Council Tax & Benefits

Most resident enquiries are resolved using telephone and online channels. As there has been no facility for document drop off and validation, residents are advised that where they need to provide original documents then these should be posted, with free, pre-paid envelopes sent out with letters. These items are returned to the resident by recorded delivery (for example a passport or birth certificate). Any other original documentation such as bank statements, payslips are sent back by 2nd class post.

Where the resident needs to provide a non-original document then this can be provided by post, or by scanning and sending the image by email (this also includes photographs taken on smartphones). Additionally, scanning facilities are available in most local libraries.

5.2 Taxi Licensing

Currently there is no face-to-face service offer at the town hall and where possible virtual and online meetings are being held and appeals are by letter only. This is an interim arrangement as there is a legal requirement for the service to undertake face to face validation checks.

5.3 Housing Solutions (Homelessness)

The Housing Solution team is conducting all of their interviews by telephone since the closure of their face-to-face service. This is done by appointment following an initial telephone triage. For residents classed as rough sleepers who may not have access to a phone, Housing Solutions and Outreach/Inreach services are actively engaging with them at an earlier stage via partners. The resident is then linked to the service via telephone contact via these agencies.

5.4 School Admissions

Since the closure of the CSC, residents have been advised to submit applications and appeals electronically where possible, or otherwise by post. Any supporting documentation can be scanned and emailed into the service. Residents attending appeals hearings are directed through the Town Hall Facilities Management office.

5.5 Elections

Due to the postponement of elections due in May 2020, there has not been the usual demand in terms of registration and proxy or postal applications. Canvassing has proceeded during this time and residents have been encouraged to use online or postal channels. Where residents have provided original supporting documents by post, such as a passport, these are being collected from the Facilities Management office.

5.6 Planning & Building Control

Most documentation is now electronic and the service will no longer go through an application face to face. Where documentation is not electronic then they will be sent via the post. Exceptions may be where the resident is required to provide a sample of proposed building materials (for example a brick sample), and these have been dropped off at the Facilities Management office since the closure of the CSC. Planning applications can be viewed online, and where the resident wishes to access the microfiche of older files then this will continue to be done through the library.

5.7 Partner Arrangements

- Citizens Advice Bureau have been offering a telephone service and are piloting video conference meetings within SureStart centres.
- The Employer Suite has been closed since March and DWP are piloting a virtual model in Tameside from which feedback will be provided and best practice taken forward.
- A Digital Inclusion working group has been established to support people in developing digital skills. Through a free text number residents can contact 40 digital volunteers and receive a call-back within 48 hours providing assistance.

- Translation services previously occupied a desk within the CSC, and since March they have been conducting telephone translations by appointment. In exceptional circumstances a translator will attend the resident's home.

6. Drivers for Change

It is now the right time to undertake a fundamental review of the Customer Service Centre, its alignment with the rest of the Customer Service Organisation and the digital transformation agenda.

This review will link into the Council's transformation agenda and will align to other projects/programmes of work mainly the Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme and the Council's Digital Inclusion Programme.

The main drivers for change have been:

- Covid - health and safety of both residents and staff.
- The learning from the lockdown phase and how we can use this learning to make improvements.
- A desire to improve and modernise the service/resident service offer.
- Improvements in technology, online support and telephone systems.
- A requirement to review the service based on equal access, digital inclusion and support and financial inclusion and support.
- The roll out of Universal Credit and the positive impact that this has had on the number of residents needing to provide further evidence to the Council.
- The decision to use the DWP UC data as a claim for Council Tax Support meaning that we require less evidence to set up new claims for CTS.
- Acceptance that visiting the city centre is not always the most convenient or cost effective for many residents.
- Feedback has shown that when residents have contacted by phone or email to make an appointment for the CSC, when the advisor has contacted them to arrange the appointment, the vast majority of enquiries were resolved at this point, negating the requirement for a face-to-face visit or appointment. The key thing is the one-to-one time and resource to deal with the enquiry and what is sometimes considered technical and challenging can still be resolved by staff over the phone or email.
- The Council's budget position and a requirement to undertake a review of the service. This is to ensure the most cost-effective delivery model and expectation that where possible, residents should be supported to self-serve due to the Council's financial challenges. Out of all of the access channels, face to face is by far the most expensive per interaction and as such should be provided when required rather than preference or default, ensuring we make best use of our available resources.

7. Considerations

7.1 The Customer Service Organisation New Service Principles

The following overarching service principles were shared and agreed by Future Council working group to support the wider change agenda and

delivery model and will be kept under review. It is anticipated that these principles will be rationalised after year one, however, it is felt these principles are both relevant and required at present to drive and inform the future Customer Service Centre delivery model.

1. We will endeavour to keep our residents and colleagues as safe as possible and follow health and safety advice.
2. We will use our limited resources in the smartest way, so that we are best placed to meet the needs of all our residents and businesses in the city.
3. We will respect all residents and colleagues and the relationship between us will be based on mutual respect, responsibility and accountability.
4. We will provide high quality help and advice across a range of access channels and supported services, that recognise our residents' strengths and needs.
5. If we can't help, we will signpost people to the correct organisation.
6. All of our services will adhere to the Equality Act and we are committed to meeting the needs of residents who have protected characteristics. This will include fair and equitable access to all services.
7. Access channels and support services will be based on the needs of residents, based on their strengths and capacity, recognising that we can all learn new things.
8. We will coach and support each other to learn new skills and fulfil our potential.
9. We will try to provide the most cost-effective service and this means that where they can, residents should self-serve, via our website or by using modern technology.
10. We will aim to provide the best technology and systems that we can to support these principles; recognising that there is more work to be done, including new systems' development.
11. We will listen, and the service we offer will be continually improved to take into account resident needs, feedback and developing technology.
12. We will provide face to face services and home visits, only when absolutely necessary and there isn't another option that meets the needs of the resident.
13. We will avoid unnecessary travel and will work with our partners to support people in our communities where possible.
14. We will only ask residents to provide evidence and documents where this is necessary for us to do our job.
15. We accept that we don't always get things right; when we do make a mistake, we will say that we are sorry, work hard to put things right and learn from it.

7.2 Other important considerations

7.2.1 Equality considerations

As part of the scoping process consideration has been given to each of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and how residents may be impacted by the proposed model for the CSC. Members of the Council's Equality team were part of this review.

7.2.2 Digital Inclusion

In undertaking this assessment, we have considered that not all residents have the skills or equipment to access services digitally. We've therefore incorporated within the proposed model a range of support mechanisms which will support and enable digital inclusion such as:

- Providing self-service PCs.
- Supporting residents to self-serve using co-browsing functionality.
- Maintaining existing offline channels eg telephone and face to face appointments.

7.2.3 Financial inclusion

Consideration has been given to residents experiencing financial hardship. This includes people not having to travel great distances, not having digital equipment and phones and not having immediate cash and phone credits.

We've therefore incorporated within the proposed model, support mechanisms which will enable financial inclusion such as:

- Local call rate for contacting us by telephone;
- Call back facility;
- Providing telephones within the new face to face space; and
- Providing a face-to-face offer within localities thus reducing the need for residents to travel into the city centre.

8. Customer Service Centre revised Scope

The new model for the CSC in the Town Hall Extension will be based on the following core functions that are needed to support residents and provide the optimum service.

- Reception, meet & greet and triage.
- Appointments for essential face to face services including partners; and
- The ability for residents to hand in documents (in line with health and safety guidance) related to Council Services

The new service model will not offer a drop-in service for private face to face enquiries.

9. Proposed New Model - Means of access by service and interaction

9.1 Access channels and triage

The new model will be based on providing the most appropriate access channel by understanding residents' strengths to support their needs. Support will be provided across three main access channels (Online, Telephone and Face to Face) with a number of additional support mechanisms in place across these channels to meet a resident's specific needs or circumstances:

9.1.1 Self Service using the Council's website

Supported by:

- Co-browsing of the Council's website with real time online support provided by Customer Service staff.
- Copies and images of documents can be provided by residents to support service requests or applications using technology, including mobile phone or scanned images sent direct to the service areas.
- On-line application and payment processes.
- Sites across the city with free access to computers.

9.1.2 Telephone support

Supported by:

- Local call charges.
- Co-browsing of the Council's website with real time online support provided by Customer Service staff.
- Translation and interpretation services - all community languages provided.
- Call back facility – this can hold a caller's position in the call queue. The caller does not need to stay on hold on the line and will receive a call back when their call reaches the top of the queue (saves caller time and reduces call charges).
- Three-way telephone conversation (third party can join call to provide support to caller/resident for example support worker or family member). These could be pre-arranged or ad hoc.
- SignVideo (three-way conversation).
- Staff will receive further training to identify and support residents with additional needs.

9.1.3 Face to Face support and assistance

This will include (when required):

- Face to face appointment with a fully trained Customer Services member of staff (venue at appropriate location).
- Face to face appointment with a fully trained Customer Services member of staff using video conferencing (either from the resident's home or access at a range of convenient locations).
- Reception / Triage to signpost residents to self-service access channels and direct them to appointments.

Supported by:

- Translation and interpretation services- all community languages provided;
- SignVideo;
- Signing services;
- Hubs in a range of venues across the city; and
- Provision of Covid-safe interview rooms.

10. Service areas and the new model

Service areas where the CSC provided face to face resident interactions, and partner organisations which share the CSC space, have been consulted on the proposed new operating model to ensure that their requirements are captured.

10.1 Services provided by the CSO

The following table shows the range of service areas provided by the CSC and the access channels that will be available to residents for each service:

	Document drop off	Signposting	Simple Enquiry	Complex Enquiry / Interview
Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post • Online / Email • Face to Face (appointment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reception Point <input type="checkbox"/> Online / Email <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone • Face to Face (appointment)
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post • Online / Email • Face to Face (appointment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reception Point <input type="checkbox"/> Online / Email <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone • Face to Face (appointment)
Housing Solutions (Homeless)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post • Face to Face (appointment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reception Point <input type="checkbox"/> Online / Email <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Online / Email <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face (through partner organisations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face (appointment)
Taxi Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post • Online / Email • Face to Face (appointment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Point • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone • Face to Face (appointment)
School Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post • Online / Email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Point • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone • Face to Face (appeals only by appointment)
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Point (post box) • Post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Point • Online / Email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone 		
Planning & Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Point (post box) • Post • Online / Email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Point • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online / Email • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone

10.2 Receipt and validation of documents to support a benefit claim (Covid)

One of the major service areas requiring the validation and receipt of documents was the Revenues and Benefits Service. The volumes associated with this activity especially in relation to original documents to provide identity and national insurance number have been dropping annually. The main reason for this is that the proof of NINO and Identity is only required once and the majority of new working age claimants now come into the service via the Universal Credit route which means that the DWP will have already validated original documents. For many of the requests copies of scans can be used.

Since March 2020, the service has moved to a mainly electronic and postal service and where required, residents are provided with a pre-paid envelope to provide documents. This has worked well and in the seven months that we have been operating the new process there have been no issues or complaints about the approach.

Due to Covid and ongoing health and safety requirements, it is proposed that the post and scan service is maintained and is reviewed quarterly based on feedback. This means that staff in the CSC will not be required to provide a receipt and validation service in the main CSC.

If the service is required in the future, current volumes suggest that two staff would be required.

10.3 Partner ask of the new Customer Service Centre Operating Model

Partners are also currently undertaking a review of their service offer in order to ascertain their requirements moving forward. Following consultation with each service area, the space requirements in the new model are set out below.

Organisation / Service	Requirement
Housing Solutions (Homelessness)	Require 4 private interview rooms & access to free self-service telephones to enable initial telephone triage and appointment booking.

Taxi Licensing	Require 2 private interview rooms plus an additional room one day each week to conduct PACE interviews.
Citizens Advice Bureau	Require 2 private interview rooms
Employer Suite	Require continued use of the suite plus access to 2 interview rooms
M Four Translations	Require an interview room for appointments
Elections	Require 2 rooms during the lead up to an election for postal vote reissues and for issuing replacement passes for staff, candidates and agents. 1 room will require a PC.

10.4 Additional Requirements

In addition to the private interview space that will be required within the Town Hall Extension, there will be further additional provision needed to support the new operating model:

- Some elements of Triage/Reception will be required to direct people on arrival to their appointment, or to provide advice on how to access Council services.
- Self-service telephones that will allow residents who may be 'rough sleeping' to contact the homelessness service to conduct an initial triage and to make an appointment with the Homelessness Service where this is required.
- Self-service computers to enable residents to access Council services online and support digital inclusion.
- The facility to allow residents to drop off documents for certain service areas.
- Waiting area for residents waiting for appointments or for document return.
- The CSO would require access to two interview rooms for face-to-face meetings where a video conference is not suitable.

Work is currently being undertaken in conjunction with the Council's Estates Service to define how the new model will operate within the space and what physical changes to the space are required. At this stage the initial plans are suggesting that the new reception point and interview spaces will be based at the Mount Street end of the town hall extension. This will result in the rates hall space being released as part of the Council's wider estates' strategy.

10.5 City-wide video conferencing pilot

Discussions have taken place with Library Services to ascertain whether they are able to support video conferencing from any of the libraries. It is anticipated that video conferencing will be initially piloted in three libraries geographically spread across the city: Blackley, Longsight and Wythenshawe.

There are several additional libraries offering potential space to accommodate further hubs.

Video conferencing facilities within libraries will need to be set up with simple to use video meeting technology.

Library locations for Face to Face Videoconferencing Facilities



11. How the new model will work in practice

Scenario 1, Old model - Young person with learning disability, historically would visit the CSC with family member for help and advice on his benefit claim form.

New model - Appointment with advisor who is fully trained to support residents in this way, for a three-way conversation with resident and family member from their respective homes either by phone or video conference.

Scenario 2, Old model - Person part time working- with limited credit on phone, worried about call charges so calls into the CSC in their lunch hour from work.

New model - Even at busy times can hold place in call queue for call back without the need to stay on the line, does not cost anything other than initial connection charge. No additional cost to Council associated with call back and resident receives call back when their call reaches the front of the call queue and is connected to a fully trained advisor.

Scenario 3, Old model - Resident must come into to the town hall and queue up to provide evidence of a payslip for benefit claim.

New model - Scanned photograph on mobile phone accepted.

Scenario 4, Old model - Resident can use technology but visits the Council as not confident completing a full HB claim form.

New model - Telephone appointment using co-browsing that supports the resident navigating the website and making the claim.

Scenario 5, Old model - Resident comes into the CSC as English not their first language and wants to discuss in community language.

New model - Phone call with advisor who speaks language or supported by language line.

12. Equalities Considerations

The Council's Equality team have been involved in support this work and developing the new model. This includes consideration of the needs of all our residents across the protected characteristics. We also need to consider the city's demographics and our emerging populations and how they may need to access services, including how the digital inclusion agenda will be key to the success of this. A robust Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken, working closely with Equalities Specialists for their challenge, support and connection to key equality related groups in the city for engagement.

12.1 Technology:

The proposed technology solutions for the new model will be fully accessible and includes:

- Video conference software;
- Touchscreen equipment;
- Telephone in queue messages must allow for 3-way conversations from any location and allow automated captioning to be enabled;
- Equipment in localities must be easily adjustable and accessible for residents to self-serve or be assisted;
- In queue messages will all contain an accessibility statement which will give the resident the opportunity to tell advisors what support they need to access services (this statement will also be published on the Council website); and
- We will take guidance from Health and Safety as to how we keep all equipment COVID compliant.

12.2 Building/Floor Plate:

- Wayfinding will be supported by accessible and clear signage and clear accessible routes;

- Video conferencing spaces will be wheelchair accessible and sufficient for residents to be accompanied;
- All video conferencing spaces will provide privacy;
- Wired hearing loops will be installed;
- Lighting should be adaptable so as not to become a barrier; and
- All localities chosen must have sufficient external space for drop off and pick up of residents, but we will not presume residents will have support from friends and family.

12.3 Language:

- Advisors will be cognisant of language used when serving residents for example. We will not use the description 'vulnerable' to describe and capture all people who may just need additional support.
- Gender inclusive language will be used.
- Translations services will be accessible and timely when appointments are made.
- Communications, wherever possible, will be in the preferred format of the resident for example braille, large font, first language etc
- Communication will be sent to residents via their preferred route including post, SMS, email etc
- Awareness and refresher training will be provided for staff and the use of Living Libraries and regular input and interaction with the Equalities Team will keep the model and those who deliver services current.

12.4 Consultation:

To develop and realise the model, we will consult with partners and stakeholders including the following partners and activity:

- RNIB;
- Deaf Centre;
- Business Disability Forum;
- Our Manchester Disability Board;
- Age Friendly Manchester Board;
- Equality groups relating to Age, LGBT, race and faith;
- Resident/citizens via focus groups;
- Equality Specialist with leads for each of the protected characteristics;
- Estates;
- Libraries;
- An Access Audit will be commissioned; and
- Development of a detailed equality impact assessment.

13. Budget implications

The proposals deliver annual staffing savings of £500,000 per year.

The new service model will still require a core team of six officers to support the new model linking into the wider Customer Service Organisation.

14. Conclusions

A detailed assessment of the current model including discussions with partners and other service providers has resulted in a proposed approach for a revised target operating model that improves service to residents and provides efficiencies.

The new model recognises improvements in technology and supports residents in a strength-based way in accordance with Our Manchester principles. Accessibility and equality are key to the new model and it means that vulnerable residents and residents that need support can access services in the best way to suit their individual needs and circumstances.

Consultation between the Customer Service and partner organisations & services, including ICT and Estates will ensure that the new operating model delivers first class, fully accessible services to residents, while achieving targeted savings.

The new model for the CSC in the Town Hall Extension will be based on the following functions:

- Reception, meet & greet and triage;
- Appointments for essential face to face services including partners; and
- The ability for residents to hand in documents (in line with health and safety guidance) related to Council Services

The new proposed service model will not offer a drop-in service for face-to-face enquiries.

15. Recommendations

It is recommended that members note the content of this report and endorse the proposed approach to developing and implementing a new operating model for face-to-face Council Services. This will include the following next steps:

- Further engagement and input from members through specific engagement sessions to feedback on the proposed new model and offer, including the establishment of a member task and finish group to support and oversee the transition to the new operating model.
- Strategic timetable.
- Work programme to support move towards the new model.
- Communications and Engagement strategy.