

- 1. The majority of customer demand is now being met within service areas, so do we really need separate customer service?**

The proposal takes account of the reducing role of the Customer Service functions in dealing with customer demand but aims to maintain a corporate customer service lead.

- 2. As we understand it the main footfall and customer demand is for housing and relevant benefits, this is being met with locality work and through the relevant benefit and revenues services. Surely the residual customer service demand can therefore also be added to the existing structures in operation or the transformation work happening in other areas , i.e environmental services ?**

As detailed above, the proposal takes account of the reducing role of the Customer Service functions in dealing with customer demand but aims to maintain a corporate customer service lead. In addition the proposal recognises the strong links between customer service and provision of financial support. The proposal is not for a standalone customer service function but an enhanced service to the customers of Redditch and Bromsgrove.

- 3. Customer access is as critical to transformation as H R so why is it not going to the same site/location as H R?**

The Head of Customer Access and Financial Support will manage the front facing, customer access and support and advice. The HR & OD will transfer to the Head of Transformation as this relates to the internal support for our staff in dealing with change and the new ways of working.

- 4. Is there any evidence to suggest that the workload or the need will reduce in any other area than Customer Services (directly)**

The current proposal relates solely to the Heads that support the organisations in an enabling way. The evidence to support any changes in other departments is not as developed as that within the enabling services.

- 5. Given the current challenges major organisational challenges, i.e transformation, budget cuts, welfare reform etc can the proposed structure cope with this?**

Whilst it is accepted that there will be a reduction in posts, the proposals will support the transformation and welfare changes within a systems thinking and efficient framework.

- 6. Financial modelling and planning is critical yet it appears that you are attempting to reduce the expertise and knowledge**

The financial modelling of the organisations will be undertaken by the finance team and supported by the S151 officer as at present. Service managers have ownership of their financial position and projections and therefore it is anticipated that the potential changes and required training will give more financial knowledge to the service manager.

7. Can you explain the reasons that legal and democratic services are left untouched?

As is clearly laid out in the report the legal and democratic services functions have been reviewed against “Enabling Governance of the Organisation” and it is recommended that the current responsibilities are appropriate for the current role.

8. How will having less people looking at issues the organisation faces impact on the authority?

There is a commitment that the costs associated within the enabling side of the organisations need to reduce and that the Councils need to ensure that funds are available for posts that create value to our customers. The capacity that will remain within the structure will ensure that future impacts on the Councils will be reported and assessed.

9. Strong links already exist between the Dep 151 Officer and statutory 151 officer why was this not addressed in the first review?

The changes over the last few years in Government funding has resulted in the proposal to directly link the 2 posts.

10. Where is the evidence that the customer service need has remained the same? (help me become financially independent)

The proposed structure develops customer service as a skill for advisors rather than being a standalone provision.

11. We see the role of customer services as an integral part of peoples roles in all services and therefore more of a training and support element sitting in H R and the CSA’s incorporated as above.

As previously mentioned the proposed structure will reflect the need for customer skills across the organisations. As with all structures within a systems thinking environment there will be a need to further review as the redesigned service delivers customer needs.

12. There appears to be no link with housing supported in this review, currently there are very strong links between the housing service and revenues and benefits, how will this be addressed?

It is accepted that there are strong links between the services but at present the interventions are still being developed / piloted (eg need for a separate reception). At present the proposed structure reviews the services provided by the enabling Heads of Service.

13. Can you explain please as the expertise has been rolled out to departments / sections what role the customer service advisors will involve expertise? Surely the expertise will be in the departments from the benefits advisors who possess great customer service skills?

It can already been seen that a different type of customer care professional is required to both on the phone and face to face to appropriate establish the correct expert to be pulled

to support the customer. This role is developing as we learn through transformations but I do not see it as simply a receptionist or telephonist role but one which can work across purposes.

14. Is there evidence that customer service advisors are still giving advice / information to customers?

The CSA's still provide advice and information on many services including those currently in intervention when necessary, if customers are not prepared to wait, at the One Stop Shops (in Redditch) or at weekends. It is recognised that that this a reducing role and a subsequent review of the Customer Service team will take place once there is certainty about what is required.