



Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) Review Report

November 2016

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Table of Contents

Chairman's Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Key Findings and Conclusions	6
Recommendations	7
Main Report	9
Customer Relationship Management system functionality	9
Councillor Requirements of CRM	12
Support and training for Councillors in using CRM	15
Data Protection, Safeguarding and Information Governance	17
Site Visit to Northumberland County Council	17
CRM project team Councillor survey	18

Foreword

Durham County Council has a proven track record in delivering high quality services to the 519,695 residents of County Durham. The Council is constantly seeking to improve the way in which its customers are able to do business with the Council and the use of Information Technology as a means to facilitate smarter ways of working and even faster responses to customer services requests is a critical factor in the Council's transformation journey.



Councillors also need to be able to respond to requests for service delivery on behalf of their constituents and their ability to ensure that the Council delivers against its agreed service standards is an essential part of their community representative role.

As part of the delivery of the Council's enhanced Customer services, the procurement of a replacement Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was a key element of the delivery of the enhanced Customer First Strategy. As part of this work and recognising the vital role that the CRM plays in supporting Councillors, the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a small review group to examine how the CRM system can deliver functionality to assist Members in managing their casework, including consideration of recording, tracking and monitoring of casework to service responses and performance information.

The Review group has identified some key issues around the CRM functionality, Councillor expectations and requirements of the new CRM system, the importance of training and development for all Councillors on the CRM system alongside those staff charged with delivering support to members in dealing with their constituents' casework. The Review group have made a series of recommendations which will support members through the implementation of the CRM process and into the new Council from May 2017.

I would like to thank all those who took part in the review for their time and support especially the members of the CRM project group and staff within members' support.

Councillor John Lethbridge
Chairman
Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers customer services performance as part of quarterly performance management reports and previously carried out a light touch review on the development and implementation of the Council's Customer First Strategy.
2. A fundamental element of the delivery of the Customer First Strategy was the procurement of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System for Durham County Council. Recommendation (ii) of the Customer First Task and Finish Group review report was that:
 - Cabinet monitor the implementation and benefits of the new CRM system currently being procured in supporting the delivery of the Customer First Strategy.
3. In procuring and developing a new CRM system for the County Council, the project team acknowledged the vital role that the CRM plays in supporting Councillors in dealing with and tracking their casework and constituents' queries. The Corporate Issues OSC on 17th November, 2015 agreed to establish a small cross party task and finish review group to input into the development of the new CRM system implementation prior to its launch in 2016.

Terms of Reference

4. The purpose of the review was to examine how the CRM system can deliver functionality to assist Members in managing their casework, including consideration of recording, tracking and monitoring of casework to service responses and performance information.
5. The objectives of the review were to:
 - Assess the functionality of the Council's new CRM system and the range of services that will be integrated into/available through the CRM system;
 - Examine the operational needs of Councillors in accessing information and reporting issues/service requests on behalf of their constituents and in respect of their casework;
 - Undertake an analysis to identify what can be done to provide members with appropriate functionality and access to information;
 - Work with elected members to "road test" the Council's new CRM system post implementation and continue to monitor the effectiveness

of the CRM system as part of the periodic update of recommendations arising from this review.

6. The review group comprised 8 members of the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Evidence was gathered over four meetings and a site visit to Northumberland County Council. The project was supported by the Head of Projects and Business Services, Neighbourhood Services; CRM Project Manager, Neighbourhood Services; Senior IT Project Manager (Web Development) and Member Support Officer, Democratic Services, Resources.

Key Findings and Conclusions

7. The new CRM functionality did not allow for the migration of casework from the previous CRM system although Councillors and Members support staff have had access to open cases upon transfer for a period of time.
8. The new CRM system enables a wider offer of user interface including self - serve forms, web forms and services, customer accounts, improved digital and mobile access which allows better responses to be made by front line services.
9. Councillors have queried the need for separate accounts for use as both a service user and a Councillor and whether the CRM functionality will allow this. This functionality is now being considered.
10. In view of the wide range of service request categories accessible via the CRM system and the rich source of data therefore available to management and Councillors, the review group supports the development of a "Member portal" which allows Councillors to report issues and track progress against issues, where constituents have requested support. The Portal should provide automated updates on progress and closure of issues and also to allow Councillors to access all issues reported within their electoral divisions.
11. The Member Portal should share functionality with the CRM system to allow Customers/constituents to grant access permissions to their local Councillors, possibly via a tick box within the service request forms. The review group also consider that information on appropriate service standards and performance indicators be built into CRM functionality and response/progress updates.
12. Councillors have been surveyed following the implementation of the new CRM system to assess the degree of support and training that members would wish to receive in respect of the CRM system and the proposed "Member Portal". The review group consider a member pilot to be essential to the success of the CRM/Member Portal to enable Councillor and member support officer input into the development of the system.

13. The review group welcome a member pilot in February/March 2017 which will engage a cross section of members of varying IT skills to road test the Member Portal alongside member support staff with a view to an evaluation of the system to be produced which will inform subsequent training and development programmes for Councillors following the May 2017 County Council elections. Councillors want this training to be part of the 2017 member induction training along with any planned training on IT hardware/equipment.
14. The CRM project team have confirmed that the CRM system and any Member Portal would be fully compliant with data protection and Information Governance legislation and Councillors acknowledge that safeguarding measures must be in place for information of a sensitive nature. However, Councillors have reiterated their desire for CRM and Member Portal functionality to enable customers/constituents to grant access to service requests and issues to their local Councillors.

Recommendations

15. The review group having considered the findings and conclusions of the review have made the following recommendations:

Recommendation one

Following the successful launch of the Council's CRM system, members support the development of a "Member Portal" facility which will enhance how Councillors deal with their constituents' casework and provide meaningful management information to Councillors on local issues within their electoral division.

Recommendation two

The CRM Project Team investigates the possibility of the CRM/Member portal enabling permissions to be given to Councillors to access cases, where customer permission is given, so they can receive summary information to enable them to update their constituents/residents.

Recommendation three

The CRM Project Team investigates the possibility of the CRM/Member Portal including a method for customers to give consent for details of cases/issues to be shared with their local councillor, in order to protect customers' privacy and personal data in line with data protection regulations.

Recommendation four

A pilot of the Member portal take place in February/March 2017 which will engage a cross section of members of varying IT skills to road test the Member Portal alongside member support staff to give them the chance to enhance how they deal with their constituents' casework and provide meaningful management information on local issues.

Recommendation five

That member induction/training on the new CRM/Member portal system and its functionality be made available for all members elected in 2017, as part of their induction training, with such training to include Data Protection, Information Governance and IT Equipment functionality.

Recommendation six

That a systematic review of the report and progress made against recommendations should be undertaken after consideration of this report, within 9-12 months.

MAIN REPORT

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

Key Findings

- **No migration of data from the old CRM system to the new system although open cases were accessible upon transfer**
- **Wide offer of user interface – self serve forms, customer accounts, mobile/offline access to improve response by services;**
- **Councillors need access to CRM as both service users/residents and Councillors**
- **CRM system needs to log Service request/casework monitoring and tracking.**
- **Wide range of potential service request categories accessible via CRM – rich source of data for Management and Councillors**

16. Information Technology is becoming more important in people's lives, both at work and at home, and in the way some services are accessed and delivered. DCC's ICT Strategy details the Council's ongoing commitment to continue to deliver improved services for the people of County Durham.
17. DCC's Customer First Strategy also identifies the role ICT plays in delivering Services with:-
 - a greater and increasing demand from our customers for faster service delivery across longer opening hours and from many locations;
 - an introduction in the market of new technologies and a growth in new ways of communication such as social media, digital television and video on demand that heighten user expectations;
 - a move to greater self-service;
 - the need to demonstrate value for money, and provide Council services and more effective technology for less.
18. The Strategy also set out proposals to support the Council's approach in using technology where appropriate, by reviewing use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.
19. The previous CRM system was used to record information on interactions with customers from their contact with Customer Services, although many interactions between the public and council staff do not involve the customer services team and are not managed through the CRM system.

20. When examining the functionality of the old CRM system several shortcomings were identified including:-
- An incomplete database/directory of properties across County Durham;
 - No ability to link property information contained in the Council Tax or Electoral registration IT systems to CRM;
 - Only the details of those customers who had transacted with the Council were captured by the CRM system and that was achieved by Customer services staff manually logging customer details when dealing with service requests;
 - A lack of automation built into the CRM system to log customer details or pass service requests directly to service departments and front-line staff;
 - The absence of automation added to delays in dealing with customer queries, increased the call on customer services staffing resources and adversely impacted upon the customer experience and service performance.

Review of the CRM provision

21. The Council, after reviewing its CRM provision, came up with a series of proposed recommendations, including the establishment of a CRM owners group; a CRM system replacement roadmap; the alignment of CRM to the customer first strategy; and the development of a business case for CRM replacement.
22. As part of ongoing development work, the CRM owners group considered the strategic objectives for the Council in respect of its CRM provision and examined how an improved CRM infrastructure could address existing shortcomings that have been identified in respect of:
- Efficient and effective access channels;
 - Responsive and customer focused services;
 - Treating people fairly and respecting differences;
 - Creating channel shift;
 - Creating greater use of customer insight to influence and improve service design, provision and feedback;
 - Harmonising services and processes across the Council;
 - Delivering value for money.
23. It was agreed that procurement of a replacement system would be prioritised. Specialist consultants were employed to develop a business case and following a procurement exercise, Firmstep were awarded the contract and work then commenced on developing and implementing the system.

Replacement CRM System functionality

24. The new CRM system provides a default customer contact system for customers in addition to providing more choice for them thus providing better customer insight and increased Value for Money (VFM).
25. The CRM provider is a leader in helping local government to build and deliver better services and had to date developed over 150 programs for local authorities across the country. The new system would be 'cloud based'. The program was updated gradually on a weekly basis and would eradicate issues that had previously been found with time consuming bulk updates.
26. The new system was a made to measure product with the aim of providing a user friendly and intuitive portal for users. The platform to be adopted by Durham County Council included the following components:-
 - Self-serve forms
 - Bespoke portal ('my account' and links to other services)
 - Mobile – offline access for staff away from their desks, allowing issues to be reported easily.
27. The new CRM product is mobile optimised and responsive to most mobile devices. Given that 55% of traffic through the council's website was accessed via a mobile or tablet device, this increased functionality is essential.
28. The system incorporates a customer passport which allowed the council to obtain rich customer data, subject to customer agreement to use of their data, which would in turn help inform future services.
29. Further details were reported in respect of open workflow and integration of other systems, however, it was noted that the system would not replace some of the core council systems such as SSID. There would be no migration of data from the existing CRM system. However, the data held on the old system will be accessible for a period of time. Any open cases at the time of transfer to the new system are viewable.
30. With regard to the development of the system it was reported that the switch off and switch on to the new system and subsequent phases were scheduled to take place between April and October 2016. Phase 1 of the project would see the introduction of 115 new webforms, changes to 52 business process, 13 new web payments, 140 service requests, 39 maps and 33 system integrations, the latter being the most complex stage of this phase.

31. Phase 4 of the deployment would involve looking at which other services could be built into the system and this would likely occur in April 2018.
32. In examining the processes involved in reporting service requests/ issues, Councillors note that once a service request is logged by either a Member or customer, an email response acknowledges receipt. This includes the service level standards, where possible, for example the number of working days it should take for the request to be completed. A further email would be sent on completion of the work.
33. The CRM system allows for anonymous complaints to be submitted online, however for a customer to be kept informed on the progress of a request, they would need to register and enter their details.
34. Initial benefits identified following the launch of the new CRM system include:-
 - A reduction in the workload of office support - services such as bulky waste collections and pest control appointments can now be made by customers online, where previously these had to be done by telephone.
 - Processes for contacting services have been re-evaluated and streamlined so that customers can be directed more quickly to the correct point of contact.
 - Customers and Members need only speak to a technical member of staff if absolutely necessary;
 - Quicker responses to issues for front line services using remote/digital technology;
 - Customer Services staff were responding well to the new system. It was felt that the new CRM had many benefits, including the reduction in work for contact centres.

Councillor requirements of the CRM system

Key Findings

- **Councillors support the development of a Member Portal via the CRM system to report issues, track progress against issues reported by them, provides automated updates on progress and closure of issues, and which provides real time information on issues being reported in their divisions.**
- **The system will assess customer satisfaction with the way service requests/issues are handled.**
- **Councillor access to issues reported by constituents within their divisions through the development of a tick box function.**
- **Information provided on service standards where available and to build these into CRM response/progress updates.**

35. Members were given a presentation by the Senior IT Project Manager on the reporting capabilities of the CRM system from a Councillor perspective with a view to developing a “member portal” through which they could report issues as part of their day to day casework and also access management information relating to their electoral division. Key features being considered for the development of the portal included:-

- Councillor log in with a unique user ID and password via the internet;
- Identification of service requests and issues by electoral division across a wide range of services, including those identified as being the most used via the CRM system;
- the ability to display all information which was logged by services;
- the promotion of self-serve and service request web-forms via the Council’s website to reduce telephone contact with the Council;
- the incorporation of service standards and performance indicators within the CRM system and relevant service requests;
- the ability to provide information detailing customer service satisfaction;
- instantaneous uploading of service requests by the CRM system and the updating of such requests in a timely manner, (every 24 hours).

36. Whilst the review group are encouraged with the functionality of the CRM system demonstrated to them, they have identified a number of potential additional requirements/improvements which include:-

- The need for members to be able to log issues/service requests both as an individual service user and also in their role as a County Councillor;
- The need for Councillor and member support to easily and quickly identify individual service cases;
- The system must be simple and easy to use;
- Councillors/Member support should be able to track and update service requests/cases and also obtain progress information regarding cases to allow for feedback to Customers;
- Provide management information to Councillors in respect of service performance that adds to the ability of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to identify and prioritise potential work programme issues;
- The system should allow for Service users/customers to permit Councillors to access service requests/issues and complaints should the customer agree to such permissions, possibly by way of a “notify your councillor” tick box facility upon initial reporting of an issue.

37. In considering these issues, the review group stressed the importance of Members keeping constituents updated and also to be able to consider an appropriate time to become involved in chasing requests. Key notification timelines and reporting information suggested were:
- Upon the initial logging of a service request;
 - what type of request had been made;
 - who the point of contact was;
 - when the request would be completed;
 - Notification of any delays;
 - Notification of completion.
38. Members also suggested that if they could see the age range of people who had reported service requests, it would identify who was more inclined to use the system and identify specific groups who may not be using it.
39. The review group are keen to support and explore the potential of developing a Member portal within the CRM system that will enable Councillors to report issues in connection with their casework, track progress on such matters and enable feedback to be provided to both Councillors and constituents on the issues when resolved. Councillors also want the Portal to be able to provide management information on issues across as many service areas as possible including the ability to generate summary reports and “heatmaps” for their respective electoral divisions.

Recommendation one

Following the successful launch of the Council’s CRM system, members support the development of a “Member Portal” facility which will enhance how Councillors deal with their constituents’ casework and provide meaningful management information to Councillors on local issues within their electoral division.

Recommendation two

The CRM Project Team investigates the possibility of the CRM/Member portal enabling permissions to be given to Councillors to access cases, where customer permission is given, so they can receive summary information to enable them to update their constituents/residents.

Recommendation three

The CRM Project Team investigates the possibility of the CRM/Member Portal including a method for customers to give consent for details of cases/issues to be shared with their local councillor, in order to protect customers’ privacy and personal data in line with data protection regulations.

Support and Training for Councillors in using the CRM system

Key Findings

- a member pilot is considered essential to the success of the CRM/Member Portal to enable Councillor and member support officer input into the development of the system;
 - the pilot should take place in February/March 2017 which will engage a cross section of members of varying IT skills to road test the Member Portal alongside member support staff;
 - an evaluation of the system to be produced which will inform subsequent training and development programmes for Councillors following the May 2017 County Council elections;
 - Member Support input into the development of member portal and any training is critical to success of CRM use by Councillors.
40. The timeline for implementation of the “Member Portal” element of the CRM system is April 2017, and initial briefing sessions were provided for Members during summer of 2016 as well as Members’ seminars on the CRM on 15th September 2016 in County Hall.
41. Members are eager to receive training and pilot the system before implementation and are disappointed that this did not happen earlier in the process. The CRM system was launched in July 2016, and the CRM Project team have acknowledged the need to work with existing members to assess any issues with the new system and attempt to match system functionality with members’ aspirations in accessing management information relating to their divisions.
42. The review group consider a member pilot to be essential to the success of the CRM/Member Portal to enable Councillor and member support officer input into the development of the system. The review group welcome a member pilot in February/March 2017 which will engage a cross section of members of varying IT skills to road test the Member Portal alongside member support staff with a view to an evaluation of the system to be produced which will inform subsequent training and development programmes.
43. County Council Elections in May 2017 may lead to a change in Council membership and member induction/training should therefore include training on the new CRM system and its functionality.
44. In analysing the preferred method for Councillors to raise service requests/casework issues using the old CRM system, the two most

popular methods were via Member support and directly to the service. Member support officers have confirmed that most Councillors rely on and expect a high level of support in reporting, tracking, updating and providing feedback to customers/constituents in respect of service requests and casework issues.

45. The review group consider it essential that Member support staff are engaged in the development of the proposed member portal and are also provided training alongside Councillors in operating the new CRM system.
46. The Members' survey also indicates that Members require support in other areas, such as operating a laptop/tablet and website training, as well as training on data protection and FOI legislation.

Recommendation four

A pilot of the Member portal take place in February/March 2017 which will engage a cross section of members of varying IT skills to road test the Member Portal alongside member support staff to give them the chance to enhance how they deal with their constituents' casework and provide meaningful management information on local issues.

Recommendation five

That member induction/training on the new CRM/Member portal system and its functionality be made available for all members elected in 2017, as part of their induction training, with such training to include Data Protection, Information Governance and IT Equipment functionality.

Data Protection, Safeguarding and Information Governance

Key Findings

- The CRM system/Member portal must be fully compliant with Data Protection and Information Governance legislation;
- Data submitted by customers could be shared with their Councillor under an agreed "permissions" functionality;
- Safeguarding measures must be in place for information of a sensitive nature.

47. In considering of the development of a member portal within the new CRM system, concern has been expressed by members on whether data protection regulations would impact upon the amount and quality of the management information Councillors would have access to.
48. It has been suggested that where Councillors log an issue on behalf of a customer/constituent, they would have full access to information

regarding the issue including progress updates and sign off when completed. Data submitted by customers would have to be anonymised unless the customer agreed for the case information to be shared with their Councillor under an agreed “permissions” functionality.

49. Members have accepted the importance of safeguarding measures being in place to protect data of a sensitive nature, and it was confirmed that customers would have to register and log in with their password to access personal/sensitive data.
50. The CRM project team has confirmed that the CRM system had been developed to be fully compliant with Data Protection and Information Governance legislation.

Recommendation three

The CRM Project Team investigates the possibility of the CRM/Member Portal including a method for customers to give consent for details of cases/issues to be shared with their local councillor, in order to protect customers’ privacy and personal data in line with data protection regulations.

Site visit to Northumberland County Council

51. In order to benchmark against other Councils’ use of a CRM system to support Councillors in their day to day casework, the Working Group visited Northumberland County Council on 22nd September 2016, and received a demonstration of their CRM system.
52. Whilst noting that the two Councils had adopted different approaches to Councillor use of CRM systems and information – Northumberland had approached this from the member input and use viewpoint whereas Durham had procured and launched the CRM system before looking at how the system might assist Councillors in their daily casework. Members and Officers benefitted from comparing experiences between the two authorities.

CRM project team Councillor survey

53. All Councillors were invited to complete a survey in September 2016 on their opinions and experience of the CRM system.
54. 26 out of 126 councillors responded to the survey with key findings of the survey including:-
 - 86% of responses said under the old CRM system they raised services requests through Member Support, with 57.7% contacting the service direct;

- 80.77% of respondents said that under the new CRM system they would raise service requests they would do this through Member Support;
- 73% of respondents would like to receive feedback from raised requests on the CRM directly by email and 50% through Member Support;
- When indicating the functions that Councillors would find the most useful in dealing with customers, 78% said track and view status updates on raised cases and 65% said to both view cases already reported and provide additional information on cases that have already been raised;
- When asked what support would you require to raise and view requests in the new CRM – 91.67% responded CRM system training; 25% PC laptop or tablet training, 12.5% responded website training;
- When asked their preferred method of training, 75% said face to face training and 25% online training;
- All respondents wanted to be able to see reporting on service requests that they had raised with 92% also wanting to be able to see issues reported within their electoral division;
- The ten most common service requests received by Councillors as identified by Councillors were – Roads/Footpaths; Dog Fouling; Tree/Hedge removal or pruning; Grass cutting, shrubs and flower beds; Flytipping; Anti-social Behaviour; Rubbish in Gardens and Yards; Street Lighting; Complaints and Missed Bins.
- In considering the format in which Councillors would like to receive such information? 72.73% asked for tables, 45.45% charts and graphs, and 27.27% heat maps.

Recommendation six

That a systematic review of the report and progress made against recommendations should be undertaken after consideration of this report, within 9-12 months.

