

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **18 October 2005**

By: **Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Policy Management and Communications.**

Title of report: **Update on the E-Government Access Initiatives as part of the wider 'Customer Focus' agenda.**

Purpose of report: **To provide an update on the E-Government Access Initiatives**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of this report.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The report details primarily with the initiatives to roll out the distributed service phone hub model and the roll out of 'community help points' (CHP's) and 'kiosks' with partners. The focus to date has been part of the wider customer service initiatives being developed for highways maintenance and adult social care. The direct cost of the over-arching infrastructure (eg. Customers Relationship Management (CRM) system) has been funded from the E-Government development budget at a planned cost of £360,000. The latter have been developed with Borough and District partners at a planned cost of £193,000, with an additional £150,000 allocated to install Kiosks in strategic Libraries and Children's Centres, again from the E-Government development budget.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 As set out in the approved E-Government strategy the Council has been implementing it's approach to improved 'phone in' access (through distributed hub model) and improved 'walk in' access to services (through community help point and kiosk model). This is a deliberate stand of the councils broader customer focus agenda. The work has been managed by an Access Programme Board, this being a sub-group of the E-Government Steering Group.

2.2 Other key strands of the broader customer focus agenda include:

- Consultation and customer engagement
- Complaints management (now part of the CRM solution)
- Customer response standards (being developed as part of the distributed hub roll out)
- Internal and external communication strategy
- Impact on approach to service planning and design

2.3 All of the above link to the over-arching policy commitment now agreed by Cabinet. A future report will update on the wider programme of actions underway whilst this report deals with the phone hub and CHP / kiosk aspects.

3. Progress to date

3.1 The attached appendices set out the progress to date and covers:

- Appendix 1 – Customer focus E-Government Access Strategy Update.
- Appendix 2 – What is a Distributed Service Hub.
- Appendix 3 – Update on CHP / Kiosk Progress.
- Appendix 4 – Map of current planned Kiosk coverage.

Appendix 5 – Key Customer response service principles.

3.2 Service Hubs

The remit of this project has been to develop a 'blue print' model that can be implemented across all services thereafter. This does not focus on the implementation of a single corporate call centre, but rather the introduction of 'mini call centres' based around a modelling of our services as actually used by our customers. This model uses a set of common core infrastructure (eg. CRM). The first Services Hubs to go live in October 2005 are Adults Social Services, Highways and Trading Standards, with Libraries following shortly thereafter. COMT are now to choose the order in which future Service Hubs are to be implemented.

3.3 A key element in the design is the notion of a tier 1 and tier 2 response which allows the Service Hub staff to deal with generic / non specialist calls (tier 1) and pass those that require more specialist knowledge to qualified staff (tier 2). The target is for at least 80% of all calls to the Service Hubs to be addressed at the 'first point of contact' ie. Tier 1.

3.4 Physical Access Channels

This work builds on the pilot 'Community Help Point' (CHP) at Battle and the six Internet Kiosks that have now been operational across the County for many months. It focuses on the significant extension of this network of physical 'help points' in partnership with, principally, Districts and Boroughs who will share in their funding (capital and revenue). Significant use is to be made of Libraries and Children's Centres in this work. All Partners agreed this Strategy at an event held in Uckfield in May 2004.

4. **Internal and External Communications**

4.1 Internally, the key messages focus on delivering our commitment to be a modern, efficient authority providing high quality services. Three key principles have been adopted in support of this :

- To work, internally and with partners, to put our customers access preferences at the centre of our work, utilising technology to the full.
- To provide clear, reliable and accessible information about services.
- To take personal responsibility for resolving enquiries wherever they are received.

4.2 Externally the publicity around the new Service Hub phone numbers is being raised incrementally.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

'Implementation of a Corporate Customer Access Strategy' approved by Cabinet - 19/04/04.

'Roadmap for the delivery of E-Government in East Sussex' approved by Cabinet - 25/03/03.

Appendix (2) : Distributed Service Hub.

What is a Service Hub?

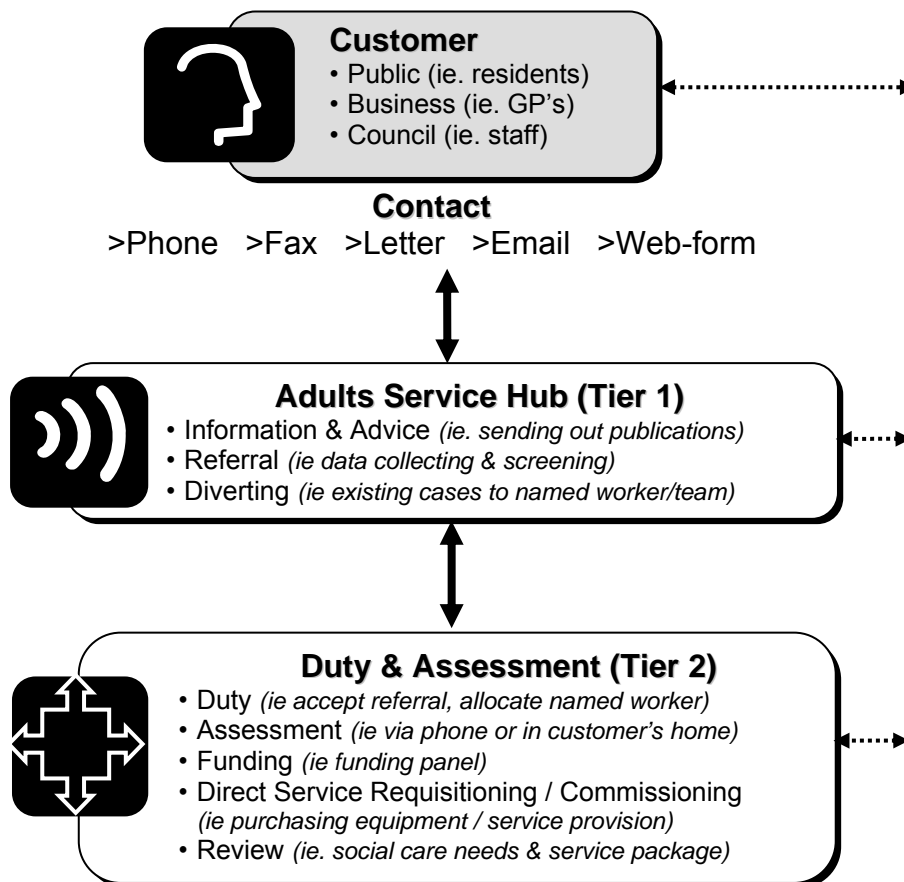
A Service Hub ('Hub') within an organisation provides customers with one central point of contact, in which to access it's services.

Contacts from customers are answered by a team of staff who are equipped to immediately answer the majority of enquiries, usually up to 80%. Specifically they will:

- » Help the customer to structure their enquiry.
- » Resolve the enquiry wherever possible.
- » Identify the correct ESCC resource to resolve the enquiry if necessary.
- » Collect referral data on behalf of new/closed customers, and pass to Tier 2 to determine eligibility and an assessment of their needs.

The Hub forms the '**1st tier**' at which customers contact the organisation. Existing service teams will then form a '**2nd tier**', who will accept the referrals from the 1st Tier, and answer queries from existing customers.

The diagram below is a simple explanation of how the Adults Service Hub will operate.



Appendix (3) : CHP / Kiosk update



General

- Co-Op permission to stores granted, and communicated to store managers.
- Library kiosk installations underway, starting with Lewes.
- Planning commenced for Children's Centres
- Kiosk suppliers Netshift now known as N/S Systems, with office and systems move requiring updates at each kiosk (completed)
- Portal/FAQ development presented to partnership for consultation and link to kiosks / websites / CHPs

Rother

- Sites identified and agreed
- Kiosk Contract signed
- Purchase orders received
- Installations of new kiosks at Ticehurst and Northiam. Remainder scheduled for Oct / Nov

Wealden

- Sites identified and agreed
- Contract signed
- Awaiting Purchase order to proceed with kiosks
- Hailsham CHP works complete
- Heathfield / Uckfield works underway – Uckfield due for completion Jan 06, Heathfield Nov 05

Lewes

- Kiosk site identification and negotiation underway, for review with LDC.
- Signed Contract, awaiting purchase order
- Lewes library open - providing interim signposting + access to Lewes services

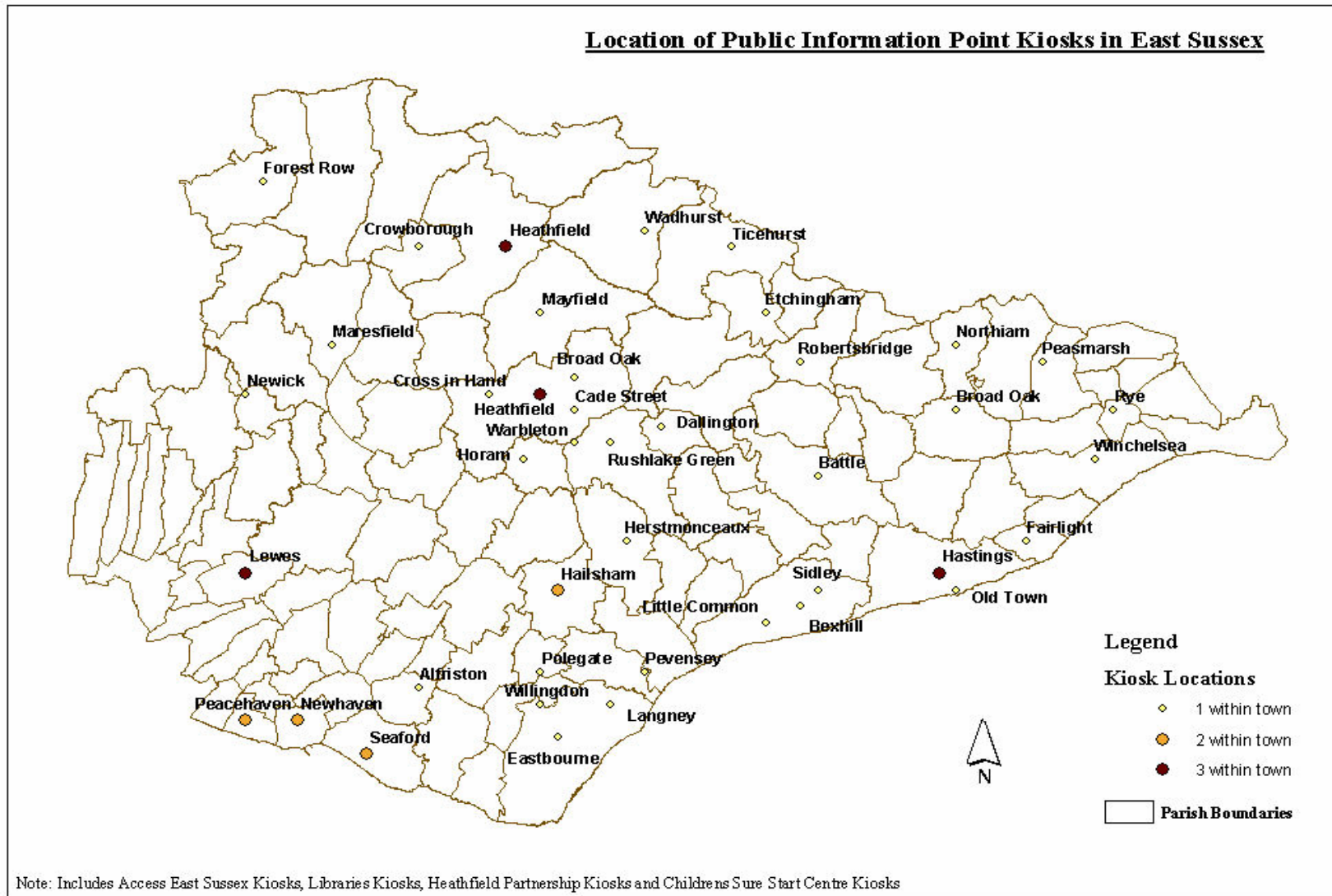
Eastbourne

- Contract agreed but not yet signed
- Awaiting purchase order
- Grove Road CHP functioning with BC services
- Met to discuss training and full CHP functions
- Kiosk confirmed for Grove Road, others pending – budget pressures

Hastings

- Meeting to discuss re-launch of Hastings CHP (Hastings Information Centre)..
- Kiosk site identification completed
- Contract yet to be signed
- Awaiting purchase order

Appendix (4) ; Current planned Kiosk locations.



Appendix (5) - Key Customer response service principles.

1. Set Standards of Service

Set clear standards of service that users can expect, monitor and review performance, and publish the results

2. Be Open and Provide Full Information

Be open and communicate effectively in plain language, to help people using our services

3. Consult and Involve

Consult and involve present and potential users of services, as well as those of elected members, staff and partners and use the views to improve the service provided

4. Encourage Access & Choice

Make access to services and information easily available to everyone, using technology to the full, and offering choice wherever possible

5. Treat All Fairly

Treat all people fairly, respect their privacy and dignity, be helpful and courteous, and pay particular attention to those with particular needs

6. Put Things Right When They Go Wrong

Put things right quickly and effectively, learn from complaints, and have a clear, well-publicised and easy-to-use complaints procedure

7. Use Resources Effectively

Use resources effectively to provide best value for taxpayers and users

8. Innovate and Improve

Always look for ways to improve the services and facilities offered

9. Work with Partners

Work with partners to ensure that services are simple to use, effective and co-ordinated, delivering a better service to the user.