

Summary of Joint Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Recommendations and Wyre Forest District Council Responses

	WFDC Response
RECOMMENDATION 1: If the Hub is to be increasingly used as a basis for service transformation across the County, it is vital that there is councillor understanding and support across all authorities. All authorities should ensure their inductions include briefing about customer service strategies across the whole of the Worcestershire Hub (and not just their local area), including visits to both local centres and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre (based at Perry Wood Walk).	Democratic Services have been invited to extend new Member inductions to include a visit to the Hub. Although not undertaken in 2010, it has been carried out previously and has proved a success.
RECOMMENDATION 2: All authorities consider their scrutiny arrangements of shared services – this could be done at the joint scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs network.	CMT/Cabinet to consider.
RECOMMENDATION 3: We recommend that each authority and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service review governance arrangements across the Worcestershire Hub Partnership. The aim would be to ensure clarity, accountability and transparency and to move towards a single governance structure.	A review of governance arrangement is underway. The Hub Strategic Management Group will be taking a report to Chief Executives Panel which will include governance matters, by the end of the year.
RECOMMENDATION 4: We recommend that the District Councils should consider researching the cost of individual transactions for different services, which will build on the work being carried out by the Hub Shared Service.	The formula for understanding transaction costs needs to be agreed by all Partners to understand what is/isn't included. The Hub Strategic Management Group has recently agreed to carry out work to look at the total cost model for key services.
RECOMMENDATION 5: The more services use the Hub, the better value it becomes. Therefore, as part of the BOLD programme, the County Council should increase its efforts to ensure all its services use the Hub.	All District Council services use the Hub as first point of contact for customers.
RECOMMENDATION 6: In light of future funding and the move towards self-service within the Hub, all authorities and the South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee should monitor and record the efficiencies and savings gained by use of the Hub.	WFDC are implementing self service projects across various service areas including Revenues and Benefits which are the top 2 services dealt with by the Hub. Increasing self service in high volume areas will also mean savings in back offices through streamlined processing as well efficiencies made through paper and form reductions.
RECOMMENDATION 7: Appropriate resource plans for the Hub are in place to	This lesson has been learnt following the recent

Agenda Item No. 9, Appendix 1

<p>better plan for forecast demand.</p>	<p>change to refuse/recycling rounds.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 8: The Hub also needs to be prepared to deal with unpredicted peaks in service demand, and we recommend that Business Continuity Plans are in place across the Hub Shared Service and the non shared service Hubs.</p>	<p>The Hub continuity plans are included within the Directorate plan.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 9: Performance information should be consistent across the Shared Service and the non-Shared Service districts, to enable like for like comparisons, and we recommend a single performance management framework is established across the Hub.</p>	<p>The Hub Strategic Management Group are looking at performance information to drive improvements in service.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 10: All performance information – for shared service and non-shared service districts – should be made available to all councillors.</p>	<p>Hub performance is reported to CMT on a quarterly basis and to Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Clinic on an exception basis.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 11: We recommend that all partners consider the role which scrutiny could play in helping to monitor performance of the Worcestershire Hub, if they have not already done so.</p>	<p>CMT/Cabinet to consider.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 12: For telephone enquiries inform customers of their place in the queue, or an estimated wait time for them to be able to speak to a customer services advisor.</p>	<p>This facility is best suited when operating a large call centre. It is important to recognise that calls are currently being answered within 30 seconds so implementing this option at this stage would not be the most appropriate.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 13: Define and agree Service Level Agreements between the Worcestershire Hub and every service area.</p>	<p>Main service areas have agreements in place – benefits, planning, refuse & recycling.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 14: Ensure there is sufficient time allocated for service area staff and Hub staff to review any issues or needs, and to monitor service provision via the Hub.</p>	<p>Service reviews are ongoing between service areas and the Hub. Any issues that arise are dealt with as they occur.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 15: Further work on the flow of information between the service area and the Hub (and vice versa) should take place, to ensure that the correct information is provided by the Hub to the service area, and that service area staff provide a response which enables Hub staff to answer the customer enquiry. It is important that both teams understand the implications of what the information they provide will be for the customer. The creation of Service Level Agreements between the Hub and services will support this.</p>	<p>See point 13 and 14.</p> <p>WFDC also has a corporate “Putting Customers First” strategy which outlines that customer service is the responsibility of everyone.</p>

Agenda Item No. 9, Appendix 1

<p>RECOMMENDATION 16: Give all customers the enquiry reference number, to encourage and enable them to track progress themselves online, and reduce the need for repeat enquiries to the Hub.</p>	<p>Reference numbers are provided to customers where applicable (not all are logged on Oneserve due to using back office systems direct). Work is underway to improve self service enabling customers to report issues and some services will allow customers to track the status online – e.g Highways.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 17: move towards more consistent IT packages, as contracts come up for renewal.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 18: In view of the negative feedback from our survey of parish councillors, we recommend further dialogue between senior officer representatives from the Worcestershire Hub and parish councils, to ensure their feedback can be used to improve the overall Hub service.</p>	<p>WFDC parish forum can assist here.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 19: The 'Hub' means different things to different people. We recommend further communication of the Hub's identity and services to the public. This could, for example, accompany the issue of council tax bills, which would present a cost-effective opportunity for marketing.</p>	<p>Information about the Hub and its services is always included in the Council Tax leaflet.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 20: Our investigation of best practice advice and customer survey results supports our findings that the website offers huge potential for helping customers to help themselves, and for making substantial efficiency savings. This can only be achieved if the website is as user-friendly and effective as possible. We are pleased to see that the website is being improved and recommend that this work continues in order to realise the potential gains in customer satisfaction and efficiency gains.</p>	<p>The Web Development Officer is making positive improvements to our website and is working with service areas to improve content to allow self service.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 21: In addressing the website and its expanding role in customer contact, we recommend that consideration is given to where the website sits within the council's organisational structure. This should take account of the need to align expertise in customer contact and communication, as well as information technology.</p>	<p>WFDC is the only authority to transfer management of the website to Customer Services. This also supports the recommendation of SOCITM.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 22: Councils' websites are very important and their profile needs to reflect this. A cabinet member for each authority should have responsibility for the website within his or her portfolio.</p>	<p>Recommendation is already in place.</p>