

Report for Information

Report to Cabinet
24 November 2010
Report of Deputy chief executive
Subject Phased closure of the City Hall cashier service - update

6

Purpose

To update cabinet regarding the progress of the phased closure of the City Hall cashier service.

Recommendations

To note this report.

Financial Consequences

None – this report is for information only.

Risk Assessment

None – this report is for information only

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Opportunities for all – communities to be able to access the wide range of services in the city provided by the Council”.

Executive Member: Councillor Sands – Well being

Ward: All

Contact Officers

Robin Hare – team leader, customer contact team
Tina Bailey – head of customer contact

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Background Documents

None

Report

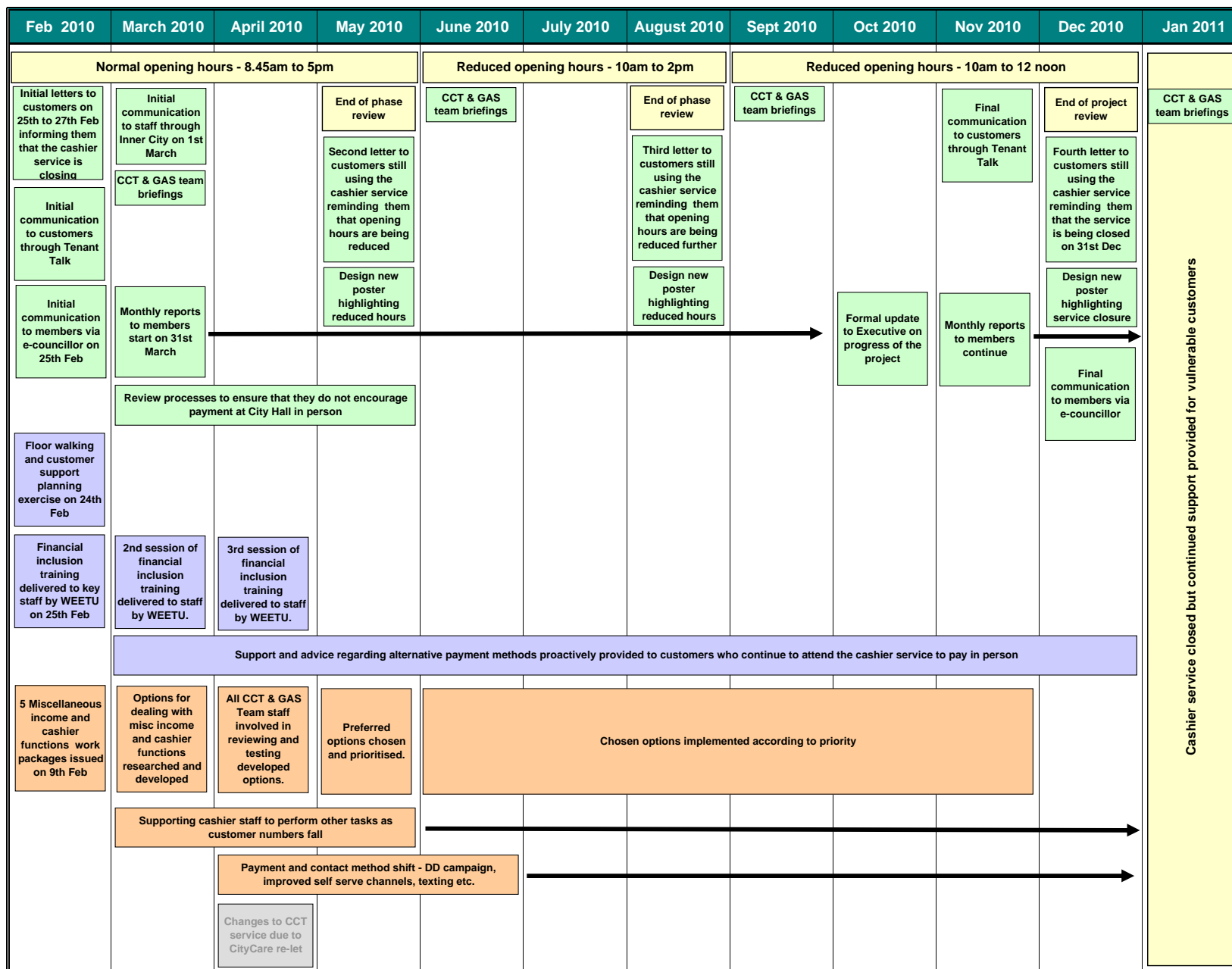
Phased closure of the City Hall cashier service - update

1. On 16 December 2009 Executive resolved to implement a programme of savings proposals.
2. One of the proposals was the closure of the City Hall cashier service.
3. On 13 January 2010 Executive considered the implementation plan for the closure of the cashier service and resolved "to ask the Deputy Chief Executive to provide the Executive with monthly monitoring reports on the usage of the Cashiers' Service and to review the plan for closing the Cashiers' Service to include a phased approach over a longer timescale".
4. The implementation plan was subsequently adjusted to incorporate a phased closure of the service by 31 December 2010. A copy of the plan is attached as Appendix A.
5. All council members have been provided with monthly update reports as requested. The latest monthly report, covering the period 13/9/2010 to 10/10/2010 is attached as Appendix B.
6. The latest monthly report to members shows that the number of face to face customer transactions being conducted using the cashier service has steadily reduced since 1/3/2010 and was 58% lower during the latest four week period, compared to the same period last year.
7. As shown on the implementation plan three letters have been sent to customers of the cashier service reminding them of the reducing hours that the service was open, that the service is finally closing on 31/12/2010 and asking them to make arrangements to make their payments by other methods.
8. Throughout the phased closure process customers have been supported by staff to change to alternative payment methods
9. The closure of the service has also been advertised in other publications such as Citizen, TLC and on the corporate website.
10. During August 2010 an exercise was undertaken where staff approached customers in the queue for the cashiers service and offered help and advice to change their methods of payment. A small number took up the offer but the majority were aware that the service was finally closing on 31/12/2010, already had the means to pay by other methods, but intended to continue to use the service until it finally closed.
11. Since February 2010, we have received a total of 13 complaints/comments about the closure of cashiers covering several issues as follows:-
 - 5 comments about the information,
 - 6 comments about different payment methods, and
 - 2 general comments about the closure

All of these customers have been called or written to and individual support continues at all points of contact and will continue to be provided. A programme of ongoing support is included in each phase of the closure programme.

12. As illustrated in the implementation plan the service is due to finally close on 31/12/2010. Contingency plans are being put into place to ensure that any vulnerable customers, or those genuinely unable to pay by any other means, can make cash payments.
13. It is anticipated that a relatively small number of cashier service customers currently using the service will continue to attend City Hall in the hope that they will still be able to pay in person. Analysis has shown that 389 council tax/rent customers do not appear to have currently an alternative method of payment in place. A contingency plan and policy to help support, advise and migrate these customers to other payment channels is being developed and will be in place by 1/1/2011.
14. It is intended to monitor the effect of the cashier service closure post 1/1/2011 on a monthly basis. These reports will be circulated to all members for their information.

Phased Closure of City Hall Cashiers - Time Line



Project Principles and Values

In delivering the vision for this project the council will adopt the following set of values. We will:

- Be open, accountable, listening and responsive.
- Put our customers at the heart of everything we do, delivering the required changes in a caring and sensitive manner.
- Manage resources in a coordinated way and with an emphasis upon sustainability.
- Value contributions from partners, employees and citizens, trusting each other and working collaboratively.
- See the diversity of our people and communities as a strength.
- Focus upon continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence, setting and achieving clear priorities and embracing new opportunities.

Transformation programme - closure of City Hall cashier service
Customer transaction comparison - 2009 to 2010

Period 2010	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Start date	01/03/2010	29/03/2010	26/04/2010	24/05/2010	21/06/2010	19/07/2010	16/08/2010	13/09/2010	11/10/2010	08/11/2010	06/12/2010
End date	28/03/2010	25/04/2010	23/05/2010	20/06/2010	18/07/2010	15/08/2010	12/09/2010	10/10/2010	07/11/2010	05/12/2010	02/01/2011
Transaction type											
Cash	5185	6681	6330	5394	4725	4443	3771	3269			
Cheque	965	1429	1295	994	985	850	738	831			
Cards	1108	1332	1313	965	833	754	686	554			
Postal orders	4	5	3	3	4	4	5	1			
Total	7262	9447	8941	7356	6547	6051	5200	4655	0	0	0
Cumulative Total	7262	16709	25650	33006	39553	45604	50804	55459	55459	55459	55459

Period 2009	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Start date	02/03/2009	30/03/2009	27/04/2009	25/05/2009	22/06/2009	20/07/2009	17/08/2009	14/09/2009	12/10/2009	09/11/2009	07/12/2009
End date	29/03/2009	26/04/2009	24/05/2009	21/06/2009	19/07/2009	16/08/2009	13/09/2009	11/10/2009	08/11/2009	06/12/2009	03/01/2010
Transaction type											
Cash	6770	7613	7827	7456	7773	7631	7433	7796	7377	7389	4703
Cheque	1222	1737	1715	1501	1591	1565	1524	1761	1465	1428	881
Cards	1112	1321	1335	1298	1301	1342	1277	1495	55	1353	937
Postal orders	7	4	3	2	9	1	4	2	9	6	2
Total	9111	10675	10880	10257	10674	10539	10238	11054	8906	10176	6523
Cumulative Total	9111	19786	30666	40923	51597	62136	72374	83428	92334	102510	109033

Comparisons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Period	-1849	-1228	-1939	-2901	-4127	-4488	-5038	-6399			
Period % change	-20%	-12%	-18%	-28%	-39%	-43%	-49%	-58%			
Cumulative	N/A	-3077	-5016	-7917	-12044	-16532	-21570	-27969			
Cumulative % change	N/A	-16%	-16%	-19%	-23%	-27%	-30%	-34%			