

Report & Recommendations

Prepared For

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council



By

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Confidential



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For the Attention of Julie Beilby

Dear Sirs

In accordance with your instructions, we have pleasure in setting out our report and recommendations, following various discussions at the Kings Hill and Tonbridge Castle offices.

The purpose of the report is to review the points raised, deliver some insight into CRM and provide Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council with a strategy to take the project forward.

If you have any questions, please contact the writer, Sandy Spink on 01737 242400.

Yours faithfully

Spink Telecom Consultants Ltd

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1. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

TMBC is in the fortunate position of having high CPA and customer satisfaction ratings; however, these alone are not sufficient to meet government targets, nor are they a guarantee for the future. Spink Telecom Consultants Ltd has therefore been invited by TMBC to evaluate the relevant benefits of CRM and whether it will serve their interests in the context of the overall e-government strategy.

In the preparation of this report we have interviewed several key officers to:

- Determine the level of understanding of CRM at TMBC.
- Explain the concept of CRM.
- Explain the different approaches to CRM.
- Explain and discuss the likely method by which it could be introduced.
- Evaluate existing processes, at a high level, to determine whether this approach is workable.

As part of the communications strategy and change management cycle, we would expect the report to be circulated among those interviewed, allowing them to comment on our interpretation of their service and as part of the necessary consultative process required for future project communications.

In addition, we have reviewed the reports prepared by RS-e Consulting in March 2004 and TMBC Improvement and Development Unit (IDU) in February 2005, to ensure that proposals put forward here are in line with current strategy.

Scope

- An explanation of CRM and the three possible approaches available to TMBC
- The recommended approach to CRM for TMBC.
- Observations of current practises and how these may be adapted to the recommended approach.
- Test proposals against RS-e report priorities
- Test proposals against existing ICT infrastructure and identify potential issues and costs.
- Suggested approach for communication strategy to staff and customers, ensuring buy in and support.

Comment

The government has defined 14 service improvement areas under which there are 29 outcomes 'Required' by December 2005. Our understanding is that these must reach Green stage in IEG self-assessment terms by December 2005 (i.e. the work has been implemented) in order to receive the final tranche of funding. Particularly noteworthy is the necessity for 'consistent customer relationship management'. This can, in our view, really only be achieved via



comprehensive CRM, workflow and knowledge management; three key areas that are also covered under the 23 National Projects.

The RS-e report also alludes to this by stating that, under the IEG Agenda TMBC is ‘required ...to commit to making progress in a number of e-government projects including CRM and Contact Centres. Money has been specifically tied to the satisfactory completion of these IEG statements.’

Aside from government demands, our own view is that TMBC must make the first steps towards installing CRM in order to *maintain* their high ratings, as they will be one of the last to implement it and unless they too implement a CRM, will not benefit from the improvements in customer service that CRM systems can generate. One of the main points to emerge from the staff interviews was that teamwork and customer care rates very highly in importance with all TMBC staff; this would account for the high satisfaction levels achieved. We believe that if CRM could help extend this ethic corporately rather than focusing on an individual’s own department, it would enhance a service that is already good, by following established principles.

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2. CRM – BACKGROUND & OPERATION

2.1 BUSINESS PROCESS REVIEW

Put simply, a process map logs the entire end to end process of an enquiry, regardless of its channel of origin (post, e-mail, web, face to face or telephone) and provides an essential tool for any organisation that wants to understand exactly how it is performing and where specific dependencies lie ('as-is processes'). It also creates a basis for re-engineering existing processes to make them more efficient and to maximise the benefits of integrated workflow, customer services and knowledge management.

One of the key benefits is finding out where customer service (front office) stops and processing/admin (back office) function starts. In many TMBC departments, both are carried out on an ad hoc basis by a single group of officers, but with technically trained professionals handling the more complex issues. Conflict inevitably arises when staffing levels are reduced for any reason; administration slows down or worse still, professional officers have to stand in for customer services which compromises efficiency and KPIs.

Another benefit is the discovery of gaps in the process or information flow, clearly indicating where inefficiencies lie and providing background for 'to-be' process re-engineering.

2.2 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

The aim of a successful CRM solution is to complete as many transactions at the first point of contact as possible and where it is not, to reduce the processes that the caller must endure to see it completed. In order to achieve this, the customer service officer must have access to a broad range of information and services; without this capability, all that is achieved is to add an extra tier of administration to the process.

CRM works in three ways: as a sophisticated contact management system, as a means of accessing and issuing information from disparate sources and to provide workflow so that all enquiries are logged and tracked, regardless of who instigates them. It can also provide the same information to a customer portal, accessible through the Internet, which will encourage 'self help', thereby reducing the burden on Council staff.

The benefit is that, with a central database of FAQs or knowledge management system, almost anyone can at least take a call, letter or e-mail and either respond with a routine answer or log into the system to be passed onto the relevant department for completion. This makes it virtually impossible for customers to become 'lost in the system'.

There are two recognised approaches to CRM, when budgets are limited:

- i) Wide and shallow, which will allow the common front end to be accessed across departments and provides workflow and FAQs, but has little integration with specific departmental applications. This means that many routine enquiries will be answered quickly, but cannot be followed through to the end. The cost of this approach is lower.
- ii) Narrow and deep, which is used by fewer departments but allows deep integration into their systems and therefore more of the transaction to be completed at the first point of contact. This approach can be more expensive as integration with different applications is less standardised.

The suggested approach for TMBC is a combination, set up in a ‘virtual’ or distributed basis, but with deep integration in one or two specific applications (e.g. CAPS and Sx3 as the most widely used).

A CRM system provides a browser based front end used by all customer service staff, regardless of their department and therefore enables resources to be shared. Peaks and troughs occur at different times of the year for many departments and therefore provide an ideal opportunity to share resources instead of bringing in temporary external help at busy times.

The concept of shared resources under current TMBC working practises may be seen as problematic, but this is due to the following reasons and misconceptions:

- i) ‘Silo’ working – where the focus is only on the department, not the Authority as a whole nor, more importantly, the customer.
- ii) Teams that cannot be broken up – for fear of losing key workers
- iii) Complexity and specialisations – no-one else could do it
- iv) Bad experience witnessed at other local authorities.

In fact, CRM creates an environment where individual horizons may be broadened by handling calls for other departments, using information, issuing standard forms and letters, pulling in information to update customers on existing cases and logging every enquiry. In the distributed scenario that we are suggesting, teams will remain intact and migration to a contact centre would only take place when task sharing becomes standard procedure.

Using the information from BPR, a clear understanding of current processes is gathered and can be used to create a more efficient environment where access to information is improved significantly, creating the workflow element. Front and back office tasks will need to be separated, but teams will continue to work together and rotate in these tasks instead of combining them.

KPIs may be automatically measured through reports generated by the CRM system and it will evolve as more integrations and departments join, ultimately creating a ‘broad and deep’ solution.

2.3 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT/FAQ DATABASE

Availability of information to customer services officers is critical if they are to have the ability to deal with new enquiries in some depth. There are various ways of creating a knowledge base, some of which we have mentioned already. However, it is important to be able to access the information easily once it has been stored and also to keep it up to date.

The most common form of knowledge management system is via an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) database. The officer types in the actual question and the system searches for the nearest matches. The search can be either based on the actual question itself within a proprietary database, or on keywords searched throughout all connected databases. The latter tends to be more accurate and is usually tied in with accuracy reporting (% rating), although the first may be better in a CRM environment where specific questions are asked.

A combination of both is the ideal solution for contact centre environments; if the specific question cannot be found (e.g. do I need planning permission for a water tank?), the entire database will then be searched for keywords (planning, water, tank). The question and associated answers can then be added into the FAQ database for future use.

Links from the answered question can then provide the agent with next steps and flow chart information on how to deal with the enquiry (enter into workflow if necessary) and who to forward the call to.

2.4 OPTIONS AND PROPOSED ROLL OUT PLAN

Options

There are three possibilities to be considered by TMBC:

- i) Central contract centre, with CRM linked to back office systems.
- ii) Maintain existing customer interface, using CRM for customer service
- iii) Distributed contact centres, using CRM for customer service

Central Contact Centre

This approach favours the 'wide and shallow' method, whereby as many services as possible use a centralised facility to handle all initial enquiries. It acts as a distribution point for all inbound contact with the council and with the benefit of knowledge management systems, can respond to many low level enquiries e.g. 'when will my rubbish be collected'.

The CRM system will also be able to issue forms and letters which are then logged and passed to the relevant back office for follow up. Where greater detail is required, such as benefit claims, disputed parking tickets, planning application follow ups, etc. the call will be passed to the departmental teams.

This system works well when customer service is of a low standard, providing the means to speed up processing and separate routine enquiries from complex. However, we do not believe this is suitable for TMBC, as it would mean the potential break up of good working teams and practices to form the contact centre, or employing a new team at great expense; if anything, this would damage the high ratings currently enjoyed.

Maintain Existing Customer Interface

This method involves the installation of CRM on customer service officers' PCs. Current methods of handling enquiries would continue, with calls being logged into the CRM system and FAQs used to answer routine questions. A degree of integration with the back office system would allow form issue, appointment booking etc through the system.

The main benefits would be for external customers to gain access to the FAQ database on the Internet and self help. No additional software would be required on the Ericsson system

We do not believe this to be a viable option because teams invariably multi-task, covering customer contact and processing, especially during busy times. Deciding who has CRM and who does not would be extremely difficult, if not counter productive because it would simply add another tier to their service. If nothing else changes, the exercise is rather pointless.

Distributed Contact Centres

By separating customer service from processing, administration and professional services, there is a clear demarcation between duties. CRM will be provided to customer service teams, while back office staff continue to use existing applications.

This method allows teams to continue as they are and to do the same work, albeit on a rotational basis instead of ad hoc; however, the main difference lies in the fact that each department has its own customer service team and as such can share resources with other departments depending on the level of activity. This is made possible by FAQs, workflow and CRM as previously described.

However, it is vital that a process mapping exercise is carried out before any attempt is made to change existing practices. It is impossible to make changes without have a clear and precise indication of how current processes operate and process maps provide a clear picture of every possible enquiry from the point of entry to closure. This exercise will also provide clear guidance in the development of FAQs.

A gradual understanding of others' working practises should develop and, as funding allows, integration with back office systems may also be extended. It should follow ultimately that migration to a central contact centre will occur,

but only when officers are comfortable with the idea. The target is a ‘wide and deep’ solution.

Recommended Approach

The approach recommended to TMBC is intended to avoid causing disruption to teams that already perform well and to help those that need it. The following stages are recommended:

- i) Selection of Phase 1 departments
- ii) Process mapping and evaluation in Phase 1 departments
- iii) Selection of CRM provider
- iv) Process re-engineering to suit the selected CRM
- v) Implementation

We recommend that the Ericsson ACD used for Street Line is extended or upgraded to Phase 1 departments and the new CRM system should be introduced shortly after. Those with high volumes of telephone traffic are likely to benefit the most initially. Using the information provided in the TMBC ‘Monitoring Customer Contacts’ report, it is clear that the eight sections that account for over 50% of contacts made by phone should be considered for Phase 1. In addition to this, it is interesting to note that they all have a high proportion of enquiries that can be resolved in 2-5 minutes, requesting readily available information. These types of enquiry can be built into the knowledge management system and answered by non-specialist staff or through an Internet self help portal.

The first phase of CRM should incorporate the creation of a customer database and knowledge management system, access to diaries and some integration with back office systems (we suggest CAPS Uniform and Sx3 as a starting point), although the extent will depend on suppliers’ costs.

Each department must create its own knowledge base of FAQs that may be incorporated in the CRM system for use across the Council. As previously stated, this can be greatly enhanced through process mapping.

The Area Office at Tonbridge Castle currently provides some elements of a one-stop shop. It is understood that the service delivery options are due to be reconsidered later in the year, but use of knowledge management and CRM will allow access to information on many more issues than is currently possible, reducing the number of calls that have to be made to Kingshill for assistance.

Further phases will depend on available funding; however, once several departments are using CRM and are able to share resources and accommodation issues are resolved, we recommend the move towards a contact centre is considered as there will be a ‘virtual’ contact centre in operation already.

2.5 ACCESSIBILITY

The CRM browser interface will be accessible by customer service staff at Kingshill for telephone and face to face enquiries. A 'thin' version will be required at the area offices for use across the WAN and an Internet version will be required for the public to access information. Through deep integration, it does not matter where the access is from to be able to reach up to date information, updates being created automatically from the specialist applications themselves.

The RS-e report indicates that among quick wins from the e-govt strategy will be members and home workers ability to access information through laptops. A CRM web portal, coupled with some improvements to the Ericsson PBX will enhance intranet facilities and remote access considerably (see Section 4).

2.6 QUICK WINS

Based on the information obtained during interviews and from the two reports provided, there are undoubtedly some areas that will benefit from CRM in the short term:

- The Castle and possibly Larkfield area offices (subject to the forthcoming service reviews)
- Members and home workers (see above)
- The eight high volume departments cited in the IDU's report.
- Self service and customer access, highlighted as Priority Projects by RS-e (see page 20).

As always, cost will have a significant impact on how far the first phase can go; this list will therefore have to be narrowed to begin with and priorities decided upon.

2.7 SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

Below is a summary of the relevant benefits that may be brought about by CRM highlighted through the interview process:

- Integrating PBX database with internal directories
- Shared resources between departments
- Separation of routine and complex tasks for better resource allocation
- Separation of back and front office for better resource allocation
- Improved training and less resource input through knowledge management
- Reduced exposure to key-man dependencies
- Same access view to council services from all channels (phone, face to face and web)
- Customer self help capabilities greatly improved
- Access to central information from area offices

- Improved time and resource management using single input for multiple reports
- Better customer relationships through call ownership
- Better use of resources through form and letter generation at customer service level

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3. STAFF INTERVIEWS

A number of interviews were carried out with key officers at TMBC to determine the current methods of enquiry management, as well as perceptions of CRM. Customer service at TMBC is excellent and for this reason we have looked for ways in which CRM will maintain this level, or improve it where necessary. Where a scenario has been described by the officer, we have also explained our suggested CRM solution in italics below.

3.1 FINANCE

- 3.1.1 The Larkfield and Tonbridge Castle area offices handle enquiries mainly on Council Tax, Benefits and Leisure, as well as having a cash office, but are also expected to know about the complete range of council services. Because of this, officers frequently have to refer back to Kingshill for further information which not only delays the response, but also interrupts other work. Face to face enquiries count for a large proportion of the total and at the Castle it seems that there is quite a dependency on one individual to handle benefits verification as well as a number of general enquiries shared with reception.

Our understanding is that the area offices service delivery options are due to be reconsidered later in the year. If this is the case, officers may need far greater access to information than is currently available; a comprehensive knowledge management system will aid routine enquiries and reduce dependency on Kingshill staff. CRM will allow them to be logged, tracked and to be picked up by trained staff from the appropriate department.

- 3.1.2 There can be a shortage of resources created by thin distribution of staff over three geographically separate locations, particularly during holidays and other breaks. We understand that staff have primary and secondary skills, but this must require investment in time for additional training.

Access to FAQs and a detailed knowledge base and process maps for all services will aid the training process. Instead of asking for assistance, a trainee can refer to the database first, leading to workflow maps charting the required steps to be taken for a particular enquiry. As this will be built into the CRM system, there will be a feed directly to the back office of the relevant department for more complex cases (depending on levels of integration).

- 3.1.3 Revenues and Benefits (at Kingshill) comprise multi skilled teams that handle routine and complex enquiries. 2-4 people answer incoming calls on a day to day basis, but during busy times everyone will pick up the telephone. The

impact here is that processing and administration is then relegated and completed later, which impacts on KPIs.

Through resource sharing with CRM, less busy departments will be able to take a number of overflow calls, allowing processing to continue uninterrupted. As many of these calls will be of a routine nature (53% of calls where the transaction was completed overall in under 2 minutes according to IDU report and 60-70% according to our interviewees) information can be retrieved from the CRM and knowledge management systems.

- 3.1.4 When staff at Kingshill Revenues and Benefits departments are queried about another topic, they attempt to transfer the call or take the callers details for the relevant department to ring back. It was noted that these officers become frustrated when the caller returns to them if the enquiry has not been responded to. At the area offices, the tendency is to transfer them back to the switchboard at Kingshill.

If these officers were equipped with more information, they would probably be able to answer the second question as well or if more detail was required from a specialist, log it into the CRM system to be picked up by the correct department. This will avoid unnecessary delays and ensure that ALL enquiries are followed through. To complete the ownership issue, if there is no response within a certain timeframe, reminders can pop up for the original officer to chase BEFORE the caller rings back.

- 3.1.5 Training is carried out on a one to one basis which could stretch resources. Although there was little concern about this as staff changes are very rare, it does highlight a potential issue for the future. The Sharks multiple choice testing system is not really designed as an ongoing support tool.

Use of knowledge management as a training tool applies here as in 3.1.2

- 3.1.6 Information on debt recovery, customer information, benefit calculations etc. is retrieved from the Sx3 iWorld system. However, it does not provide the resource to log and track cases or further information outside this area; this is currently done manually on paper files which must be cross referred with iWorld each time and follow ups are not automatically notified.

CRM and workflow software, when integrated with Sx3, will provide the means to retrieve all customer information, with details popped to the screen when they call and the ability to trace how far an application has got as well as any additional information or personal circumstances that may be relevant. Reminders can also be set up to appear in specified timeframes.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING

- 3.2.1 There is a consistently high volume of telephone traffic – approximately 5000 calls per month in total with 3000 going to Client Services alone. There is no technology available to assist with accurate statistical measurements or call distribution.

In the short term we recommend that the ACD facility used by Streetline is extended to include Environmental Health and enhanced (see section 4) to integrate with the chosen CRM system. ACD will provide even call distribution, wrap up time between calls and a management facility to monitor busy periods and bring in extra staff quickly.

- 3.2.2 As with other departments, Environmental Health officers multi-task, prioritising telephone calls during peaks, leaving administration to one side. Wide ranging advice is given from Housing issues to Health and Safety and Pest Control and again it is estimated that approximately 50% of calls are of a routine nature.

Longer term aspirations must clearly be to separate the front and back office functions, as we have proposed, introducing a specific customer service section to handle all incoming calls. This, coupled with CRM and the capacity to overflow to less busy departments equipped with an FAQ system will allow uninterrupted processing to be carried out, improving KPIs.

- 3.2.3 There are 3 Client Inspectors and 5 Technical Officers who are frequently out visiting customers for a number of reasons. There is no mobile access to systems for appointments/e-mails although a PDA trial was abandoned because the units were not sufficiently robust and still required a return to the office to download new information.

The intention is to move onto a mobile solution that will allow 'push' access to e-mail so that officers do not have to return to Kingshill for updates. We concur with this as devices are available that will integrate with office solutions, automatically e-mailing information when entered. Customer service officers can pull up calendars on CRM, check availability and enter appointments. Going one stage further, it may also be possible for mobile officers to update case notes on the CAPS system using the CRM web portal.

- 3.2.4 There is an existing FAQ database for recycling, which we understand needs some updating.

This is a good starting point for the knowledge management system, but it is important to recognise that as new questions are asked, it must have the facility to add them and be updated regularly.

3.3 CENTRAL SERVICES & SWITCHBOARD

- 3.3.1 The existing switchboard arrangement at Kingshill combines with reception on the front desk. We understand that 74% of calls are answered within 10 seconds, against a target of 73%. Calls are directed to departments via well publicised DDI numbers, thus reducing the volume of switchboard traffic. The typical problems of understaffed departments reverting calls to the switchboard, creating delays, do not occur at TMBC. Nor is there a conflict between reception and switchboard services, which is also unusual. This allows operators leeway to provide an excellent personalised service to both visitors and callers alike.

Whilst this service is excellent, it does highlight the benefits of having receptionists/operators that have a thorough knowledge of council hierarchy and personnel. Therefore it also highlights the problems that could develop if these staff members were away for an extended period for any reason.

In order to maintain this level of service at all times requires either several people with this degree of knowledge (which takes years to accumulate) or access to information on council services, hierarchy, location, telephone numbers and personnel. This can be created through knowledge management and existing reception staff will provide invaluable input for the project.

- 3.3.2 Directories are maintained using the DNA management facility, Groupwise and the 'soft book' (for general use) which are updated by Central Services and IT.

Ideally, there should be a link between the Ericsson system and other directories as changes made to the telephone system have to be immediate. It is possible to create a central repository for such databases so that as new numbers and names are fed into DNA, it is replicated in all associated directories. This will save time and ensure accuracy at all times.

- 3.3.3 It was noted that several departments pass calls back to the operator when a different service is requested. This has the potential to clog the switchboard at peak times.

As previously discussed, if officers have the ability to own the call and have access to the necessary information, there will be a reduced need to rely on the operator to find the right extension. Alternatively, if there is no time available to answer the question, CRM with CTI can provide the relevant hierarchy for that enquiry and allow the call to be transferred using the same screen.

- 3.3.4 The Datatrack call management system does not provide intelligible reports, which are required to prove certain KPIs .

We have recommended an alternative web based bureau service that can provide online and bespoke call logging reports, from statistics that are downloaded overnight from the PBX.

3.4 PLANNING AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

- 3.4.1 Planning and Engineering Services incorporates Highways, which we understand has been transferred to KCC. Whilst staff are still active at Kingshill, they are scheduled to relocate in September 2005 which will reduce call volumes by approximately two thirds. However, it is interesting to note that a customer service centre (Streetline) has been operating effectively here for some time, using a homespun Access based CRM system.

Whilst the Streetline system is highly effective, it would not offer the levels of information, workflow and integration that CRM can. From a maintenance point of view, support can only be internal and is also dependent on one member of staff in IT, which itself would not be sufficient for a corporate solution. However, the benefits derived from having Streetline are highly advantageous, in that these staff will be used to working in a 'contact centre' environment and are likely to appreciate the extra information brought by CRM.

- 3.4.2 A high number of parking enquiries are fed back to Kingshill from the Castle.

As previously stated, we recommend that Castle staff have access to the FAQ system and CRM as one of the project's quick wins, so that these can be resolved on site.

- 3.4.3 The relocation of Highways staff to KCC will reduce combined calls to approximately 600 per week, including parking.

We recommend that the residual engineering and parking staff combine under the ACD system (whether existing or upgraded) as a preliminary to the installation of CRM. We understand that this already happens to some extent during peaks; furthermore, those that are used to Streetline will be able to assist others in the set up of CRM based customer service.

- 3.4.4 Multiple reports of the same incident occur from time to time, e.g. abandoned vehicles, spillages etc. which need to be recognised before being logged and passed to contractors.

A strong feature of many CRM systems is the ability to recognise locations and match reports that appear similar. This is made simpler if there is a link to the GIS, which can provide map locations as well. The benefit is time saved in identifying duplications.

- 3.4.5 Planning is a difficult area for CRM in the early stages as most enquiries are complex and require detailed knowledge of planning law, without which the council runs the risk of giving incorrect advice. For this reason, giving advice is avoided in Planning Reception, but it does also mean that planning officers often have to give routine advice.

The fundamental question for planning in the first instance is 'Do I need planning permission?' from which an array of questions must then follow to determine the final answer. It is possible to map each possibility and the steps required to reach a conclusion using flowcharts with 'if, then, go to' type

interactions. This in turn can be built into a knowledge management system, the extent of which will determine how far a customer service officer can go before transferring the enquiry to a planning officer, thus helping to separate routine from complex.

- 3.4.6 As with other departments, there is no distinction in Planning between front and back office processes; staff handle customer services as well as processing and administration on an ad hoc basis. However, it should be noted that there are few issues with customer service.

Using the steps described earlier, a rotation based method of handling enquiries may be set up instead of multi tasking. This will be made possible through resource sharing and access to information through CRM and knowledge management.

3.5 LEISURE SERVICES

- 3.5.1 The Leisure Services Business Unit operates in a ‘quasi’ business environment in that it has to compete commercially with other privately run facilities, but receives funding from the council as a high visibility service. Our understanding is that all staff in both the central Leisure team and the Business Unit are trained to be very customer focused, and two mystery shopper surveys are carried out per year.

As with other departments described so far, the central Leisure Services section has a core of officers that deal primarily with customer contact, but which overflows to the administration team when necessary.

The distributed contact centre approach could work here, and would benefit particularly during Summer registrations. We understand that the Leisure Services Business Unit (facilities) is outside the initial brief for CR.M, so the initial focus would be on the central leisure services management section.

3.6 CHIEF EXECUTIVES OFFICE – MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.6.1 As this relatively small department has to handle the media and issue press releases, it is important that they have a complete understanding of how CRM will operate at TMBC and more importantly, the benefits that it will bring.

We hope that the definition and description of the proposed roll out at TMBC is sufficient to develop an ongoing series of press releases, although we would recommend delaying this until a PID (project initiation document) has been prepared, detailing exactly which departments are to pilot the scheme and what the projected timescales are.

- 3.6.2 Media and Communications occasionally have some difficulties obtaining information from some departments. This is mainly due to lack of resources during peak periods

Access to the knowledge management system may answer some queries, or to CRM if it is case based. It would be better for CRM to serve this department further into the project, as general access to all areas would be required. However, once available, it could save departmental time and provide quicker media responses.

3.7 SUMMARY OF CONCERNS

The perception of many, prior to being interviewed, was that CRM is a ‘call centre’ or ‘call queuing’ or an ‘information database’, which therefore led to some doubts as to the benefits for TMBC. The main issues were:

- Cohesive and effective teams would have to be broken up
- What is the point in changing something that works well?
- Having seen other local authorities struggling with contact centres, it did not inspire confidence.
- It could add an extra tier of administration unnecessarily.

We hope that these concerns have been addressed adequately during interviews and through this report as part of the communications programme to establish the project.

4. CRM SOLUTIONS & ICT ENHANCEMENTS

Choosing the right contractor is not always a foregone conclusion. TMBC are in the position of being surrounded by Northgate equipped authorities; Maidstone, Swale, Thanet and Canterbury all use this system which could have reciprocal benefits. However, Lagan are known to have developed some very close integration with CAPS systems; conversely Northgate have recently acquired Sx3, which may compromise development within the Revenues and Benefits departments.

We are not in a position to say which would be the best system for TMBC other than to comment on known strengths of the two most likely contenders:

Northgate – ubiquitous in the Kent region, rapid implementation for wide and shallow, using their ‘Rapid Development Tool’ which sets up process templates for quick installations. They are strong on the customer service side and have also recently purchased Sx3, used extensively at TMBC, and MVM. However, this does not mean that close integration will immediately be available; we recommend that detailed examination of Northgate’s plans is undertaken if they are to be considered.

Lagan – main strengths lie in integration through their Universal Adapter, providing a middleware platform for most applications. Lagan also offer point to point integration, involving direct access to the back office system, although this could be compromised by Northgate’s strategic purchase of Sx3. Lagan also has a ‘process library’ for quick start up templates and have good integrations with CAPS products.

PBX & Telecoms

The Ericsson MD110 PBX currently has licenses for up to 10 CCM (call centre ACD) users. We recommend that ACD is used in a CRM environment as it will provide the following facilities:

- Real time statistics on call volumes and agent management
- Agent wrap up time before accepting the next call
- Even call distribution (next call goes to the longest waiting agent)

However, for the next level of service, the existing CCM is not adequate:

- Screen pop callers details and history
- Outbound dialling by mouse click
- Integration with Groupwise
- Skill based routing

We recommend that the CCM is upgraded and enhanced to this level, if funding allows. In addition, to achieve the home working benefits, an upgrade to the software level is required. Users may then use IP telephones at home as though they were on the main system (assuming they have access to broadband).

Call Handling

In the distributed call centre scenario recommended, calls will continue to go to the departmental DDI groups, but with the capability of overflowing to other CRM equipped customer service teams during peaks.

If the decision is taken to migrate to a centralised facility after CRM has settled in, existing numbers can be diverted to a single customer service area and using skill based routing, target officers whose primary abilities are for that particular service. If they cannot take the call, it would select a second choice based on ability and so on.

IT Enhancements

For the purpose of this report we have taken only a cursory look at the infrastructure across TMBC, primarily with the view of using IP telephony across the WAN to the Castle and Larkfield area offices. As each of these locations has its own LIM from the Ericsson system connected by independent 2Mbit links, there is little to be gained by this from the service delivery perspective. Cost savings may be achieved but the initial investment would outweigh benefits at this stage. We recommend that this is considered when the PBX is upgraded and would be happy to carry out a full review if required.

It is possible that, depending on decisions regarding the Castle and Larkfield offices, CRM could place higher demands on bandwidth. This should be discussed with the chosen supplier, as it is likely that they will offer a thin client version, or that it will run across Citrix.

Costs

To upgrade the Ericsson MD110 to support a comprehensive ACD with integration capabilities with CRM for 20 users will cost approximately £50-60,000.

A CRM solution with integration with two applications, a knowledge management system and 20 users should be budgeted at around £250,000. This can be approached incrementally, although set up costs are disproportionately higher; we would suggest an initial budget of around £150,000 for a pilot of 12 seats. Process mapping would also be a requirement and approximately £30-£40,000 should be allowed for initial phases.

5. RS-e REPORT - COMMENT

The RS-e report highlights specific areas within the e-Govt Strategy that are of high importance:

- Develop and promote website functions
- Train staff to use the website more effectively
- Free up specialist officer time
- Use one stop shops

We believe that the proposals for CRM contained in this report show a clear direction in which all of these priorities may be achieved.

6. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

If TMBC follow our proposals and opt for the ‘take it slowly’ approach, a communications plan needs to be drawn up explaining the detail and providing the opportunity for feedback. If CRM is to succeed, it must be a consultative process to achieve buy in from all of those involved.

A typical format is for departmental champions to be appointed, led by a project board (we understand that the SEGG will take on this role); some of those that attended interviews for this report would be ideal as all appeared to support the concept, but on the understanding that it was implemented correctly and as described. Regular meetings will keep champions fully briefed on progress and provide an opportunity for further feedback.

Regular internal information bulletins should also be issued and information and support made available.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 We recommend that a PID is drawn up to highlight the various stages, responsibilities, risks and constraints. Phase 1 departments are to be identified.
- 7.2 Process mapping of Phase 1 departments must be carried out as soon as a decision is made to proceed. This can also be used to develop the knowledge base.
- 7.3 CRM procurement is the next stage, for the pilot department(s) which can be done through GCAT or via OJEC, whichever route is preferred by TMBC. It is important that a clearly defined specification is drawn up in either case.
- 7.4 Following selection, commence integration with relevant applications and incorporate process maps and knowledge base.
- 7.5 The communications strategy should be an ongoing project within CRM with regular review meetings following implementation

How should the PSTOs affect TMBC’s CRM strategy?

Introduction

This document should be read as an appendix to the Spink Telecom Consultants report into CRM for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC). It is designed to help TMBC assess how the Priority Service and Transformation Outcomes (PSTOs) should influence their thinking around CRM.

This paper is based on our experience of working with more than a dozen authorities around PSTOs, our excellent contacts with the team in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister who are responsible for delivering this initiative (ODPM), and our general knowledge of the Local e-Government agenda gained from working with more than one hundred English Local Authorities.

What are PSTOs and why do they matter?

- § PSTOs are the 73 specific targets for e-government implementation, most of which Local Authorities are required to meet by March 2006¹.
- § Local Authorities have all been given £950,000 over a five year period by ODPM to meet these and other e-government targets
- § The incentive for Local Authorities to fulfil the PSTOs is:
 - ODPM may retrospectively take some of the money back if they don’t
 - Successful fulfilment of the PSTOs now contributes to CPA results²

Which PSTOs are affected by CRM?

CRM has the potential to touch on almost every area of council business; and so it can contribute in some way to the majority of PSTOs.

However there are seven PSTOs which it will be hard to complete without implementing CRM.

PSTO No	Description	% of LAs Amber/ Green by March 2005 ³
R16	‘One stop’ resolution of Housing and Council Tax Benefit enquiries using workflow tools and CRM software which will enable back office integration	57/28
R27	Systems in place to ensure effective and consistent crm across access channels and to provide a ‘first time fix’ for citizen and	67/18

¹ For more specific information on how this breaks down into required, good and excellent outcomes visit: <http://www.localgov.gov.uk/en/1/priorityoutcomes.html>

² For more specific information about how it affects CPA results, visit:

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/CPA/Downloads/CAKLOEpractitioner.pdf>

³ Amber = have plans in place which they are already implementing to meet the target; Green = already met the target

	business enquiries	
R28	All email and web form acknowledgements to include unique reference number allocated to allow tracking	66/13
R29	100% of email enquiries from the public responded to within one working day	64/15
G8	Establishment of a single business account	50/3
G24	Integration of crm systems with back office activity	69/8
G25	Facilities to support the single notification of change of address	61/16

How should the PSTOs affect TMBC's approach to CRM – an informal appraisal

Based on informal briefings and research, our assessment is that:

- most Local Authorities are being optimistic about the progress they have made in each of the areas outlined above
- ODPM is unlikely to penalise authorities who have reached 'amber' on each of these PSTOs by March 2006 – but is likely to be punitive with authorities that have not yet reached this stage
- ODPM is not necessarily expecting Districts/Boroughs to implement large scale CRM solutions but will be satisfied to see more bespoke solutions

Which leads us to **recommend** that:

- The need to fulfil PSTOs should not drive TMBC's CRM strategy
- However, when implementing the CRM solution that best fits local needs, TMBC should incorporate the requirements from the PSTOs identified above into the detailed planning to ensure that it is seen to meet them
- Specifically, in light of the Spink Telecom report's conclusion that TMBC should adopt a 'take it slowly' approach to rolling-out CRM it would make sense to:
 - Consider including businesses (G8) and Housing and Council Tax benefits (R16) as 'phase one' options for the roll-out; these are the only two service areas specifically mentioned in the PSTOs
 - Develop a top level plan demonstrating how eventually CRM will be rolled out to *all* council services; this will ensure that TMBC can show ODPM that it intends to take a corporate approach to CRM