

# Delegated Decision Report

*Decision below £250k*

<b>Subject:</b>	Customer Operations Service Restructure
<b>Decision maker: Senior Officer</b>	Fiona Greenway, Executive Director of Resources
<b>Decision date:</b>	10 March 2026
<b>Report author:</b>	Leo Morgan, Head of Customer Operations Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience
<b>Ward (s):</b>	All

## **Reason for decision**

This report seeks approval to implement a revised Customer Operations structure aligned to the new Customer Empowerment Framework, designed to strengthen frontline capacity, improve outcomes for residents, and provide a sustainable approach to managing demand.

This proposal is not being progressed to deliver budget savings and will be implemented within existing budget.

## **Recommendation(s)**

To review and approve the proposed Customer Operations restructure (Option C), including changes to service design, line management and roles, the creation of additional Customer Service Officer posts, and the cessation of the Support and Inclusion Team as a standalone function, subject to formal consultation.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Customer Operations is experiencing increasing demand in terms of volume, complexity and vulnerability, alongside rising expectations for digital access and resolution at first point of contact.
- 1.2 The current service model is largely transactional and has come under sustained pressure. However, the service is performing consistently, regularly meeting and exceeding several performance targets. It is important to ensure this is enabled by a sustainable structure to ensure our teams thrive and that residents are supported.
- 1.3 This restructure builds on the Customer Experience restructure that commenced in February 2025. It focusses on how the Customer Operations Team now operates in practice, ensuring the service has the right roles, capacity and accountabilities in place to deliver effective, resident-focused outcomes ensuring the structure is fit for purpose moving forwards.
- 1.4 Recent months have seen additional services join the Customer Operations Team. The Warm Homes service (1 FTE permanent team member and 1 FTE agency team member) transferred from Strategic Housing in October 2025. October also saw the Web Team (2 FTE permanent officers) move from the Communications Team into Customer Operations. Additionally, in December 2025, the Support and Inclusion Team (7.44 FTE permanent Team Members) was paused following a service review and temporarily integrated from Revenues and Benefits into Customer Operations to provide additional capacity and resilience while a wider review of the operating model was undertaken.
- 1.5 In addition, the Contact Centre has also taken on additional services. In August 2025, the Contact Centre Team took on responsibility for the Complaints phone line moving from voicemail managed within the Complaints Team to an operating phone line. February 2026 saw Planning calls come into the service again from a serviced managed voicemail service to a Contact Centre managed phone line. Future plans for additional services to move into the Contact Centre are being scoped to ensure a resident focused and consistent approach.
- 1.6 The new operating model for financial support and inclusion services has been developed with a one front door approach set out in a Cabinet Paper on 23 February 2026. This paper received Cabinet approval to procure a partner to deliver advice services to Oldham residents. Effective from 1 April, Public Health funding for the Warm Homes Team ceases. During a transitional period from Spring into Summer and following the timeline of this consultation, the partner will launch the new one front door to advice services and the Warm Homes Team will cease. Additionally, it is proposed that the Support and Inclusion Team will cease in this period and a new Income Maximisation function within the

Customer Experience Team and funded by Government Grant Funding – the Crisis and Resilience Fund will be established. The team will focus on supporting residents to make benefit applications.

- 1.7 The proposed model has been developed using existing service budget associated with the Support and Inclusion Team roles, totaling £281,160. The proposed roles within the revised structure have an associated cost of £274,610 and can therefore be delivered within the existing budget envelope. The proposed structure and organisation chart are set out later in this report.



## **2. Proposed Changes**

- 2.1 The new operating proposes a revised Customer Operations structure aligned to the new Customer Empowerment Framework. The model strengthens frontline capacity, embeds relational support within core delivery, and provides clearer accountability across transactional, relational and specialist functions.
- 2.2 The restructure includes changes to line management arrangements to better support strategic direction, performance oversight, quality, and continuous improvement across Customer Operations. This ensures clearer leadership ownership for operational delivery, workforce development, and service improvement.
- 2.3 The proposed restructure increases the number of Customer Service Officers by 5.5. FTE. This reflects the Complaints and Planning calls already taken on further services to be scoped.
- 2.4 The proposed restructure strengthens the capacity of the Complaints Team. This reflects increasing demand and complexities in addition to the implementation of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)'s Code effective from 1 April 2026. This change means that most Complaints should be investigated and responded to within 10 days from the current timeline of 20 days. Moreover, additional capacity and expertise was bought into bolster team capacity on a temporary basis. The proposed structure reflects the need for the additional capacity. The temporary support will no longer be required once implementation has taken place.
- 2.5 Web Team capacity has also been reviewed following the move from Communications in October 2025. To support succession planning, an Apprentice role is proposed within the restructure.
- 2.6 As part of the proposed structure, a number of job titles will change to better reflect role purpose, scope and accountability within the revised operating model. Job descriptions and person specifications have been redrafted to reflect these changes.
- 2.7 Current working arrangements across Customer Operations vary, with some staff working primarily from home and others based in council offices. To support the proposed operating model, staff will be expected to attend the office for a minimum of two days per week. Any requests for alternative arrangements must be made through the Council's formal flexible working process and will be considered on an individual basis in line with policy and legislation.

### 3. Alternative option(s) to be considered

3.1 As part of the review of Customer Operations, a number of options were considered to determine how the service should be structured to align with the new operating model and Customer Empowerment Framework, and to ensure the right roles and capacity are in place to deliver effective outcomes for residents.

#### 3.2 Option A – Maintain current interim arrangements

This option would continue the current interim arrangements, including the paused Support and Inclusion Team operating without a formalised structure. This option was discounted as it does not provide long-term clarity on roles, responsibilities or line management, and does not support the consistent application of the operating model or empowerment framework.

#### 3.3 Option B – Retain existing roles and structures

This option would retain the current mix of roles within Customer Operations. This was discounted as it would continue service fragmentation, limit flexibility in responding to demand, and would not provide the operational leadership, improvement capacity or frontline resilience required.

#### 3.4 Option C – Implement revised Customer Operations structure (preferred option)

This option proposes a revised Customer Operations structure aligned to the operating model and Customer Empowerment framework. It includes the cessation of a number of existing roles and the creation of new roles that better reflect how the service operates in practice.

#### 3.5 Table 1

<b>Deletion of the following roles:</b>				
Support and Inclusion Officer / CSO (SIT)	6.79	3	£250,300	Delete post(s)
Supervisor (Support and Inclusion Team)	0.65	6	£30,860	Delete post
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.44 FTE</b>	-	<b>£281,160</b>	

In addition to the roles outlined in Table 1 and as outlined in Section 1.5, the Public Health funding for the Warm Homes ceases meaning the role of Resident Liaison Officer (Warm Homes, Grade 5) is at risk of redundancy. With this being Public Health funded, this is not included in core revenue budget.

3.6 Table 2

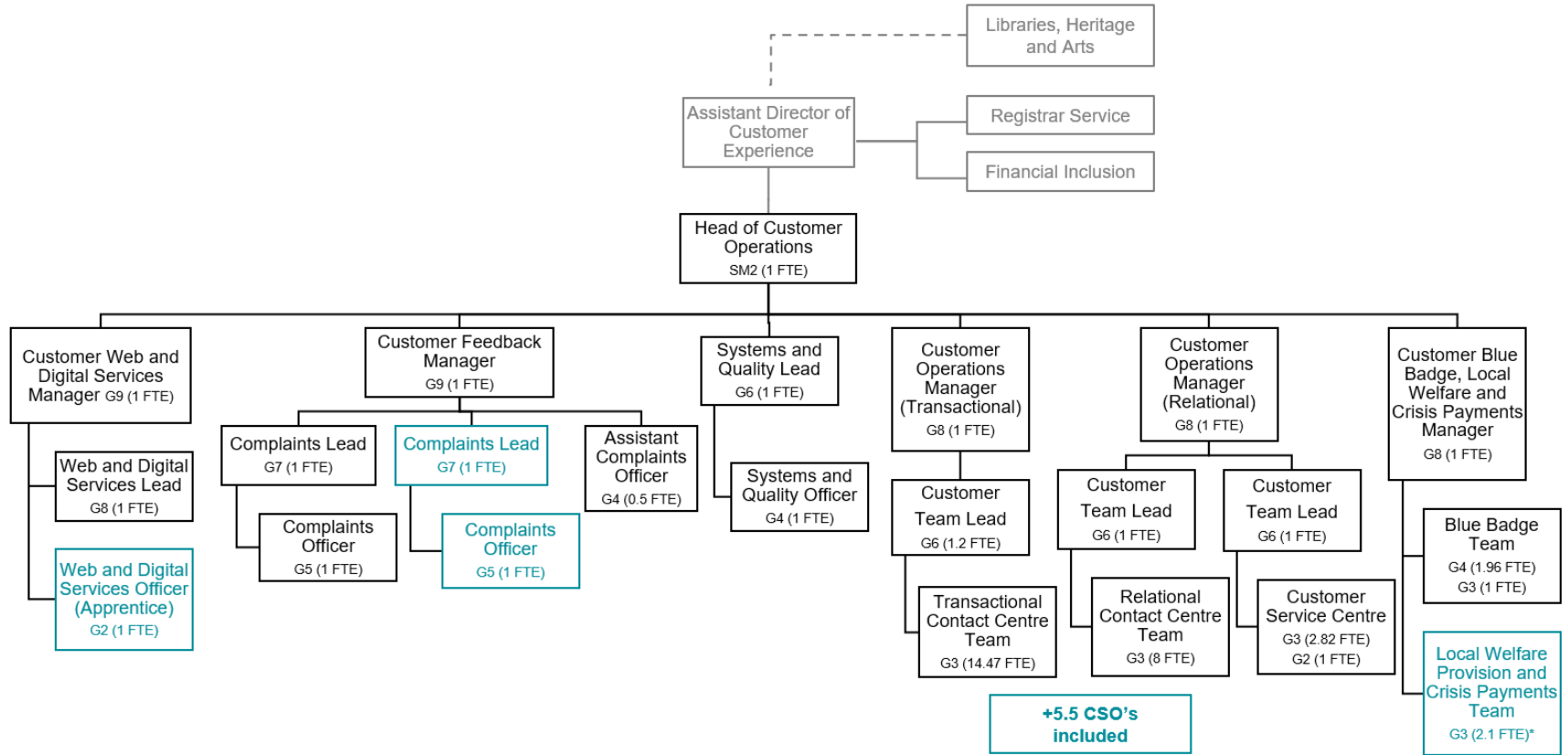
<b>Creation of the following roles:</b>				
<b>Role</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>25/26 budget</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Senior Complaints Officer	1	7	£12,660	Existing Grade 4 role re-graded to Grade 7 to reflect complexity of statutory complaint caseload. Competitive process to be established with current Grade 5 officers.
Complaints Officer	1	5	£41,510	Additional capacity in Complaints Team to support with increased caseload and demand, ensuring complaints are responded to within new statutory timeframes.
Customer Support Officer	5.5	3	£187,440	Additional capacity in Customer Support Officer cohort to ensure appropriate staffing levels now and with the addition of future services.
Web Apprentice	1	2 (SCP4)	£33,000	New role. This post is being created as part of the consultation, funded through the deletion of existing posts. As it is an apprenticeship role, recruitment will take place separately in line with the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme. Employees affected by this consultation are not eligible to apply through this route.
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.5 FTE</b>	-	<b>£274,610</b>	The remaining £6,550 will be used to support future increment payments.

Separate to this consultation, 4 FTE Income Maximisation Officer roles have been established through the Crisis and Resilience Fund which is grant funded by the UK Government. Affected staff from the Support and Inclusion Team will be offered a ringfenced interview for these new roles.

<b>Role</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Income Maximisation Officer	4	3	In place from 1 April	Roles have been established with Government Grant Funding are not subject to this consultation.
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 FTE</b>	-	-	-

### 3.7 Proposed Structure

# Proposed option



= New roles

Job title changes not part of formal consultation

\*LWP and Crisis Payments funded via CRF

#### 4. Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation documentation has been prepared. Formal consultation will begin on 10 March 2026.
- 4.2 Job descriptions have been amended for affected roles. Job descriptions are included in the consultation documentation.

#### 5. Risks

- 5.1 There is a risk of short-term disruption to service delivery during implementation of the revised structure, particularly while consultation is undertaken and new line management arrangements are embedded. April to July will be a transition period, with phased implementation, clear communication, and close operational oversight in place to mitigate impact on service delivery.
- 5.2 There is a risk that demand continues to increase at a faster rate than anticipated, placing pressure on frontline capacity despite the revised structure. This will be mitigated through the application of the operating model, strengthened Customer Service Officer capacity, and the phased implementation of the Customer Empowerment Framework.
- 5.3 There is a risk of uncertainty for staff affected by the restructure, which could impact morale and retention. This will be mitigated through formal consultation, engagement with Trade Unions, and HR support to ensure the process is managed in line with council policy.
- 5.4 We will continue to work with the IT team with the aim of quickening the pace of service transformation by integrating online forms to reduce the need for residents to call. This will support the service to work towards achieving delivery of performance targets including 89% calls answered.

#### 6. Implications

Financial	<p>The proposed Customer Operations restructuring is financially sustainable from a revenue perspective and can be delivered fully within the existing budget envelope.</p> <p>As outlined earlier in this report, the proposal is broadly cost neutral.</p> <p>The current budget associated with roles proposed for deletion totals £281,160 (7.44 FTE).</p>
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The proposed roles within the revised structure total £274,610 (8.5 FTE), creating a balance of £6,550 to support future incremental progression within the establishment.

Any one off implementation costs (e.g. redundancy or pension strain) fall outside of the ongoing revenue position.

<b>Revenue movement summary (annualised)</b>	<b>£</b>
Budget associated with roles proposed for deletion	281,160
Cost of roles proposed for creation (including regrade)	274,610
<b>Net revenue position within service budget (headroom for increments)</b>	<b>6,550</b>

Subject to approval, the proposal places 7.44 FTE at risk of redundancy or redeployment. In a worst-case scenario, the estimated combined one-off cost is approximately £74,000.

In accordance with Council policy (given that this is not an approved savings proposal) any redundancy costs must be funded from within existing service resources and must demonstrate a payback period of less than 18 months, unless an alternative corporate agreement is reached.

Separately, the 4 FTE Income Maximisation Officer posts funded through the Crisis and Resilience Fund are grant funded, therefore do not impact the Customer Operations revenue budget.

Although no specific funding has yet been formally allocated to cover the potential maximum liability of approximately £74,000, Customer Services are confident that this cost can be accommodated within existing budgets if required.

Budget pressures will continue to be closely monitored throughout the year, and it may ultimately be necessary for the wider Resources portfolio to absorb some or all of the expenditure.

(Matthew Kearns, Finance Manager)

Legal

Provided the Council comply with their duty to inform and consult the Unions and Staff affected by the restructure as set

	<p>out in the HR section below, there is no legal impediment to this proposal.</p> <p>(Teresa Harrison, Employment Solicitor)</p>
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A
HR	<p>HR confirms that the Equality Impact Assessment and Job Evaluation for the proposed new role have been completed. HR therefore supports the proposal progressing to formal consultation.</p> <p>As the restructure involves the deletion of posts, there is a potential risk of redundancy, which will need to be carefully managed. HR will continue to support management throughout the consultation period, ensuring clear communication, adherence to policy, and appropriate employee support.</p> <p>Subject to these considerations, the proposal can proceed in line with the Council's Organisational Change and Redeployment policies.</p> <p>(Jingwen Yang, Workforce Business Partner)</p> <p>8.44 FTE will be at risk of redundancy in the proposed restructure. There are potential redeployment options within the new proposed structure e.g. expansion of Grade 3 Income Maximisation Officers. It would be expected that these roles would be ringfenced. The HR and OD service would also seek other redeployment opportunities elsewhere in the organisation prior to any final dismissal on the grounds of redundancy.</p> <p>Any proposed changes to working patterns (e.g. minimum 2 days in the office) is also subject to consultation and must be clearly rationalised and open to feedback and counter proposals.</p> <p>HR recommends the development of a clear cultural, training and transition plan to support workforce morale, capability development and service continuity during the period of change.</p> <p>(Eleanor Devlin Assistant Director of Workforce &amp; Organisational Culture)</p>

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
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Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

## Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

N/A

### Appendices


Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment



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Operations\_Consultat

Report author sign-off	Leo Morgan
Role	Head of Customer Operations
Date of sign-off	09/03/2026

Report author sign-off	Fran Lautman
Role	Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Date of sign-off	10/03/26

<b>Approval</b>	
Officer approval sign-off	Fiona Greenway 
Role	Executive Director for Resources
Date of sign-off	10/03/26