

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, 2006**

Present: Councillor A Burnip (Chair)

Councillors D Armstrong, B Burn, A
Collinson, S Mason, C Patching, R
Taylor and P G Ward

Also present: Councillor D Myers - Executive
Member for e-Government and
Scrutiny Liaison

1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 24 January, 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 31 January, 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

3 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no Members of the public present.

4 **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY**

There were no items to report.

5 **CONTACT CENTRE**

B Nicholson, Head of Information Services was in attendance to discuss progress in relation to the implementation of the Contact Centre.

He advised that the target was to answer up to 80% of all queries at the first point of contact. A survey carried out had established that the majority of residents preferred to contact the Council by telephone, with the remaining of those surveyed preferring face-to-face contact. Electronic means of access were also being developed in accordance with the Government's IEG requirements.

A Customer Related Management System (CRM) would record any contact with the public and how that request had been dealt with.

To achieve the target a phased arrangement was necessary. Three major phases had been identified and B Nicholson proceeded to outline each.

The first phase had been to identify suitable premises for the Contact Centre and populate it firstly with staff from housing benefits, reception, Envirocall and Customer Services. Initially each of these would answer queries in

relation to their own areas of work but the second phase would provide training to enable them to deal with all calls. The number of staff in the Centre would also be increased as part of this phase and training provided. The third phase was the provision of a single reception area to deal with the public face to face. The timing of this was dependent upon a decision being made in relation to the new civic premises.

To date, he advised that Building 6 had been identified as the location for the Contact Centre and was now occupied. A new telephone system was implemented in December 2005. Consultation had been carried out with staff and trade unions, and job descriptions/personal specifications for Call Centre Advisors had been drafted.

Consultants CCP had been appointed to look at training needs and business processes, funded by IDeA. The Head of Customer Services was due to commence work on 6 March, 2006 and a Research Student was looking at performance measurement to ensure that efficiencies were realised. The Knowledge Management System was being developed and work on the CRM system continued in partnership with the other Districts in the County and Durham County Council.

B Nicholson then proceeded to outline the next stage in the process which was to continue training, install Environmental Services within the Contact Centre by the end of March 2006, continue development of the CRM and telephone system, undertake business processes for other departments, appoint more staff (approximately 16), and start to measure achievements.

The Executive Member for E-government and Scrutiny Liaison added that publicity for the Contact Centre with an official opening would be carried out when it was fully functional.

A Member commended the Head of e-Government and Information Services and staff on the work undertaken and asked what arrangements were in place for dealing with any calls relating to East Durham Homes (EDH). B Nicholson advised that EDH had been consulted and had decided to establish it's own mini Contact Centre at Meridien Court in Peterlee where they were to be re-located. Their telephone switch system was the same and any query for EDH received by the Contact Centre could be re-directed in the same way as an internal telephone call. Publicity would have to be given to East Durham Homes' new premises and telephone numbers.

In response to further questions from Members, B Nicholson confirmed that in relation to the telephone system, automated menu options would not be used and that signage for the Contact Centre would be erected once the reception area was in place.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Request for Additional Wheeled Bin

The Chair advised that a resident had expressed concern that their request for a second wheeled bin had been refused. On investigation the Chair had been advised that the reason for refusal was because optimum levels of collection had been reached.

Resources Scrutiny Committee – 14 February, 2006

It was **RESOLVED** that the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager be invited to the next meeting to discuss this matter.

JE/MC/COM/RES/060201
16 February, 2006