

Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 November 2015



Customer First Task and Finish Group Review – Update on progress against recommendations

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Terry Collins, Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to update members of the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress made against the recommendations from the Customer First Task and Finish group Review.

Background

- 2 At the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 September 2013, during consideration of the Performance Management Report for Quarter 1 2013/14, reference was made to performance in respect of Customer Services including telephone answering and e-mail transactions. At that time, members were informed of the on-going work being undertaken in respect of the revised Customer First Strategy for the Council. The Committee agreed to establish a small task and finish group to provide policy development support to the refresh of the Council's Customer First Strategy.
- 3 Evidence was gathered over a series of 6 Task and Finish Group meetings culminating in a presentation to the group on 24 September 2014 which highlighted key findings from the review and at which members of the group agreed a series of recommendations.
- 4 Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the review report at a special meeting held on 17 October 2014 and a copy of the review report is attached at Appendix 2 for members' information.

Recommendations from the review

- 5 The review made the following ten recommendations:
 - a. That Cabinet consider as part of the implementation of the refreshed Customer First Strategy, that Customer services training be provided across all Council services as part of the Corporate Training programme, such training to be prioritised to cover all customer facing service provision and also to be offered to all Councillors.

- b. That the Cabinet monitor the implementation and benefits of the new CRM system currently being procured in supporting the delivery of the Customer First Strategy;
- c. That Cabinet seeks to ensure that the provision of broadband/digital service connectivity in respect of new residential, business and commercial developments is expected;
- d. That the Cabinet ensures that a focussed and structured plan for the delivery of the customer first strategy is in place which provides clarity on how those business critical projects identified within this report will be delivered including proposed timelines and delivery milestones;
- e. That Cabinet supports the rationalisation of the Council's telephone numbers that are promoted and advertised to a small series of golden numbers that are easily recognised and accessible by customers;
- f. That the Cabinet recognises the need for Customer Access Point provision to be supported by the emerging "Information Durham" service provision that is suitably branded, easily identifiable and delivered through as wide a network of facilities and locations as possible, including partner organisations, community facilities and third sector organisations with robust support from the Council's ICT service;
- g. That the Cabinet supports the ongoing development work on the Council's website and that all services commit to provide enhanced service information which will reduce avoidable contact and promote online transactions as part of a structured plan to promote channel shift;
- h. That the Cabinet supports the work of Customer services and the Corporate news team to review social media as a customer services channel and to pilot ideas on how this could work;
- i. That the Cabinet supports the ongoing project work to develop service standards and associated performance management arrangements across all services and, upon completion of this work, all stakeholders including the public, council staff and Councillors will be engaged upon the proposed services standards;
- j. That the Council support the development of mystery shopping for use as part of service standard performance management arrangements and that any such proposal include the input/involvement of Councillors.

Systematic Review

- 6 The pro-forma attached at Appendix 3 provides an update on the recommendations of the final report.

Customer Relationship Management system development, procurement and implementation

- 7 One of the recommendations made by the Customer First Task and Finish Group was that the Cabinet monitor the implementation and benefits of the new CRM system currently being procured in supporting the delivery of the Customer First Strategy.
- 8 A key element of the implementation of the Council's preferred CRM system is how the system can support Councillors in dealing with and tracking their casework and constituents' queries. To this end, the Committee is invited to consider appointing a small cross party panel of members to input into the CRM implementation prior to its launch in April 2016.
- 9 It is envisaged that the group would meet on three occasions during January to March 2016. A detailed project plan and terms of reference would be submitted to the group's first meeting for agreement.

Recommendations

- 10 The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:-
 - (a) Note the update on the recommendations of the Customer First Task and Finish Group Review, and
 - (b) Agree to the establishment of a small cross party panel of members to undertake a further task and finish review which would input into the CRM implementation prior to its launch in April 2016.

Background papers

Customer First Task and Finish Group Review report

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications - None