

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - CUSTOMER SERVICES
TUESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2005**

Councillors Bevan (Chair), Bull and Oatway

Apologies Councillor Bax, Gilbert and Peacock

Also Present: Councillor (none)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
SCCS01.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Judith Bax, Stephen Gilbert & Sheila Peacock.</p>	
SCCS02.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>None.</p>	
SCCS03.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY, IN RESEPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA</p> <p>None.</p>	
SCCS04.	<p>APPOINTMENT OF EXPERT ADVISER</p> <p>Lydia Dlaboha introduced herself, she is a Consultant with Housing Quality Network (HQN), which mainly worked on housing projects. There are a lot of cross cutting issues such as customer care, access and performance. She led on the Housing Mock Inspection in Haringey which took place in preparation for the ALMO. There were some vital issues picked up in the mock inspection on customer care, equality, diversity and the links of customer service with housing.</p> <p>The Panel endorsed the appointment of Lydia Dlaboha as an Expert Adviser to this review subject to the terms and conditions of appointment set out in the service level agreement.</p>	
SCCS05.	<p>CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY PERFORMANCE ISSUES</p> <p>The Head of Customer Services introduced this report, which followed a question and answer session:</p> <p>Q1) Is Homeless Unit part of Customer Services (CS)</p>	

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Ans 1) Homeless Unit is not part of CS or part of this review. Although external Inspectors do look at how local authorities serve vulnerable people in the community.

A key challenge for Customer Services was joint working and the Housing Improvement Plan in response to the housing mock inspection detailed ways to address this issue.

Action: JW- Issues relating to CS in the Housing Mock Inspection, along with the Improvement Plan relating to them be presented at a later stage of the review.

Q2) The Customer Services Telephone Survey data table for CSC's & CC had a high proportion of actions which were agreed with customers but not carried out. Can you explain why that is? Can this data be split into Directorates to identify those departments not undertaking the actions.

Ans2) This may not necessarily be a Customer Services issue. For example if a resident phones up about a Housing Repair, but for some reason the repair does not get done but the transaction has been completed on CS side then this obviously is out of the remit of CS. This data can be split into Client Service and I will provide a copy to the Review Panel.

Action: JW – Data of % of action carried out by Client Service. (Please See Appendix 4)

Q3) During our visits to the CSC's it was obvious managing and displaying leaflets was an issue. There were boxes lying around and it was not clear if the leaflets they contained were out of date.

Ans 3) We are currently looking into this and it has been proposed that Corporate Communication take responsibility for all reception and corporate leaflets, which includes version control. At present we have boxes lying around as departments get them printed in bulk and give to us as it is cheaper and we have to store them wherever possible. The re-design of some of the reception areas in CSC will create further display space, in particular for ALMO.

It was noted that the CSC's were a very important way of communicating with residents for the Council. It was imperative that the information displayed are accurate and sufficient.

Q4) CS's last recruitment was undertaken through the website. This meant that a lot of people were excluded. Are there any Government Schemes which pays for local people to train in such a job, or do you have any plans to recruit local people? What do you look for in your officers? Local people will have more empathy towards residents and also a better understanding of the issues affecting the borough.

Ans 4) Through the New Start Scheme we have taken on 2/3 people each year, and most of these have secured permanent jobs

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with the Council. There may be a possibility of setting up a Customer Service Academy which is self financing. This will obviously need to be thoroughly thought out with sufficient resources invested.

Q5) What kind of an impact does IT have on Customer Services?

Ans 5) CS is very reliant on IT as it has major impact on our performance. CS is now last in line to be Tech Refreshed due to the compatibility of some of the software's.

Action: AH to arrange for Mark Saffrey (Prioritisation Manager) to attend meeting in November.

Q6) Do CS have access to any other database on residents from other directorates of the Council?

Ans 6) Most departments do not hold the type of information that we need and capture in the CRM system. We are looking at ways we can share our system with other databases. The Council has managed to negotiate a site contract with Cyborg which means that the Council will not have to purchase a license for all the sites.

Q7) There does not seem to be much information on benchmarking?

Ans 7) Currently there is not much information on similar services. Haringey is leading on a benchmarking group and the data we have gathered is the only data available.

Q8) How much duplicate data is there on your database? How often do you clear duplicate data?

Ans 8) We have about 270,000 people on the database and of those 26,000 are duplicate. These are not all Haringey residents they can be people visiting and working in the borough. The database is from 2001 when CS came in to existence.

Q9) What do you do to get feedback from Customers?

Ans 9) The following consultations are undertaken annually:

- The Annual Residents Telephone Survey – 1,000 people are surveyed and survey undertaken by independent agency researchers and the data is put together by CS.
- The Exit & Call Back Survey is undertaken 6 months after the telephone survey. It is also undertaken by Independent staff but managed by CS.
- The Corporate Reception Survey is undertaken annually
- A Customer Services London Group had also undertaken a research on 14 boroughs. Initial results show high level of

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	<p>satisfaction.</p> <p>Action: Chair asked to see results of this survey. – JW & AH (Please See Appendix 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of each call all callers are asked ‘were they happy with the service they received’. The data on this is currently not available but would be soon. <p>Q10) Any ideas where the weak link is in client service?</p> <p>Ans10) There are regular meetings with Client Service where operational staff meet from both side to discuss the key issues. There are also log books which you can have a look at.</p> <p>Action: Chair asked to attend one of the liaison meetings and view notes of log and notes of meeting. - JW & AH (Please See Appendix 6)</p> <p>Q11) Does the 15 minutes waiting time referred to in the performance data is from when a customer takes a ticket at the reception?</p> <p>Ans 11) The waiting time to be seen at the reception is not easily measurable. In addition the upgrade to the CRM system will ensure that waiting time at the reception is reduced as transaction time is reduced. The 15 minutes reefer to the time once a customer has taken a ticket and waits to be seen by a customer services officer.</p> <p>Some further questions and answers which were sent to the officer prior to the meeting are attached as appendix A.</p>	
<p>SCCS06.</p>	<p>REVIEW WORK PLAN</p> <p>The Review Panel made the following comments on the work plan:</p> <p>That the meeting arranged for 18th October 2005 be combined with the meeting on 29th November 2005. JW to arrange staff from CS and Client Sides to attend meeting on 29th November 2005. CS will arrange for facilitation of this focus group.</p> <p>LD suggested that perhaps visits to private sector or Housing Associations such as English Churches or Metropolitan Housing may be a good learning experience for Members.</p> <p>JW suggested that perhaps a visit to Westminster Council Call Centre which is operated by a private company would be beneficial.</p> <p>LD stated that Customers view points needed to be taken in to account. JW said that a focus group with customers could be undertaken and agreed to arrange a focus group with local service</p>	

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	users. Action: AH to amend work plan and arrange the visits.	
SCCS07.	URGENT BUSINESS None.	

COUNCILLOR JOHN BEVAN

Chair