

# **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**DRAFT PLAN VERSION 2**

**AUGUST 2005**

# Contents

1. Introduction
2. Membership of the Review
3. Area for Review
4. Scope and Aims of the Review
5. Output
6. Key Stakeholders
7. Evidence
8. Timeframe
9. Oral Evidence – List of witnesses

Contact Officer: Afazul Hoque  
Principal Scrutiny Support Officer  
Tele: 020 8489 2663  
E-Mail: Afazul.hoque@haringey.gov.uk

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Overview & Scrutiny as part of its work programme for 2005/06 commissioned a scrutiny review into Customer Services. The review topic was chosen as part of the on-going review of the implementation of the customer services strategy and based on concerns previously raised about the performance of customer services.
- 1.2 The needs of our residents can and should be at the heart of how we manage and organise our services. The approach to access, whether it is improving people's ability to access our services or their experience in our customer service centres and the call centre, will change residents' perceptions of the Council and, in doing so, challenge the way that the Council thinks about itself and how it is organised.
- 1.3 The Executive agreed the Customer Service Forward Strategy in July 2002. An annual review of the customer service strategy in 2003 and 2004 noted the significant progress that has been made in achieving the strategy. In particular the success in improving the customer experience in Customer Service Centres and the improved performance in the Call Centre.
- 1.4 This review will focus on the performance of customer services and in particular the four service centres and the call centre. It will make recommendations on ways performance could be further improved to ensure residents' queries are dealt with satisfactorily. The review will also look at the issues raised in the housing mock inspection and ways communication can be improved between customer services and client services.
- 1.5 Customer Services has been in operation in Haringey for over 4 years now. Over this period it has extended its provision to more services and more customers. The table below illustrates the visitor and call numbers to our Customer Service Centres (CSC), Call Centre and Switchboard over the last three years. The figures show that there has been an increase in the visitor numbers and callers coming through the customer service channels which now equates to 37% of all initial approaches to the Council.

<b>Year</b>	<b>CSC</b>	<b>Call Centre</b>	<b>Switchboard</b>
2002/3	75,920	258,729	876,001
2003/4	74,910	250,308	785,700
2004/05	138,816	299,821	700,599

*Source: CS News August 2005*

- 1.6 The 2005 Annual Review of Customer Services Strategy and Vision noted the poor service level experienced in the Call Centre during 2003/04 was addressed through the investment in staffing and has been significant with only 5.6% of calls answered in 15 seconds in April 2004 to 77.2% of calls answered in 15 seconds in March 2005, achieving 43%

for the year overall against the target of 45%. This was recognised by customers in the annual telephone survey, which registered an increase in overall customer satisfaction from 71% in late 2003 to 77% in May 2005.

1.7 The review also noted that service levels in CSCs remained good and achieved 77% of customers seen in 15 minutes for the year, against the target of 70%. Service levels have continued to achieve target levels in 2005/06 year to date.

## **2. Membership of the Review**

Cllr John Bevan (Chair)

Cllr Judith Bax

Cllr Gideon Bull

Cllr Bernard Millar

Cllr Sheila Peacock

Cllr Stephen Gilbert

Cllr Susan Oatway

### External Advisers

*To be appointed - (job title, qualifications etc.)*

## **3. Area For Review**

The Review will look at the Council's performance in customer services.

## **4. Scope and Aims of the Review**

### Aim

*To review the performance of customer services in Haringey Council in particular the four-customer service centres and the call centre.*

### Tasks

1. To consider current and prospective corporate customer services strategies and how these link with services across the council;
2. To consider key corporate customer services improvement targets and plans in place to achieve them;
3. To understand how customer services impacts on residents of Haringey;
4. To consider how customer services performance can be improved;

5. To consider how the council can address the concerns raised in the housing mock inspection;
6. To consider results of Customer Service telephone survey and in particular look at areas of concerns;
7. To consider ways Customer Service relationship and communication can be improved with client service to reduce duplication of work.

#### Outcomes

1. Measurable improvement in the performance of customer services in the four service centres and the call centre;
2. Provision of better services to customers;
3. Improved communications between customer services and client services;
4. Improved services to residents accessing services in housing offices;

#### **5. Output**

- To express a view of the level of customer service that the council should aspire to.
- To identify some key mechanisms that will direct the council to achieve this aim.
- To make recommendations on improving customer service performance;
- To make recommendations which help the council address the concerns raised in the housing mock inspection;
- To make recommendations which will improve relationship and communication between customer service and client service;
- To ensure all our residents are able to access services.

#### **6. Key Stakeholders**

Lead Officer: Jane Waterhouse (Head of Customer Services)

#### Executive Members

All Members of the Executive

In particular:

The Leader – Cllr Charles Adje

Cllr Lorna Reith, Executive Member Community Involvement

Cllr Takki Sulaiman, Executive Member ODPM

#### Council Officers

All officers of the CEMB.

In particular:

Justin Holliday - ACE Access

Khim Dew - Head of Equalities

Chris McLean – Corporate Customer Focus Manager

## Other Local Authorities

Government Office for London (GoL)  
London Borough of Brent  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
London Borough of Newham  
Members of the public / interest groups

Customer Service Staff Focus Group  
Client Service staff focus group  
Area Assemblies

## **7. Evidence**

- Officer report and presentation, which includes outline description, statutory requirements, key targets and benchmarking with other council's performance;
- Customer Services Strategy;
- Customer Services Business Plan;
- Customer Services Telephone Survey 2005;
- Results of Haringey Staff Survey 2005;
- Corporate Reception Points Survey 2005;
- Customer Services Performance Indicators;
- IEG Strategy and investment

## 8. Timeframe

<b>SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SERVICES TIMETABLE</b>	
<b>Review Stage</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
1. O&SC approves annual programme of work for Scrutiny	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2005
2. Define scope and aims of review - Send aims and scope to Directors of relevant department for comment	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2005
3. Project plan outlining timescales	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2005
4. Appoint external advisers / co-optees	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2005
5. Identify potential witnesses / key stakeholders –	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2005
6. Review proposal submitted to OSC for approval	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2005
7. Issues paper to consider main aspects of the review	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2005
8. Scrutiny Review Panel interviews with key witnesses	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2005 – December 2005
9. Scrutiny Review Panel meeting to finalise conclusions	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2006
10. Draft Report – Send to Chair for agreement	January 2006
11. Draft Report - Send draft report to service to check factual accuracy	January 2006
12. Report presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2006

**9. Oral Evidence**  
**INTERVIEWS WITH WITNESSES**

<i>Date of Meeting</i>	<i>Name of Witness &amp; Designation</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>Time &amp; Venue</i>
Site Visit – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2005	All Panel Members, JW & AH	LBH	Visits to 4 CSC & Call Centre	10.00 – 3.00pm various venues
TBA	All Panel Members, JW & AH	LBH	Visits to other LA Brent Council Westminster Council	
TBA	Customer Focus Group	Local Residents	Residents view on CS	
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting – 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2005	Jane Waterhouse – Head of CS Harry Gulrajani – Performance & Finance Manager - CS	LBH	ToR & Review Plan, Introductory report by dept. on key performance issues & the review	7.00pm – CR 3, Civic Centre
2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting – 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2005	Cllr Lorna Reith – Exec. Member	LBH		7.00pm – CR 3, Civic Centre
	Cllr Takki Sulaiman – Exec. Member Justin Holliday – ACE (Access) IT Services – Mark Saffrey – Prioritisation Manager	LBH	View on what review to look at and outcomes sought. Importance of IT and key developments	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting – 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2005	CS Staff & Client Side Focus Group	CS, Housing, Benefits, Taxation	Key issues for staff from both sides	7.00pm – CR 5, Civic Centre
		Parking		
4 <sup>th</sup> Meeting – 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2005	JW , LD & Panel Members	LBH	Conclusions & Recommendations	7.00pm – CR1, Civic Centre
5 <sup>6</sup> <sup>th</sup> Meeting – 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2006				7.00pm – CR1, Civic Centre