

Questions for Assistant Chief Executive (Access)

- 1. Is there a specific date when you expect to meet the 80/80 vision, as in the business plan and other documents it mentions over time. Do you think that we should set a specific date for achievement of this target?**

The Council agreed the Customer Services Strategy at Council Executive in July 2004 to achieve the vision of 80% of Customer Contacts to be handled through Customer Services channels and that 80% of these are to be completed at first contact.

This is an aspiration rather than a specific target. Whilst I still believe that the aspiration is realistic and that we are working towards it, I would be reluctant to set a specific target until there are firm plans in place and the requisite funding is agreed. This is probably a matter for the next administration.

- 2. Why has the total cost per call/visit increased from £4.43 in 04/05 to £4.54 in 05/06? How can we reduce this cost?**

This is a 2.5% increase, less than the increase in costs and, therefore, a real terms saving. Cost per call is calculated by dividing the total Customer Services budget by the number of contacts (calls answered and customer visits).

Dealing with an increased amount of customer contacts without increasing staff resources will reduce both spare capacity and cost per call. The Customer Services Strategy will deliver additional customer contacts. At the same time the service will be working to reduce transaction times and increase productivity allowing us to deal with these additional customer contacts without increasing staff numbers.

Please also note that the 05/06 is a year to date figure and so will vary as customer demand changes over the year.

- 3. How is the total cost of customer services allocated and billed to the clients who use it facilities?**

Customer services costs are recharged to clients through the corporate overhead process, based on the volume of activity weighted by the average duration of the interactions.

The initial funding is transferred from the client service based on a scoping exercise which assesses the numbers of staff required to undertake the work.

The Customer Services budget comprises (in round terms):

Customer Service Officers	£3.4m
All Other Staff	£2.0m
Supplies and Services	£0.1m

Overhead recharges	£2.8m
Total Recharged to client services	£8.3m

4. Please provide details as to how and where from the next 3yrs savings are to be found, 900k.

Customer Services are expected to save £899k over the next three years. These saving will be achieved through our Siebel development programme resulting in improved efficiencies including process improvement, understanding what creates demand and taking action to satisfy needs and reduce demand and migration to self service channels. These will be delivered through a combination of taking on new services (more service from the same resource) and some Customer Service staff reductions, through natural turnover.

5. Are there any plans for the Hornsey CSC when the town hall site is developed?

There is a continued demand for a CSC in Hornsey CSC. Any changes that affect the CSC are being discussed between Customer Services Management and Property Services

6. Has it been agreed with all interested parties for housing to conduct its interviews at the csc. If not what parties have still to agree, is the start date agreed?

The Director of Housing has agreed with the Head of Customer Services that Housing should conduct interviews at a Pilot CSC (Hornsey) from December 2005. There are some residual issues which are being worked through.

7. Has the need for Saturday opening been tested, if not why, if so what was the result? Does staff attendance on Saturdays incur premium pay rates?

A recent customer survey identified Monday evenings as a the most preferred extended opening for CSCs, with Saturday mornings as the next preferred option. A pilot recently commenced in Wood Green CSC where opening hours have been extended to 7pm on Monday evenings. This pilot will allow us to understand customer demand and determine if further extending opening hours would be cost effective.

The Call Centre is now open until 8pm Tuesday to Wednesday. Joining up with the Out of Hours service will give us the opportunity to further extend opening hours.

Recently recruited staff have contracts which include Saturdays as standard working hours and so it would not be necessary to pay premium pay rates.

8. Are there any plans to use job centre plus programmes / new deal programmes etc to recruit and train new staff? Utilizing any government funding that may be available.

Customer Services have employed 2 to 3 young people a year through the new start scheme and the majority have secured permanent jobs with the Council. There may be a possibility of setting up a Customer Services Academy which is self financing. This will obviously need to be thoroughly thought out with sufficient resources invested

9. What is the Customer Focus Stream Board? What is the Member Working Group on Customer Services? What do these Groups do? Please explain the impact of these groups on service provisions.

Customer Services Member Working Group

The Customer Services Member Working Group Terms of Reference is:

1. To support, challenge and champion Customer Services and customer service across the Council, from the customer experience through to the technology enablers.
2. To oversee the implementation of the customer services strategy.
3. To oversee the implementation and development of the IS/IT strategies.
4. To support the member e-champion in their role.
5. To maximise the opportunities for customer feedback and input into the future development of customer services.
6. To monitor and challenge the performance within customer services and on key corporate customer service metrics.
7. To monitor and promote the development of e-democracy and the provision of Members' IT facilities.
8. To support Member capacity to lead and publicise Customer Services as above.

Membership of the Group is Cllrs Adje, Sulaiman, Reith and Milner.

Customer Focus Stream Board

The Purpose of the Board is to oversee the assigned projects and ensure their coherence and delivery. The Board meets monthly, is chaired by the board Assistant Chief Executive (Access) and attended by representatives from each Directorate. The Board is accountable to and escalates to the CEMB Programme Board. The objectives of the Board are:

- to oversee a range of projects, providing strategic insight and providing coherence between projects and streams;
- to co-ordinate with other streams;
- to consider and approve/recommend to programme board project briefs and business cases;
- to manage and monitor the realisation of the expected benefits from the stream;
- to resolve (or find ways of resolving) risks, issues and policies escalated by other stream boards and/or projects; and
- to monitor, support and challenge assigned projects; and
- to provide service input to stream activity and facilitate activities within directorates.

Projects that report to the Stream Board include:

- Benefits and Local Taxation Improvement Project
- Customer Services Strategy Realisation Project
- Siebel Development Project
- E-Payments Project
- Highways Implementation Project
- Homelessness & Housing Options Project
- Housing Repairs Project
- Leisure System Replacement Project
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer Project
- Property Management System Project
- SAP Realisation of Benefits Project
- Web Development
- Tech Refresh Project
- E-democracy Project