

DRAFT CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Customer Services in consultation with Property Services provide parking facilities for customers with disability as near as possible to the Customer Service Centres, which should be clearly marked for the use of disabled customers only.
2. That Customer Services provide 'Sign Video' system for deaf service users at the Customer Service Centres and a 'Type Talk' system at the Call Centre. This should replace the Minicom facility and deaf sign language interpreters.
3. The Review Panel endorses and agrees with the recommendations in the 'Reception Project' that the Communication Unit manages and control the printing and distribution of posters and leaflets. All leaflets and posters should include versions/ date of issue indicators, to assist in removal of obsolete items. It also further suggested that electronic copies of posters and leaflets be made available on the Council Website.
4. That all new employees visit the Call Centre and a Customer Service Centre as part of the Corporate Induction to the Council.
5. That Customer Services develop a forward plan in conjunction with Client Services of all major letters, information, bills, reminders etc being sent to residents throughout the year to enable Customer Services to prepare resources adequately.
6. That Customer Services cease the practise of asking customers their opinion of the service received after each call. That Customer Services seek to purchase a 'cast view' system which enables customers to give their opinion on a recorded system, the service received after each call, which includes ability to leave additional comments.
7. That Customer Services develop a mystery shopping exercise as part of their user consultation. The mystery shoppers to include local residents, businesses and council staff. The mystery shopping should include testing access for disabled users including parking facilities.
8. The Review Panel endorses the work being undertaken in further developing Customer Focus throughout the Council, this includes the Membership of the Institute of Customer Services.
9. That a monthly/quarterly award scheme for staff in Customer Services be introduced to recognise and award excellent customer service.
10. That regular service liaison meetings between Customer Services and Client Services be held. At each meeting at least one member of staff

from Customer Services should participate. The meetings should cover some of the following issues:

- Forward plan requirements;
- Service level performance;
- Consider reports from Team Managers from Customer Services for reasons for calls to Client Services;
- To confirm that cut of points are still correct;
- To compare data on number of issues which require Client Service actions and what proportion of those have been completed;
- Repeat calls statistics to be discussed including reasons;
- Information on key issues affecting the borough to be better communicated to Customer Services Officers. i.e. Parking enforcement during Christmas period;

In addition, all staff and team managers in Customer Services and Client Services should be advised of key outcomes arising out of service liaison meetings.

11. That a review be undertaken of IT support to Customer Services led by independent experts and supported by Council's IT Services.
12. That logs of system downtime be reported to each Customer Services Member Working Group meeting.
13. That Team Managers and senior staff members be trained to specialise (as a service champion) in particular service areas to reduce calling Client Services and improve service time. In addition, Team Managers to keep log of reasons for calling back office which is to be reported to liaison meetings.
14. That training in Customer Services and Client Services be co-ordinated and where possible shared. Where appropriate, staff from the switchboard to be included in this training.
15. That inline with the findings of Reception Project report, it is recommended that Security Staff at the Customer Service Centre be employed permanently by the Council with a varied role to include some of the following:
 - Welcoming Customers;
 - Establish the purpose of their visit and direct them accordingly;
 - Provide answers to basic queries;
 - Be responsible for the maintenance and updating of application forms, posters and leaflets display.
16. That Customer Services staff and Client Services staff be better informed of each others targets and performance. In addition, the 'cut of' point for each service as to different areas of responsibility needs to

be clearly defined and to be made readily and permanently available to all staff.

17. That the Call Centre be renamed 'Contact Centre' as it now deals with e-mails.
18. That Customer Services investigate the possibility of outside funding to further assist in the recruitment and training of new recruits.
19. That the roll out of parking permits to all centres be completed immediately.
20. That the charging arrangements for all client services be clarified. Client services need to be made aware of the number of calls / visits handled on their behalf along with the average time of their transaction, repeat visit / calls information to be included. Provision of this information will encourage client services to ensure a reduction in repeat visits / calls and to streamline their transactions to achieve reduced transaction times.
21. That the Customer Services Department aspires to achieve a Charter Mark award for Customer Services. It is the opinion of the Scrutiny Panel that the ability is there to 'win'.
22. That Customer Services look at purchasing a phone system that indicates the callers positioning in the queue and the estimated time of waiting.
23. That all Customer Service Centres introduce the facility to take credit/debit card payments.
24. That if Hornsey Town Hall is sold and there is a need to move the Customer Service Centre, that it be relocated to Hornsey Library;
25. Staff feedback needs to be enhanced, bottom up. Four issues below were raised with members of the Scrutiny Panel and indicate that feedback opportunity for staff is not as effective as it should be.
 - Housing Benefit application form needs to have section for applicants to give permission at the time of application for others to make enquiries / representations on the applicant's behalf.
 - Housing surveyors need to leave a slip stating what is to be done.
 - Income Support and Housing Benefit to check if there is a claim being processed prior to taking of income recovery action
 - Parking enforcement during public holidays, especially Christmas holidays.