

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 3 CUSTOMER SERVICES

Thursday, 5 January 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Mike Hallam (Chair), Councillors Tony Ansell, Dennis Meredith, David Palethorpe and Terry Wire

Officers

Marion Goodman	Head of Customer Services and ICT
Tracy Tiff	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Joanne Birkin	Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none

3. DEPUTATIONS/ PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. TO SET THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Panel considered a report on the scoping of the Customer Services Review.

The main points of the discussion were as follows: -

Purpose /Objectives of the Review.

- Members felt that the scope of the review should be wider than the One Stop Shop. There were many different methods of contacting the Council and all should be included. It was felt that more emphasis needed to be put on the whole customer experience.
- The previous Scrutiny review on Customer Services had looked at issues beyond the contact centre although the majority of the recommendations had been focussed on the One Stop Shop as it was felt that this was an area where many of the problems lay. The previous Task and Finish Group had visited Kettering Borough Council. They also listened to some telephone conversations and visited the Housing outstations.
- Members were advised that all of the recommendations from the previous review had been implemented.
- Members felt that there have been significant changes in the customer services area. Members of the public are contacting us about a much wider range of

services, the Council no longer directly delivers some of these services, but the customer concerns will include the delivery of the service. There are also wider ranges of technology available and they need to be evaluated.

- It was agreed that the objective of the Review should include the whole customer service experience.

AGREED That the Scope of the Review be as attached at Appendix A.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The background information detailing the final report of the Customer Services Review of 2009 was noted and accepted as informing the Review.

The meeting concluded at 6:50 pm



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Scrutiny Panel 3 - Customer Services

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To evaluate all customer services with a review of the customer contact centre, customer satisfaction and the refurbished and extended one stop shop.

2. Outcomes Required

- To establish whether all customer services are providing value for money around:
 - Quality of service and service delivery
 - Customer satisfaction across the whole organisation
 - Cost and efficiency
 - Use of all media
- To establish the accessibility of customer services
- To establish the benefits of a shared customer services facility
- To establish the appropriateness of current targets for customer services
- To make recommendations for improvement as appropriate

3. Information Required

- Baseline data including
 - Budgets
 - Statistics
 - Targets
 - Call times
 - Performance Indicator data
- Evidence from partners, key employees, including the Customer Services Manager and service users
- Evidence from the Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement) and the Leader of the Council, NBC
- Evidence from the Director of Finance and Support, NBC
- Benchmarking with other Local Authorities, including information regarding:-
 - Targets

- Costs
 - Recorded calls
- Site visits to internal customer services facilities at Northampton Borough Council (NBC) - observing process including perusing waiting times, signage, observing calls into the contact centre, speaking with staff and service users
- Site visit to a sample of departments within NBC, including the Gateway Project
- Site visit to Enterprise Managed Services (EMS) and Northampton Leisure Trust
- Site visit to a best practice Council external to Northamptonshire
- Focus Group with a sample of Chairs of Residents' Association

4. Format of Information

- Various site visits
- Officer briefings/presentations
- Baseline data
- Witness interviews and written evidence
- Portfolio Holder evidence
- Officer evidence:
 - Director of Finance and Support
 - Customer Services Manager
 - Various other Officers
- Partner evidence including:
 - Northamptonshire County Council
 - Northants Police
 - Womens' Aid
 - Citizens' Advice Bureau
 - Bromford Support
 - Enterprise Managed Services (EMS)
 - Northampton Leisure Trust
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their experience of customer services at NBC
- Desktop research
- Encapsulate all new methods of customer services within the Council, including organisations providing a service on behalf of the Council
- Northamptonshire Residents' Association to be approached suggesting that it sets up the Focus Group as detailed in section 3 above.

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Desktop research
- Minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Panel
- Officer Reports and presentations
- Witness evidence

- Site Visits
- Examples of best practice
- Witness interviews and evidence as detailed in section 4 above.
- The Northamptonshire Residents' Association to be approached regarding it setting up a Focus Group comprising a sample of Resident Association Chairs.

6. Co-Options to the Review

- County Councillor Marion Minney to be approached suggesting that she is co opted to this Review for its life. County Councillor Marion Minney had been co opted to the previous Scrutiny Review into Customer Services (2009)

7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment

- Scrutiny Officer to undertake an Equality Impact Screening Assessment shortly after the Scoping meeting

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

January 2012 – April 2012

5th January 2012 – Scoping meeting
 2nd February - Evidence gathering
 1st March - Evidence gathering
 21st March - Evidence gathering
 19th April - Approval of final report

Meetings will commence at 6pm

Various site visits will be programmed during January and April 2012.

9 Responsible Officers

- Lead Officer Marion Goodman, Head of Customer Services and ICT
- Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

10 Resources and Budgets

- Marion Goodman, Lead Officer, to provide internal support and advice.

11 Final report presented by:

- The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to present the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to then present the report to Cabinet.

12 Monitoring procedure:

- Review the impact of the report after approximately six months (November/December 2012)