

Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 3 Customer Services



Please find enclosed the agenda and supporting papers for Scrutiny Panel 3 Customer Services

Date: **Thursday, 2 February 2012**

Time: **6:00 pm**

Place: **The Jeffrey Room, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.**

If you need any advice or information regarding this agenda please phone who will be able to assist with your enquiry. For further information regarding Scrutiny Panel 3 Customer Services please visit the website www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Members of the Panel

Chair	Councillor Mike Hallam
Panel Members	Councillor Tony Ansell Councillor Dennis Meredith Councillor David Palethorpe Councillor Terry Wire DL
Co Opted Member	County Councillor Marion Minney

Calendar of meetings

Date	Room
1 March 2012 21 March 2012 19 April 2012	All meetings to be held in the Jeffery Room at the Guildhall unless otherwise stated

Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 3 Customer Services

Agenda

Item No	Title	Pages	Action required
1	Apologies		Members to note any apologies and substitution.
2	Minutes	1 - 6	Members to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 th January 2012.
3	Deputations/Public Addresses		<p>The Chair to note public address requests.</p> <p>The public can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per speaker per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive at the meeting a few minutes early, complete a Public Address Protocol and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak.</p>
4	Declarations of Interest (Including Whipping)		Members to state any interests
5	Evidence Gathering		
5 (a)	Baseline data	7 - 46	<p>The Scrutiny Panel to receive the following baseline data:</p> <p>Statistics Targets Call times Performance Indicator data Mystery shopping data Customer Excellence Strategy 2009 – 2012 Surgeries available at Northampton Borough Council's One Stop Shop.</p>
5 (b)	Core Questions - Expert Witnesses.		<p>The Scrutiny Panel to devise a list of core questions to be put to the expert witnesses.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement) Leader of the Council Director of Finance and Support, NBC Customer Services Manager, NBC</p>

Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 3 Customer Services

			<p>Director, Enterprise Management Services (EMS)</p> <p>Director, Northampton Leisure Trust</p> <p>Service Users and Residents' Association Focus Group</p>
5 (c)	Site Visits		<p>The Scrutiny Panel to confirm its site visits to:</p> <p>Internal customer services at NBC</p> <p>Sample of departments within NBC, including the Gateway Project</p> <p>Enterprise Management Service (EMS)</p> <p>Northampton Leisure Trust</p> <p>Local Authority external to Northamptonshire and private sector contact centre</p>
6	Draft Equality Impact Assessment	47 - 55	<p>The Scrutiny Panel to approve the draft Equality Impact Assessment for this Review.</p>

Agenda Item 2

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)

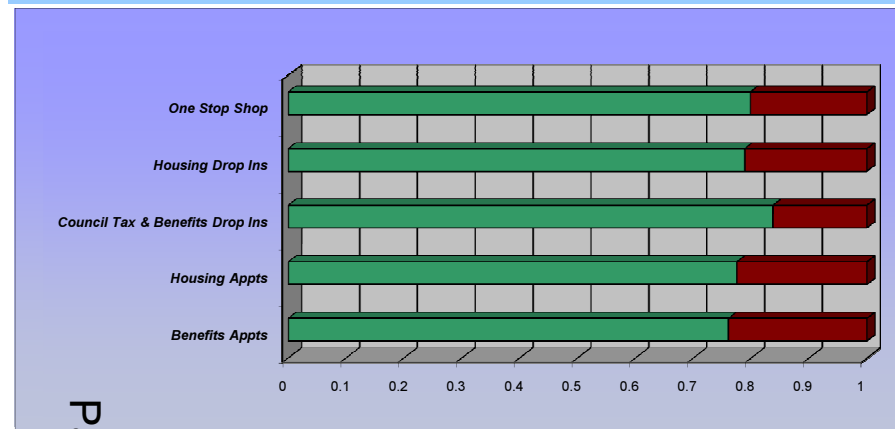
One Stop Shop Performance Report 2 May - 31 December 2011

Performance Summary

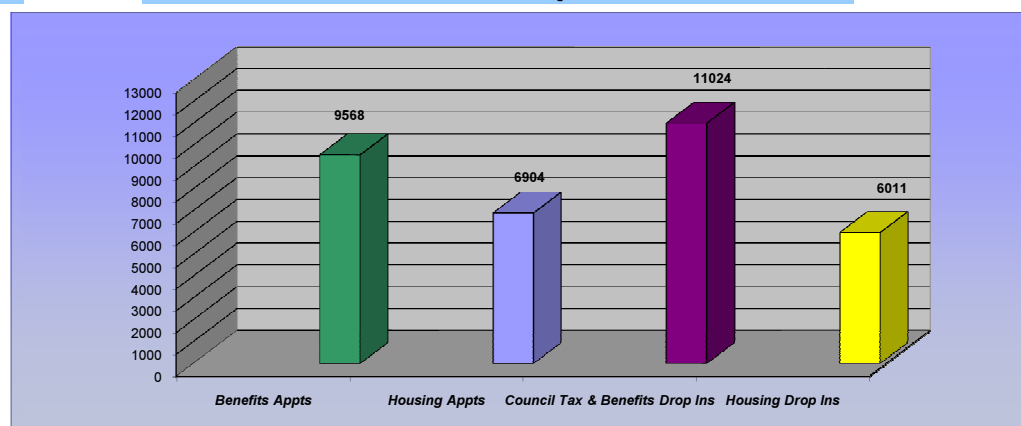
	Customers Per Day	Total Customers	Customers seen within target	Av Wait Time(decimal)
Benefits Appts	64	9568	76.1%	9.35
Housing Appts	46	6904	77.6%	9.29
Council Tax & Bens Drop In	74	11024	83.8%	7.78
Housing Drops In	40	6011	78.9%	9.48
ONE STOP SHOP	225	33507	79.9%	8.98



ONE STOP SHOP PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGET



ONE STOP SHOP TYPE OF ENQUIRY VOLUMES



Performance by service

Service	Avg. Service Time Mins (decimal)	Avg. Waiting Time Mins (decimal)	Waiting Time Distribution		Total Served	Total Custom	Total Abandon	Customers - Daily Average	% Abandon	% Wait within Goal
			<=15:00	>15:00						
Benefits Desk 1	16.75	9.42	2418	643	3034	3061	27	21	0.88%	78.99%
Benefits Desk 2	16.15	9.95	2441	734	3145	3175	30	21	0.94%	76.88%
Benefits Desk 3	20.50	11.05	1460	601	2041	2061	20	14	0.97%	70.84%
Housing Desk 1	16.60	9.37	2292	668	2947	2960	13	20	0.44%	77.43%
Housing Desk 2	17.23	9.43	2237	672	2898	2909	11	20	0.38%	76.90%
Housing Desk 3	17.45	9.08	811	224	1034	1035	1	7	0.10%	78.36%
E Benefits (Face to Face)	8.92	6.98	1130	141	1265	1271	6	9	0.47%	88.91%
Total	16.23	9.33	12789	3683	16364	16472	108	111	0.66%	77.64%
Council Tax + Benefits (Drop In)	6.48	7.78	9245	1779	10704	11024	320	73.99	2.90%	83.86%
Housing (Drop In)	6.40	9.48	4743	1268	5998	6011	13	40.34	0.22%	78.91%
Total	6.44	8.63	13988	3047	16702	17035	333	114	1.99%	82.11%
Appointment Total	16.23	9.33	12789	3683	16364	16472	108	111	0.66%	77.64%
Drop in Total	6.44	8.63	13988	3047	16702	17035	333	114	1.99%	82.11%
Total	11.34	8.98	26777	6730	33066	33507	441	225	1.33%	79.91%

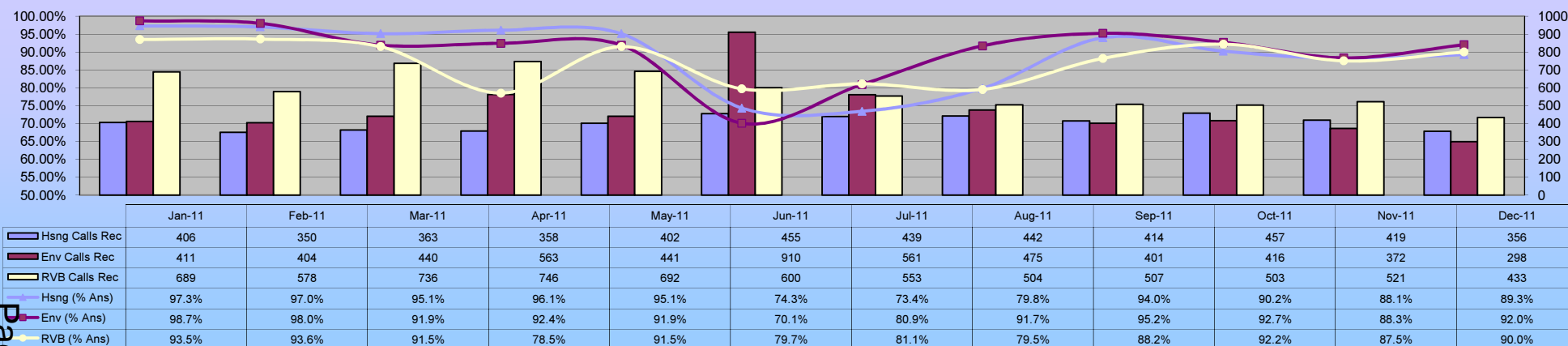
Customer Contact Centre Performance Report 2011

Performance Summary

	Calls Per Day	Calls Rec	Calls Ans	Av Wait Time
Housing Services	437	100101	88.1%	01:43
Gen Enq & Env Servs	490	112155	88.3%	00:57
Council Tax & Benefits	642	146962	87.5%	03:13
CONTACT CENTRE	1569	359218	87.9%	02:05



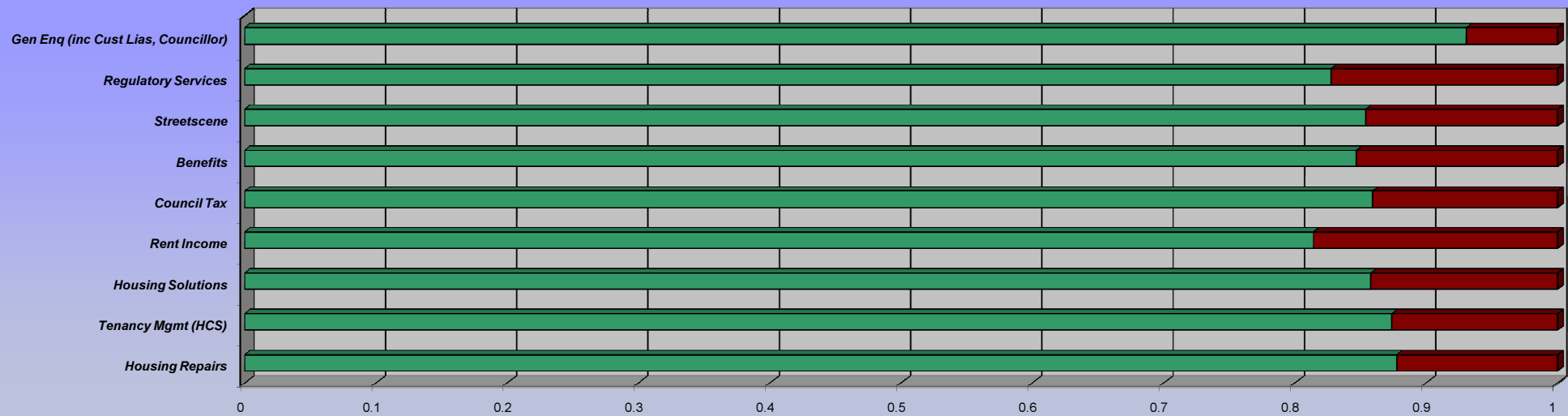
CONTACT CENTRE PERFORMANCE & DAILY AVERAGES 2011



Performance by service

	Calls Rec	2011 Daily Av	2010 Daily Av	Movement	2011 % Ans	2010 % Ans	Movement	Av Call Time
Housing Repairs	51838	226	238	-12	87.8%	95.3%	-7.5%	04:24
Tenancy Mgmt (HCS)	24265	106	95	11	87.4%	92.9%	-5.5%	04:11
Housing Solutions	13890	61	61	0	85.8%	94.3%	-8.5%	04:49
Rent Income	10108	44	64	-20	81.4%	BACK OFFICE	N/A	03:59
Council Tax	89381	390	329	62	85.9%	89.1%	-3.2%	05:26
Benefits	57581	251	174	77	84.7%	88.5%	-3.9%	05:20
Streetscene	50242	219	149	70	85.4%	94.2%	-8.8%	03:11
Regulatory Services	14027	61	50	12	82.8%	94.7%	-11.9%	03:19
Gen Enq (inc Cust Lias, Councillor)	47886	209	189	20	93.1%	93.8%	-0.7%	01:55
					Target Hit	Within 5% of target	>5% below target	

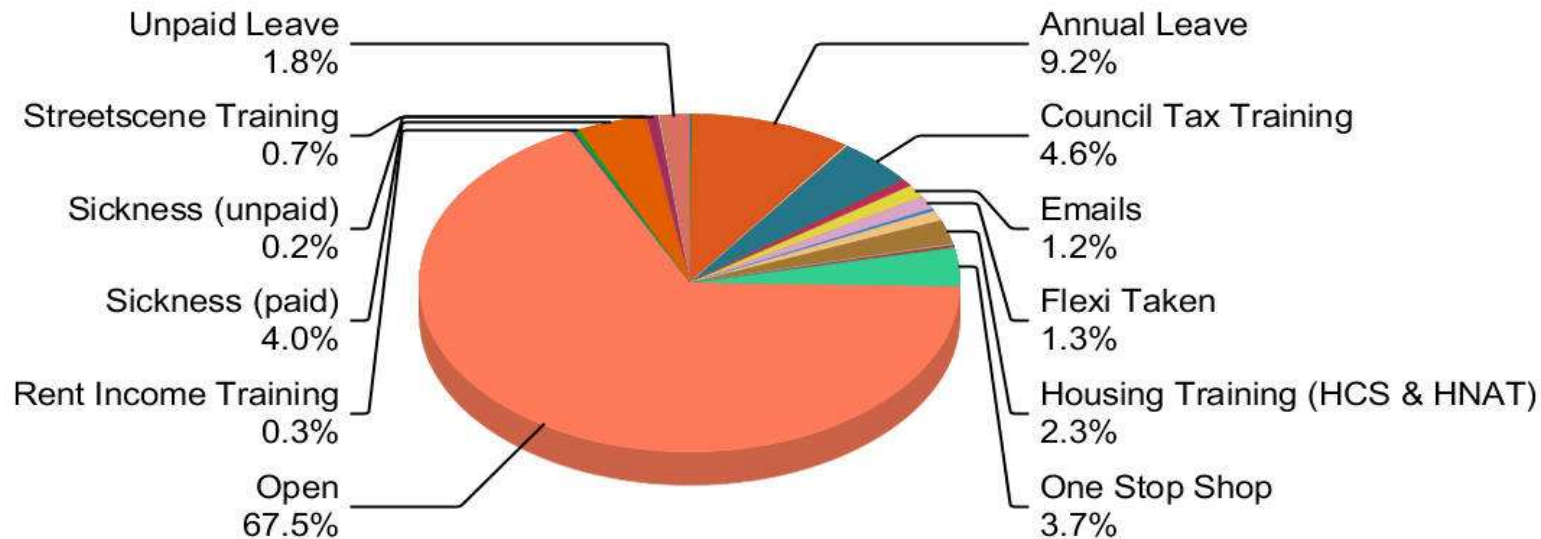
CONTACT CENTRE PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGET BY SERVICE AREA 2011



Customer Contact Centre Time Distribution October - December 2011

Page 9

Training	1425.25 hours
Emails	192.5 hours
Sickness	711.25 hours



1 to 1	Absence Mgmt/Return to Work	Admin duties	Annual Leave	CRM Clean Up	Call Backs
Council Tax Training	Court	Dentist Appt	Dependency/Compassionate	Electoral Registration Training	Emails
Flexi Taken	Hospital/Doctors Appt	Housing Repairs Training	Housing Training (HCS & HNAT)	Learning & Development Training	Meeting
One Stop Shop	Open	Refresher Training	Rent Income Training	Sickness (paid)	Sickness (unpaid)
Streetscene Training	Unauthorised absence	Union Meeting	Unpaid Leave		



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - CUSTOMER SERVICES

2ND FEBRUARY 2012

BRIEFING NOTE: BASELINE DATA

Performance Indicator data.

This relates to the key measures data (e.g. Management Board and Cabinet measures)

CS05 Percentage satisfied with the overall service provided by the Customer Service Officer

Dec YTD Actual: 92.03%

Dec YTD Target: 90%

Colour: Green

CS13 Percentage of ALL calls into the Contact Centre answered

Dec YTD Actual: 88.26%

Dec YTD Target: 95%

Colour: Red

CS14 One-Stop shop: Percentage of all customers waiting less than 15 minutes (excl. licensing)

Dec YTD Actual: 82.6%

Dec YTD Target: 95%

Colour: Red



Report of the analysis of Northampton Borough Council's Customer Services Contact Centre

Mystery Shopping Exercise
March / April 2010

Introduction to the Report

The purpose of this Mystery Shopping Project is to give a customer perspective on the services Northampton Borough Council offers.

The Derbyshire Tenants Network Mystery Shopping Group (DTN) shop focused on four areas, these being **Anti Social Behavior, Disabled Facilities and Grants, Property Maintenance and Voids**. The aim behind this was to test how staff dealt with queries in accordance with their service standards.

Particular consideration was given to:

- The call being answered in the first instance
- Whether the correct information was given out
- The “Feel Good” factor of the telephone calls – if the customer have a positive experience
- Whether staff were helpful
- Whether staff went the extra mile

Executive Summary

Overall 30 calls were made, where 3 services tested within the contact centre, these being:

- Anti Social Behaviour – 4 different questions were posed and 3 calls made for each question
- Property Maintenance – 3 questions were posed on each each, and each question was repeated 3 times by different shoppers in each instance
- Voids - 3 questions were posed on each each, and each question was repeated 3 times by different shoppers in each instance

Definitions

Going 'The extra mile' - checking that the caller is satisfied with the reply given and offering further help beyond the original request.

Being Helpful – Giving correct information and reaching a satisfactory conclusion to the query.

Wanting to help – being willing to offer the help requested

Anti Social Behaviour

Scenarios:

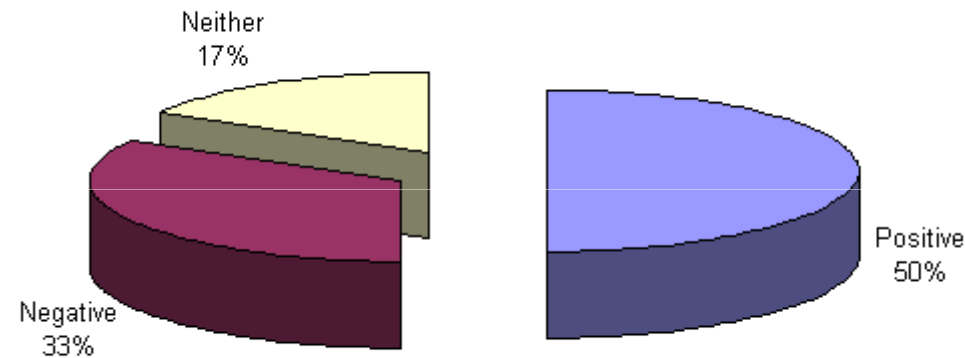
“A friend / relative is having a problem with a male neighbour who is regularly drunk and is harassing them. The neighbour will often knock there door, shout verbal abuse and tries to invite himself in against the person’s wishes”

“ A friend / relative is having problems with a neighbour verbally abusing them. They have been threatened and had racist graffiti painted on the wall of their property. They find it difficult to speak English. What measures can you offer to help?”

“A friend / relative lives on the second floor of a block of flats. The flat above plays music loudly from the late evening to early morning, what can you do to sort the problem?”

Anti Social Behaviour

feel good factor



Out of 12 calls, 2 customers felt that we went the extra mile

Anti Social Behaviour

Constructive Comments:

- Said nothing could be done without an address
- Was told very brusquely to contact the police
- They were unwilling to do anything without an address
- They weren't very understanding / sympathetic
- Weren't interested unless they gave an address

Housing Repairs

Scenarios:

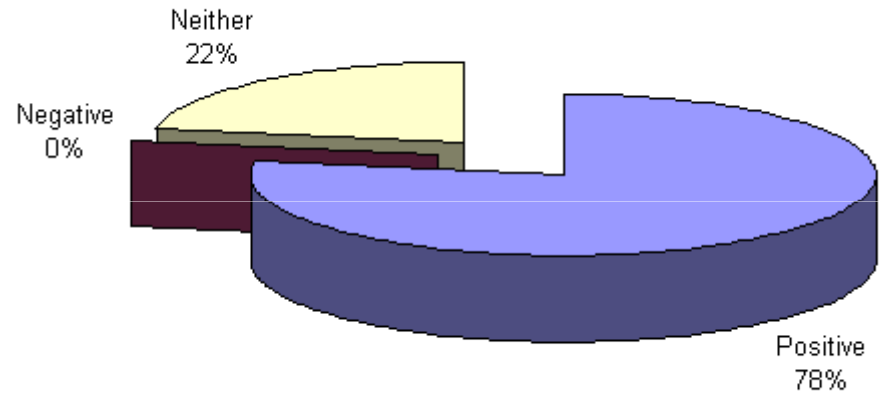
“I have damp / mould in my bathroom, can you please come and sort this?”

“My back / front external door is sticking, can you please get this sorted?”

“An inspector came out a few weeks ago and said he would sort the plastering to cover the holes in my bathroom walls. This has still not been done, can you tell me what is happening?”

Housing Repairs

feel good factor



Out of 9 calls, 4 customers felt we went the extra mile

Housing Repairs

Positive Comments:

- All in all an excellent call
- Very thorough, nice person
- Extremely pleasant and efficient
- Explained when job would be completed by

Constructive Comments:

- Felt they should have asked about water leaks

Voids

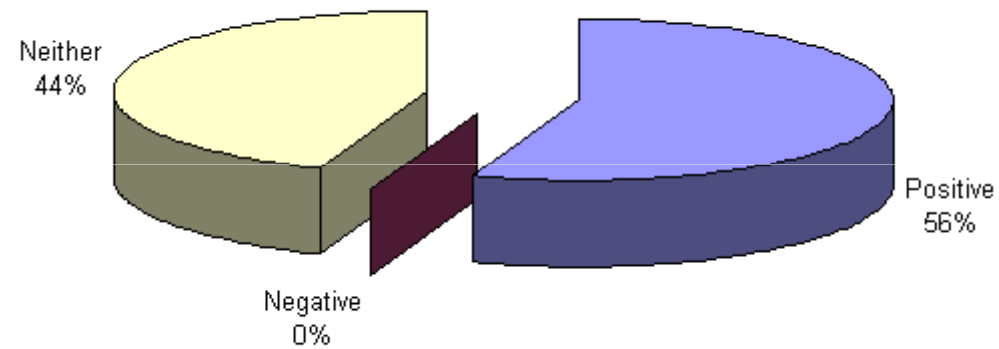
Scenarios:

“I have been allocated a property at xxx could you please tell me when the repairs are likely to be completed as I have to give 2 weeks notice to my current landlord?”

“My mother is hoping to be allocated a property but as she is a large lady / disabled, I would need to do some kitchen alternations. If a new kitchen is die to be fitted in the property can we have a say on the layout?”

“I have been allocated a property at xxx I have a fitted cooker, hob and built in fridge and I want to install it in the kitchen. Can I go and fit these items into the kitchen whilst the council workmen are working there?”

Voids



Out of 9 calls, 3 customers felt we went the extra mile

Voids

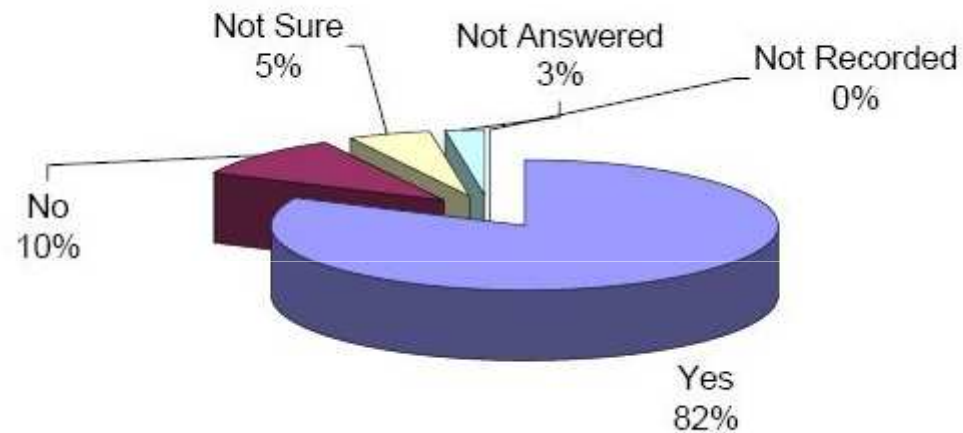
Positive Comments:

- I found them very helpful
- Despite not ticking all the boxes was a very good call
- Nice person, sounded very caring
- Very clearly spoken, happy to help
- Did their job
- It was a straightforward call

Constructive Comments:

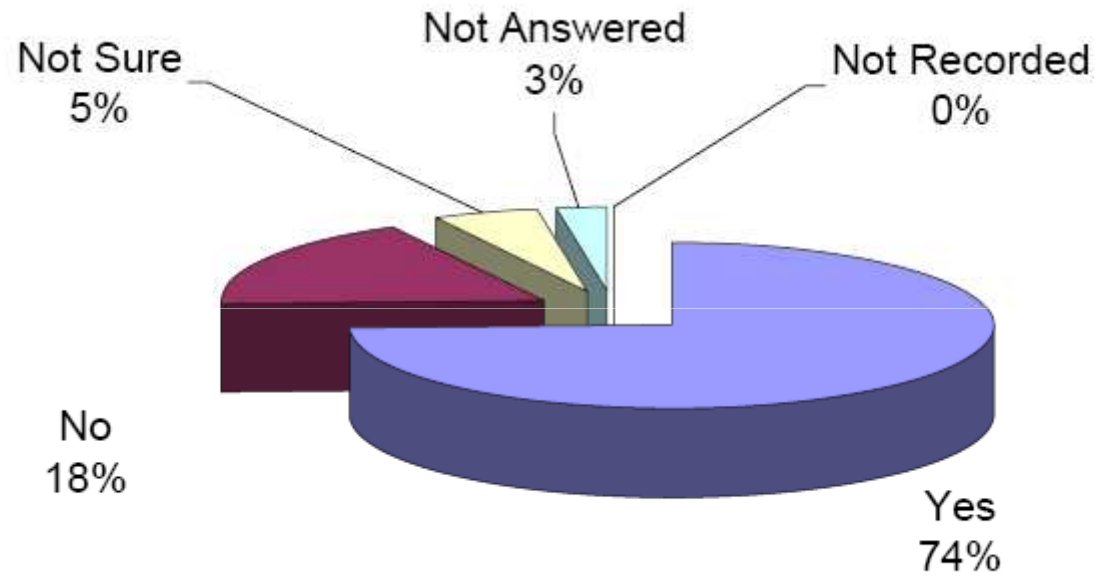
- Was just told I would need to speak to disabled adaptations

Overall did the staff use the correct phone procedure?

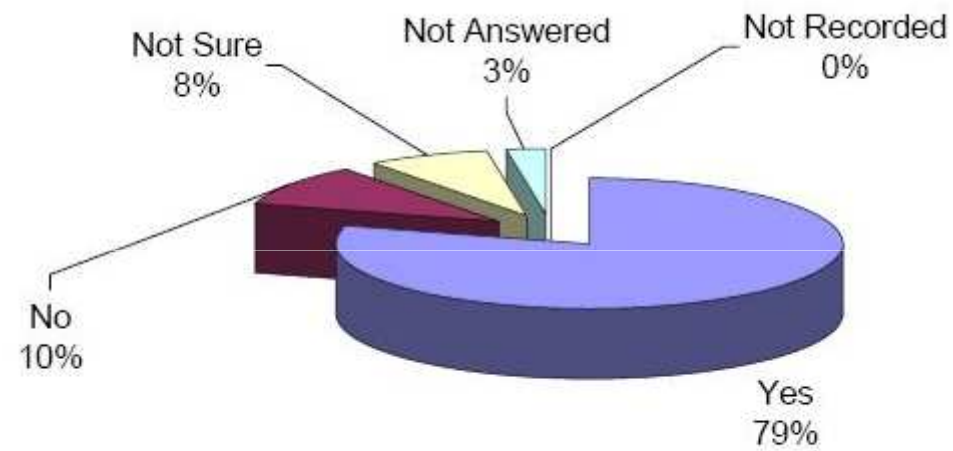


82% a great result! 2nd highest result, 17% higher than the average

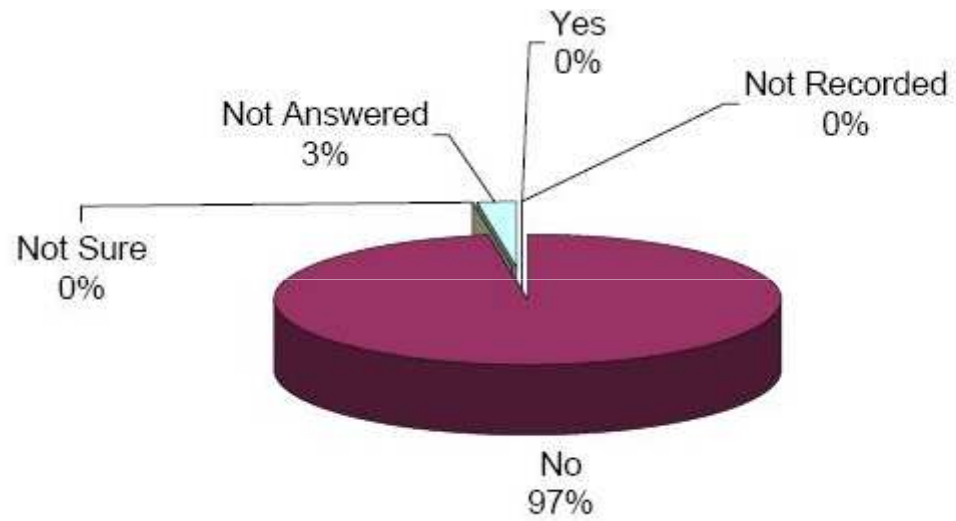
Overall were the staff helpful?



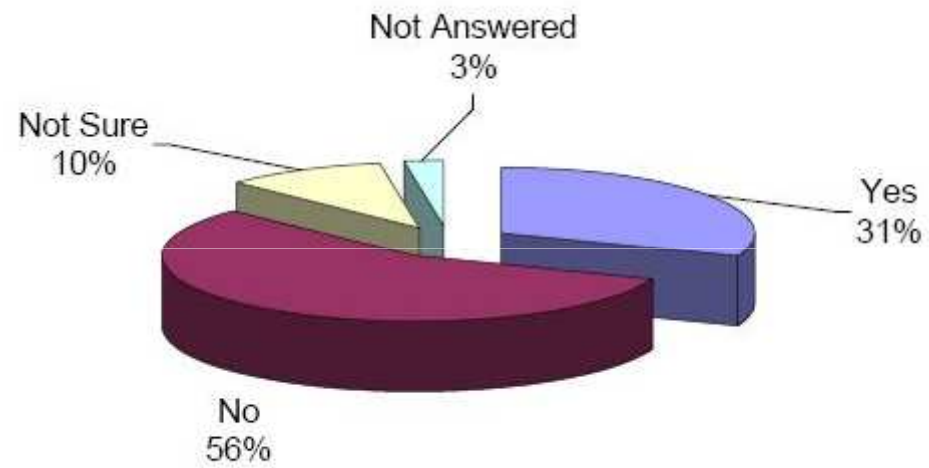
Overall did the staff want to help?



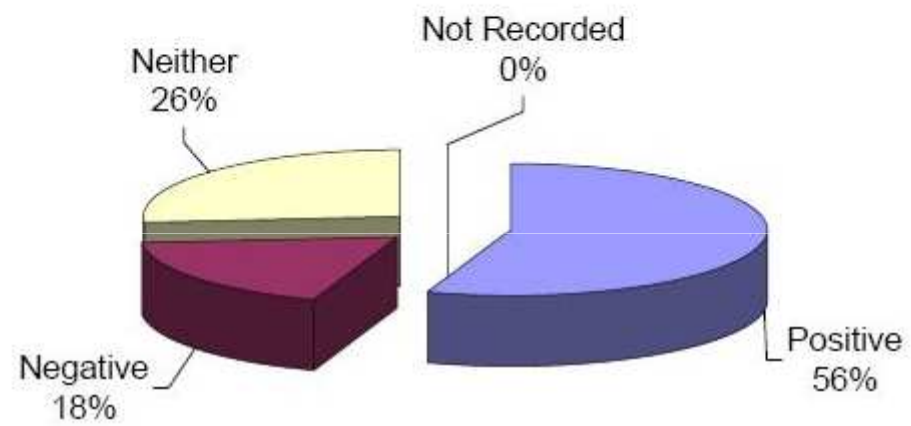
Overall did the staff use jargon?



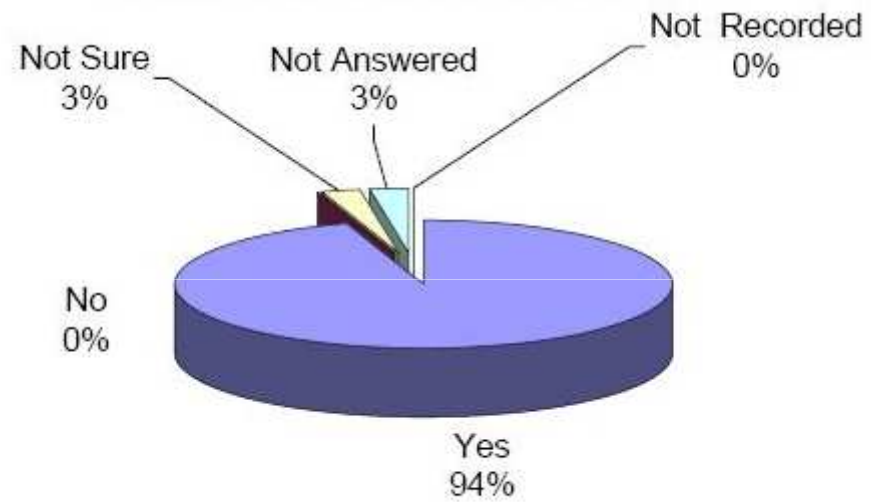
Overall did staff go the extra mile?



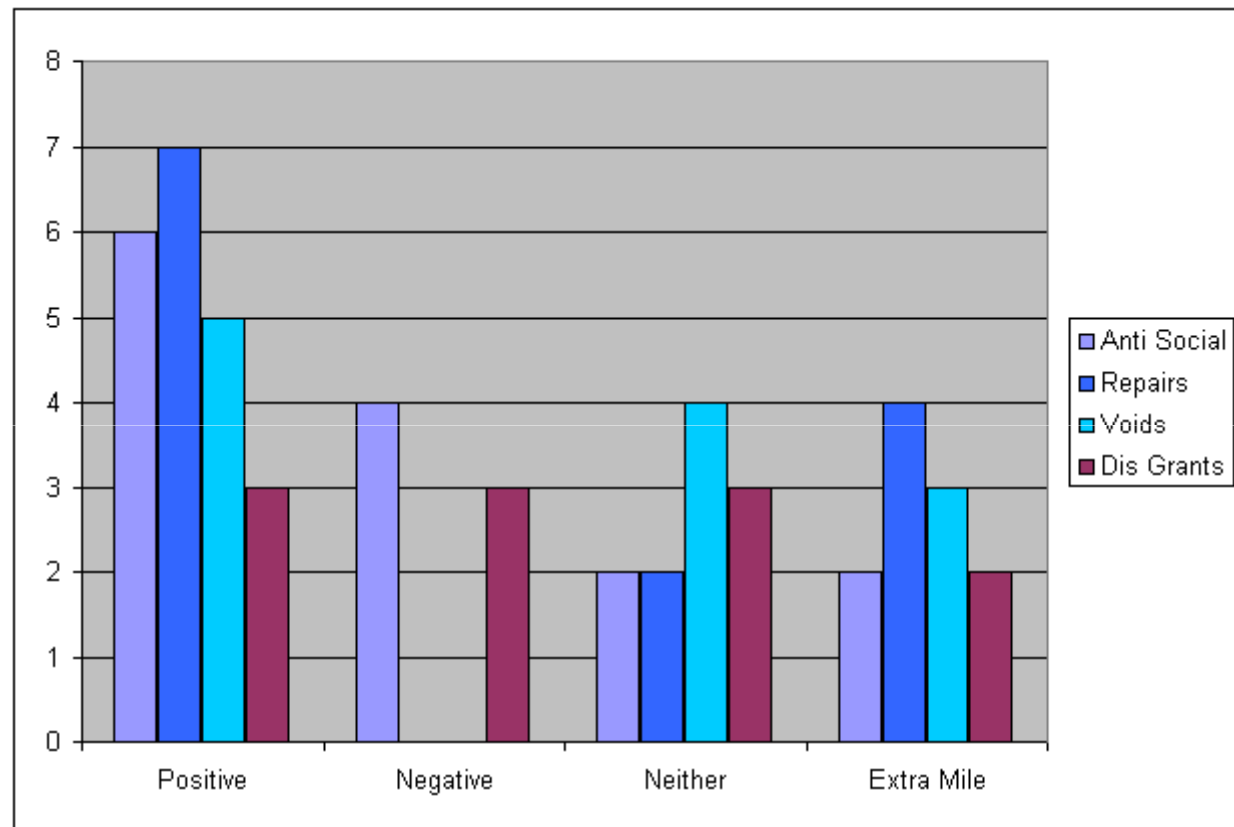
Overall “Feel Good” factor



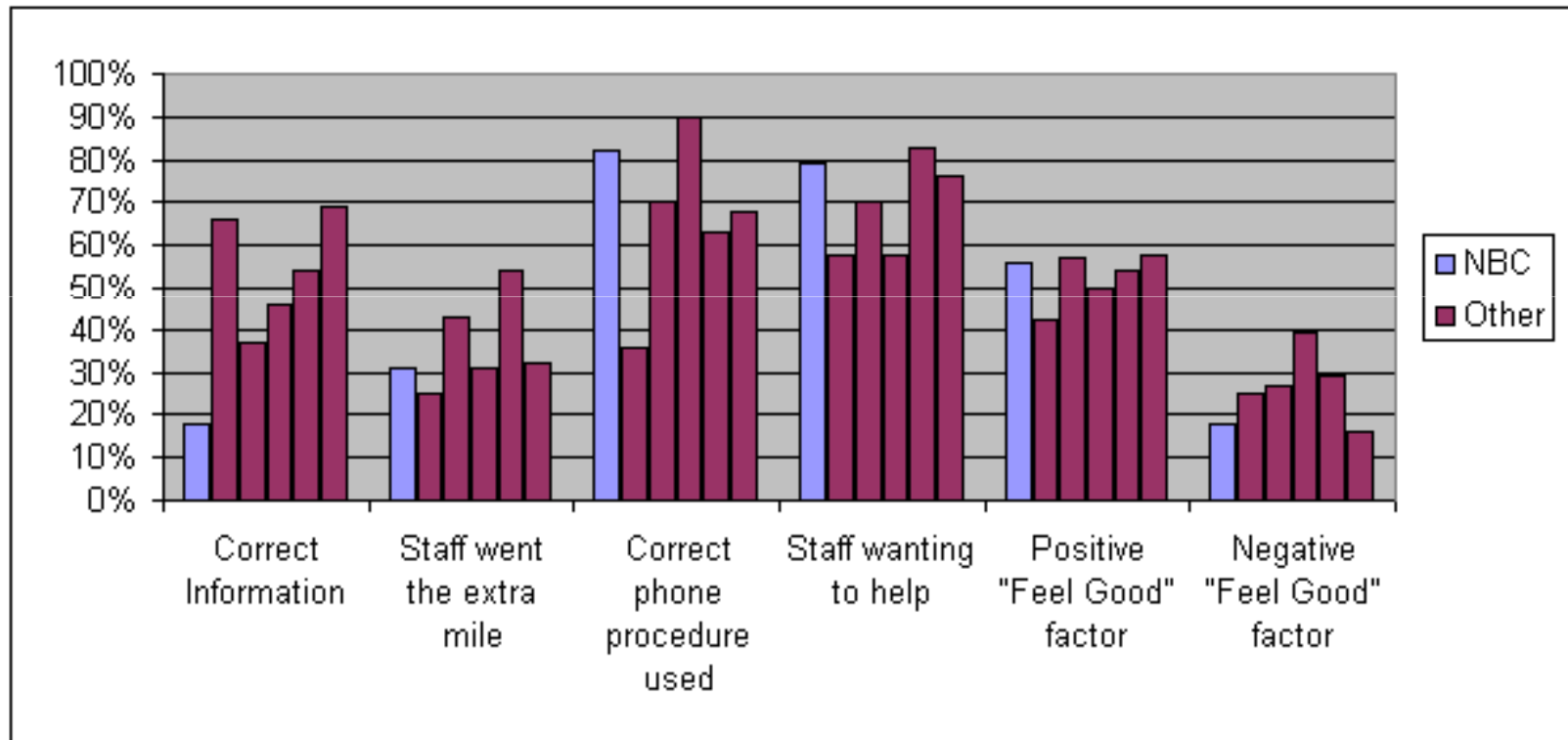
Overall did Staff use good diction?



Contact Centre vs Disabled Facilities Grants



Benchmarking



Anti Social Behaviour

Actions needed:

- Understand agreed handoffs
- To explore options, literature, websites that are available to help customers experiencing anti social behaviour
- Agreed scripts of what we could offer. E.g Support victims and witnesses or the sentry scheme to make houses safer
- Agreed timescales to quote for when a housing officer will contact the customer

Housing Repairs

Actions needed:

- On damp reports need to consider asking if this could be a result of a leak

CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE STRATEGY

2009 - 2012



Introduction

Organisations that provide the best customer service have a clear vision of the quality and service they want to achieve and the way in which it will be delivered.

The Council's ambition is "To be one of the best councils in terms of public service by 2013". Providing excellent customer service is the first of the council's five management aims which underpin the delivery of the corporate priorities and outcomes:

- Provide excellent customer service
- Engage in meaningful dialogue
- Make best use of resources
- Be a single effective team
- Work towards a better Northampton

The Council's vision for customer service is to provide residents and customers easy access to services through a multi-service contact centre providing a single point of telephone contact, a multi-service one stop shop and 24 hour transactional internet access.

The council provides a range of options where customers can access services face to face including:

- One Stop Shop, Guildhall, Northampton Town Centre
- Cliftonville House (Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health)
- Leisure Centres
- Museums



Background

In 2006 the Council set up a telephone contact centre for the services in highest demand from customers (Streetscene, Revenues, Benefits and Housing). Other high demand services have set up single contact numbers and are benefiting from call handling technology to improve the customer experience (Environmental Health, Planning).

The Councils website www.northampton.gov.uk was updated in 2006 and customers are able to access online billing for Council Tax, make payments and get information on a wide range of council services.

Over the next 4 years we plan to build upon this progress to transform the way in which customers access our services by creating:

- A single telephone contact centre serving the whole borough;
- A single one stop shop based in the Guildhall in the centre of Northampton Town Centre.
- 24 hour internet access providing a wide range of interactive, self-service and information services;
- A network of local access and outreach for the wider community that addresses the diverse needs of local people and other centres of population.

This range of access channels will give customers flexibility and choice in how they contact the Council.

This document is intended to be used as a framework for Northampton Borough Council to achieve excellence in Customer Service, by delivering quality, local and joined-up, customer-focussed services. Improving access to services requires this clear vision, which can then be converted into reality by the development of a detailed business case and financial model and a full implementation plan including the definition of critical success factors and performance targets.



The Customer Experience

Our surveys tell us that generally, local people are satisfied with the way in which services are delivered, however experience of contacting the Council can differ. There can be lack of consistency in the way that customers are dealt with. Customers can be asked to provide the same information several times to different services, or may be transferred between services before their query or request for service can be resolved.

Research has highlighted the multiple receptions across the borough, the large number of telephone numbers listed in the Council's A-Z of services and on the website and a lack of management/customer information.

Anyone wishing to talk to a Council officer in person has to first of all determine which of the receptions they need to visit and then will probably have to travel to get there. Enquiries about a number of services will require separate visits to different offices.

Customers do not want to visit several different offices, or have their telephone calls passed around if they want to interact with the Council, nor should they be expected to know the complexities of the Council's workings in order to access services.

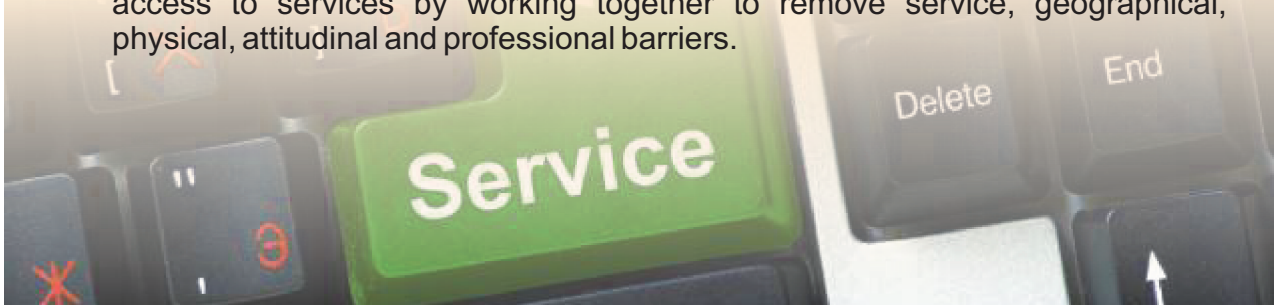
"If the person I contact can't help they usually give me the number/name of a person who can, but it's hard to know who to contact first"

Changing Relationships with Customers

In today's busy existence, people demand a choice of access methods for services telephone, face-to-face, electronic at a time that is convenient for them.

In many organisations, customer access has to fit around the needs of the organisation, rather than the customer. Traditional organisations made up of separate "functional departments" can hinder the organisation's learning and understanding of its customers and complicate avenues of customer contact when these departments do not work together jointly in the interest of the customer. Team Northampton will have a traditional structure with a radical ethos. We will continue to develop and foster a culture of all working together seamlessly in a customer focussed approach.

We believe that to work towards a better Northampton we need to provide better access to services by working together to remove service, geographical, physical, attitudinal and professional barriers.



Customer Preferences and Demand

When designing services to meet customer needs, we need to understand that customers will wish to use and access services in various ways. A resident with Internet access may prefer to check the progress of their planning application on line, rather than make a journey to Cliftonville House. Someone submitting an application for Housing Benefit might require help from an experienced officer and therefore may prefer access through a telephone or face-to-face environment.

CRM Customer Relationship Management

CRM is an approach to doing business and providing better customer service. Technical solutions are “enablers” of this approach, but CRM is as much about cultural and process change as it is about new technology. CRM aims to improve customer service by encouraging a higher quality of customer interaction and smoother internal organisation. The emphasis is on improving services to the individual customer. Our ICT Strategy supports the ongoing development and expansion of our CRM system.

OUR VISION

The Council's ambition is “To be one of the best councils in terms of public service by 2013” This means making best use of resources, working as a single effective team to make it as easy as possible for all customers to access the services they require and to deliver positive experiences for all customers that contact us, regardless of when or how they make contact. We have recently merged our Customer Service and ICT Services into one joint service to ensure that ICT enables and supports improvements to our Customer Service delivery across the Council.

Underpinning this strategy are some key strategies and documents which support the delivery of excellence in customer service these are:

- Customer Engagement Strategy
- ICT Strategy
- Service Plans
- The People Strategy
- Corporate Equality Plan

The Council has a clear view of the outcomes that it wants for its customers, employees and the Council as a whole:-

Outcomes for Customers

- Greater clarity on how to access services and what to expect when they do request services
- Increased choice and convenience when accessing services
- Service solutions that meet their needs now and in the future
- Services that offer value for money
- Involvement in helping to shape both the design and delivery of services
- Increased opportunity to answer enquiries right the first time
- Greater focus on ensuring that services are accessible for people with additional needs such as those with disabilities or those for whom English is a second language.
- More consistent and accurate provision of basic information and answers to frequently asked questions.
- Increased confidence and trust in the Council and a belief that the Council is working for them.
- Opportunity to extend opening hours to meet demand
- Staff are competent in resolving enquiries regardless of the complexity
- More customers are dealt with

Outcomes for Employees

- Increased job satisfaction through the creation of an empowered, enabled and motivated workforce
- Greater understanding of what drives customer satisfaction and how their roles and responsibilities contribute to delivering customer solutions.
- Clear focus on customers as individuals with individual needs
- The right tools, skills and information to enable them to deliver service excellence
- Increased confidence in the Council as a first choice employer
- Pride in the services they provide and the role they perform
- The support of partner organisations
- The opportunity to develop skills in other areas and improve their career progression

Outcomes for the Council

- Confidence that the needs of customers are being addressed and that services of an appropriate quality are being delivered.
- Improved understanding of the diversity of opinions and needs of customers and confidence that no sector of the community feels disadvantaged
- Increased satisfaction that value for money in primary activities is being achieved
- Improved decision making through the contributions of a wider set of customers
- External validation that the council is effective and competent through improved customer satisfaction ratings and other commendations from external bodies.
- Improved ability to manage customer demand effectively
- Enables the collection of comprehensive management information regarding customer contact
- Increased value for money as services become cheaper to provide through the economies of scale available and removal of simple and moderately simple work from more highly paid specialist staff.
- Successful and fruitful working partnerships with a broad range of external organisations.

Face-to-Face Contact

The Council's ambition is to expand the existing One Stop Shop in the Guildhall, right in the heart of Northampton Town Centre.

The multi-service One Stop Shop will deliver a wider range of Council Services and also Partner Services. This will provide an integrated first point of contact where queries will be dealt with by highly trained staff. They will focus on reaching a broad customer base and will provide a full range of transactional, informational, signposting, self-service, assisted self-service and surgery-based services. Residents, visitors and businesses will be able to access the Council, and ultimately other services, easily and irrespective of need.

Telephone Contact

The vision also includes the creation of a single telephone contact centre serving the whole Borough. E-mail enquiries and requests for service will also be dealt with through the telephone contact centre. Currently not all key services are delivered through the contact centre and this will be expanded to include those services. Voice recognition software will be utilised to further improve customer service and generate efficiencies.

In time the telephone service will be expanded to include proactive outgoing calls for example promoting Council services or special events, debt recovery and satisfaction surveys including partner services.

Electronic Access to Services

The range of informational and transactional facilities available through the Council's website, www.northampton.gov.uk needs to be expanded and improved. The Council will continue to develop its website to meet the needs of its customers and will evaluate other technology solutions such as SMS/Text Messaging and social networking in order to maximise the potential of new technology for improving customer access to services. The Council's Website and Electronic Government Strategy underpins this aim and provides further detailed information.



Access to Services Across the Borough

To meet the diverse needs of local communities and individual customers a wider access to services network will be developed in consultation with our customers and stakeholder groups. This will deliver a range of more targeted services, possibly on a part-time outreach basis and utilise existing Council buildings and partner premises.

We will exploit the benefits of new technology, providing outreach access to the Council's Web site and telephone contact centre in libraries, community centres, schools, supermarkets etc.

The Longer Term

The Council is actively seeking to re-engineer customer access to its services, wrapping service provision around customers' needs. To address the wider needs of residents to access a broad range of services easily. In the medium term, the One-Stop-Shop will include contact points for partner organisations and in the longer term this will be expanded to include telephone contact.

The Council will work with its partners to extend the range of services provided from the One Stop Shop and the telephone contact centre. We will work towards a goal of "joined-up services" the provision of public services in an integrated and unified environment.

We will invite organisations such as the Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust, the Northamptonshire Police, the Northamptonshire Fire Service and the Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary sector organisations to provide joined up shared service operations thereby facilitating easy access to a broad range of services that reflect the diverse needs of local residents. We will also work with Northamptonshire County Council to further expand the range of County Council Services provided and we will also explore whether the arrangement could be extended to include government departments such as the Department for Works and Pensions, Job Centre Plus and HM Revenue and Customs.



Success Factors

A range of factors will be identified and targets set to judge the success of the Access to Services Strategy. These will include measures that matter to Customers and to the Council, for example:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Increase in the percentage of enquires that are resolved at the first point of contact
- Increased customer confidence
- Improved staff satisfaction
- Increased staff retention
- Change in the profile of access channel usage
 - The % of letters received reduced
 - The % of face to face contact reduced
 - The % of telephone and electronic contact and self-service increased
- Reduction in cost per transaction
- Services complying with the equality standard for local government and Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The management of data, content and knowledge is improved and streamlined (e.g. data collected once and used many times)
- Improved customer insight.
- Achievement of the Cabinet office Customer Service Excellence standard in key service areas and work towards accreditation for the whole Council by 2013
- Reduction in avoidable contact (NI 14)
- Improved standards reported through Mystery Shopping exercises
- Improved value for money (NI 179)
- Increased understanding of our customer and non-users needs (Customer Insight)
- Staff accredited with customer service qualifications (NVQs or Institute of Customer Service Accreditation)

The initial targets will be to deal with 80% of enquiries at the first point of contact and to achieve 85% Customer Satisfaction.

We will consult with our customers regularly through customer forums and during outreach and this consultation will inform our ongoing targets for first point resolution and customer satisfaction. We will feedback our performance against targets and advise customers of our on-going progress and planned improvements.

Management Information

Management Information is critical in ensuring that the Council regularly measures its performance against its objectives. To this end the council will:

- Measure and report on performance regularly based on what is important to customers
- Develop and publish a range of comprehensive performance indicators and service standards including Customer Service and Access Standards which will determine the success of the Council in achieving its objectives.
- Benchmark its performance against other organisations both public and private sector to ensure that it is delivering value for money.

Moving the strategy forward

The strategy is to be presented to Cabinet on 18th March 2009.

Once approval has been gained, consultation with all internal services will take place to ensure that the objectives of the strategy are integrated into their service plans.

Specific customer engagement service delivery plans will be developed.

Consultation with customers will take place to agree the Customer Service and Access Standards which will then be monitored and reported on a regular basis.

An action plan will be developed to define how the different elements of this strategy will be taken forward.

Equality Impact Assessment

It is anticipated that this strategy will have a positive impact on members of our diverse communities by the very nature of its aims. An equality impact assessment for our customer services operation was undertaken during 2008 and the findings of the assessment have influenced the development of this strategy. An Equality Impact Assessment will be produced before the strategy is adopted.

Surgeries Available in Northampton Borough Council's One Stop Shop

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<u>Health Trainers</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Kirsty or Uzma. Time: 09:00 – 12:30 Location: Room No. 1	<u>Bromford Teenage Support</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Gerri Norris Time: 10:30 – 16:00 Location: Room No. 3	<u>CAB</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Martin Lord. Time: 10:00 – 13:00 Location: Self-Serve Area.	<u>CAB</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Martin Lord. Time: 10:00 – 13:00 Location: Self-Serve Area.	<u>Health Triage</u> With Debre De Vere or Adam. Time: 10:30 – 16:00 Location: Self-Serve Area
<u>Teenage Parents NCC/NBC</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Nicola Hobbs. Time: 13:30 – 15:30 Location: Room No.1	<u>Health Trainers</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Kirsty or Uzma. Time: 09:00 – 12:30 Location: Room No. 1	<u>Woman's Aid</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Philomena. Time: 10:00 – 13:00 Location: Room No.1	<u>Bromford Support Mental Health</u> Drop-in session with Ian 13:00 – 14:00. Appointments with Ian 09:00 – 13:00 & 14:00 – 17:00. Location: Room No.1	<u>Leaving Care</u> Drop-in session. Time: 13:00 – 17:00 Location: Self-Serve Area & Room No.1
<u>Leaving Care</u> Drop-in session. Time: 09:00 – 13:00 Location: Self-Serve Area and Room No. 3	<u>Stop Smoking</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Jancy. Time: 14:00 – 17:00 Location: Room No.1		<u>Bromford Teenage Support</u> Appointments & drop-in session with Gerri Norris Time: 10:30 – 16:00 Location: Room No. 3	<u>Bromford Support Mental Health</u> Drop-in session with Ian 13:00 – 14:00. Appointments with Ian 09:00 – 13:00 & 14:00 – 17:00. Location: Room No.1
<u>Police</u> Drop-in session with Pam. Time: 09:00 – 16:30 (Lunch 12:30 – 13:00) Location: Police Desk	<u>Police</u> Drop-in session with Pam. Time: 09:00 – 16:30 (Lunch 12:30 – 13:00) Location: Police Desk	<u>Police</u> Drop-in session with Pam. Time: 09:00 – 16:30 (Lunch 12:30 – 13:00) Location: Police Desk	<u>Police</u> Drop-in session with Pam. Time: 09:00 – 16:30 (Lunch 12:30 – 13:00) Location: Police Desk	<u>Police</u> Drop-in session with Pam. Time: 09:00 – 16:30 (Lunch 12:30 – 13:00) Location: Police Desk
			<u>A4E</u> Drop-in session with Sally Hackett. Time: 10:00 – 16:00 Location: Self-Serve Area	

What The Surgeries Offer...

Health Trainers

The Health Trainers will give advice on weight, diet, drinking limits, stopping smoking, exercise, and other life style changes you may wish to make.

Bromford Teenage Support

This service provides floating support to teenage parents between the ages of 16 and 20 and focuses on sustaining tenancies and maximising independence. Support is for a short term period of up to 2 years, and will consist of weekly visits to the service user in their own home. The support offered is flexible and tailored to meet the particular needs of each individual person accessing the service.

Applicants can be referred by any statutory or voluntary agency, or through self-referral.

People who are already on our housing waiting list will be considered for housing with Bromford when the panel meet to discuss their vacancies. There is always a representative from Gateway on this panel, and they will nominate people off our waiting list who fit the category.

If you should have a customer come in to see you who is a teenage parent within the age limits mentioned, and they are struggling to cope, please refer them to Bromford on the surgery day, or get the person to ring them. Please remember however, to check if they have spoken to Gateway and been referred through them.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice, and by influencing policymakers.

Teenage Parents

Can get pregnancy tests and termination support to those who are aged up to 20 years, unless they have been in care and/or have a learning disability in which case will go up to aged 24. For Chlamydia screening will go up to age 24 whatever their situation, and if their partners are over this age they can also be tested, as long as one of them is 24 or under. Can also support those requiring contraception advice and issues of domestic abuse and emotional support as required.

Woman's Aid

Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that helps up to **250,000** women and children every year.

They work to end violence against women and children, and support over **500** domestic and sexual violence services across the country



PROTECTION

By influencing laws, [policy and practice](#) and working in partnership with key national and local agencies.



PREVENTION

Through raising public awareness and developing education programmes e.g. hideout.org.uk, [campaigns](#)



PROVISION

By providing services needed to help abused women and children e.g. [UKROL](#), the [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#).

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Stop Smoking

Will provide advice on the different methods of stopping smoking and can also provide a prescription for you to take to the chemist to get the gum, patches etc.



Equality Impact Assessment Part 1: Screening

When reviewing, planning or providing Services Northampton Borough Council needs to assess the impacts on people. Both residents and staff, of how it works - or is planning to – work (in relation to things like disability). It has to take steps to remove/minimise any harm it identifies. It has to help people to participate in its Services and public life. “**Equality Impact Assessments**” (EIAs) prompt people to think things through, considering people’s different needs in relation to the law on equalities. The first stage of the process is known as ‘screening’ and is used to come to a decision about whether and why further analysis is – or is not – required. EIAs are published in line with transparency requirements.

A helpful guide to equalities law is available at: www.northampton.gov.uk/equality. A few notes about the laws that need to be considered are included at the end of this document. Helpful questions are provided as prompts throughout the form.

1 Name of policy/activity/project/practice	This is:
Overview and Scrutiny Review - To evaluate all customer services with a review of the customer contact centre, customer satisfaction and the refurbished and extended one stop shop.	Existing Service which will be reviewed by Scrutiny Panel 3 – Customer Services

2. Screening undertaken (please complete as appropriate)	
Director or Head of Service	Marion Goodman, Head of Customer Services and ICT
Lead Officer for developing the policy/activity/practice	Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer
Other people involved in the screening (this may be people who work for NBC or a related Service or people outside NBC)	Councillor Mike Hallam , Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Customer Services

3. Brief description of policy/activity/project/practice: including its main purpose, aims, objectives and projected outcomes, and how these fit in with the wider aims of the organisation.

Is it linked to NBC's Corporate Plan? Service Plan? Other?

Please explain:

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a means of providing non-Executive Councillors the opportunity to inform policy development and critical friend challenge to the Council's Executive policy makers and decision makers (Cabinet). It also has a strong role in promoting the engagement of non-Executive Councillors in a diverse range of policy development activities, including performance improvement at the Council. Scrutiny aims to engage the community in its work either by attendance at meetings, public addresses to meetings, witness evidence or co-optees to Scrutiny Reviews.

The purpose of this Scrutiny activity is to evaluate all customer services with a review of the customer contact centre, customer satisfaction and the refurbished and extended one stop shop.

The projected outcomes of this Scrutiny Review are :

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

All Scrutiny Reviews link to the Council's Corporate Plan and details of which are evidenced within the final report. This Scrutiny Review links to corporate priority CP9 – Satisfying our customers.

4 Relevance to Equality and Diversity Duties

Is it linked to NBC's Single Equality Scheme? NBC's Public Sector Duties? Equality Framework Criteria? Service or departmental equality priorities?

Please explain:

Overview and Scrutiny ensures that it adheres to the Council's statutory duty to provide the public with access to Scrutiny Reports/agendas/minutes and other such documents. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny/Scrutiny Panels are widely publicised, i.e.: on the Council's website, copies issues to the local media and paper copies available in the Council's One Stop Shop and local libraries.

The Scrutiny Panel is mindful of the eight protected characteristics when undertaking scrutiny activity so that any recommendations that it makes can identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. This will be borne in mind as the Scrutiny Review progresses and evidence is gathered.

Any possible recommended changes may have perceived adverse and beneficial effects

for all diversity groups.

How will the aims affect our duty to:

Promote equality of opportunity?

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

Promote good community relations?

Promote positive attitudes towards people with protected characteristics?

Encourage participation of people with protected characteristics?

Protect and promote Human Rights?

For example, think about it from the perspectives of different groups in society. Does it cause harm or a benefit to any group(s) differently to others? Will it differentially affect:

Black, Asian or other ethnic minority and/or cultural groups?

Disabled people? And their carers?

Transgender people?

Men and women?

Lesbians, gay men and/or bisexual people?

Different religious communities/groups?

People of a particular age e.g. older people or children and young people?

Any other groups?

People with flexible or agreed working patterns?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered, or accessed, that could contribute to inequalities? (This should relate to all areas including Human Rights.)

Please explain:

The public's lack of understanding of the Overview and Scrutiny function could lead to poorly attended and little public participation in the process.

A comprehensive Overview and Scrutiny webpage has been developed and a leaflet promoting the work of Overview and Scrutiny and detailing how members of the public can become involved in the process has been issued to the Council's One Stop Shop and the town's main libraries. This leaflet is also distributed to attendees at all Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel meetings.

So that the Scrutiny Panel obtains a variety of views, the Chair of Scrutiny Panel 3 has contacted the key witnesses:

- Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement), Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
- Leader of the Council, NBC
- Director of Finance and Support
- Customer Services Manager
- Various other Officers
- Councillors at NBC
- Partner evidence including:
 - Northamptonshire County Council
 - Northants Police
 - Womens' Aid
 - Citizens' Advice Bureau
 - Bromford Support
 - Enterprise Managed Services (EMS)
 - Northampton Leisure Trust

Asking them to answer the Scrutiny Panel's core questions at scheduled meetings. The

comments of the key witnesses will be minuted and published publicly within the Council's meeting management system.

Evidence will also be provided by the Head of Customer Services and ICT and various key officers

Evidence gathered from all sources will be analysed and contained within the Scrutiny Panel's final report.

The Scrutiny Panel has scheduled, site visits to:

- Various customer service facilities at NBC
- Partner organisation customer services facilities
- Local Authority and private organisation noted as best practice for its customer service facilities

During the site visit, the Scrutiny Panel will be mindful of the eight protected characteristics equality. Information gathered from these site visits will inform the evidence base of the Review.

Should the Scrutiny Panel conclude that there are concerns and puts forward recommendations for change; the expected impact of these changes will be detailed within the Scrutiny Panel's final report.

The Scrutiny Panel's report, after it has been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be forwarded to the Council's Cabinet for consideration; Cabinet will then become responsible for delivering the recommendations that it accepts.

Meetings of this Scrutiny Panel are held in easily access locations (wheel chair accessible), with the provision of a hearing loop and start at 6pm; so aiming to enable those with working commitments to attend. It could be found that the timing of Overview and meetings (evenings) may not be suitable to all, for example those who are required to work during the evenings.

There is a standing agenda item on all Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel meetings enabling members of the public to address the Committee/Panel. The public does not have to register their intention to speak in advance but is advised to arrive a few minutes prior to the start of the meeting and notify the Scrutiny Officer of their intention to speak. A Scrutiny Public Speaking Protocol has been produced and advice and assistance is offered and available to members of the public wishing to attend and address an Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panel meeting.

The Council has access to an interpretative Service and therefore such documents can be supplied in formats other than English if required.

In terms of the working of this Scrutiny Panel and the impact on the equality protected characteristics, paper copies of the agenda for the meetings are issued to Members of the Committee and Scrutiny Panels, Leaders of the Political Groups relevant officers and anyone else who is on the distribution list who had previously requested paper copies. Electronic versions of the agenda are issued to a wider circulation of Officers, the local press and radio, and also individuals who have requested to be kept informed of the work of Overview and Scrutiny.

Provision has been made for members of public who have a disability, e.g. the documents are written in 12scale font with a yellow front cover for those who may suffer from a visual impairment, the blind have access to 'talking' documents, those whose first language is not English have access to translation Services and the building in which the meetings will occur contain hearing loops and are accessible by those with severe mobility issues, such as wheel chair users.

If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:

Legal?

No

Please explain:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been produced for the Council's Customer Service Facility. Should there be any recommendations for changes, which are accepted by Cabinet; the current EIA may have to be revisited.

Intended?

No

Please explain:

Should there be any recommendations for changes, which are accepted by Cabinet; the current EIA for Customer Services may have to be revisited. This would need to take place should the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel be accepted.

5 Evidence Base for Screening

List the evidence sources you have used to make this assessment (i.e. the *known evidence*) (E.g. Index of Multiple Deprivation, workforce data, population statistics, any relevant reports, customer surveys, equality monitoring data for the Service area.)

The number of public attending the Scrutiny Panel meetings is recorded

Baseline data provided to the Scrutiny Panel:-

- Budgets
- Statistics
- Targets
- Call times
- Performance Indicator data
- Mystery shopping data

Are there any significant gaps in the known evidence base? If so what are your recommendations for how and by when those gaps will be filled?

.Equality profiles of public attendees/witnesses/co optees to the Scrutiny Panel are not currently recorded.

6 Requirements of the equality duties:

(remember there's a note to remind you what they are at the end of this form and more detailed information at www.northampton.gov.uk/equality)

Will there be/has there been consultation with all interested parties?

Yes

Please explain:

The Scrutiny Panel will be consulted upon this EIA (Screening) document.

Are proposed actions necessary and proportionate to the desired outcomes?

Yes

Please explain:

The Scrutiny Panel will after completion of its evidence gathering, formulate conclusions and recommendations as appropriate including consideration of the following areas:

- 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

Recommendations will link to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) Objectives. Should the recommendations be accepted by the Council's Cabinet, they will then be implemented and necessary actions drawn up.

Where appropriate, will there be scope for prompt, independent reviews and appeals against decisions arising from the proposed policy/practice/activity?

N/A

Please explain:

Does the proposed policy/practice/activity have the ability to be tailored to fit different individual circumstances?

Yes

Please explain:

When the Scrutiny Panel formulates its recommendations it will be mindful of the evidence received and how this could affect users to the customer service facility.

Where appropriate, can the policy/practice/activity exceed the minimum legal equality and human rights requirements, rather than merely complying with them?

Yes

Please explain:

The recommendations from this Review could conceivably exceed the minimum requirement.

Overview and Scrutiny will continue to offer facilities, such as language translation, large print of reports, agendas and minutes, to race and disability groups.

From the evidence you have and strategic thinking, what are the **key risks** (the harm or 'adverse impacts') **and opportunities** (benefits and opportunities to promote equality) this policy/practice/activity might present?

	Risks (Negative)	Opportunities (Positive)
Race	No impact anticipated but there is the need to ensure appropriate access to interpreting Services as necessary	
Disability	No impact anticipated for meetings of the Scrutiny Panel – However there are no arrangements in place such as sign language interpreters at meetings	Meetings of this Scrutiny Panel are held in accessible meeting rooms, normally with the provision of a hearing loop
Gender or Gender Identity/Gender Assignment		No impact anticipated. of this Scrutiny Panel are available to all genders Both male and females use the Council's customer service facilities. Staff training addresses Equality and Diversity.

		Meetings of the Scrutiny Panel are attended by all genders.
Pregnancy and Maternity (including breastfeeding)	Initially no impact anticipated but there is the need to ensure equitable access for all attendees and Councillors at meetings of this Scrutiny Panel	
Sexual Orientation	The Scrutiny Panel has no information about levels of participation by persons of different sexual orientation to the Customer Services f	No impact anticipated
Age (including children, youth, midlife and older people)	The Scrutiny Panel will have regard to the extent that existing facilities and alternative facilitates are individuals of all ages.	Meetings of this Scrutiny Panel are normally held during the evening with the aim that they are accessible to all.
Religion, Faith and Belief	The Scrutiny Panel has no information concerning the Religion, Faith and Belief of those presently using the Council's customer services facilities but would have regard to any potential inhibitions on persons from a particular Religion, Faith or Belief	No impact anticipated
Human Rights	It is not felt that consideration of any specific human right is relevant to this particular are of Review.	No impact anticipated

8 Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed to full impact assessment

Date of Decision: 11 January 2012

EITHER: We judge that a full impact assessment is not necessary since: A Scrutiny Review of is currently underway, and as part of the evidence gathering process will receive comments from a wide range of stakeholders as detailed in earlier sections of this EIA (Screening). Any changes proposed as a result of the review will be impact assessed before implementation.

OR: We judge that a full impact assessment is necessary since:

Equality Duties to be taken into account in this screening include:

Prohibited Conduct under The Equality Act 2010 including:

Direct discrimination (including by association and perception e.g. carers); Indirect discrimination; Pregnancy and maternity discrimination; Harassment; third party harassment; discrimination arising from disability.

Public Sector Duties (Section 149) of the Equality Act 2010 for NBC and Services provided on its behalf: (due to be effective from 4 April 2011)

NBC and Services providing public functions must in providing Services have due regard to the need to: **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.** 'Positive action' permits proportionate action to overcome disadvantage, meet needs and tackle under-representation.

Rights apply to people in terms of their "Protected Characteristics":

Age; Gender; Gender Assignment; Sexual Orientation; Disability; Race; Religion and Belief; Pregnancy; Maternity. But Marriage and Civil Partnership do not apply to the public sector duties.

Duty to "advance equality of opportunity":

The need, when reviewing, planning or providing Services/policies/practices to assess the impacts of Services on people in relation to their 'protected characteristics', take steps to remove/minimise any negative impacts identified and help everyone to participate in our Services and public life. **Equality Impact Assessments** remain best practice to be used. Sometimes **people have particular needs** e.g. due to gender, race, faith or disability that need to be addressed, not ignored. NBC must have due regard to the **duty to make reasonable adjustments** for people with disabilities. NBC must **encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life** or any other activity in which their participation is too low.

Duty to 'foster good relations between people'

This means having due regard to the need to **tackle prejudice** (e.g. where people are picked on or stereotyped by customers or colleagues because of their ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc) and **promote understanding**.

Lawful Exceptions to general rules: can happen where action is proportionate to achieve a legitimate aim and not otherwise prohibited by anything under the Equality Act 2010. There are some special situations (see Ch 12 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010 Statutory Code of Practice – Services, Public Functions and Associations).

National Adult Autism Strategy (Autism Act 2009; statutory guidelines) including:

to improve how Services identify and meet needs of adults with autism and their families.

Human Rights include:

Rights under the European Convention include not to be subjected to degrading **treatment**; **right to a fair trial** (civil and criminal issues); **right to privacy** (subject to certain exceptions e.g. national security/public safety, or certain other specific situations); **freedom of conscience** (including religion and belief and rights to manifest these limited only by law and as necessary for public safety, public order, protection of rights of others and other specified situations); **freedom of expression** (subject to certain exceptions); **freedom of peaceful assembly and to join trade unions** (subject to certain exceptions); **right not to be subject to unlawful discrimination** (e.g. sex, race, colour, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin); **right to peaceful enjoyment of own possessions** (subject to certain exceptions e.g. to secure payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties); **right to an education**; **right to hold free elections by secret ballot**. The European Convention is given effect in UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.