

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 26th September 2016

Briefing Note: Customer Service Task and Finish Group

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update to the recommendations set out in the Overview and Scrutiny document constructed between January and May 2012 presented to Cabinet on 11 July 2012. This paper sets out to give an updated progress on the accepted recommendations (9th September meeting of the O&S Committee).

2 Recommendations

The recommendations were:

- a) That funding for the improved signage both outside and inside the Guildhall is made available, particularly in relation to signs for housing and registrars with particular focus on the improvement of signage around the old building of the Guildhall.

Action Taken and Impact:

Signage has been reviewed with many changes being made over the last three years including new signage for co-located and new partners, including Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), the Police, Community Law Services (CLS) and Citizens Advice (CA)

The new signage has helped direct customers with ease. **(Appendix 1)**

Our partners have seen an increase of enquires since moving into the OSS. The Police have made the following statement:

'The Police desk was introduced into the Guildhall on the 1st February 2014 under a fanfare of publicity . The "One Stop" concept allows members of the

public to deal with a multitude of issues that are affecting them under one roof . As stated footfall has significantly increased, figures collated during 2014/15 showed that there were approximately 64 enquires per day or 1536 per month based on 6 day week. Although we do not have the 2015/16 figures available my staff estimate that they on average have in excess of 80 enquiries per day with Mondays and Fridays being the busiest days of the week . I attribute this increase to the fact that the desks location is now embedded into the minds of the local community and the community are now confident in reporting both low level criminality and serious crimes to us. These crimes range from Abduction, Rape, Domestic Violence, violence and murder. The benefit of the location and the confidence that it has instilled has increased our detection rate and reduced investigation time and allowed victims to be safe guarded immediately and allowed us to obtain best evidence.

Sergeant 378 Rodney Williams, Safer Community Team Sergeant, Northampton Central Sector'. (Appendix 2)

Early in 2016 CA and CLS frontline services co-located to the OSS enabling customer to be seen at first point of contact preventing issues including debt and homelessness. We have seen a collaborative partnership between CA and CLS where CA have recently commented: -

'The move to Northampton Borough Council's One Stop Shop has been a success for Citizens Advice. Client numbers have increased steadily and a conservative estimate indicates that the service has seen a 20% rise in clients seeking face to face access. A recent informal survey indicated that clients' find the service more efficient and easier to access. Our move to the Guildhall coincided with a change in the model of service delivery, so that clients' needs are assessed in an initial interview, allowing Citizens Advice volunteers to quickly identify the best way to resolve their issue. Some clients are given assisted information, while others are given appointments for further advice or referred to one of the many partnership organisations working within the One Stop Shop.

Tina Cottrell, Head of volunteer Support/Core Service'. (Appendix 3).

- b)** That floor walkers, located in the One Stop Shop, be provided with a uniform that makes them and their role clearly identifiable to customers and
- c)** That funding for additional uniforms for front line Customer Services Officers be investigated and
- d)** That the uniforms provided for front line Customer Services Officers identify the corporate image of the Council

Action taken and Impact:

Uniforms have been provided for all front facing staff. These have had a positive impact, making staff feel more professional. Customers have commented within recent feedback that the premises and staff are smart and professional. The uniforms help customers identify staff easily with

both the front and back of the fleeces bearing the words 'We are here to help you' which puts customers at ease when approaching staff.

Floor walkers are an essential and important role within the OSS ensuring, where possible, that customers are supported to use the self-serve options. Floor walker resources have increased to support the Digital First strategy and also the co-location of our new partners. All front line staff are multi skilled and rotate their duties between appointments and floor walking.

- e) That the plasma screens in situ in the One Stop Shop be utilised to broadcast news channels which can be done at no extra cost to the Council.

Action Taken and Impact

The news is broadcast, where applicable, and the plasma screens are also used to advertise partner agency surgeries and other promotions and initiatives which might benefit customers.

- f) That those departments not currently delivered through Customer Services, such as planning, building control and licensing be brought into Customer Services for "first contact", to apply customer services skills, to enable the channel shift strategy to be fully applied to calls/visits in relation to these departments.

Action taken and Impact:

OSS staff now take all Planning initial enquires and work very closely with the Planning and Regeneration service to ensure an excellent customer experience.

A review of processes has taken place and some processes have been migrated into Customer Services. In order to fully migrate all the remaining services into Customer Services it was necessary to ensure that ease of access to information for customer service officers was enabled. This has been addressed as part of the council's EDRMS programme (Electronic Document Record management). Services which have been migrated as a result include payments, appointments, infectious diseases and Events.

Over the next few months Licensing, Housing (NPH) and Housing (NBC) will have deployed Civica Digital Solutions which will enable further opportunities for efficiencies in service delivery to be explored including the migration of further services to the Contact Centre and OSS.

We are replacing our current CRM (customer relationship management) system which will further enhance the "one view" of the customer.

Licencing and Planning are included within this project and will be migrated into Customer Services within 12 months.

- h)** That the mystery shopping exercise is repeated, including the Centres under the management of the Northampton Leisure Trust, and that in order to achieve consistency the same questions should be used and repeated on a regular basis.

The management team for the Leisure Trust have declined as it operates as an independent business and employs an external company to undertake mystery visits for us.

We currently have a mystery shopping exercise with local authorities including NCC, Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby. We are currently reviewing these arrangements and discussing opportunities with the Museums.

In addition our new methodology for collating Customer satisfaction has been successful where we have received increased feedback. This has enabled us to review and improve processes with partners. **(Appendix 4)**

3 Other Implications

None

4 Background Papers

4.1	Appendix 1	One Stop Shop new signage
	Appendix 2	Police Desk in the One Stop Shop
	Appendix 3	CAB and CLS signage
	Appendix 4	Satsifaction Survey Results

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Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix 3

