

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting:

06 December 2001

Title: CUSTOMER CONTACT BEST VALUE REVIEW - UPDATE

Report of: The City Treasurer

Report reference: Financial Memo 2001/02 No 119

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress so far of the Project Team conducting the Customer Contact Best Value Review.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of the report.

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CITY OF CARLISLE

To: The Chairman and Members of the Financial Memo

Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2001/02 No 119

06 December 2001

CUSTOMER CONTACT BEST VALUE REVIEW – UPDATE

1. BACKGROUND

1. The team have met several times since the scoping panel sat on the 10th September.
2. They have arranged a provisional timetable for the delivery of the review including the reporting cycle to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. The projected reporting dates for the project are as follows:-
 - Confirmation of Scope & Initial Report on Consultation - 6th. Dec 2001
 - Final Report on Consultation and Initial Report on Challenge – 24th Jan 2002
 - Final Report on Challenge and Initial Report on Comparison – 28th. Feb 2002
 - Final Report on Comparison and Initial Report on Competing – 18th Apr. 2002
 - Final Best Value Report – May/June O&S 2002

The final report will have three elements:-

1. A new customer contact policy
2. An outline customer contact model
3. A detailed action plan for implementing the above

2. CONFIRMATION OF SCOPE

1. A project team has been assembled which broadly reflects the skill mix the Scoping Panel recommended. However, a critical friend has still to be identified to take part as part of the Best Value process. The City Vision partnership is to be approached to see if any organisation would be prepared to release a Customer Service professional to advise on the process the review is undertaking.
2. The Team is in broad agreement with the width and depth the review has to undergo. However it feels that the scope needs to include two other areas:-
 1. The first is in the area of home visits. These visits can be very intrusive to the Client and the Team feels they need to be covered by some form of customer contact guidance and policy.
 2. The second area concerns corporate complaints. It was originally thought that in order for the complaints procedure to be seen to be truly independent that it should remain outside the remit of customer contact. However, it is now recognised that the handling of corporate complaints is integral to any customer services policy and should be included within the review.
3. The O&S Committee are requested to confirm the original scope of the review with the amendments recommended by the project team.

3. INITIAL REPORT ON CONSULTATION

1. The Team have commissioned a number of consultation exercises in order to understand the customer contact service currently provided.
 1. Four externally facilitated focus groups have been run. One for Unit

Heads, one for Members and two for staff (both high and low exposure to Clients). These have proved very successful and have provided a wealth of suggestions and ideas. The results will be summarized by the facilitators and be available next week. The comments will help direct the Team to current weaknesses in Customer Services and provide suggestions on how the situation may be improved

2. A random customer survey covering 500 citizens is to be carried out on all aspects of customer contact. This will inform the Team on the public perception of the current customer contact service. The proposed questionnaire is attached in Appendix A. The collated results from this survey will be available in late January.
 3. Exit interviews will take place on customers leaving the Civic Centre who have just experienced customer contact to gauge client's immediate reactions to the service they have just received.
 4. An exercise in mystery shopping is also to be carried out. Covering personal visit's and telephone contact with the Authority this will give a direct indication about how services are being delivered rather than just perceptions.
 5. A suggestion that a public notice be placed inviting comment has been shelved due to the unstructured nature of the responses that are likely to be received which would make subsequent analysis difficult.
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2. Targeting of specific groups of citizens has been considered. It was decided not to target Under 18's or students for their views on service as they were considered to rarely use the Civic Centre. However, elderly and disabled clients were considered to be a significant group of clientele for the Authority. The team is considering approaches to include these groups in the consultation process.
 3. The result of these consultation exercises will form the bulk of the report to the O&S Committee in January.

4. OTHER WORK IN HAND

4.1 The Team is undertaking a review of customer contact policies in operation at other Councils with a view to informing a new policy. Draft principles that underpin the new policy should be available for the next O&S committee meeting. Subsequent meetings will consider draft and final policies.

2. A determination, on a service by service basis, of the resource which is currently put into customer contact with a view to quantifying corporately how much is currently spend on customer contact.

4.3 The Team is also compiling a list of current access points and policies to produce a complete picture of customer services within the Authority.

D THOMAS

City Treasurer

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City Treasury

Carlisle

30 November 2001

JN/CH/f1190102

Appendix A

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE - DECEMBER 2001

Please can you give us your opinions on Customer contact and Leisuretime services by Carlisle City Council. Information received from the questionnaire will help us to improve our services.

- Q1 Have you spoken to any staff in the Civic Centre over the last 2 years? This includes speaking on the telephone. (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)**
- Ground floor reception/Keepers Desk 01
 - Civic Centre Telephonists 02
 - Revenues staff - Benefits Section 03
 - Cashiers - Benefits Section 04
 - Housing Reception staff (Ground Floor) 05
 - Town Clerk & Chief Executive Reception area (1st Floor - includes Electoral Registration) 06
 - Corporate Complaints (TCCE Dept) 07
 - Personnel (TCCE Dept) 08
 - Energy Advice Centre 09
 - Environment and Dev - Environmental Services, Planning, Design, Property Services (inc Car Parking) 10
 - Environment & Development 8th Floor (Photocopying service) 11
 - Economic Development Enquiries 12
 - Leisure & Community Development (5th Floor) 13
 - No - haven't spoken to any staff, either face to face or over the phone (GO TO Q6) 14

Q2 How effective are the staff?

| | Very effective | Effective | Adequate | Ineffective | Very Ineffective | DO NOT KNOW |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ground floor Reception/Keepers desk | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Civic Centre Telephonists | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Revenues staff - Benefits Section | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Cashiers in Benefits Section | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Housing Reception staff | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Town Clerk & Chief Executive Reception (1st Floor) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Corporate Complaints (TCCE Dept) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Personnel (TCCE Dept) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Energy Advice Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Environment and Dev - Environmental Services, Planning, Design, Property Services (inc Car Parking) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Environment & Development 8th Floor (Photocopying service) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Economic Development Enquiries | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Leisure & Community Development (5th Floor) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

Q3 Have you telephoned staff in the Civic Centre in the last 2 years?

Yes (GO TO Q4)..... 1 No (GO TO Q6) 2

Q4 How quickly was the telephone answered?

Very quickly 1 Had to wait a long time 3
 Fairly quickly 2 Gave up trying 4

Q5 How easy was it to get through to the person you wanted?

Very easy 1 Difficult..... 3
 Fairly easy 2 Very difficult..... 4

Q6 Have you spoken to staff at any of the following places over the last 2 years? This includes speaking on the telephone. (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Sands Centre 01
- Tullie House 02
- The Pools 03
- Bereavement Services 04
- Tourist Information 05
- Benefits Advice Centre..... 06
- East Cumbria Countryside Project 07
- Carlisle Works 08
- Housing Offices..... 09
- Shopmobility..... 10
- No - haven't spoken to staff either face to face or over telephone (GO TO Q10)..... 11

Q7 How effective are staff?

| | Very effective | Effective | Adequate | Ineffective | Very ineffective | DO NOT KNOW |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sands Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Tullie House | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| The Pools | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Bereavement Services | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Tourist Information Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Benefits Advice Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| East Cumbria Countryside Project | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Carlisle Works | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Housing Offices | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Shopmobility | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

Q8 If you telephoned any of the places in q7, how quickly was the telephone answered?

- Very quickly 1
- Fairly quickly 2
- Had to wait a long time 3
- Gave up trying 4

Q9 How easy was it to get through to the person you wanted?

- Very easy 1
- Fairly easy 2
- Difficult..... 3
- Very difficult..... 4

- Q10 How convenient are the opening times in The Civic Centre?**
- Very convenient (GO TO Q12) 1
 - Fairly convenient (GO TO Q12) 2
 - Not very convenient (GO TO Q11) 3
 - Not convenient at all (GO TO Q11) 4
 - Don't Know (GO TO Q11) 5

Q11 What opening hours would be convenient for you?

- Q12 Would you prefer to communicate with the Council face to face, OR by other methods such as telephone/Internet? (Please choose ONE only)**
- Face-to-face 1
 - Other methods (Telephone/Internet etc) 2

Q13 If you have visited the Civic Centre, what did you think of the surroundings in customer contact places (reception areas, enquiry/help desks etc)

Q14 If you have visited other council run organisations, such as Tullie House, The Sands, Pools, Bereavement Services, Shopmobility, Tourist Information Centres, Benefits Advice Centre etc, what did you think of the surroundings in those customer contact places (reception areas, enquiry/help desks etc)

- Q15 How do you think service by council staff compares to private sector staff? (such as in banks and building societies)**
- Much better 1
 - Better 2
 - About the same 3
 - Worse 4
 - Much worse 5

