

Appendices

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title

Cabinet Response to Customer Service Task and Finish Group

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	16 January 2013
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Customers and Communities
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Brandon Eldred
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to respond to the recommendations set out in the Overview and Scrutiny document constructed between January and May 2012, presented to cabinet 11 July 2012.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report for Customer Services are accepted.

2.1.2 That the Task and Finish group are formally congratulated for their commitment to continued customer excellence, the high quality and comprehensive report produced and thanked for the time and effort given to produce it.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 It was highlighted in the original report that significant and innovative improvements had been made in Customer Services, but it also recognised that there was still some scope for improvements to further enhance and enrich the customer experience when approaching the Council for advice.
- 3.1.2 The Review took place between January and May 2012, and the Panel received evidence both written and spoken, from a variety of expert advisors. The Panel also visited a number of other Council facilities to obtain a fair benchmark upon which to compare standards, and to better equip them to make a fair and qualitative judgement as to the importance of a good quality customer service.

3.2 Eight recommendations were included in the report

3.2.1 The recommendations are:

- a) That funding for improved signage both outside and inside the Guildhall be 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
- 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.
- c) That funding for additional uniforms for front line Customer Services Officers be investigated.
- d) That the uniforms provided for front line Customer Services Officers identify the corporate image of the Council.
- 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.
- 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 service skills, to enable the channel shift strategy to be fully applied to calls/visits in relation to these departments.
- g) That Planning Services is incorporated into the One Stop shop and the Planning Reception desk is constantly manned during opening hours by a fully trained Customer Advisor
- 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.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 All recommendations have been accepted by Customer Services, with most now already deployed. Services such as front-end Licensing, Planning and Building Control, will be progressed in the New Year following consultation with the relevant Service Head.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 There are none specifically

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 There are no financial implications at this stage, from the adoption of these recommendations.

4.3 Legal

None specifically.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 There are no specific new equality implications in adopting these recommendations.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 The Panel took evidence from a wide range of Stakeholders, Councillors, representatives from Northamptonshire Federation of Residents' Association; Customer Plus; Gentoo and Ford Retail; Rugby Borough Council; Northamptonshire County Council; Northampton Leisure Trust; Enterprise Management Services; The Leader of the Council, Councillor David Mackintosh; Cabinet Member, Councillor Brandon Eldred and a number of Officers representing service areas from Northampton Borough Council.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 NBC Corporate Plan – creating empowered communities and responding to your needs.

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

O & S Scrutiny Panel H report to Cabinet 11 July 2012

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