

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: August 2013

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 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.

Progress: Funding was provided and external signage has been installed in keeping with the town's other directional signage.

- b) That the floor-walkers located in the One Stop Shop be provided with a uniform that makes them and their role clearly identifiable to customers.

Progress: All One Stop Shop staff wear uniforms. Floor walkers are rota'd every day, throughout the day to greet and assist customers.

- c) That funding for addition uniforms for front line Customer services Officers be investigated.

Progress: The budget for uniforms was increased 2013/14, and as in point b) all staff in the One Stop Shop wear uniforms.

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- d) That the uniforms provided for front line Customer Service Officers identify the corporate image of the council.

Progress: All front facing staff wear their corporate name badges, and each uniform item is tagged with the corporate logo.

- 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.

Progress: The plasma screen now runs BBC news throughout the opening hours.

- 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.

Progress: Plans are underway to migrate the remaining services into Customer Services. A scoping document has been presented to the Head of Planning and Building Control in the first phase of the roadmap.

- 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.

Progress: Please see response to recommendation f).

- 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 on a regular basis.

Progress: Customer Services undertake mystery shopping on a quarterly basis. It has not been possible to extend this exercise to the Northampton Leisure Trust as the questions are not transferable. To test quality and accuracy of information, the questions are very specific to the technical and legislative services offered by Customer Services, mainly Housing, council tax, and benefits.

3 Conclusion

3.1 The recommendations are working well and there are no additional financial implications.

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