

Customer Services Strategy Task Force – Findings from the First Meeting

The Customer Service Strategy Task Force met for the first time on 14 August and undertook a comprehensive review of the draft strategy. The following comments were agreed:-

- a) There was strong support for greater partnership working for the benefit of the customer and to achieve efficiencies/economies of scale, although it was recognised that the strategy as it currently stood needed further work to emphasise this approach (mention was also made of the need to involve RSLs in any partnership approach)
- b) Although partnership working was championed by the Task Force, this needed to be supported by strong a governance framework with adequate controls covering data protection (particularly in respect of any CRM solution). The Strategy's suggestion that the Council may not always be the lead partner was also supported in principle, subject to clear accountability.
- c) The strategy needed to be explicit in what it wanted to achieve in terms of key performance indicators and the efficiencies/savings anticipated. The strategy also needed to provide evidence of, and refer to, best practice elsewhere
- d) The Strategy would benefit from a comprehensive glossary of words/phrases as an appendix.
- e) The Task Force was sceptical of the benefits/use of speech recognition technology and asked that Members be involved in the evaluation of such an approach. Any use of such a system (should an evaluation deem it necessary) would need to be fully supported by a comprehensive publicity campaign to raise understanding. The Task Force requested that other options be considered during any evaluation, such as number select (IVR) and the ability for users to be given wait times.
- f) The use of text messaging was supported in principle subject to adequate evaluation of demand, with controls in place identifying that the message had been received.
- g) The strategy needed to make reference to our News Central magazine and how it can support customer services.
- h) The Strategy needed to be clear regarding the Council's intentions over I-Stop Kiosks ie outcomes from the pilot, what's next, etc. Members also requested details of where these pilots were.
- i) The Task Force requested that the Strategy outline proposals regarding extended opening hours with a full evaluation and business case.
- j) The Task Force agreed that Members were an integral part of providing good customer service and could act as a "critical friend" in this respect. There was also a need for the Strategy to refer to Members' role in the Community Engagement Strategy.
- k) The Task force agreed to a number of amendments to the Risk Analysis to reflect partnership working arrangements.

- l) The Task Force acknowledged that the Action Plan needed further refinement in terms of capturing all the actions contained within the strategy and ensuring key performance indicators were included.
- m) The Task Force wished to receive details of the methodology for customer satisfaction surveys.
- n) The Task Force was content with the Customer Charter with the exception of the 2 final bullet points under “Listening to our Customer”, which referred to questions/feedback regarding schools and social care. These bullet points seemed to run counter to the whole “one contact” ethos.

The Head of Customer Services will now revisit the draft Strategy, taking into account the above comments, and submit a revised version to the Task Force for consideration at its next meeting on 8 September (4pm).