
Meeting: Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 28 September 2009
Subject: Customer Services Strategy
Report of: Assistant Director, Business Transformation & Customer Services
Summary: This report summarises the findings of the Customer Services Strategy Member Task Force established by this Committee to review the draft Customer Services Strategy 2009 - 2011, and requests the Committee to endorse these findings and the draft Strategy itself for onward submission to the Council's Executive.

Contact Officer: Hannah Richards, Head of Customer Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee endorses the contents of this report and recommends to the Executive that it adopts the draft Customer Services Strategy 2009 – 2011 attached.

Reason for Recommendations: So that the Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee is able to ratify the findings of the Customer Services Strategy Task Force and approve the draft Customer Services Strategy for adoption by the Council's Executive.

Introduction

1. As Members will be aware, at its first meeting on 6 July 2009, the Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Member Task Force to review the draft Customer Services Strategy and report back its findings before Executive consideration.
2. The Customer Services Strategy Task Force duly met on 14 August and 8 September 2009 to review the draft Strategy in detail, and this review work was supported by the Assistant Director of Business Transformation & Customer Services (Clive Jones), the Head of Customer Services (Hannah Richards) and the Overview & Scrutiny Manager (Bernard Carter).
3. For information, the Task Force consisted of Councillors Nigel Aldis, Mike Gibson and Janet Nunn (Chairman).

Findings

4. The findings of the Task Force are based on a thorough examination of the draft Strategy (supported by a briefing paper prepared by the Overview & Scrutiny Manager), and a detailed question and answer session with the Assistant Director of Business Transformation & Customer Services and the Head of Customer Services at both meetings.
5. The findings have all been incorporated into the draft Strategy before Members today but detailed below is a summary of these findings for information.
 - (a) A need to strengthen the requirement for robust governance and accountability arrangements within partnership arrangements
 - (b) Increased detail in relation to the action plans listed within the Strategy appendix
 - (c) Confirmation that any business case for the implementation of speech recognition technology be presented to Members for consideration
 - (d) The requirement for a glossary of terms detailed within the Strategy. The Strategy has been expanded in context to add clarification of specific terms and references
 - (e) Increased clarity in respect of the outcomes and next actions for the I-stop pilot
 - (f) The requirement to review operating hours of customer services in line with the results of the customer insight programme

Conclusion and Next Steps

10. The attached draft Strategy (as amended by the findings above) will now be presented to the Executive for adoption at its meeting on 13 October 2009. Members of this Committee are therefore requested to endorse the contents of this report and recommend the draft Strategy's adoption by the Executive.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This Strategy supports the vision of Central Bedfordshire Council, to improve the quality of life for all. It contributes to all Council priorities through delivery of quality customer solutions, releasing specialist officers to deliver against the specific priorities

Financial:

Legal:

Any partnership or contractual arrangements will be conducted in consultation with legal colleagues

Risk Management:

A risk analysis is included within the Strategy and each work theme will develop its own risk register in line with corporate Risk Management guidance

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Consultation has been undertaken with staff and Trade Unions in respect of harmonised opening hours and will take place as appropriate for each work theme detailed in the Strategy

Equalities/Human Rights:

An equality impact assessment is being completed to ensure compliance with the Equality Framework adopted by the Council

Community Development/Safety:

The Customer Insight Programme will shape the nature of partnership working, delivery of services through the Customer Access Network, ensuring communities are supported in the most appropriate way

Sustainability:

Appendices:

Appendix A - Draft Customer Services Strategy 2009 - 2011