

COMMITMENTS SURVEY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor N Williams
LEAD OFFICER: Jane Salt, Head of Customer Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Marissa Joyce, Customer Relations Officer

Recommendation: that

- (A) the results of the Commitments Survey are publicised accordingly,
- (B) the Options to improve customer services detailed in the conclusion be introduced across the Council,
- (C) regular surveys be undertaken to measure the Council's performance against the Customer Service Commitments and the Executive be asked to find ways in which to fund these, and
- (D) further reports be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee as solutions detailed in the conclusion are being developed.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Performance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6 November 2006 (OSCP 133) commissioned a survey and mystery shopping exercise in order to measure the Council's performance against the Customer Service Commitments.
- 1.2 A summary of the results of the surveys are at Appendix "A" and "B" and a copy of the full CN Research reports in PDF format is available on the intranet and a hard copy has been placed in the members' room.
- 1.3 The results show that the Commitments are important to our customers and that in most areas we are delivering our customers high levels of expectations.

2. FINDINGS

- 2.1 In the Mystery Shopping exercise telephone and face to face scored highly overall achieving 89% and 97% respectively.

- 2.2 In the telephone and postal survey:
93% of our customers felt they were dealt with politely, professionally and with respect.
87% felt that the information we provide about our services is easy to understand.
85% felt that we make it easy for them to comment or complain about the services they receive.
78% were satisfied with the way their enquiry was handled.
- 2.3 The survey found that the most popular method of contact was by phone at 52%, followed by face to face at 36%.
- 2.4 The survey also established that our response time to letters, e-mails and voice mails was poor.
- 2.5 In the case of letters of complaint which were sent straight to the department the response time neither met the Commitment nor the Complaints procedure.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Consideration needs to be given to ways in which the findings can be used to improve customer services. These are shown in the conclusions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 As 80% of responses rated our Commitments at 8, 9 or 10 on a scale of 1-10 of importance, it is recommended the commitments remain as they are. They should be publicised in customer areas and on the website. All sections will be asked to adopt an approach that will allow the measurement of them.
- 4.2 Employees will be made aware of the Commitments by way of a reminder in Team Talk. The item be added to the Induction checklist and be part of the Employee development interviews.
- 4.3 There is a need to develop an I.T system which will automatically record and monitor all correspondence received via e-mail and letter. Each department will then be able to record incoming correspondence and the system will automatically confirm receipt of e-mails, issue reminders when responses are due and allow us to do quality checks on correspondence.
- 4.4 As phone and face to face are the most popular methods of contact and score the highest, there is a need to extend the services delivered through the single point of contact.

- 4.5 Future surveys should be carried out at regular intervals in order to continue to measure our achievements of these Commitments.
- 4.6 Further progress reports can be made to Overview and Scrutiny Committees as these developments are progressed.
- 5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)**

- 5.1 Costs of developing the system will be within the existing IT budget.
- 5.2 The Council needs to find funds to cover the costs of future surveys.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 None

7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 The recommendations will help the Council to become more customer focussed.
- 7.2 In particular it will help achieve objectives 2.5.1 and 2.5.5. These are:

Action	Outcomes (measurable)	Target date
Survey customer satisfaction and stakeholder perception at agreed frequency	Baselined customer satisfaction and stakeholder perception understood	Annual
Extend the services delivered through a single point of contact for all our customers	Continued improvement in customer service	2012

List of Appendices

- Appendix A - Commitments Survey summary
- Appendix B - Mystery Shopping summary

List of Background Documents: CN Research Commitments Survey and Mystery Shopping

List of Consultees: Corporate Team, Cllr N Williams
CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Allow timely response to reported issues
Impact on Sustainability	Allow timely response to reported issues
Impact on Rural Proofing	Allow timely response to reported issues
Health and Safety Implications	Allow timely response to reported issues
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Ensure all customers have equal access
Children and Young Persons Implications	Allow timely response to reported issues
Human Rights Act Implications	Allow timely response to reported issues

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision NO