

## **SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 5 NOVEMBER 2008**

### **HTWM CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE AND CUSTOMER FIRST PROGRAMME UPDATE**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Scrutiny Commission of the current performance of the HTWM Customer Service Centre and to demonstrate that future phases of the Customer First Programme are well planned and reflect the lessons learned to date.

##### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

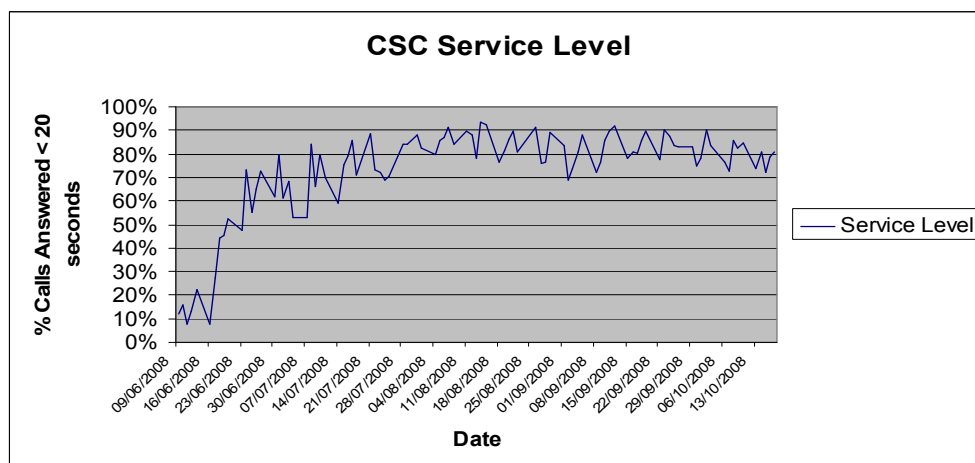
2. The Scrutiny Commission met on the 18 June 2008 and considered the Strategic Change Programme's annual report 2007/08 and resolved:
  - a) *That this Commission notes the Annual Report and welcomes the progress made particularly in relation to capacity building and the achievement, ahead of target, of procurement efficiencies of £4.4 million;*
  - b) *That the Cabinet be advised accordingly and that the Commission:-*
    - (i) *has concerns about the implementation of the elements of the Customer Services Centre for Highways, Transportation and Waste and the procurement of external services within Highways which has seen a deterioration in service;*
    - (ii) *whilst noting the assurances given, remains concerned about the proposed roll out of the Customer First programme particularly in the case of Adult Social Care;*
    - iii) *requests that a further progress report be submitted to a future meeting of the Commission on the Strategic Change Programme, and in particular, plans put in place to recover the position on the Customer Service Centre and proposals for the roll out of the next phase, and that the appropriate Cabinet Lead Member be invited to attend the meeting for consideration of that report.*

## **Background**

3. The Business Case for the Customer First Programme was approved by Chief Officers in August 2006. This Business Case states the vision for the programme which is that it *will provide customers with improved web, telephone and in-person access to obtain information and request Council services.*
4. On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2006 Cabinet considered a report that presented a summary of the Customer First Programme business case and agreed that the programme should proceed.
5. The Business case describes the overall solution as the establishment of specialist customer service centres delivering customer service to a consistent, high standard for all service departments, linked through the use of a single Customer Relationship Management solution (CRM), providing a single view of the customer. The implementation plan within the document articulated a phased approach that would see the first of these service centres providing customer service for Highways Transportation and Waste Management (HTWM) by the end of 2007.
6. The HTWM Customer Service Centre (CSC) went live in November 2007. Following an initial settling in period, the CSC reached the nationally recognised target service level of answering 80% of calls within 20 seconds.
7. In Spring 2008, an unprecedented increase in call volumes coincided with a further technology upgrade resulting in a significant drop in service levels. An action plan to restore performance to its previous level over a 6 – 8 week period was developed and implemented.

## **Current Performance of the HTWM Customer Service Centre**

8. A comprehensive review of operational issues including technology, process and staffing arrangements in the CSC made a series of recommendations to consolidate and improve upon performance. As a result, since mid July 2008, the HTWM Customer Service Centre has consistently met the service level target of answering 80% of calls within 20 seconds as demonstrated by the following graph.



9. This target is consistently achieved through the answering of calls by a member of the CSC, not relying on an automated menu approach ("press one for service XX etc). Many other organisations rely on this technology to meet the target.
10. The CSC has also developed a number of quality measures that includes
  - The recording of all calls in the service centre to assist in agent training
  - Outbound calling to customers seeking feedback on customer service experience
  - The procurement of a system that will give all customers the option to answer a series of short questions on their customer experience. This will apply to telephone, website and face to face locations. This is expected to operational in the New Year.
  - The use of a mystery shopper approach. A six monthly cycle will test all aspects of the customer experience, including accuracy of a response by a CSA (based on a model answer provided).

### **Future Phases of Customer First**

11. In March 2008, the Customer First Programme Board received a report detailing the lessons learned during the delivery of phase 1 and how these will be incorporated into the delivery of future phases of the programme. One conclusion was the need to 'refresh' the programme business case, to ensure that it accurately reflects the current issues within the wider Strategic Change Programme. This revised business case will be considered by Chief Officers in December 2008.
12. The key 'lessons learned' that have been incorporated into the delivery of phase 2 are:-
  - a) Carry out a more detailed analysis of existing call volumes for services transferring into the Customer Service Centre to ensure adequate staffing numbers are deployed.
  - b) Ensure greater involvement in the design and implementation process from the impacted department.
  - c) Plan a more gradual introduction of services into the service centre, avoiding where possible, too many services and existing numbers transferring on a single day to limit risks during 'go-live'.
13. Delivery of Phase 2 of the programme will see the migration of Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) services to the existing service centre and the establishment of a second service centre for Community Services Department (CSD) providing customer service for Registrars, Country Parks and Rights of Way enquires. The management of these service centres and the training approach will mean peaks in demand in a particular service area can be met through use of agents from other service centres.
14. Detailed analysis of telephony statistics (that were not available in Phase 1) has been undertaken and a sensitivity test against anecdotal volumes provided by existing staff in PTU and CSD completed. This validated data increases the confidence of the programme board on the calculation of the required staffing levels in the service centre.

15. The Phase 2 CSC will go live from June 2009. A detailed transition plan has been prepared that takes into account seasonal peaks in customer demand of in-scope services, and the detailed lessons recorded in phase 1.
16. The Customer First programme is enhancing the content of information on the County Council's website and developing on-line forms that allow customers to make bookings, make payments or request services for in-scope services. An enhanced website will encourage customers to access information and request services at a time that suits them and promotes the Council's most cost effective channel for customer service.
17. The customer service solution for Adult Social Care will be designed to support the personalisation of Social Care agenda. The original Customer First business case recognised that it was too early to specify a detailed solution for Adult Social Care. Further detailed work defining the precise approach is ongoing.

### **Resource Implications**

18. The Implementation costs of the Customer First Programme remain within the total identified in the 5 year financial model. There is a predicted increase in revenue costs as a result of the service centre managing more customer service work for the departments than had originally been anticipated. This increase will be met by reductions in administrative staff in departments, a principle agreed in the Customer First business case.

### **Timetable for decisions**

19. None

### **Conclusions**

20. The HTWM Customer Service Centre is consistently meeting its service level target of answering 80% of calls within 20 seconds.
21. A revision to the Customer First business case will restate the programme vision, but set out a new implementation approach, incorporating lessons learned to date and changes in the wider Strategic Change Programme.
22. A customer service solution for Adult Social Care is currently being prepared in collaboration with the ASC Personalisation programme with implementation scheduled for completion in summer 2010.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

23. There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report. Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken for each phase of the Customer First Programme.

### **Environmental Implications**

24. There are no specific environmental issues arising from this report.

### **Background Papers**

25. None

### **Circulation under Sensitive Issues Procedure**

26. The report relates to service improvement across the Council, and as such there are no issues affecting particular local members or areas.

### **Officers to Contact**

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### **Appendices**

None