

# Customer Services Service Plan 2010/2011

SECTION

1

## Description of Service

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### Customer Services

Customer Services supports the delivery of all of the Council Services to its external customers. The Council is looking to continue to improve the way people can access services regardless of whether they choose to visit, telephone or use other modern methods such as email or the internet to contact us. The intention is that any customer will be able to contact us in a convenient way that suits their needs and receive a consistent high level of customer care.

It aims to fulfil the majority of enquiries at first point of contact to reduce unnecessary contact by customers and to ensure they receive a positive experience when they contact the Council. The strategy for delivering ongoing improved customer service consists of multi-skilling members of staff so that they can deal with customers in a holistic manner. These skills are supported by the use of developing technology that will continue to assist in our developments to provide ongoing improved customer experiences.

SECTION

2

## Recent Achievements

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During 2009/2010 the service achieved the following:

- A positive Ofsted inspection of the Children Centres with them claiming that they were “one of the best examples of joined up working in the Country”
- Successfully implemented the Customer Service Performance Improvement Action Plan
- An improvement in call answering efficiency compared to 2009/10
- Despite a huge increase in workload in benefits and council tax due to the recession, improvements in individual performance and increases in productivity, this workload is being maintained with the same resource
- Championed the NI14 – Avoidable Contact indicator to help reduce avoidable contact Council-wide
- Improvements in complaints handling resulting in quicker responses and more complaints being dealt with at stage 1
- Improvements in Freedom of Information and Data Protection handling
- Closer and more productive relationships formed with service areas working towards service improvement and more positive customer experiences

SECTION

3

## The Next Steps

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## Customer Services

The service contributes to the Council's efficiency savings targets through a number of medium term actions have also been identified over the following two years. The plans for the improvement/change in service levels over the years 2011/12 and 2012/13 are shown below:

Proposal	Link to Strategic Priorities	2011/12	2012/13	Outcome targets
To begin to adopt Government standards in Customer Service Excellence	A Well Run Council	To start	√	By meeting high standards in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Insight</li> <li>• Positive Organisational Culture</li> <li>• Information and Access</li> <li>• Service Delivery</li> <li>• Timeliness and Quality of Service</li> </ul> This may take several years but Customer Services can champion this organisational improvement so that we can achieve the Customer Service Excellence accreditation.  Link: <a href="http://www.cse.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/UserFiles/Custom er_Service_Excel lence_standard.pdf">http://www.cse.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/UserFiles/Custom er_Service_Excel lence_standard.pdf</a>
To adopt the 12 principles of high quality customer service being developed throughout Leicestershire Local Authorities and embed within our organisation and processes	A Well Run Council	√		The Principles of High Quality Customer Service are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality Service Standards</li> <li>2. Equality/Diversity</li> <li>3. Accessible</li> <li>4. Consultation and Evaluation</li> <li>5. Choice</li> <li>6. Value for Money</li> <li>7. Information</li> <li>8. Complaints</li> <li>9. Partnership</li> <li>10. Reducing Avoidable Contact</li> <li>11. Our People</li> <li>12. Best Practice</li> </ol>
Implementing a Revised Customer Service Strategy	A Well Run Council  People	√		To succinctly draw together the Customer Service Excellence Standards, the 12 Principles of High Quality Customer Service, the Access Strategy and the Service Plan

With this slight change in direction for Customer Services, the following short-term actions are designed to lay down the foundations in order to achieve these strategic objectives. During 2010/11 the following short-term actions are to be completed:

## Customer Services

Action	<a href="#">Link to Strategic Priorities/ LAA outcomes</a>	Outcome targets
To complete and implement a Benefits Lean Project for handling new benefit claims	People A Well Run Council	To quicken the processing and payment of new benefit claims  To streamline the process and cut out 'waste'  Improve benefits performance
In order to aid development, training and further improve performance, divide Customer Services into two smaller teams (team 1 including telephones, council tax and face to face reception and team 2 including benefits, face to face appointments and outreach).	A Well Run Council	To better facilitate training in each area to improve service delivery and increase resilience  To allow for clearer responsibility and accountability for the team leaders  To help reduce sickness but providing better employee development  Team to take ownership for the performance of the department
To work on and contribute to the anti-social behaviour Circles of Needs projects to help improve outcomes for victims of anti-social behaviour whilst tackling the needs of the perpetrator to prevent the causes of anti-social behaviour	People	To implement service improvements to improve customer experiences and meet needs and expectations of the service by working with the Anti-social Behaviour Officer and Neighbourhood Improvement Officer and relevant partner organisations  To champion CRM improvements to aid service improvements  To champion customer experiences and expectations to help a more customer-focussed organisational culture  Create a 'lessons learned' document of the process followed so that the principles can be applied to other service areas in introducing service improvements
Review access strategy for the new build to ensure the best possible face to face service is delivered	A Well Run Council	To ensure the services remains easily accessible when the Council offices are relocated to the new building
Review and implement clear service standards to set clear customer expectations and to provide an open, high quality service which is more outcome focussed	A Well Run Council	Getting the balance between service delivery and value for money  Ensure they are clearly advertised by a variety of channels (web, leaflet, telephone...etc.)  Develop a reporting mechanism to improve accountability

## Customer Services

Action	<a href="#">Link to Strategic Priorities/ LAA outcomes</a>	Outcome targets
To implement and champion a revised programme of tackling avoidable contact within the organisation to help improve outcomes for customers and improve their experience with the Council	A Well Run Council  People	To be used as a form of customer consultation to identify 'problem' areas  Specific service areas to be targeting to show a before and after picture of any service redesign  Shows more clearly outcomes of service improvement
Aid, support and champion channel shift (along with the implementation and administration of transactions online) to provide a wider choice of access channels to our customers	A Well Run Council  People	Launch transactions online  CSAs promote online transactions to aid channel shift  Streamline process to aid the administration of online transactions
Review and implement team and individual performance goals to aid development of front line staff	A Well Run Council	Get team buy in to the overall performance  Ensure that productivity is maximised for each person and any development opportunities identified and acted upon at the earliest opportunity
Review Customer Service Strategy and Customer Care Policy	A Well Run Council  People	To succinctly bring together the Customer Service Strategy, the Access Strategy, Customer Care Policy and the Service Plan to provide a seamless set of aims and objectives aimed at improving customer outcomes
Champion service ownership and development of CRM processes and workflows	A Well Run Council	Using the anti-social behaviour improvements to promote the benefits of having an up-to-date and useful CRM workflows  Reduces the needs and reliance on masses of training  Helps address audit requirements for the accurate collection of information
Educate and champion the improvement of complaints handling within service areas along with quarterly reporting to Operational Management Team	A Well Run Council	Ensure a consistent process is followed in the handling and resolution of complaints  Resolve complaints at the earliest possible opportunity  Develop a Compensation Policy to help redress customers who have suffered financial loss or distress  Communicate Council-wide the complaints handling process to ensure uniformity

## Customer Services

Action	<a href="#">Link to Strategic Priorities/ LAA outcomes</a>	Outcome targets
To further improve the handling, recording and reporting of Freedom of Information and Data Protection requests	A Well Run Council	Communicate the importance of and timescales for FOI and DP requests  Look to automate using the CRM to reduce CS Admin time
Improve disability and diversity awareness throughout the department for both customers and employees	A Well Run Council  People	Visual awareness training to be organised to improve understanding Council-wide  Disability awareness training to be developed
Review recruitment and performance criteria to be more competencies-based (skills based) rather than competency-based (workload based)	A Well Run Council	Ensure that quality employees are recruited with the right skills to excel in the job  Focus more on skills and work behaviour than just quality of work as these have a huge bearing on morale, productivity and motivation of others and sickness
Utilise the benchmarking groups signed up through the County's Customer Service Managers Meeting to create 'best practice' guides to service delivery and service performance	A Well Run Council	Ensures that High Quality Customer Service standards are implemented and reviewed with best practice guidance

### SECTION

# 4

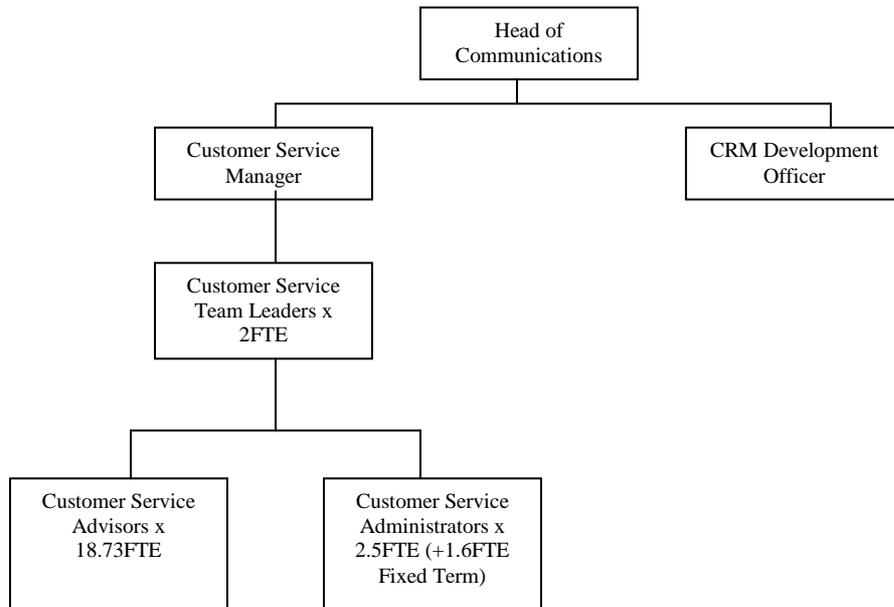
## Resource Utilisation

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### Staff

The posts within the Customer Service & Change service are shown below:

## Customer Services



### Finance

The Customer Service and Change (471) budget is detailed below:

	<b>2010/11 Estimate</b>
	<b>£</b>
Employees	739,730
Premises	34,410
Transport	7,800
Supplies	64,140
Support Services	182,540
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<i>1,024,620</i>
Capital charges	47,980
Recharges to Services	992,530
<b><i>Net Expenditure</i></b>	<b><i>0</i></b>

### SECTION

# 5

## Risks

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## Customer Services

<b>Likelihood</b>	A				
	B				
	C		1,3,8		
	D		4	7	
	E			2,5,6	
	F				
		IV	III	II	I
	<b>Impact</b>				

<b>Risk No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Capacity and Reliance on Resource due to Absence
2	Changes in Customer Demand
3	Not Enough Resource in Admin to Cover Reception Hours
4	Failure to Obtain Service Area Buy In
5	CRM Changes do not Produce Expected Improvements
6	Loss of Key Skills within the Team before Training has Desired Outcome
7	Improvements in Performance are not Realised
8	Competing Council Priorities Impacting on Service Objectives
9	Unknown Impact of Total Place
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	

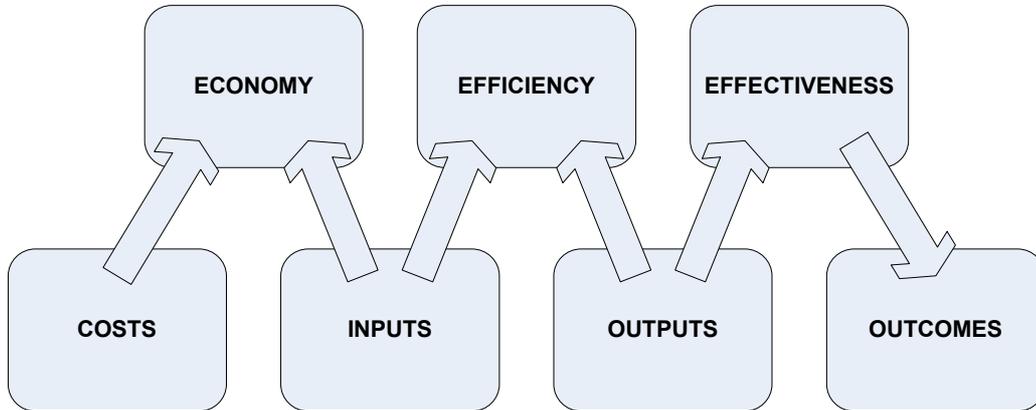
SECTION

# 6

## Performance Management

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To measure the progress that is being made in providing better quality services and real value for money a number of performance indicators have been established and targets set for the service:



Performance information is linked into the review in the service standards and expectations. Additional report to follow once these standards have been revised.