



<p><b>TITLE: CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY – ONE STOP SHOP UPDATE REPORT</b></p> <p><b>TO/ON: CABINET ON 9TH NOVEMBER, 2005</b></p> <p><b>BY: HELEN LOCKWOOD, HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES &amp; E-GOV.</b></p> <p><b>LEAD MEMBER: COUNCILLOR JANET FARQUHARSON</b></p> <p><b>STATUS:</b></p>
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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1. To provide Member's with One Stop Shop progress update.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. That the progress be noted.

**3. REPORT AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

3.1. As a major contributing factor to achieving the District Vision of Rossendale Alive, the Council has made a commitment to have 8 out of 10 customers satisfied with its services by 2008. Central to this is the Council's corporate objective of "Customers" which tasks us with "being more responsive and proactive to meet the needs of all our customers i.e., Putting Customers First.

3.2 The council is addressing this through the implementation of a One Stop Shop (OSS) and a telephone contact centre. These will be implemented through a phased approach. The first phase will be the implementation of the walk in, face-to-face OSS. It is intended to undertake testing of IT and telephone systems from the end of November to early December thus allowing the public to use the OSS as soon as possible thereafter. The second phase will be the implementation of a small telephone contact centre located within the OSS, which will go live early 2006.

3.3 This work will also act as a major stepping stone to the development and future co-location of a Multi Agency OSS which will cover other partner services such as Highways and Street Lighting.

#### **4.1 WHAT IS A ONE STOP SHOP?**

- 4.2** The face to face walk in OSS will deal with all of our enquiries, suggestions, requests and complaints about the council in one convenient visit. The OSS aims to give greater access to council services and is part of a bigger project that puts customers at the heart of the council's activities and services.
- 4.3** Many people find it frustrating to be sent from one department to another when they need to talk to council staff. The OSS will be accessible, well signposted, friendly and welcoming.
- 4.4** The OSS will be continually improved to ensure as many queries as possible are dealt with by one generic specially trained Customer Services Advisor (CSA) - making the customer's life easier.
- 4.5** In addition to this the OSS service will also incorporate accessing the Council through its website which has been redeveloped to make on-line access easier for those customers who wish to conduct business with the Council in that way.

#### **4.6 HOW WILL THE ONE STOP SHOP WORK IN ROSSENDALE?**

- 4.7** When a customer enters the OSS they will be clearly signposted to the meet and greet area and the OSS waiting area. At this point their enquiry will be dealt with at first point of contact or if it is complex they will be assigned to one of the generic advisers.
- 4.8** Initially customers will be able to book appointments which will be ideal in situations which perhaps involve a complex query and whereby the use of a private interview room is required. Overtime it is intended to offer both a face to face and on line service which is able to meet customer needs at any time suitable to them.
- 4.9** All One Stop Shop Customer Service Advisers will be issued with a corporate uniform and will wear name badges so it is easy for the customer to identify who they are speaking to.

#### **4.10 The One Stop shop as a minimum will deal with or be able to correctly signpost:**

- General Council enquiries
- General reception functions
- Housing allocations and housing points
- Council tax queries, issuing and collecting of forms
- Issuing forms and receipts for Housing and Council Tax benefits
- Environmental health issues such as noise pollution and food premises
- Queries relating to the renting and leasing garages
- Removing domestic refuse and arranging special collections
- Issue concessionary bus passes for the elderly or people with mobility problems
- Tender and Council legal notices and minutes
- Planning enquiries and designated area to view plans
- Provide private interviewing facilities with specialist staff so you can be assured of confidentiality
- Have direct telephone links to all council services, including parks and allotments, refuse collection, landscaping and more.
- Have full access facilities for people with disabilities
- Have access to Language Line for customers without English as a first language
- Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) will operate a surgery on a weekly basis in the OSS
- There will be a free phone in the OSS for reporting Housing repairs
- Ensure all county council service requests are correctly signposted

#### **4.11 WHAT TECHNOLOGY WILL IT USE?**

The OSS will use Onyx Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology which has been provided through the Shared Service Contact Centre Partnership. This is a partnership between the five borough council's in East Lancashire, Chorley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. The CRM system allows the Council to manage and record every aspect of their relationship with a customer from one central point. The CSA's will initially have access to back office systems but the long term plans are to integrate these directly into the CRM system.

In addition customer service advisers will utilise Rossendale's new web system and in doing so will be able to promote the benefits of using the web to Rossendale's citizens.

#### **4.12 WHERE ARE WE UP TO NOW?**

- Refurbishment work has commenced in the ground floor of the Town Hall Annex
- A Communications Plan has been developed for the OSS
- Health and Safety Procedures have been discussed and are in place
- Clear signage for both internal and external use has been arranged
- 7 Customer Service Advisors (CSA's), 1 Team Leader and a Customer Services Manager are in the process of being recruited
- Training and development needs are being identified and some initial Revenues and Benefits training is already being undertaken
- We are examining the processes that will take place between front and back office and looking at drawing up Service Level Agreements to manage this

#### **4.13 WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

- Once the refurbishment work has been completed the furniture, fixtures and fittings and technology will be installed
- Necessary risk assessments will be carried out in the building
- An intensive initial training programme will commence mid November for all the CSA's and the Team Leader. An ongoing training and development programme is also being developed
- There will be a smooth transition from closing the Town Hall reception point and opening the OSS and this is covered within the communications plan.
- Once the OSS opens to the public we will monitor the way that front and back office interact with each other in order to identify service improvements
- An embryonic telephone contact centre is scheduled to open in the New Year which will take all incoming calls that were previously taken in the switchboard in the Town Hall

## **5. IN CONCLUSION**

The One Stop Shop, web system and the telephone contact centre will be the Council's main point of contact with its customer's.

The One Stop Shop will operate in accordance with the Council's Customer Service Standards and the wider Customer Services Strategy. The ethos of the OSS will be one of delivering excellence with the approach of getting it right first time.

Our aim is to ensure the team operate within a culture of continuous improvement in order to improve the services we offer.

## **6. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Finance and Risk Management**

6.1.2 The development costs for delivery and ongoing management of the One Stop Shop are contained within existing capital and revenue budgets.

The One Stop Shop/Call Centre development is vital in order to start to address the various customer service issues and improve customer satisfaction levels. It is considered a significant step towards achieving corporate improvement and development that is fundamental for our aim of achieving a CPA rating of "Fair" by 2005 and our ultimate mission of 80% customer satisfaction by 2008.

## **7. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

7.1 Members are critical to the success of the establishment of one stop shop and contact centre both in terms of their community leadership role with their significant contribution and interest in improving customer relations and services for their constituents. In addition, they will play a vital role in driving and promoting both developments as a way of implementing the Customer Services Strategy.

## **8. HUMAN RESOURCES**

8.1 The adoption of the One Stop Shop and Contact Centre model has significant impact on all services and staff who deliver a customer facing function.

Staff who are performing primarily front facing activity within their current role in the services outlined have been "ring fence" for the new posts and appointments are being made via competitive interview in accordance with the current Human Resources Policy.

These staff will be highly trained to deliver excellent customer services as well as receiving training in all the Council function delivered in the shop.

## **9. ANY OTHER RELEVANT CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

Customer Services, customer perception and levels of customer satisfaction which are the focus of this report and the Best Value Review are directly impacted by, and will impact upon, all of our 8 Corporate Objectives and our Corporate Improvement Priorities.

## **10. RISK**

The key risks associated with this report in summary are:

- Complex programme and timetable – all activity will need to be tightly managed
- ICT – Part of this programme entails significant contributions from third parties in terms of delivering appropriate ICT hardware and software etc. (SX3, Vivista as well as the preferred supplier for telephone systems), that could compromise the programme
- Staff resistance to change – it is natural for staff to be reluctant to change the status quo. However, this can be mitigated to some degree with extensive and comprehensive communications and this has commenced.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE REPORT**

None identified.

## **12. EQUALITIES ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REPORT**

The Customer Services Best Value Review highlighted a number of areas that require significant improvement. These included consultation with all diverse social groups and improvements to buildings in terms of accessibility. The development of Rossendale Customer Services Strategy, Contact Centre and One Stop Shop will provide equal service to all members of the community by improving accessibility in terms of both availability and physical accessibility.

## **13. WARDS AFFECTED**

All

#### **14. CONSULTATIONS**

Various consultations have taken place. Full details can be seen in the background documents listed below.

#### **15. Background documents:**

Customer Services Best Value Review documents  
Customer Services Strategy

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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