

## Progress Update Report – Halton Direct Link

**Period:** Q4 - 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

### 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information concerning those objectives / milestones identified within the Adults and Community Directorate Plan that relate to the Council's Halton Direct Link facility.

### 2.0 Key Developments / Emerging Issues

The Council's Efficiency Review of Halton Direct Link and Revenue & Benefits Division, which combines Customer Services Division with Revenues and Benefits Division into a new structure was formally accepted in January 2011.

All posts within the new structure have been recruited from within Halton Direct Link and the necessary reductions in posts have all been achieved through requests for Voluntary Early Retirement or Voluntary Redundancy.

A review of the Council's Contact Centre is currently ongoing and options for Future Service Delivery models are being explored. The 'As Is' Report, or the current situation, will go to the Efficiency Programme Board in May 2011.

On-going Customer Satisfaction Exit Surveys carried out during quarter 4 have again revealed very positive results. 94% of Customers questioned in the One Stop Shops found the waiting times to be acceptable and 89% of those contacting the Contact Centre found the waiting time acceptable. Quality of Service received was rated very high with 86% of Customers in the One Stop Shops and 90% of Customers using the Contact Centre rating the service as Very Good.

A separate survey was carried out for the Contact Centre Efficiency Review and results of this have shown that there needs to be more awareness raising of the Contact Centre, and what services it provides and hours of opening. A marketing strategy is to be drawn up as part of the 'To Be', future process.

Over the weekend of 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March the Contact Centre relocated to Municipal Building first floor from Catalyst House. The move went relatively smoothly. This also provided an opportunity to fully test the Business Continuity Plans for the Contact Centre, by maintaining service delivery at another as the telephony infrastructure was relocated.

The new facilities at the Municipal building have been designed to foster an efficient and flexible style of open plan working, with a modern ergonomic look. All staff now work in a hot-desking environment and a clear desk policy is in force.

Staff, within the Contact Centre, have settled into their new environment and there is a very positive feel amongst the team in the new surroundings.

### 3.0 Current Progress

#### Objectives/Milestones

<b>Objective CS3</b>
<b>Review the efficiency of Customer Services (Halton Direct Link) to ensure that it is providing a value for money service, which meets the needs of the people of Halton</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q 4</b>
Develop an Implementation, Transition and Development Plan which outlines the activities required to implement the recommendations of the review of Halton Direct Link <b>May 2010</b> (AOF 33).	Refer to comment
<b>Supporting Commentary</b>	
<p>The new structure for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits was agreed in January 2011 and all posts have been recruited into. The reduction in posts within the One Stop Shops have all been achieved through voluntary means.</p> <p>An implementation team was recently formed to ensure that all systems and procedures required for the new way of working, which sees Benefits officers working within the One Stop Shops, are in place for the agreed date of April 29<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>A separate review of the Contact Centre is continuing and the 'As Is' report will go to Efficiency programme Board in May 2011. Work is on-going on this review with regards to identifying new, more efficient, ways of working and at least 75% of the savings target has potentially been identified.</p>	

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q 4</b>
Following the work stream efficiency assessment of Halton Direct Link, develop alternative options for delivery of the service (if any) <b>April 2010</b> (AOF 33).	Refer to comment
<b>Supporting Commentary</b>	
<p>Several options for delivery of service were presented to the Efficiency Board in January and a new structure has been agreed, which sees Benefit Officers embedded within the One Stop Shops. The Customer Services Division will be combined with the Revenues and Benefits Divisions. The new structure will be implemented from 29<sup>th</sup> April 2011.</p> <p>A separate review of the Contact Centre is currently on-going.</p>	

Milestone	Progress Q 4
Following implementation of the Transition and Development Plan, undertake an evaluation of the service to ensure that it is meeting the requirements of the people of Halton <b>Mar 2011</b> (AOF 33).	Refer to comment
Supporting Commentary	
Subject to the progress being made in the above milestone.	

### Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	09 -10 Actual	10 – 11 Target	Progress Q4
NI 14	Avoidable Contact: The average number of customer contacts per received customer request.	18.97 %	18 %	Refer to comment

Supporting Commentary
<p>This NI is no longer collected nationally because of the difficulties in ensuring data is collected in a comparable manner.</p> <p>As a result, information regarding this indicator will no longer be collated, but a review of performance indicators will be undertaken once the Efficiency Programme outcomes are known.</p>