

REPORT TO: Corporate Services PPB
DATE: 9th September 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT: Review of Customer Care
WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the draft topic brief for the review of Customer Care.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 That the draft topic brief for the review of Customer Care be endorsed.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Board has agreed a number of topics for review this year. A main recommendation of the review of compliments and complaints from last year was for the Council to use the Customer Excellence Model to develop a Customer Care Strategy across the organisation. A draft topic brief is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and endorsement.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications arising directly from this report at this stage. However customer care impacts on the service provision of all council directorates and therefore the review should have a positive effect on the way the Council interacts with its customers.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Review of Compliments and Complaints Report	Municipal Building	Rob Ross

TOPIC BRIEF TEMPLATE (Part I)

TOPIC TITLE **Customer Care**

PPB(s) responsible: Corporate Services. Officer Lead: R.Mackenzie Tel: 1016

Planned start/end dates Sept 08– Mar 09. Target PPB meeting 2/6/09

Topic description and scope

There are two strands to this Scrutiny topic. The first strand is to explore how best to implement the Customer Excellence Model to help drive improvement and consistency throughout the organisation. It is expected that this will lead to increased customer satisfaction with how the Council operates and responds to its customers.

The second strand is to develop an overarching Customer Care Strategy which sets out the key areas the Council needs to focus on in order to secure improved outcomes for its customers. The strategy will describe the Council's current approach to customer care and the opportunities that exist that will enable the Council to continuously improve service delivery as a result of responding to our customers. This will involve reviewing the current systems in place throughout the organisation and researching examples of best practice through the IDEA and other local authorities.

Why this topic was chosen

Last year's Scrutiny Programme included the review of Compliments and Complaints with the final report being reported to this Board on 3rd June 2008. The review was undertaken following on from the results of the 2006 Best Value User Satisfaction Survey. The survey found that 22% of respondents had made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months, of which only 31% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way that the Council had handled their complaints. This satisfaction level was below the average for all local authorities and was lower than Halton's satisfaction level in the previous survey in 2003.

Whilst the scrutiny review recommended a number of improvements to improve customer satisfaction, particularly with regard to compliments and complaints, it found that those local authorities that had secured the greatest improvements in customer satisfaction had an overarching Customer Care Strategy in place. Therefore the review's main recommendation was for the Council to develop a Customer Care Strategy and as part of the process use the Customer Excellence Model which has received support from Management Team.

Key outputs and outcomes sought

An overarching Customer Care Strategy which sets out the key areas the Council needs to focus on in order to secure improved outcomes for its customers.

An implementation plan setting out the most beneficial way to roll out the Customer Excellence Model throughout the organisation to help drive improvement and consistency in relation to customer care.

It is anticipated that this will lead to improved customer satisfaction which will be assessed by the new Place Survey which replaces the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey.

Which of Halton's 6 strategic priorities this topic addresses and the key objectives and improvement targets it will help to achieve

The scrutiny topic relates to the strategic priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery. In particular:

- B To deliver services in a fair, equal, accessible way to all residents.
- E To improve continuously the quality and efficiency of services.

Therefore by developing a Customer Care Strategy and implementing the Customer Excellence Model this should have a positive impact on Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery.

Nature of expected / desired PPB input

The desired PPB input is to:

- comment on and agree the scope
- in particular, indicate how they would like to receive information on the implementation of the Customer Excellence Model and drafting of a Customer Care Strategy
- receive and comment on progress reports
- monitor progress against the final action plan

Preferred mode of operation

The approach taken should be to:

- audit the current position across the Council and consider the most appropriate way of implementing the Customer Excellence Model
- look at good practice elsewhere for example the IDEA and benchmark against other local authorities with regard to Customer Care Strategies
- consult
- put together proposals for change
- finalise recommendations

Media/communication implications

Improvements in customer care should result in an increase of positive media communications and a reduction of negative media communications.

Agreed and signed by:

PPB Chair

Officer

Date:.....

Date:.....