
Report to:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT	AGENDA ITEM:
Date of Meeting:	22nd JUNE 2006	CATEGORY: OPEN
Report from:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	
Members' Contact Point	JAYNE JONES (Ext 5800) PAM CARROLL (Ext 5784)	Doc:
Subject:	Customer First	Ref: JJ
Ward(s) Affected	All	Terms of Reference: FM05

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the committee notes the continued progress on the Customer First project and the achievements to date.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update Finance & Management on progress with the Customer First Project and to outline the action plan for moving it further forwards.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Since the report to Finance & Management Committee on 16 June 2005, progress has continued with the Council's Customer First Project.
- 3.2 The number of services on the Customer Relationship Management System and being delivered at the first point of contact, is growing. We have added 16 new processes since the last report.
- 3.3 Electronic payments are now being taken for pest control, council tax, sports bookings and household bulky waste collections.
- 3.4 The number of enquiries received by customer services is growing rapidly. The number of transactions has more than doubled since June 2005. We are now handling 45% of enquiries at the first point of contact against our target of 80% by March 2007.
- 3.5 Work on the refurbishment programme commenced in September 2005 and was completed in January 2006. There was minimum disruption during this period and all services were maintained throughout.

4. Background

- 4.1 The contact centre opened in March 2004 and was staffed by existing members of customer services.
- 5.2 In March 2005 staff from the cash office were assimilated into the role of customer services advisor and the responsibilities for customer payment transactions was transferred from revenue services to customer services.
- 4.3 Following extensive consultation with Heads of Service a scoping report was produced giving detailed analysis of services by department that can be integrated into the contact centre. This identified 170 services that can be dealt with by customer services.
- 4.4 At the F&M committee meeting in June 2005, the workforce planning procedure was agreed. This has ensured that any recruitment to the customer services team is undertaken with a commitment to try and avoid, where possible, losing the skills of existing employees.

5. **Progress to Date**

- 5.1 Work on the new customer first reception and contact centre commenced in September 2005 and was completed in January 2006. It has been designed for disabled access and to put visitors at the centre of our business. This involved consolidating existing reception areas and the cash office to one central customer service desk that deals with all payment transactions and enquiries. The new facilities also provide three interview rooms, one specially designed to be more accessible for people with disabilities.
- 5.2 We have also extended the opening hours for payments to 8:45 to 5:00 pm (was 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 pm).
- 5.3 The switchboard is dealing with an average of 8,000 calls per month. In the last quarter 2005/2006 90% of calls were answered in under 10 seconds.
- 5.4 The Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) that was implemented in March 2004 is now firmly established and utilised by customer services and the depot. It is also utilised in Revenues and Benefits in order to maintain an efficient customer queuing system and by support services for managing Freedom of Information requests and sending out Job Application Packs.
- 5.5 The number of services on the Customer Relationship Management System and being delivered at the first point of contact, is growing. We are now handling an average of 6,000 transactions per month, including telephone payments and enquiries and face to face payments and enquiries. Since the report to F&M in June 2005, we have added the following to make a total of 44 services being dealt with by customer services. This equates to 45% of enquiries being dealt with at the first point of contact.
 - Interview Room Queue - Revenue
 - Interview Room Queue – Benefits
 - An enquiry from the Web
 - E-Billing Requests
 - Gold Card and Bus Passes
 - Right to Buy (housing)
 - Mutual Exchanges (housing)

- Permissions and Improvements (housing)
- Ordering Keys (housing)
- Rent Account Refund Requests (housing)
- Garage and Plot Requests (housing)
- Housing Transfers (housing)
- Bin Deliveries (depot)
- Household Bulky Waste Collections (depot)
- Job Application Packs
- Anti Social Behaviour

5.6 Refuse Collection DSO based at the Depot are using CRM to handle the following services which are being transferred into customer services in July this year.

- Abandoning refuse complaints
- Missed refuse collections
- Missed recycling collections
- Refuse complaints
- Recycling complaints

5.7 The Contact Centre are now taking electronic payments over the phone during core hours (8:45 am to 5:00 pm) for council tax, pest control sports bookings and household bulky waste collections.

5.8 A vacant post in customer services was filled in January 2006. The member of staff came from the housing department and the vacated post was deleted from the establishment. This gave a cost saving of 1 scale 4 full time equivalent.

5.9 A further member of staff has been transferred from the depot and her vacated post has not been filled.

5.10 Both were recruited using the workforce planning procedure that was approved by F&M in June 2005. This has allowed us to deal with some housing processes and also some processes from Waste and Cleaning from the depot. In July this year we will be taking the majority of calls for Waste and Cleansing.

5.11 There is one other vacancy at present which is being filled by a member of staff on a temporary contract. This allows us a degree of flexibility when services are being moved into customer services.

5.12 A new Call Management system was introduced in December 2005. This allows for statistical reporting and also enables the Customer Service Advisors to see if there are calls waiting to be answered.

5.13 Integration has been carried out with the following systems:

- MOTO (electronic payments system)
- Flare (environmental health)
- Realink (revenues and benefits information screens)
- Orchard (housing information screens)

This means that the customer service advisor can access the relevant information using the Northgate Front Office system (CRM) without the need to log onto different departmental systems.

Action Plan

- 5.14 We have just commenced the review of revenues and benefits processes and have begun process mapping their services with a target date for integration of September 2006.
- 5.15 Planning services are also in the process of mapping their services and we are aiming to integrate them by December 2006.
- 5.16 Community and leisure is scheduled for January 2007 and a mop up of all other areas throughout February and March 2007.
- 5.17 New telephone software has been purchased and is currently being installed. This will enable us to phase out the switchboard and answer all calls through the contact centre. Subject to software installation this should be achieved by October 2006.
- 5.18 Phase 2 will commence in April 2007 when we will re-visit all service areas to capture services that were not reviewed in phase 1.
- 5.19 A full copy of the action plan is attached as appendix A.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 None

7. Corporate Implications

- 7.1 The Customer First Project as well as meeting key E-government objectives plays a major part within the council improvement plan following its "fair" CPA assessment.
- 7.2 One of our priorities in the 2006/09 Corporate Plan is "More efficient, customer focused services.
- 7.3 The project is helping the council to review the way it delivers services to its customers and clarify the service standards that customers can expect, another key element of the CPA.
- 7.4 The Project is enabling the council to review its procedures and benchmark these against other councils to ensure that the practices we follow are as efficient and cost effective as possible.

8. Community Implications

- 8.1 The project is helping to ensure that the Council responds to the needs of all of its customers in the way they expect those needs to be addressed.
- 8.2 The project is improving access and enabling a greater choice of access channels.
- 8.3 Increasingly however customers will expect that their enquiry will be answered quickly and efficiently at the first point of contact regardless of the time of day. This is a key challenge for this project to address in the next phase.

9. Summary and Conclusion

- 9.1 South Derbyshire can be proud of the progress it has made with this project, which is progressing well within its intended timescale.
- 9.2 Having made such a significant investment in this project with help from the Derbyshire Partnership, we now need to make sure that our customers receive the benefit from this investment by using the system effectively and expanding the number of services that we cover at the first point of contact.
- 9.3 In return the Council has the prospect of more efficient administration and being able to answer a larger number of customer calls in an effective way.

CUSTOMER FIRST

ACTION PLAN

	Details of the action(s) to be taken	Who will take the action	Date of action	Result of the Action	Future Action Required
1.	Refurbishment of reception and contact centre	Customer Services Manager (CSM)/Housing	Sept 2005 – Jan 2006	Completed	Maintenance programme
2.	Map housing procedures	Business Analyst (BA)/CSM/Housing	Dec 2005 – March 2006	Housing processes on CRM. Housing reception closed	Re-visit April 2007
3.	Recruitment two vacant posts	CSM	Dec 2005 March-July 2006	Two vacancies filled. Housing reception and calls covered. Depot processes mapped	
4.	Transfer all depot services	CSM/BA/Depot	July 2006	Depot processes on CRM. Phone lines transferred	Re-visit April 2007
5.	Map revenues and benefits processes	Revs & Bens/CSM/BA	May – August 2006	Revenues and benefits processes on CRM.	Re-visit May 2007
6.	Recruitment to cover revenues and benefits (workforce planning procedure)	CSM	August 2006	Sufficient number of staff to support new service	Review numbers
7.	Phase out switchboard and replace with “softphones”	CSM/Head of IT and CS	Oct 2006	Switchboard removed and calls answered in contact centre	Review effectiveness and call answer/abandoned rates
8.	Transfer planning services to CRM	CSM/BA/Planning	November 2006	Scripts on CRM	
9.	“Go live” with planning services in customer services	CSM/Customer Services/Planning	December 2006	Telephone lines transferred from planning.	Re-visit June 2007
10.	Process map community and leisure	CSM/BA/Community	December 2006	Scripts on CRM	

	Details of the action(s) to be taken	Who will take the action	Date of action	Result of the Action	Future Action Required
11.	"Go live" with community and leisure	CSM/Customer Services/ Community	January 2007	Telephone lines transferred	Re-visit July 2007
12.	"Mop up of other services	CSM/BA	Jan – March 2007	All services investigated	
13.	Phase 2	CSM/BA	April 2007	Re-visit all service areas to capture services not reviewed in phase 1	ongoing

CSM = Customer Services Manager

BA = Business Analyst