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BEST VALUE REVIEW MONITORING 2001 - 2002 (Year 2 Programme)

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 10 September 2001

Review Title *Customer & Support Services*

Review Team Leader *Lesley Wain IT & Customer Services Manager*

Management Report

Please provide a comprehensive account for the reporting areas detailed below.

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| REPORTING AREA | MANAGEMENT REPORT |
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| 1 Activities & Achievements | <p><u>Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>Revised Terms of Reference – Scope of Review Identified – Attached.</p> <p><u>Information Gathering</u></p> <p>Internal questionnaire being developed, background information on service delivery gathered and relevant external customers identified.</p> |
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| 2 Problems encountered and how being managed | <p><u>Team Leader</u></p> <p>Commencement of review delayed due start of IT & Customer Services Manager and subsequent involvement in preparation of Corporate IEG Statement.</p> <p><u>Diverse Review</u></p> <p>Printing Services identified as facing different commercial issues to the rest of the review. Separate Terms of Reference for this part of the service. It will still come within the overall review but it may be beneficial to have a separate sub group dealing with some aspects of the review in this area.</p> |
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| | <p><u>Corporate Review</u></p> <p>Customer Services cannot be reviewed in isolation from the dedicated support in some Divisions. The review needs to consider the balance of support services across the Council provided centrally and in Divisions.</p> |
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| <p>3 Factors which may affect future progress managed</p> | <p><u>Team Membership</u></p> <p>Change of team membership due to Central Support Service Managers Maternity leave and Press Officer vacancy.</p> <p>Identification of team member from the Labour Group.</p> <p>Identification of union representation.</p> <p>Identification of member from other support service area.</p> |
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| <p>4 Employee Awareness / User Consultation</p> | <p><u>Team</u></p> <p>Identification of staff representation on team.</p> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <p>Circulation of revised Terms of Reference</p> <p><u>Initial Questionnaire.</u></p> <p>Identification of suitable internal/external customers.</p> |
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| <p>5 Work on Challenge</p> | <p><u>E-Government Implications</u></p> <p>Use of IT to streamline procedures.</p> |
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| 6 Work on Comparison | <u>Contact Centre</u> |
| | Implications to Service - Public & Private sector. |
| | <u>Print Unit</u> |
| | Services levels provided – Public & Private sector. |

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| 7 Work on Competition /Procurement | <u>Print Unit</u> |
| | Cost, quality and service levels available. |

| 8 Review Team Meetings | Date | Matters discussed |
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| | | 3/9 |
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| 9 Committee Reports | Date | Committee | Report Title |
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| | | 10/9 | Corporate Overview & Scrutiny |
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| 10 Training | <u>Team Members</u> |
| | Internal training to some of team by Policy & Best Value Officer 13/9. |

South Derbyshire District Council

BEST VALUE REVIEW

CUSTOMER SERVICES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the last reorganisation the Council established a central administration unit with the Finance and IT Department.
- 1.2 The Customer Services section is divided into three main areas of activity as follows: -

Central Support Unit

- Corporate Administration Duties including post opening and distribution/despatch, issue of ID badges, central and controlled stationery and central purchasing.
- Secretarial Support to Chief Officers (excl Chief Executive) and divisional units.
- Word processing support.
- Validation and despatch of creditors cheques twice weekly.
- Collection and despatch of Housing Benefit cheques weekly.
- Provide telephone hotline and reception for personal callers on behalf of Environmental Health department.
- Provide support for Elections and Democratic services.
- Sickness absence hotline for all staff.
- Preparation of job application packs on behalf of Personnel.
- Preparation of updates to the emergency plan and out of hour's information.
- Back-up support to cover staff vacancy etc within other areas.
- Dealing with customer complaints
- Co-ordination of central filing.
- Secure holding area for received tender documentation.
- General administration e.g. input of timesheets, invoice preparation, corporate hospitality register, and holiday records.

Central Services

- Main reception desk

- Switchboard
- Corporate Administration Duties including post opening and distribution/despatch,
- Distribution of material e.g. Job Application Packs
- Directory enquires (192 numbers)
- Meeting Accommodation and Refreshment bookings

Printing Services

- Direct provision of council printing e.g. committee agendas.
- Manage and advise on work awarded to external printers.
- Desktop publishing.
- Design and finishing.
- Photocopying and collation services.
- Offset printing for high quantity print runs.

1.3 It is apparent that there continues to be considerable overlap between the work performed centrally within Customer services and support staff in other divisions. This is especially the case with: -

- Reception desks – the Council has 4 reception desks – 1 managed by Central Services. The others are managed by divisions, some of which have restricted opening hours e.g. Cash office, and can impact on the main reception desk.
- Administration – a number of divisions have retained their own administrative units

1.4 In many ways this unit is the first point of contact for many residents who use our services.

- By telephone – main switchboard
- In person – at reception areas
- By post – producing material for despatch e.g. printing, typing etc.
- Via electronic means - Email

1.5 Technology has had an impact on administrative tasks throughout the organisation.

- Increasing use of office systems has streamlined administrative tasks e.g. providing improved access to shared documentation, managing diaries etc.
- Officers produce their own documentation via the PC.
- Citizens are increasingly comfortable contacting the Authority by phone rather than in person.
- Internet Technology has also changed how people make contact with the council and receive information from it via e-mail and council web-sites

- Printed information is becoming less widely used with a corresponding impact on the demand for printing services

1.6 Government initiatives are determining that Authorities change the role of first line staff to provide more services at the first point of contact. (Contact centres). This will not be achieved without a major process re-engineering and re-focussing exercise being carried out throughout the Council.

1.7 The work of the print unit is to some extent distinct from the above issues. For this reason, the print unit will be considered separately within this review. The subsidiary terms of reference for that review are set out at Annex A.

2. Scope

2.1 The review will be divided between Customer Services and Printing Services.

2.2 The review will investigate how the Council can use e-government technology to improve the level of service that it provides to its customers.

2.3 The issue of e-government will be addressed in more detail in the year 3 review – e-government

3. Key Tasks

3.1 To consider a range of options for delivering administrative support services

- Increased centralisation of Customer Services
- Decreased centralisation
- Change the balance of duties carried out centrally and within divisions
- Retain our existing model
- Outsourcing of part or all of the work to external suppliers

3.2 Challenge the way administrative services are provided and options for streamlining them with consequent implications.

3.3 Explore the potential to use technology to streamline administrative procedures.

- Making better use of existing technology e.g. user training
- Introducing new technology – e-government, new computer systems

3.4 Examine how the council interfaces with its internal and external customers.

- Identify customer needs re face to face contact – reception areas
- How the number of points of contact for members of the public can be reduced.
- Examine how the Council deals with customer complaints

3.5 Explore the practicality of introducing a contact centre either within the Council or in partnership with another local authority or organisation.

4. Resources

4.1 The Best Value Review Team will consist of the following

- Lesley Wain – Head of IT and Customer Services
- Sue Smith – Central Services Manager
- Terry Neaves – Chief Finance Officer
- Jan Middleton/Elaine Fripp – Secretarial Support Supervisors
- Mandy Simms or Julie Uncle – Reception
- Team leader support services - tba
- Divisional Manager – tba
- Trade Union Representative - tba
- Best Value Review Team Representative – Malcolm Roseborough

4.2 The review will also use the resources of the Best Value Team to hold focus groups as necessary with both internal and external customers.

4.3 Questionnaires will be used to canvass user views on the service that is delivered at present.

5. Timescale

5.1 The aim is to complete both aspects of the review by the January 2002 to enable early implementation of key recommendations by April 2002/

