

IT and CUSTOMER SERVICES DIVISION SERVICE PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT (2005/06)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The IT and Customer Services Division has a corporate role providing Information Technology (IT) and Customer Services to all directorates.

IT is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the use of IT and guiding the Council towards the corporate achievement of e-Government Targets
- Support and Maintenance of Council IT systems
- Support and Maintenance of Council Computer Infrastructure (e.g. servers, network, PC's, etc.)
- Telecommunications systems (including mobiles)

Customer Services is responsible for:

- Customer First Contact Centre including Main reception and switchboard
- Secretarial and administrative support
- Post distribution
- Corporate purchasing of stationery
- Customer complaints, Freedom of Information and Data Protection
- Printing Services

The Division is very active in Partnership working (e.g. Derbyshire Partnership, Derbyshire Consortium and the wider Regional Partnerships) as this enables results to be achieved that would not be possible if we worked alone. This gives us access to a wider range of expertise and helps to spread the risk of implementing new projects.

THE YEAR IN CONTEXT

The past year has presented many challenges for the IT and Customer Services Division. Customer Services has predominantly focused on moving the Customer First project forward, which has involved a radical re-organisation in the way the Council delivers its services. IT has continued replacing all our major IT systems and implementing the wide range of eGovernment projects across the Council. Performance throughout the year has been monitored by this committee and a final report is attached at **Annexe A**

The benefits of partnership working have again been demonstrated through the year (e.g. the Content Management System). Considerably more has been achieved than if we had progressed such an initiative on our own. The Council has shared resources and knowledge with partners to make effective progress.

IT

Because of limitations on the required IT resources (for officers and equipment) to implement an ever growing wide range of tasks, projects have had to be prioritised and some of the lower priority items have not been achieved.

Some projects have been delayed because of issues outside of our control (e.g. Revenues and Benefits system – note this has effected all members of the Consortium).

The following points describe the progress, opportunities and challenges faced:

- The highest priority of the IT Division is to make sure that South Derbyshire District Council has a stable IT infrastructure and working functional helpdesk, so enabling other divisions to focus on their objectives. The infrastructure and helpdesk have again performed to a high standard and no major issues have arisen. Evidently while providing such a service peaks and troughs will occur. The annual user satisfaction survey will be carried out later in the year.
- A new ICT Strategy introduced.
- Within the Derbyshire partnership we continue to be the lead partner in the Customer Relationship Management area. Services have continued to be introduced into the Contact Centre.
- Integration between CRM, A to Z, website and back office systems has started.
- Infrastructure replacement has progressed (e.g. UNIX server).
- A seminar run for Members to demonstrate how they can make effective use of e-Government.
- A Content Management System has been implemented to manage our website. This enables each Divisions to take ownership of and to update their content on the website. The same functionality has been made available to some members.
- Balances and Benefits Calculator for citizens available on our web site.
- Publicised the Benefits Calculator and website through BBC Radio Derby and their BBC Bus.
- Continued development of Mobile Working.
- Introduction of the ability to receive bills electronically.
- The Audit Commission has carried out a comprehensive review of the IT Division.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

The following points describe the progress, opportunities and challenges faced:

- The new Customer First reception opened in January and provides one central customer service desk for all payments, general enquiries, housing enquiries, and revenues and benefits enquiries.
- Recruitment to the customer services team has continued using the workforce planning procedure and one member of the housing department joined the team in January. A further member of staff from direct services was appointed in January. Services from both of these areas are now being handled by the contact centre.
- The customer services team are now handling 45% of enquiries at the first point of contact with work on integrating revenues and benefits and planning enquiries underway.
- Funding was awarded from the Regional Centre of Excellence and the Derbyshire E-government partnership for a mystery shopper survey across all 15 authorities in Derbyshire. The results of this survey identified areas for improvement and actions plans are now in place to resolve these.
- The draft Customer Service Code of Practice and standards has now been produced and following a period of consultation, will be issued to the general public.
- The corporate image has been reviewed and the recommendations implemented.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

IT

- Achieved the government target of delivering 100% of services electronically.
- Implemented 50 out of the 54 Priority Service Outcomes, with plans in place for solutions for the remaining 4.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

- The new Customer First reception and contact centre was completed on schedule and on budget. The area is functioning exceptionally well and provides a more customer focused environment with facilities for disabled access.
- We met our target of handling 40% of enquiries at the first point of contact and are on schedule to meet our overall target of 80% by 2007.

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

ACTION	EXPLANATION
IT IT9 Revenues and Benefits System (via a consortium of 5 District Councils) IT10 Document Image Processing IT22 IT Standards manual IT24 Business Continuity Strategy	The consortium replacement of our existing legacy Revenues and Benefits system, with the Anite Pericles product, has been further delayed. The main issues being in the data conversion and product functionality. The resources required to move the project forward are currently unavailable. As the Council is moving away from in house developed systems the IT Standards Manual will not be as relevant as in the past. Subsequently this will be a greatly reduced document that will link closely to the ICT and IEG strategy. An IT Business Continuity strategy is in place, this needs linking into the overall Councils business continuity plans.
Customer Services CS6 Establish a baseline for satisfaction with Council Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires, customer focus group telephone survey • Produce report 	Other priorities (Refurbishment of Reception) subsequently delayed to Sept 06.
Key Aims KA3 Improving Services Establish service standards for key service areas	Key stages have been delivered. Further work continues in 2006/7

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2006/07

Managing the culture change/business process re-engineering is necessary to deliver our Corporate Plan. This emphasises the fact that IT and Customer Services will be at the heart of many of the changes that take place within the Council over the next few years. IT and Customer Services have a key role in championing this change and providing the training and support needed for staff and indeed residents to embrace this change. The

Customer First project will lead this change process and it will encompass the complete organisation.

IT

A high degree of staff turnover, within the IT Division, has occurred in 2005/06. The challenge to the new team is to continue providing the service to the required high level. Additionally three posts in the IT Division have been funded via the Implementing Electronic Government programme, this funding stopped in March 06. To ensure continuity of service these positions have been extended for a further year. A review is currently in progress.

E-Government is being replaced by Transformational Government, which will come with a new set of deliverables and challenges.

Projects in the following areas are planned: Improvements to the website, Paperless Direct Debits, ePayments, Customer Relationship Management integration to back office, PC refresh and developments to the Revenues and Benefits system.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

The customer services team continue to develop and progress the Customer First project. Work is currently underway to process map the revenues and benefits service and the planning service so that they can be integrated into the contact centre. New software will be installed to allow us to phase out the switchboards and all calls will be answered by customer service advisors. The focus for this year will be to maintain the momentum of the Customer First project.

The Customer Service Code of Practice and Standards will be rolled out across all departments and a customer service champion from each area will form a group to assist in developing and monitoring these standards.

Two more waves of the mystery shopper survey will be undertaken in 2006/2007. This will measure improvements and provide benchmark information across the Partnership.

We will undertake a review of print services to look for more cost effective, quality driven processes.