

South Somerset District Council

Notes of an informal meeting of the **Well-Managed Services Overview Commission** held on **Thursday 20th September 2007** in Committee Room 2, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(9.30 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.)

Present:**Members:**

Rupert Cox (Chair)
Tom Parsley
Derek Yeomans

Officers:

Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Angela Oxenbury	Committee Administrator
Mike Lay	Head of ICT and Customer Services
Jason Toogood	Customer Services Manager

Apologies were received from:

Robin Munday
Alan Smith
Jean Smith

Contact Centre**Role of the Commission**

In his introduction the Chairman reminded members that the performance of the Contact Centre was being reported as an exception on a regular basis. The purpose of the Commission's review was to discover the reasons for this and to recommend a way forward.

Role of Officers

The Head of ICT and Customer Services described his role as ensuring the delivery of Service aims and objectives in line with SSDC aims and to ensure that the overall performance of the Council supports those aims. He said his role was 60% service focused and 40% corporately focused.

The Customer Services Manager's remit was to deal with the day-to-day running of the Service and to improve the performance of the Contact Centre. The Service Plan was one of his top 3 priorities and this was mainly complete.

Members noted that it had not been possible to achieve an integrated system with the County Council and those plans had now been abandoned.

Aims and Objectives

Members were invited to consider the Aims and Objectives of the Review as set out in the Project Plan and agreed by the Scrutiny Committee. The main points of the discussion are summarised as:

- It was acknowledged that customer satisfaction with the service was good but the main problems centred around a slow response time.
- A quality service was important to members but a balance was needed between providing this and improving the speed of response.
- Improvement of the service to customers across all services was required. Links with the web team should be developed to reduce the need for people to phone the Council.
- More awareness of future issues was needed for the Service to be better able to gauge staffing needs.
- Other centres to be contacted to benchmark best practice.
- The HR & Performance Manager should be invited to a future Commission to discuss staff contracts.
- All services should be encouraged to review their processes and ensure adequate training of staff to deal with customers.
- The Commission should flag up with Heads of Service the need for staff to be more responsive.
- What progress is being made on the Corporate Customer Care Package?
- The timescale for integrating services was unclear at present but information sharing was already taking place.
- A comparison of the costs of different channels of access should be made and the public encouraged to use low-cost channels.

Actions

The Customer Services Manager to provide service standards and terms of reference for himself and the Head of ICT and Customer Services.

The Scrutiny Manager to speak work with Customer Services Manager to identify other contact centres to allow useful benchmarking exercise to be carried out.

The Scrutiny Manager to find out what progress has been made on the Corporate Customer Care Package.

The Commission will meet again on October 24 to discuss operational steps taken to address performance.

Date of Next Meeting

Members agreed that the next meeting of the Commission would be on Wednesday 24th October at 9.30am in Committee Room 3.