

**South Somerset District Council**

Notes of an informal meeting of the **Well-Managed Services Overview Commission** held on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007** in Committee Room 3/4, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

**Present:**

Rina Singh – Corporate Director – Communities (CDC)  
Mike Lewis – Executive Portfolio Holder  
Jason Toogood – Interim Customer Services Manager

Rupert Cox – Commission Chair  
Tom Parsley  
Alan Smith  
Derek Yeomans

**Meeting notes**

The Chairman explained that this was the final meeting of the Commission and was an opportunity for members to discuss their findings with the Portfolio Holder and senior officers.

The Corporate Director – Communities informed members that the Interim Head of ICT and Customer Services would be leaving the Council at the end of November due to personal reasons.

The post had been filled through the use of an agency and the Corporate Director – Communities was currently in discussion with the agency to appoint a replacement. However, she assured members that she would only appoint a suitable candidate and was prepared to look at other options.

The Chairman noted the encouraging recent improvement in the performance of the Contact Centre and sought reassurances that the improvement would continue and was not simply as a result in a drop in call volumes.

The CDC stated that the measures introduced over the past few months would lead to continued performance.

Members asked the Portfolio Holder what he saw as the key service objectives over the next 12 months and he outlined the key priorities as outlined in the Portfolio Holder Statements;

- Deliver actions for 07/08 as set out in Access to Services Strategy
- Maintain customer satisfaction with service at 95%
- Increase percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact in line with Somerset partnership targets
- Increase percentage of calls answered within target time

**Critical Success Factors**

- 100% actions for 07/08 as outlined in Access Strategy delivered.
- Over 95% of customers to be either satisfied or very satisfied with the call centre service
- Over 60% of calls to the contact centre resolved within the contact centre.

- Over 80% of all call centre calls to be answered within 30 seconds  
Over 90% of call centre calls to be answered within 60 seconds

Members of the Commission welcomed the proposed service developments but asked what impact the current financial climate will have on the Contact Centre. They were particularly concerned that the performance of the service should not be adversely affected by budget savings.

The Corporate Director – Communities informed members that savings were identified according to Corporate Themes and that the required level of savings had been identified from elsewhere in her directorate, therefore there would be no impact on the Contact Centre.

However, the Interim Customer Services Manager told members that he would still be looking to achieve efficiencies as he felt this was good management practice.

Members asked the Corporate Director what work, if any was planned to join up contact centres with neighbouring authorities. They were informed that the Council is pursuing a transformation agenda across the organisation and all possibilities are being explored. This work is being led by the Transformation Board that consists of members of Management Board.

Not sufficient is known about the ISIS / Southwest 1 project at this stage to be able to say what our involvement may be.

Based on the information gathered from North East Derbyshire District Council, members were interested to know what work, if any, is planned to monitor customer satisfaction with the Contact Centre more robustly. Members felt that measuring qualitative data would be equally, if not more beneficial than measuring quantitative data (time taken to answer calls etc).

Members were referred back to the Portfolio Holder Statement which indicated several measures to reflect customer satisfaction.

Members of the Commission agreed that their final report should emphasise the importance of successfully resolving customer enquiries rather than only looking at length of call.

Members of the Commission noted that previously the number of abandoned calls had been reported on a quarterly basis but that this was no longer the case. The Interim Head of Customer Service said that he uses this information on a daily basis as he thinks it is a fundamental tool in managing the service.

The Commission agreed that the measure is important as it shows the number of people who are unable to contact us and therefore can be used in deciding staffing levels. Members of the Commission agreed that they would like to see this measure re-introduced to the quarterly performance reports.

In summing up the Chair of the Commission said that he was pleased to note the improvement in the performance of the Contact Centre over the past two months but that the Commission would be keeping 'a watching' brief. This would allow members to be certain that the measured recently introduced would lead to long-term performance improvement.

He also said that members would be making a series of further recommendations based on the work of the Commission.

He undertook to write a report for consideration at the January meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and he thanked the officers and Portfolio Holder for attending the meeting.