

Progress Update – Customer First

Number	Recommendation	Responsibility	Proposed actions	Anticipated Completion Date/ Completion Date	Evidence of progress 01/06/09	Assessment of progress (Categories 1-4) 01/06/09	Evidence of Progress 16/11/09	Assessment of progress (Categories 1-4) 16/11/09
1	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council adopts the Cabinet Office's new Customer Service Excellence Standard corporately, replacing and building on the Customer First Stage 2 programme post-March 2009, following corporate completion of Customer First Stage 2.	D Hurwood/ K Hornsey/ J Robinson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness raising at Setting the Standard meetings 12th & 19th Nov. 2. Revisit services that have already reached Stage 2 Standard to confirm ongoing compliance and develop actions plans for CSE. 3. Appoint Assessment Body, firm up costs and agree project plan. 4. Enter into contract with selected Assessment Body (once funding secured) 5. Setting the Standard Workshops during 2009/2010. 6. Awareness raising through KYIT and team meetings. 7. Support for services as they prepare for assessment. 8. Corporate Infrastructure assessment. 	Aug 2010	<p>Awareness raising ongoing - attended Setting the Standard meetings in November 2008 and producing a series of articles for KYIT, the first of which was published in the March 2009 edition. Up to the end of April 2009, Customer First Manager had attended 19 team meetings to start services off on Customer Service Excellence. Following a procurement exercise, "Centre for Assessment" appointed as external assessor - contract started 1st April 2009. Corporate Infrastructure assessment scheduled for June 2009. Currently pulling together a timetable for "chunks" of individual service assessments which will be conducted by Centre for Assessment between August 2009 and July 2010.</p>	2 - On Track	<p>Desk-top assessment of corporate evidence complete – no concerns raised. Assessor will be checking that what we say is happening on paper is actually happening “on the ground” when he undertakes his on-site visits.</p> <p>Service assessment timetable has split all services over four assessment periods. The first set of services submitted evidence for desk-top assessment in Aug and on-site assessment took place end Sept. All services were assessed as meeting the required standard.</p> <p>The second set of services submitted evidence for desk-top assessment in October and their on-site assessment will take place at the end of Nov/early Dec.</p>	2 – On track

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			9. Service assessments. 10. Achieve CSE council-wide					
3	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Councillors to have the opportunity for increased involvement, for example by supporting Council staff involved in mystery shopping exercises or as customer service champions, under the Customer Service Excellence Standard or any other customer service programme implemented following Customer First Stage	J Robinson J Robinson K Hornsey	1. Design on-line survey form for Members to feedback their experiences 2. Send survey to Members as part of next mystery shopping exercise 3. Continue to issue 6-monthly Members Customer Services newsletter	Apr09 May09 Ongoing	On-line survey designed and distributed to Members on 5th May. Feedback will be reported to Members by the end of June. Members Newsletter was issued December 2008	2 - On Track	Low response rate from Members' survey but positive feedback. This feedback and comments from customers were taken into account as part of a review of the Council's Customer Service Standards which was completed in August 2009. Latest Members Customer Service newsletter was issued in August 2009. Will continue to engage with Members as appropriate.	1 – Achieved
5	To assist customers presented with a voicemail message when contacting Council officers by telephone the existing service standards and	K Hornsey D Hurwood J Robinson	1. Review Voicemail service standards and staff guidance to include liaison with ICT in order to gain understanding of voicemail/telephony functionality.	Dec08 - Jan09	Consultation with Members and Access to Services (Officer) Steering Group and Nextira One has taken place and new guidance has been drawn up. The proposed arrangements are to be	3 - Slipped	Pilot complete and feedback analysed. Some minor amendments made to initial proposals. Working with Nextira One to develop roll-out plan which will be	3 - Slipped

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	<p>guidance for the use of voicemail be enhanced and promoted, in particular: § All voicemail messages include the officer's name, team or service details and extension number. § The alternative voicemail message facility is used if the officer being contacted is out of the office on business for the day or away on holiday. § Voicemail messages give an indication when the caller can expect to receive a response, or otherwise provide the caller with an alternative telephone contact officer and number. § Targets for responding to voicemail messages are established.</p>	<p>J Robinson / S Stoker K Hornsey/ J Robinson J Robinson</p>	<p>2. Communicate outcome of review to Members 3. Publish updated guidance and publicise through KYIT, team meetings, message of the day etc. 4. Include guidance in corporate customer service training course. 5. Monitor use of voicemail as part of Customer First compliance visits and make recommendations. 6. Include use of voicemail in all future mystery shopping exercises.</p>	<p>Feb09 Start Feb09 Jan09 Ongoing April 09 and six-monthly thereafter</p>	<p>piloted within HR and Xentrall prior to corporate roll-out to check that they lead to the anticipated improvements and do not create any new problems. Further work to be undertaken to evaluate cost implications prior to final decision as the proposals will require some re-programming of the telephone system. Revised completion date October 2009.</p>		<p>recommended to CMT December 2009. Results of pilot suggest that roll out of changes will be more complex than originally envisaged, requiring re-programming and a review of use of hunt groups and pick-up groups to identify the optimum set-up for each team that uses a hunt group or pick-up group. Estimated completion dates: April 2010 for individual phones September 2010 for hunt/pick up groups. Mystery shopping exercises are continuing to monitor use of voicemail.</p>	

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	Furthermore, taking into account the above recommendation, the use of voicemail be included in future mystery shopping exercises.							
7	A corporate staff suggestion scheme be implemented under the Customer Service Excellence scheme with awards presented for the best suggestions.	J Spittle	1. Develop an Employee suggestion scheme including employee awards. 2. Develop clear and simple procedures for implementation. 3. Develop a communication and marketing strategy for the scheme. 4. Put in place review and monitoring arrangements.	Dec 09	Initial research on alternative suggestion schemes has been undertaken. The evidence is supportive of these schemes provided they have been well planned to fit with the organisations culture and are supported by top management. In addition staff suggestion schemes work best when they are part of a package of measures designed to encourage dialogue between employees and management. Consequently this work will be incorporated into the new Employee Engagement Strategy.	2 - On Track	Some initial suggestions have now been agreed with the final approach likely to be a flexible scheme which Service Areas will be able to adapt to their particular circumstances. A report to CMT with a recommended way forward is planned for December.	2 – On track

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9	<p>A review of the provision of children's toys in Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council reception areas and other appropriate buildings/ areas of buildings be undertaken. In carrying out the review, consideration should be given towards:</p> <p>§ Assessing the potential customer demand for the provision of children's toys by conducting public consultation in reception areas.</p> <p>§ Recognising that children's toys cannot be provided in every reception area and are best suited to reception areas suitable for families rather than where customers do not have to queue for very long.</p> <p>§ The financial implications to the</p>	<p>K Hornsey/ K Dumain</p> <p>“</p> <p>K Hornsey</p>	<p>1. Design feedback questionnaire for selected viewpoint panel members and appropriate reception areas</p> <p>2. Conduct survey and analyse results</p> <p>3. Depending on outcome of research, liaise with Trading Standards and Health & Safety to identify suitable toys and cost implications.</p>	<p>Nov08</p> <p>Jan09 – Feb09</p> <p>Mar09</p>	<p>Advice from Research and Consultation Team was that face-to-face questioning would be more appropriate than a questionnaire. A series of focus groups was arranged and promoted but attendance was disappointing and did not provide a representative sample. A new approach is now being taken involving staff consulting with customers at reception points at the same time as they conduct mystery shopping exercises, together with asking questions as part of standard exit surveys at our main Reception points. New completion date for this recommendation set as September 2009.</p>	<p>3 - Slipped</p>	<p>Surveys and customer focus groups conducted over the Summer period. These identified a demand for toys/books in areas where customers with children may have to wait.</p> <p>An audit of existing provision indicates that Children's Centres and Libraries along with some other reception areas already have toys/books.</p> <p>Toy units (similar type to that considered by the Committee during the Review) have been ordered for Municipal Buildings, Gloucester House and 16 Church Road. These are suitable for transfer to the new Stockton multi-service centre when it opens next year. Costs have been met from existing budgets.</p>	<p>1 - Achieved</p>

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	Council.							
10	The Customer Service Excellence Awards be continued under the Customer Service Excellence Standard or any other customer service programme implemented following Customer First Stage	J Robinson	The next awards ceremony is scheduled to take place on 27th February 2009. There will be a further ceremony in June 2009 which will conclude awards for Customer First Stage 2. Thereafter ceremonies will be held annually to celebrate and reward individual and team achievements, best reception and contributors to staff suggestion scheme.	Ongoing	Customer First awards ceremony held on 27th February 2009. The next ceremony will now take place in September 2009 by which time all the services that submitted their Customer First evidence at the end of March 2009 will have been through their final assessments.	3 - Slipped	All services have now been assessed and have reached the Customer First Stage 2 Standard. Awards ceremony held on 19 th October 2009. Awards ceremonies will continue to be held to recognise individual and team achievements and celebrate successes of services that have been assessed as achieving the Gov't Customer Service Excellence Standard.	1 - Achieved