

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF CUSTOMER TRANSFORMATION TASK AND FINISH
PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2008
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 8.20 PM**

Members Present: B Rolfe (Chairman), , Mrs R Brookes, R Morgan and J Philip

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: J M Whitehouse, D Bateman, A Boyce and Ms J Hedges

Officers Present D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), J Chandler (Assistant Director - Community Services and Customer Relations) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

27. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted that there were no substitute members.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

29. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of reference were noted and agreed.

30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes from 14 October 2008 were noted and agreed as a correct record subject to noting adding to minute 23 'telephone contact', that the Panel wished to actively discourage staff from using the switchboard as a directory service.

31. DRAFT PANEL REPORT

The Panel considered the draft Panel report and the recommendations made.

The Council's Website

The Panel agreed that the website was key to engaging the public and that it was not a very good idea just having one person running it. Also an improved website would help with the Council's NI 14 target. There was certainly enough work for two extra staff.

The Panel noted that Harlow had a weak website but a strong contact centre. EFDC should look to balancing it out.

RESOLVED:

That Panel endorsed the two recommendations as laid out in the report.

Provision of Reception Services at the Civic Offices.

The Panel noted that the reception area was not user or officer friendly, especially with the cashier's office being across a driveway.

There were concerns about staff welfare, in a common reception area there would be more staff there.

The Panel wanted to add to this section that a new reception area would need additional technology, such as large computer controlled plasma screens, to modernise and make it more customer friendly.

RESOLVED:

That the two recommendations are endorsed and that reference is made to the need for additional technology within the reception area in the body of the report.

Telephone Enquires

The Panel noted that this tied up with the section on NI 14 'Avoidable Contact'. They noted that the citizen charter standard required that calls are answered within 10 seconds, which currently our switchboard falls well below.

The Council also needed a computerised Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System. Currently there is only a paper system, which is a very inefficient way of gathering data. If the Council was not minded to finance a call centre then it became all the more important to have CRM system put in place, and this should be reflected in the recommendations made.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel wanted to emphasise the importance of a CRM system if a Contact Centre was not to be provided.

Public Information – The Forester

The Panel noted that currently a consultation was taking place on the Forester and that the distribution of the magazine would be changed in the new year from using the post office to using a private distribution company.

The consultation exercise had produced 111 responses so far and they had held a focus group with members of the Youth Council from whom they had received some positive suggestions on improving the publication.

RESOLVED:

The Panel endorsed the recommendation made.

National Performance Indicator NI 14 – Avoidable Contact

RESOLVED:

The Panel endorsed the recommendation made.

One Stop Shops/Contact Centres

The Panel noted that the aim was deal with 80% of all enquiries and only to pass on 20% to other officers. The contact centre would use existing staff.

RESOLVED:

The Panel endorsed the recommendation made.

The Panel noted that with the revisions made by the Panel to the report it would go to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in December for their endorsement. It would then go to the next available Cabinet meeting.

32. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. The Panel noted that a report would be made on the outcome of the Forester consultation currently taking place.

2. That a suitable date would be sought for a further meeting of the Panel sometime in mid January 2009 to review how the report had been received by the O&S Committee and to discuss whether there was a need for the Panel to stay constituted in the implementation phase of any new customer transformation improvements arising from the review.

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