



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 21 September 2004

ITEM 4

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

CUSTOMER SERVICES STANDARDS

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To consider the Customer Services Standards and provide any comments for consideration by Cabinet on 28 September 2004.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Service Access Review completed earlier this year recommended the development of a Customer Service Strategy and Customer Services Standards for the Council.
- 2.2 The Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 10 August 2004. The original intention was to seek Cabinet approval for the Standards at the same meeting, but to allow for additional consultation with stakeholders including frontline employees, managers and trade unions in August and September the Standards were not included with the Customer Service Strategy.
- 2.3 The Customer Service Standards have been developed by the Frontline Employee Forum and Corporate Customer Services Group.
- 2.4 Where appropriate the comments and suggestions from the consultation has been incorporated into the final set of standards shown in Appendix 2.
- 2.5 The Standards outline how we will improve Customer Service by detailing the responses customers can expect when they contact the Council. They cover all forms of interaction and communication with the Council and set targets for all employees to meet when dealing with customers.
- 2.6 The Standards will be considered by Cabinet on 28 September 2004 and will be launched to employees and members at events to be held at the Assembly Rooms on Monday 4 October 2004.
- 2.7 The Standards will be officially published and launched to the public in January 2005.

- 2.8 Departments, Divisions and individual Business Units will have from October 2004 to December 2004 to put in place the systems and mechanisms to make sure the standards are delivered from January 2005.
- 2.9 As part of the development of performance management arrangements for customer service, systems for monitoring service delivery against the standards will be developed.

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List of appendices: Appendix 1 – Implications
Appendix 2 – Customer Service Standards

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. There will be no significant costs in implementing the Customer Service Standards, but where they arise, departments will be expected to cover these costs within existing budgets.

Legal

2. The Council has legal obligations to prevent discrimination and promote equality under several pieces of equality legislation and regulations. Under the Race Relations Act 1976 we have a duty not to discriminate against someone of their race in employment and in the services we provide. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 states we also have a duty to promote racial equality and good race relations between different racial groups.
3. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in services and in employment and not to treat disabled people unfairly because of their impairment.

Personnel

4. None directly arising from this report.

Equalities impact

5. As part of the development of these Customer Service Standards, a number of equalities issues were considered and these are reflected in the Standards.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6. The Customer Service Standards support the Council's objectives of making Derby a city where Council services are integrated and respond to customers' and community needs.
7. The Customer Services Standards supports the Council's priority for change of making sure that we respond to people's needs appropriately, on time and first time, by developing a customer-focused culture, using new technology and investing in our buildings to provide modern working environments for service delivery and employees.

The Customer Service Standards

Customers will be at the heart of everything we do. We want to provide high quality services and information for all our customers. This explains the standards that we will work to deliver.

We are always looking for new ways to improve our service and we welcome your views. Your comments, compliments and suggestions are important to us.

We will:

- treat you politely and with respect
- listen to you and take your views, wishes and needs seriously
- make sure that our employees are trained to give you the help and advice that you need
- use plain language and not use jargon
- provide information in other languages and arrange for an interpreter or language signer where needed
- not discriminate against you.

When answering the telephone we aim to:

- answer your call within six rings
- greet you politely and clearly
- give you our name and the name of the service or place you are calling
- put calls through to the right place first time
- take a message or give you the correct number to phone if we cannot transfer your call
- return your messages within one working day.

When dealing with your letters and faxes we will:

- provide an acknowledgement where requested

- give you details of who is dealing with your enquiry
- respond to your enquiry within five working days.

When dealing with your emails, text or other electronic communications we will:

- provide an acknowledgement where requested
- give you details of who is dealing with your enquiry
- respond to your enquiry within two working days.

When you visit Council buildings we will:

- create an accessible environment that is welcoming, safe and friendly
- provide clear signs in reception areas
- provide self service facilities where appropriate
- make sure visitors are greeted within three minutes of arriving.

When we meet you face-to-face we will:

- be on time
- wear name badges or carry official identification
- arrange a time and place for you to discuss issues in private
- where appropriate make other arrangements to see you if you cannot visit us
- provide a follow up card with contact details.

Dealing with complaints, comments and compliments we will:

- provide you with information about how to report a complaint, comment or compliment
- record complaints, comments and compliments and use them to review and improve our services
- manage complaints within 28 days

- treat complaints confidentially, whilst making sure we are fair to everyone concerned
- inform you how you can take your complaint further if you are not satisfied with our response
- Apologise when we are at fault and do our very best to put things right.

We will keep customers informed and involved by:

- producing information about the Council and our services that is accurate, useful and up to date
- providing information in other languages or formats, such as in large print or audio where needed
- publishing regularly how well we are meeting our Customer Service Standard
- reviewing the customer standard every year
- using your feedback to help us make decisions.

Our employees have a right to:

- work in a safe environment free from aggressive or threatening behaviour
- be treated politely.

Help us to help you by letting us know:

- in good time if you need to cancel or rearrange an appointment
- if you need an interpreter or language signer
- immediately if you are unhappy with the service you have received
- if you are pleased with the service you have received.

You can contact us by:

- coming to see us
- telephone
- e-mail
- letter
- web site
- mini-com.