

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

13th June 2011

**12 month Review of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor M. A. Bullivant – Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance, Communications, Customer Services, Legal, Equalities, Democratic Services and Human Resources
Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny	Mrs. Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update following the 12 month review of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Board notes the report and progress made to date on the implementation of the recommendations following the review of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group was commissioned by the Scrutiny Board on 27th October 2009. Councillor S. R. Colella was appointed Chairman of the Task Group.
- 3.2 The objectives of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group were to gain:
- An understanding of the statistics behind the current levels of satisfaction;
  - An understanding of good practice in delivery and high levels of satisfaction;
  - Understand the causes of dissatisfaction for particular customer segments; and
  - Identify solutions based on further research.
- 3.3 The Task Group held a total of five meetings and interviewed a range of witnesses, including a publisher from a local newspaper and the Head of Strategy and Communications from a neighbouring authority. The meetings covered an analysis of the Place Survey, Theory and Best Practice on Satisfaction and Local Practice and Local Issues.

- 3.4 The Task Group report and recommendations were agreed by the Overview Board at its meeting on 10th June 2010 and considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 30th June 2010, when all 7 recommendations put forward were agreed.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1**

*That Cabinet note that achieving a high level of satisfaction is a combination of visible outcomes, good customer service, regular and clear communication and public engagement and requires all aspects of the Council to be fully committed and working to the same outcomes.*

The Council can now demonstrate visible outcomes e.g. affordable housing, progress on the town centre, new gym at the Dolphin Centre etc. The single management team includes a Head of Customer Service and performance at the Customer Service Centre is much improved and the Head of Customer Service has recently launched a Customer Experience Strategy. The Council has an increasingly good track record on community engagement. There has been a high response to the Core Strategy consultation and the Council is now in its 5th year of the Budget Jury and was on regional television with this in 2010.

**Recommendation 2**

*That MORI be invited to present the findings of the Place Survey to Corporate Management Team, Officers and all Members to demonstrate what are the current perceptions of the Council's services, where they stand in relation to councils with similar demographic and geographic characteristics and where the Council should actually be.*

This was deemed no longer relevant following the change of Government and the demise of the Place Survey.

**Recommendation 3**

*That a small corporate working group (officers) be set up to support the delivery of corporate communications in a standard style, (including strict brand management and style guidelines), for the Council's priority campaigns and develop closer working with the lead teams so that the Communications Team are more involved from the beginning of campaigns.*

The Corporate Communication team is now in a shared service. There has been a reduction in resources, which in an ideal world would not be what

the Council would want, however with the 27% reduction in the Revenue Support Grant every service is having to look at their resources and communications is a support service. The Communications Team has been much more involved "up front" on key projects during 2010 and there has been a number of months with a very high percentage of positive press articles. It was decided not to establish a corporate working group, but to work with specific teams on specific projects. As the new Communications Shared Service has only recently gone "live", the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the Communications and Marketing Manger will be attending every department management team to discuss their requirements.

**Recommendation 4**

*That internal communication is kept high on the agenda, particular in the light of the shared services and strict budget control. This should also include the regular communication of the Council's achievements to staff.*

*(a) That in order to improve residents' satisfaction with the Council's services regular newsletters be provided to Parish Councils and businesses and Portfolio Holders along with Officers playing a greater visible role in their area of customer interface.*

*(b) That a web design style is created that is user friendly and embraces the principles of writing in "plain English".*

(a) Each Staff Forum now includes a section on achievements and the Council has a separate Shared Services Communications Plan. It must be remembered however that it is a difficult time for staff who are naturally worried about their jobs and the Council need to consider doing more communications to help maintain morale during this difficult tme.

(b) Further staff training will take place later in the year, and the Organisational Development Officer is planning to include a customer focused Plain English course in her training plans.

**Recommendation 5**

*That a review of the use of the Council's crest and Building Pride logo be carried out in order to increase their usage and promote the message behind them throughout all Council departments and services.*

Due to other priorities e.g. Worcestershire Regulatory Services, North Worcestershire EDU, going through a restructure into a new shared service, this recommendation has not been actioned, but will be looked at again in 2012.

**Recommendation 6**

*That the Communications Team work more closely with Cabinet, through the Communications Plan in order to identify any difficult decisions at an early stage in order to involve residents as soon as possible.*

A communications planner goes to Corporate Management Team and the Communications Team has regular contact with the Leader and Portfolio Holder. The press coverage is very positive with 100% take up on press releases.

**Recommendation 7**

*That the Council Aim for Excellence with Customer Service, to include Customer First parts 4, 5 and 6 and by providing the relevant training to all staff.*

**Recommendation 7 (a)**

*That the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnership and the new Head of Customer Service work together to co-ordinate detailed customer feedback on services from both external and internal customers, which will enable the Council to understand how they are doing, what they must do better, why particular services are not used or why customers may have stopped using the service.*

The Head of Customer Services reports that the Customer Experience Strategy (Every Customer, Every Time) was launched on 1st April 2011 along with a 3 year action plan to develop customer service provision in Bromsgrove, building on the work of the Customer First Programme. The strategy, agreed by Cabinet, pulled together four key strands of work – Customer Experience, Transformation, Customer Feedback and Staff, which focused on improving the customer experience. Progress on this strategy would be reported in a quarterly report to Cabinet.

All staff have received a briefing on the strategy and the expectations placed on them to help the organisation deliver excellent customer service. Staff guidance has also been developed and is available to all staff via the Orb, and a managers' toolkit would also be developed in the near future.

An internal assessment against the Customer Service Excellence Accreditation criteria has been carried out and showed that good progress had been made against the various elements of the standard. However, due to the shared service and transformation programme the formal assessment has been deferred for 12-18 months. This will not deter the Council from pursuing excellent customer service as the transformation

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methodology would ensure that excellent customer service was provided through services which meet the demands of customers.

The majority of actions in the Customer First programme have been completed and those which are ongoing or need further development would be picked up in the Every Customer, Every Time Action Plan.

### **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the Council's democratic decision making process and enables non-executive Members of the Council to put forward recommendations for policy development, policy review and service improvement.

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the purpose of this report.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications for the purpose of this report.

### **8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no policy implications for the purpose of this report.

### **9. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 9.1 Council Objective Two – Improvement  
Council Objective Three – One Community

### **10. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 None for the purpose of this report.

### **11. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None for the purpose of this report.

### **12. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 None for the purpose of this report.

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**13. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

13.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**14. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

14.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**16. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

16.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**17. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

17.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**18. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

18.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**19. LESSONS LEARNT**

19.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**20. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

20.1 None for the purpose of this report.

**21. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**22. WARDS AFFECTED**

All

**23. APPENDICES**

None

**24. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group Report – June 2010

**25. KEY**

None

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