



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

# Customer Services Service Plan 2008/09

**“To make Richmond upon Thames the greenest, safest and best  
educated borough in London and be an exemplar borough on  
sustainability”**

*The Council's vision as set out in the Corporate Plan*

## **1. Who we are and what we do**

Customer Services provides a front line contact service for the Council via the telephone, email and face to face. The service employs approximately 34 staff (30 FTE's) and is primarily responsible for:

- Staffing two Council reception areas, currently employing 9 staff ( 7.7FTE's) and seeing over 79,000 customers pa;
- Staffing the corporate contact centre, currently employing approx 23 staff (22FTE's) and dealing with over 280,000 telephone calls p.a.
- Over 60,000 customer emails are received per year and are handled by all staff.
- Increasingly our customers choose to interact with us via our website, and the service works very closely with the corporate Web Team and others to ensure that the same systems that support effective face to face and contact centre working are also available to customers and staff on the web.

## **2. Requirements Placed On Us**

The Council has a formal Customer Strategy which builds on the work of the Customer First programme of recent years. Our vision for excellent customer services at the Council is that we aim to provide the best possible services for our customers by putting the customer first.

The strategy sets out how the Council will respond to our customers' needs, how we will ensure that services are accessible, and how we will involve customers in planning and delivering our services, all underpinned by the following principles:

- Our customers are customers of the Council not the service
- Our customers' needs come first
- Our customers are always in the right place.

The objectives of the Strategy are to ensure:

- Services are more accessible.
- Services are designed, reviewed and developed with customers.
- Services are inclusive and responsive to customers' choices and needs.
- Services work with partners to provide joined up delivery.
- Technologies adopted are efficient and effective.
- Staff are supported and empowered to deliver excellent customer service.

The Customer First programme has also led on the introduction of a number of Standards and Commitments, which Customer Services themselves are committed to delivering, including:

- Telephone calls will be answered within five rings;
- Letters will be responded to in seven working day;
- All external emails will be acknowledged within one working day of receipt, and a full response sent within the letter response standard.

All of the actions in our Service Plan for 2008/9 are designed to help deliver these objectives and standards. As one of the largest public facing services, seen by many customers as the face and voice of the Council it is essential that we offer high quality and effective performance.

### 3. How We Are Doing

Customer Services leads on a number of initiatives that provide feedback on both our own services and others across the Council. Principle amongst these is the ongoing mystery shopping programme. This has found that our services are improving, and that overall a consistently high standard of service is being provided when customers contact Customer Services by phone, email, and face to face contact. There is still room for improvement and customer services are working hard to deliver the best possible customer experience.

Our key performance indicators are as follows:

Service	Measure	2006/7 Actual	2007/8 (target)	2007/8 (projection)
Phone	% of calls answered within 20 seconds	80%	80%	74%
Phone	% abandoned calls	3%	5%	5%
Phone	Average handle time in seconds	160	180	181
Phone	% First Call Resolution	75%	80%	72%
Phone	% Customer satisfaction by phone	71%	80%	80%
Email	% Customer satisfaction by email	62%	85%	88%
Face to Face	% Customer satisfaction face to face	95%	96%	96%

The introduction of the new waste and recycling arrangements has led to a very significant increase in calls being received within the contact centre and this is reflected in the small decrease in performance for 2007/08. It is expected that additional resources and improved working practices will address this situation in 2008/09.

### 4. Pressures for Change

Customer and other stakeholders expectations are rising all the time and Customer Services is at the forefront of the Council's drive to meet these expectations, by delivering excellent services themselves and by acting as an exemplar to others. Specifically we need to undertake the following:

- Embark upon a programme of expansion for the CSC;
- Continue with the roll out of the CRM system, ensuring full integration with the web site and for face to face services;

- Achieve Contact Centre Accreditation
- Promote the Customer First programme, ensuring it is focussed on the delivery of the objectives within the Customer Strategy;
- Focus on the issues raised by the 5 areas of relative disadvantage through customer segmentation
- Pursue and promote opportunities for partnership working both within and outside the Council, thus ensuring delivery of efficiencies.
- Implement process changes to deliver efficiency gains

## 5. SERVICE OBJECTIVES

### Corporate Plan Priority: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Objective	Targets	Equalities Implications	Resource Implications	Risk	Responsibility	Efficiency savings
To roll out structured Home workers program	15- 20% of Contact Centre staff home working Target date 31.3.09	Homeworking will increase opportunities for certain groups to work within the service, such as those with caring responsibilities. Adherence to the Home working Policy will mitigate any potential adverse effects	None	See risk register risk 1 and 3	DC	Allows expansion without need for additional accommodation

### Corporate Plan Priority: TACKLING DISADVANTAGE AND PROMOTING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Objective	Targets	Equalities Implications	Resource Implications	Risk	Responsibility	Efficiency savings
To improve access to and take up of local services by prioritising customers located in deprived areas	Automatic flag in CRM for those properties that are located in deprived areas Target date 30.6.08  Gain agreement with appropriate service areas to allocate higher	Positive impact- prioritises the needs of the economically disadvantaged	IT required to flag addresses and create reports.	See risk register risk 1, 4 and 6	DC	None specific

	priority to these cases Target date 31.7.08					
To proactively support the work of the Directorate on integrating equalities policy and practice into our service	That service completes its programme of EINA's and that all staff attend Equalities training as appropriate Target date – throughout 08/09 To ensure that the actions within the Directorate Equalities Action Plan <a href="#">here</a> is delivered Target date – throughout 08/09 – per plan	That an effective EINA programme mitigates the impact of this	Within existing resources	See Risk Register risk no 4	MG/EB/EF	None specific

<b>Corporate Plan Priority: A SAFER COMMUNITY</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
To improve the quality and safety of life for residents in Areas of deprivation-by targeting as priority anti social behaviour cases within CRM e.g. fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned cars	Automatic flag in CRM for those properties that are located in deprived areas Target date 31.6.08  Gain agreement with Street Services to allocate higher priority to	Positive impact as prioritise the needs to the disadvantaged	IT required to flag addresses and create reports	See Risk Register risk no 1	DC	None identified

	these cases Target date 31.7.08					
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<b>Corporate Plan Priority: ACCESS TO SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
Re-evaluate, update and re-launch Customer First Standards	Target date 31.10.08	Information is in accessible format for all customers	Within existing resources	See Risk Register risk no 4	DC/JS	None specific
Deliver on response targets for 3 contact channels- phone, email, face to face	80% calls answered within 20 secs Visitors seen within 10 minutes CS emails responded to within 48 hours Target date by 30.9.08	Information is in accessible format for all customers	Additional resources required to achieve phone objectives	See Risk Register risk no 4	DC	None identified
To develop programme of integration of other Council and potentially partner services into CSC and the expanded use of the CRM system for F2F and web transactions	Target date 31.7.08	Improvement of access to services for all customers	Within existing corporate resources	See Risk Register risk no 8 and 9	MG/DC	Reduction in NI14 and others
Atrium- redesign to improve ease of use	Target date 31.3.09	Information is in accessible format for all customers	Within existing resources	See Risk Register risk no 3	DC	None specific

for customers						
Implement centralised change of address service within contact centre	Target date 30.9.08	Information is in accessible format for all customers	CS FTE's resources required	See Risk Register risk no 1, 2 and 8	DC	Number of calls to depts within the Council will reduce due to being handled in the CSC. This could result in salary savings for the back offices
To increase customer choice and access to services	Evaluate demand for Later opening hours within CSC and FTE requirement Target date 30.9.08 Deliver by Target date 31.3.09	Information is in accessible format for all customers	CS FTE's resources required	See Risk Register risk no 1, 6 and 8	DC	None specific
Achieve Charter Mark "New Standard" accreditation	Target date 1.2.09	Accreditation and analysis will identify any opportunities for improvements	Within existing resources	See Risk Register risk no 4	DC	None specific

Corporate Plan Priority: ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS AND THE COMMUNITY						
Objective	Targets	Equalities Implications	Resource Implications	Risk	Responsibility	Efficiency savings

<p>To better shape our services and assist towards Contact Centre accreditation..</p>	<p>5 areas of relative deprivation – customer segmentation analysis Target date 31.7.08</p> <p>Summary of customer contact CRM activity Target date 30.9.08</p> <p>Clarify legal position; data protection; and risk management for populating CRM with CT database Target date 30.9.08</p>	<p>Will enable focus and improved understanding</p>	<p>IT required to flag addresses and create reports To fully implement segmentation Council Tax database required to populate CRM</p>	<p>See Risk Register risk no 1</p>	<p>DC</p>	<p>None specific</p>
<p>To demonstrate ongoing improvements in customer satisfaction levels</p>	<p>Carry out customer satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Phone - 1 per month for 6 month period</p> <p>Email- 2 per year</p> <p>Face to Face- 2 per year</p> <p>Target date ongoing throughout year, baseline and improvement targets to be established after first round of each</p>	<p>Analysis will identify any opportunities for improvements</p>	<p>Extra funding identified for 6 month period</p>	<p>See Risk Register risk no 6 and 8</p>	<p>DC</p>	<p>None specific</p>

Liaison with SNT regarding expansion of one point of contact for non emergency calls	SNT/Council to decide if additional call volume can be handled on behalf of SNT Target date 31.8.08	Information is in accessible format for all customers	Identification: within existing resources. If implemented an increase in FTE's re'qd	See Risk Register risk no 9	DC	One point of contact – less duplication
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<b>Corporate Plan Priority: DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
Achieve Contact Centre Accreditation as part of response to Varney report	Undertake gap analysis Target date 30.4.08 Work plan in place to meet required improvements Target date 31.5.08 Apply for accreditation Target date 31.12.08	Positive impact as one of the key areas for accreditation is about ensuring services are accessible for all	Within existing resources, but gap analysis will provide any future implications	See Risk Register risk no 1, 2, 6, 8 and 9	DC	Accreditation process will either present opportunity to make savings or demonstrate the contact centre as an efficient operation
Implement Process Improvements within current services handled by the contact	Reduce avoidable contact from 66% to 61%	Information is in accessible format for all customers	Short term funding in place to deliver objectives for 6	See Risk Register risk no 9	DC	Salary savings as avoids double

centre and reduce % avoidable contact	Target date 31.03.09		months			handling of calls/ emails by resolving at first point of contact
To reduce the number of Phone transactions requiring access to "live agent".	Develop a business case for self service Speech recognition service that will handle simple low value contacts without the need for live agents Target date 30.6.08 If viable Two services in operation including out of hours service Target date 31.3.09	Information is in accessible format for all customers	IT investment costs	See Risk Register risk no 8	DC	Longer term efficiencies will result
To Improve customer services	Evaluation of Council call volume and number range by end June 2008 The launch and marketing of one number for the Council Target date 31.3.09	Information is in accessible format for all customers	Within existing resources	See Risk Register risk no 8	DC	None identified

Embed the principles of the Data Quality strategy into all aspects of service delivery	Carry out gap analysis and develop improvement plan Target date 30.6.08  Implement improvement plan actions Target date 30.9.08	Essential to base service delivery on robust data	Within existing resources	See Risk Register risk no 6	DC	None identified
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<b>Corporate Plan Priority: OUR EMPLOYEES</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
Improve CSA knowledge of Council services to enable an excellent service to be provided for internal and external customers	Improve CSA knowledge of 3 Council services Target date 30.9.08  Cross train 3 CSA's Target date 31.3.09  100% appraisal coverage for all staff Target date 30.6.08	Improved frontline knowledge to assist with customers with differing needs	Extra funding identified for 6 month period	See Risk Register risk no 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8	DC	Less calls are likely to be transferred to the back offices as knowledge improves in the front end service  Greater Flexibility will improve efficiencies

	Implement PDP for new appraisal year for all staff Target date 30.4.08					
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**6. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

New Performance Indictors		2006/7 Actual	2007/8 (target)	2007/8(projection)	2008/9 Target
	NI14- Avoidable Contact for CSC	N/A	N/A	66%	61%

Local performance indicators					
Service	Measure	2006/7 Actual	2007/8 (target)	2007/8(projection)	2008/9 Target
Phone	% of calls answered within 20 seconds	80%	80%	74%	80%
Phone	% abandoned calls	3%	5%	5%	5%
Phone	Average handle time in seconds	160	180	181	180
Phone	% First Call Resolution	75%	80%	72%	80%

<b>Phone</b>	% Customer satisfaction by phone	71%	80%	80%	83%
<b>Email</b>	% Customer satisfaction by email	62%	85%	88%	90%
<b>Face to Face</b>	% Customer satisfaction face to face	95%	96%	96%	96%