

# DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Policy and Resources Committee - 13 December 2004  
Personnel Committee - 13 December 2004

**REPORT ON:** Corporate Customer Service Team

**REPORT BY:** Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

**REPORT NO:** 125-2004

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report proposes the establishment of a Corporate Customer Service Team based on the existing operation on Floor 2 of Tayside House.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is requested to approve the establishment of a Corporate Customer Service Team within the Support Services Department.

2.2 The Personnel Committee is requested to approve the establishment of:-

2.2.1 one post of Customer Service Centre Team Leader, graded PO5-8, £27,873 - £30,060;

2.2.2 one post of Senior Customer Services Advisor, graded AP3, £17,340 - £19,029;

2.2.3 seven posts of Customer Services Advisor, graded GS3-AP2, £13,650 - £16,866, with a qualification bar at the maximum of AP1.

2.3 The Personnel Committee is requested to note that, after these new posts have been filled, a further report will be submitted to delete a number of posts elsewhere (which will be vacated by the employees appointed to the new posts).

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Provision for the establishment of a customer contact centre is contained within the current capital budget for the ICT Strategy. The estimated costs of the proposals contained within the report are £66,000 in a full financial year. These additional costs can be met from the savings achieved from the new telephone system and can therefore be contained within the Council's approved Revenue Budget."

## 4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

## 5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Corporate Customer Service Team will ensure that the Council's equality policies and standards of customer care for ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are adhered to.

## 6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Council Plan 2003-2007 includes a commitment to establish a customer contact centre to provide a uniform high standard of response to all customer enquiries and service requests. This strategy was first set out in the Council's ICT Strategy, which also included the creation of dedicated contact centres for Revenues and Housing Repairs. Both of these went live in April 2004.
- 6.2 The Corporate Customer Service Team will be a Council wide resource providing economies of scale in modernising customer contact facilities for a range of services. The aim is to assume responsibility for customer reception and call handling for departments where the volume of transactions is such that it would not be cost effective to modernise each service separately. In addition, the ultimate aim is to provide a more integrated service to the customer by reducing the amount of form filling and repeated requests for personal details by different departments.
- 6.3 The existing customer contact service on Floor 2 of Tayside House evolved out of an initiative by the Director of Planning and Transportation to establish a facility based there rather than have customers of the department being required to travel up to floors 15 and 16 of Tayside House. The same logic applied to other departments and, subsequently, the Leisure and Arts Department decided that it made sense to deliver customer services (such as applying for memberships, etc.) in Tayside House rather than requiring customers to visit Olympia for that purpose. As a result of these developments, the team on Floor 2 now handle 20 separate customer contact processes for six different departments (please refer to Appendix 1 for details).
- 6.4 The Corporate Customer Service Team will be handling customer enquiries as work on the Dundee Discovery Card progresses further. The Helpline will also be integrated into the Corporate Customer Service Team. The Helpline provides enquiries about any service and the Council's complaint service. The Helpline number and service will continue to be advertised. The combined resources will assist the Council in implementing the Modernising Government Fund 'Customer First' programme.

## 7. ROLE OF THE CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACT CENTRE

- 7.1 As part of the corporate objective of modernising the Council's customer service processes, the Corporate Planning Department conducted a survey amongst all departments. Departments were asked to describe the top five services by volume of customer contact and, for each service, the published standards and performance measures. Thirteen of these services account for 80% of the regular contact by the public to the Council. These are:-

Library enquires

Leisure and Arts enquiries

Housing repairs

Revenue accounts recovery

Revenues enquiries office	Customer contact service
Dundee Discovery Card	Benefit applications
Job application forms	Licensing
Bulky uplifts	Out of hours emergency
Education clothing	

7.2 The figures for the customer contact service and the Dundee Discovery Card include the total volume for the services covered. Therefore, by investing in the customer contact centre aligned with the recent contact centre developments in Revenues and Housing repairs, the Council will be modernising its approach in those services that have regular customer contact.

7.3 In developing the contact centre approach, the Corporate Planning Department and the staff on Floor 2 have been benchmarking with the Contact Centre Association and other local authorities which have introduced contact centres. This exercise identified that those organisations which were pursuing contact centre strategies were gathering more performance information on what happens when customers contact their organisation and that this, in turn, drives improvement projects within the services. Below is a list of customer service standards that will be adopted by the Corporate Customer Service Team for each service it will provide.

#### 7.4 **Customer Service Standards**

- Set standards for and measure contact to delivery and continuously improve performance, allowing accurate time estimates to be provided to the customer.
- Measure call waiting, abandoned calls and queuing times, and take action to improve these.
- Measure contact caused by failure to deliver, and continuously seek to eliminate failure demand.
- Measure and improve customer satisfaction.
- Avoid asking the customer to provide information already held by the Council.
- Avoid asking the customer to contact another department.
- Record complaints and reply to the customer.
- Measure how long complaints take to resolve and try to eliminate the causes of complaints.
- Provide trained customer contact staff committed to high standards of customer service.
- Provide facilities to enquire, request, order and pay for services by phone and web.

### 8. **PROPOSED CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE AND CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM**

8.1 It is proposed to establish a Corporate Customer Service Team based on the existing team operating on Floor 2 of Tayside House. The existing team has already proved successful by integrating 20 separate services on behalf of six different departments within the Council. The members of the team have or are pursuing Level 3 SVQ Customer Service qualifications. Benchmarking with other authorities which have customer contact centres shows that it is highly advantageous for the staff to be dedicated customer service staff rather than undertaking a range of other functions.

The objectives of the Corporate Customer Service Team will be as follows:-

- to be the hub for transferring low volume or seasonal calls from a range of departments;
- to answer calls at first contact and free up time for back office processing staff to focus on their roles in delivering service;
- to provide departments with quality customer satisfaction and performance statistics;
- to provide a quality customer care service;
- to develop multi channel capabilities by managing customer contact by e-mail, web, phone and over the counter (face to face).

- 8.2 The staffing structure of the Corporate Customer Service Team is based on information obtained from other local authorities. Staff will also be encouraged to gain Customer Service qualifications and engage in additional responsibilities such as integrating a range of services, measuring customer satisfaction, and proposing improvements.
- 8.3 As the service is moving from a pilot led by Planning and Transportation to a mainstream corporate service for all departments (not just those based in Tayside House), it is recommended that the service should now move to the Support Services Department. The Team Leader of the Corporate Customer Service Team will be line managed by the Administration Manager of the Support Services Department.
- 8.4 Best practice from contact centres elsewhere shows that it is highly desirable to keep face-to-face, call centre and back office (processing forms, etc.) activities separate. For example, someone dealing with customers at the counter should not leave to answer a phone and, similarly, someone managing calls should not leave a ringing phone to deal with someone at the counter. The supervisor will have up to the minute statistics from the system to ensure that queue times and call waiting times are kept within standard and can move staff from calls to face-to-face activity dependent on demand.
- 8.5 The BT Symposium System procured as part of the Council's new telephone infrastructure will provide incoming call measurement and will be integrated with the existing Council systems used by the Corporate Customer Service Team. It is proposed to install a six seat contact centre on Floor 2.
- 8.6 The project plan will cover staffing, accommodation, layout, IT integration and communication with stakeholders. The new operation will be launched when the equipment and office layout is ready, and when the staff have been trained. The 'go live' date is likely to be in June 2005 and this will be reported to Committee in due course. Following the launch of the new operation, the Corporate Customer Service Team will bring forward its own service plan with the objectives of operating to the new corporate customer centre standards and the integration of further services.
- 8.7 The working arrangements of the Team will be flexible and this will facilitate the possibility of extended opening hours in the future to meet customer demand.

## 9. FILLING OF POSTS

- 9.1 The post of Customer Service Centre Team Leader will be advertised externally.

- 9.2 The post of Senior Customer Services Adviser and the posts of Customer Services Adviser will be advertised internally within the Council.
- 9.3 Any existing member of the existing operation who does not wish to be considered for a new post, or who applies but is not appointed to a new post, will be redeployed within the Council on his/her existing grade.

10. **CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted on the terms of this report, as have the trade unions.

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Dundee Discovery Card – Policy and Resources Committee – June 2004

Modernising Government Fund 3 Bid – Policy and Resources Committee – May 2004

Corporate Customer Contact Centre Technology Report – IT Department June 2004

The Council Plan – Policy and Resources Committee – October 2003

Housing Response Repairs Best Value Review – October 2003

Replacement Telephone Contract – Policy and Resources Committee – January 2003

Modernising Government Fund Bid – Policy and Resources Committee – January 2001

ICT Strategy – Policy and Resources Committee – December 1999

Alex Stephen  
Chief Executive

7 December 2004

J.C. Petrie  
Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

7 December 2004

**Customer Service Duties and Responsibilities  
October 2002 onwards**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Annual Contract (approx)</b>
CONFIRM (Clarence) Customer Care Package Maintenance - Street Lighting and Road Defects reports from customers	Planning & Transportation	5,400
Corporate Cash Receipting Facilities	Finance	New
Doors Open Day Bookings	Planning & Transportation	250
Education Department School Clothing Grant Applications	Education	16,000
Education Job Applications	Education	1,000
Education Free School Meals Applications	Education	4,000
Education Maintenance Allowance Applications	Education	300
Rapid Response Team - Customer Enquiries	Waste Management	3500
Leisure & Arts Concession Passes	Leisure & Arts	6,000
Leisure & Arts Golf Season Tickets	Leisure & Arts	1,600
Leisure & Arts Fishing/Bowling Permits	Leisure & Arts	490
Leisure & Arts Abertay Student Card	Leisure & Arts	2,000
Leisure & Arts Allotment Permits	Leisure & Arts	varies
Disability Bus Passes and Taxicard Applications	Planning & Transportation	5,500
Disabled Vehicle Badges	Planning & Transportation	150
Sale of Monthly Car Parking Permits	Planning & Transportation	300
Sale of Parking Bay Permits	Planning & Transportation	15
Skip/Scaffold/Vehicle Access Permit Applications	Planning & Transportation	600
Smartcard Management	Corporate	10,000 (estimate)
Ad Hoc Customer Surveys (e.g. Dundee.Com)	Corporate	varies