

Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 12 September 2006

Present: Councillor Geoffrey Russell (Chair) and Councillors Peter Baker, Andrew Birchall, Henry Caunce, Doreen Dickinson, Hasina Khan, Margaret Lees, Thomas McGowan, Miss June Molyneaux, Edward Smith and Mrs Stella Walsh

06.CCS.14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Alan Cain, Magda Cullens, David Dickinson, Catherine Hoyle, Keith Iddon, Joyce Snape and Councillor John Walker (Executive Member for Customer, Democratic and Legal Services).

06.CCS.15 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared any interests in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

06.CCS.16 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 11 July 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the inclusion of an apology for absence on behalf of Councillor Margaret Lees.

06.CCS.17 MONITORING OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS - HOUSING MAINTENANCE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

The report of the Director of Housing Services was received updating the Panel on the final recommendation of the Housing Maintenance Appointment System Inquiry to be completed relating to the monitoring the detail and accuracy of fault reporting.

Members discussed recommendation 11 and noted that the transfer of the Council's houses to Chorley Community Housing had resulted in repair reporting not being carried out by the Call Centre so the automated telephone monitoring had not taken place. A local performance figure had been set up to monitor the percentage of repeat visits. It was considered that this would, amongst other factors, be an indication of the detail and accuracy of the fault reporting.

Members queried several points and noted that the number of repeat visits would be monitored and analyzed after the transfer of the Council's houses.

The Members thanked the Officers for the update report.

RESOLVED - That the update report be noted.

06.CCS.18 ONGOING INQUIRY - CONTACT CENTRE EFFICIENCIES AND PARTNERSHIP WITH LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

(a) To consider background information relating to the Contact Centre Efficiencies and Partnership with Lancashire County Council Inquiry

The Panel received a presentation from the Assistant Head of Customer Services.

Background: the Government agenda challenged Council's to think beyond the traditional methods of service delivery and to create efficiencies. There was a desire to create single point of contact for the customer to access both district and county services and to improve access to public services. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2002 and following this, from the three models put forward, a decision was taken by partners to go forward with a virtual contact centre approach. The primary contract is between Northgate and Lancashire County Council. There are further back to back contracts between the district and the County Council.

Development: A procurement exercise was undertaken. The preferred provider ITNET had pulled out and so the contract was awarded to SX3 who were subsequently bought out by Northgate. There are six district partners: Burnley, Chorley, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley and Rossendale and the County Council. The contract provides for the supply of the hardware for example computers, network, telephony system, disaster recovery and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The cost of the project is well over £12 million over a seven year contract with an initial cost of £95,000 and £50,000 per year for districts.

Governance: The Joint Committee and the Partnership Board manage the Partnership at the highest level. The Joint Committee are the sovereign decision making body, with Member representation. Each Council have one vote. Chorley is currently represented by Councillors Peter Baker, Anthony Gee and John Walker. The Partnership Board are responsible for programme delivery and is attended by the Executive Director (Corporate and Customer), the Director of Information, Communication Technology and the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services.

Technology: The key components of the system are the network, telephony, knowledge base/scripts and CRM. The aim is to address around 80% of enquiries at the first point of contact and to capture information about the customer. The scripts are essential to capture the necessary information to enable the enquiry to be dealt with and for further integration work. The scripts can also be used to enable customers to self-service via the web site and through other channels of contact.

Where are we today? There are significant challenges facing the partnership as a whole. For example there are different speeds and approaches to implementation across the Partnership. There was a need to refocus the CRM at Chorley but good progress was being made in relation to the migration of services. The staffing requirements after the recent transfer of Council Tax had been underestimated, but steps had been put in place to resolve this. Integration with back office systems remains a challenge. Email and telephone contacts would be streamlined next year, once all of the services had been transferred.

Members queried several points and noted that the members of staff who answered calls were excellent. In the future completed responses to queries could be sent back to the customer by text message or by email.

Three reports presented to the Executive Cabinet at Lancashire County Council on 5 September 2006 relating to the Shared Services Contact Centre were distributed to the Panel Members for inclusion in their reference box file.

The Members thanked the Officers for the presentation.

RESOLVED - That the presentation be noted.

(b) To discuss the Efficiencies Sub-Group and the Partnership Sub-Group

The Panel discussed the membership of the Efficiencies Sub-Group and the Partnership Sub-Group.

RESOLVED

1. **That the memberships of the Sub-Groups be as follows:**
Efficiencies Sub-Group Councillors Alan Cain, Margaret Lees, Edward Smith and Stella Walsh.
Partnership Sub-Group Councillors Peter Baker, Andrew Birchall, Hasina Khan and June Molyneaux.
2. **That the Democratic Services Officer would confirm the dates of the Sub-Groups in October and November in writing.**

(c) To note the updated Inquiry documentation

The Panel considered the Project Outline, Information Checklist, Witness Checklist and Project Plan and noted that all of the documentation on the information checklist had been received in the reference box file.

RESOLVED - That the updated Inquiry documentation be noted.

06.CCS.19 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2006/07

The Panel considered the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and noted the items that would be considered at the next meeting of the Panel in October.

RESOLVED - That the work programme be noted.

Chair