

Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Head of Customer Services	Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel	10 October 2006

## ONE STOP SHOP INQUIRY AND MONITORING REPORT

### PURPOSE OF REPORT`

1. To report a further update to the Panel following their recommendations made to Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2004.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. The Contact Centre directly affects the Council's Customer and Capacity priorities. The development represents a major investment to improve customer focus, relations and contact with the Council.
3. The project also provides the basis for realising Gershon type efficiencies that will free up more back office time for processing and will potentially release extra resources for improved direct service provision.

### RISK ISSUES

4. The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	√	Information	
Reputation	√	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial	√	Operational	√
People		Other	

5. The Council has an agreed and approved strategy for the development of a customer contact centre through joint working in the Lancashire Partnership. This is a high profile scheme that is being looked at from both a regional and a national perspective. If it were to fail it would have a damaging effect on the reputation of the partners.
6. The total costs for the Partnership will be significant, but a major share of these will be funded by Lancashire County Council. Operational risks relate to the non-achievement of planned customer service improvements.

### BACKGROUND

7. The Panel carried out an enquiry to assess the effectiveness of the newly implemented One Stop Shop and to identify improvements, which would benefit both the Customer and the Workforce.

8. The report is set out as comments against the recommendations of the Panel.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
1.	That after consideration of the evidence presented to the Panel, the One Stop Shop has been effective in improving Customer Service	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> Acknowledged. This is a developing service and will continue to focus on improving the customer experience.</p>
	<b>Service Objective</b>	
2.	To consider further the feasibility of the Planning Officer on Customer Services duty to be based from within the One Stop Shop.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> Meeting in May with Development Control where this issue was put forward. Development Control Manager was on sick leave and so no decision was made. The proposals were taken away for consideration. Another meeting set for August was cancelled. This will be rearranged on the return of the officers concerned.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> The Duty officer has been based in Customer Services since the beginning of October last year. This has improved the service for the customer by removing any undue delay. The arrangement has also helped to foster a shared understanding between the Service Units that has been appreciated by all involved. There has also been a benefit in the additional shadowing by Customer Advisors that has been enabled by this arrangement.</p> <p><b>Comments of Development Control Manager</b> Since the duty officer has been based in the One Stop Shop, Customer Services Advisors have undertaken additional planning training to enable them to provide greater assistance to customers as a first point of contact. This has led to a better working relationship between the teams. Customer Service Advisors have developed confidence in dealing with planning enquiries and this has been successful in reducing the reliance on the duty officer to provide advice.</p> <p>However while the duty officer has been based within the One Stop Shop it has not been possible to provide a similar service to customers who telephone the office. It is not possible to provide a second duty officer to deal with telephone calls. As a result the service to customers who telephone the office for advice has fallen.</p>

		<p>The number of customers visiting the duty officer and the number of telephone calls from customers has been monitored. This information is provided as an Appendix to this report. This indicates that by comparison there are a significant number of customers who telephone the office compared with those seeing the duty officer.</p> <p>In the circumstance given the difficulties that are being experienced in dealing with the level of telephone enquiries it is suggested that the duty officer remains within the main Development Control office with an assurance that when a customer requires assistance from the duty officer that will be provided.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b></p> <p>The duty officer remains in the One Stop Shop at present, pending the impact of Planning calls being directed into the call centre. The service will be reviewed at that time.</p>
3.	To consider amendments to the arrangements for 'on duty' planning officers to address the issues of customers having to wait.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>As above.</p>
	<b>Security</b>	
4.	To let staff know how often the panic buttons are tested.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>Civic Services staff test the alarms on a monthly basis. The Panic Alarm procedure has been updated with this information and all staff have been advised. The updated procedure has been posted on the intranet and is included in the induction of new staff.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
	<b>Training</b>	
5.	To have Customer Services Advisors, in particular the supervisors, join in on regular training sessions and new starters to have training with the back office sections, such as Revenues and Benefits and Planning Services.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>Agreement already in place with Revenues and Benefits that they will alert us when training sessions are relevant to the level of service which we provide. Attendance has been by Team Leader and training cascaded to customer advisors. Advisors recently spent extended periods working out of Environmental Services in preparation for the service being introduced into the call centre. This proved to be extremely successful and the same principles will be used in respect of existing services such as Revenues and Benefits and Development and Building</p>

		<p>Control, with their agreement.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b>  Agreement reached with Benefits Assessment Manager for Customer Advisors to receive coaching in back office procedures from experienced Benefits staff. Also agreement in principle to new starters working from out of the Benefits office as happened with Environmental Services.  Additional system based Benefits training is in progress.  Back Office training in Planning and Licensing is also underway.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b>  Customer Services Team Leader is attending the regular weekly training sessions held in Benefits. Relevant information is then fed back to Advisors. Additional Housing Benefit and Council Tax training has already been undertaken and more is to be arranged.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
6.	To train some Customer Services staff to a higher level in certain services to serve as reference points within Customer Services.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b>  Some CS staff came from specific service areas, e.g. Housing, Benefits and Planning Admin and so there is already a reference point for each of these services. The attendance of the above training sessions will ensure that the staff concerned keep their knowledge up-to-date. The impact of this on the Progression scheme will need to be considered.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
<b>No.</b>	<b>Computerised Systems and Dialogues</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
7.	To establish a policy to ensure that the dialogues are kept up-to-date for all services provided by the One Stop Shop.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b>  Work is taking place on the range of dialogues to ensure that they are compatible with all access channels. It has been generally established and agreed that dialogues are the responsibility of/owned by the service providers and amendments and additions are made by them. This will be confirmed by the acceptance of a draft SLA that has been drawn up.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b>  Draft SLA was presented at the meeting of the user group on 8th December. Units were asked to consider this and bring feedback to the next meeting. In January the Efficiency &amp; Transformation Board approved changes to improve the use and maintenance of dialogues by agreeing to</p>

		<p>the principle of dedicated resource by service providers and the standardisation of scripts to be a pre-requisite of transferring services to the Contact Centre. Allocation of capital programme funds were agreed to enable this.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b></p> <p>The new Information Officer is now in post and work on ensuring the dialogues are kept up-to-date, including liaison with the back office, is shortly to begin.</p>
8.	To clarify the point where the customer query requires back office attention.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>The dialogues currently indicate where a query needs to be referred to a service provider. Any lack of clarity can be addressed in detail during regular monthly meetings with service providers.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
9.	To load the Planning software on more than one computer in the One Stop Shop.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>This has been considered along with the alternative of using Planning Online, the web-based service. Planning Online is accessible from all the workstations in the One Stop Shop and it appears to provide sufficient information for the current level of service provided by the advisors, and has no licence or financial implications.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b></p> <p>Planning Online is used in the One Stop Shop where appropriate, to resolve low-level enquiries into planning applications. Not all advisors have received planning training yet and so enquiries cannot be handled at every desk.</p> <p>Planning training is currently underway. Once complete, we can begin to deal with Planning queries across the board.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b></p> <p>Planning enquiries are now being dealt with at every desk. There is still the restriction of the software not being on each PC due to licensing issues, this means that the more complex enquiries cannot be resolved at every desk. However the experience so far has been that this not caused many problems, and by far the majority of queries can be answered at any desk.</p>
	<b>External Publicity</b>	
10.	To promote the use of the Chorley Borough Council Internet site to access information and services.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>There is an established web-address strap line that is included on all Council documentation. The internet site is also referred to in the call centre waiting messages and publicised on the plasma screen in the One Stop Shop. Further work is scheduled for improving the web</p>

		<p>site and will present an opportunity to extensively promote this once in operation.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
11.	To publish frequently asked questions (FAQs) in the One Stop Shop on the different services provided, potentially via the plasma screen.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>The dialogues in use in the One Stop Shop provide more information than FAQs, as well as capturing information. Some information is already available on the plasma, e.g. Different ways to pay. Work is being carried out to provide information on other services via the plasma screen.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b></p> <p>The recent appointment of the new Information Officer means that we are now in a position to up-date FAQs in readiness for displaying via different means.</p>
12.	To increase the advertisement of facilities available at the One Stop Shop, for example a leaflet to libraries or an article in Chorley Borough News.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>An article advertising the services provided from partnership working (PALS DWP CAB) appeared in the July edition of Chorley Borough News and Tenants News and Views. Further article in September Chorley Borough News.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b></p> <p>An article appeared in the Winter 2006 Community Newsletter.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
	<b>Internal Information</b>	
14.	To produce a breakdown of the range of enquiries to Customer Services between Revenues and Benefits, Planning Services etc to aid future service provision.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>Dialogues in use already provide this information in a limited form, as does the Callplus software in use in the call centre. The imminent introduction of CRM will allow far more detailed information in this area.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
15.	To record the number of queries requiring back office resolution.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>Again dialogues already provide this, and CRM will allow more detailed reporting.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
16.	To record the numbers of Black and Minority Ethnic customers to aid future comparisons.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b></p> <p>CRM will allow this information to be recorded. However there is concern on how readily customers will provide this information during their contact with Customer Services.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>

	<b>Internal Communication</b>	
17.	To set up a One Stop Shop user group with management and staff from all of the Council's Service Units involved and a Member of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> An initial, introductory meeting of the Customer Focus Group was held at the end of May. All services were represented except Housing. This was well received and it was proposed that meetings are held every three months and include a cross-section of staff. The invitation for August's meeting to include a representative of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> Customer Focus Group meeting held on 23rd September, Cllr Mrs Walsh in attendance proposed that they be held quarterly. Further meeting to be arranged for early 2006.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b> The last meeting was held on 26 May 2006, further meeting to be scheduled shortly.</p>
	<b>Service for Customers with Disabilities</b>	
18.	To use footsteps/arrows to direct customers to Fast Track Reception.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> There have been difficulties in sourcing these and the search continues.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> Footsteps are now in place, there has been some improvement in customers visiting Reception prior to entering the One Stop Shop.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
19.	To train staff in basic sign language and to liase with deaf organisations on other ways to provide services to deaf customers, such as the provision of sign language interpreters by appointment by an external or internal identified resource.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> An existing member of staff is already a trained signer working in the Union Street offices who has been called on previously and is happy to provide continued support if called upon. Some Customer Services staff have expressed an interest in this area and have a basic knowledge. HR have been consulted, however there has been difficulty finding a suitable course.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> Two Advisors are currently attending an evening class in sign language and have already been able to use these new skills to help customers.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b> The course was successfully completed by two Advisors.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>

20.	To make the internal entrance and exit doors to the One Stop Shop more accessible, potentially by making the doors semi-automatic push button operated.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> An estimated cost has been established. We are currently working to a specification that is still to be agreed by all parties. A site meeting took place on 4 August. Property Services have considered quotations from 4 companies and have identified a possible successful one. Final agreement to be reached w/e 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Work can then be arranged.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> The alterations to the doors have been completed. There are a couple of minor issues in that the tendency has been for the majority of customers to use the push button rather than opening the door manually and this has shortened the battery life. The contractors have suggested improved signage or using mains power.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
21.	The layout of Interview Room Three to be reconsidered.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> This has been carefully considered. However, the only option would be to change the door to open outward that would impact upon the queuing and reception areas. Any change has therefore been ruled out.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
22.	To provide a disabled parking space in the vicinity of the One Stop Shop.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> Disabled parking with the appropriate badge is currently permitted on both streets either side of the Union Street offices. The Parking manager is currently investigating the possibility of using the coach bay at the front of the building as disabled parking.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> The coach bay has been replaced with a disabled bay in front of the One Stop Shop on Union Street. This has been in use since 6th February.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
<b>Services for Black and Ethnic Communities Customers</b>		
23.	To advertise the 'Language Line' service	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> This service is advertised at Reception and on the plasma screen in the One Stop Shop. An article promoting the service is planned for the next edition of Chorley Borough News.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>



24.	To target Black and Minority Ethnic communities for open evening events in the One Stop Shop and promotion of facilities available in the community.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> A meeting has been held with the Community Development Co-ordinator (LCC) to arrange weekly surgeries in the One Stop Shop. The first of these is on 7<sup>th</sup> September. These will be publicised and the possibility of an evening session will be considered.</p> <p><b>1 March 2006</b> The weekly surgeries have been a success with positive customer feedback. A visit by Customer Services staff to the Women's Forum is in the process of being arranged and this will be followed by a buffet open evening at the Union Street offices.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b> Staff from Customer Services enjoyed attending an open evening with the Asian Women's Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> March. There was a very successful and well attended return visit by the Women's Forum on 16<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
	<b>Progress on the Development of the Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre</b>	
25.	To extend the opening hours to provide additional ease of use for in-work customers e.g. Appointments outside opening hours and extended hours phone lines.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> Phone lines in the call centre are currently open from 8am until 6pm. Once Partnership protocol is in place additional access to services and the treatment of overspill calls can be agreed.</p> <p>This item is now considered closed.</p>
26.	To introduce text phone facilities for people with speech and hearing difficulties.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> It is planned to discuss this further with the SSCC partnership to look at how members are delivering this facility in their Contact Centres.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b> Issues with the SSCC implementation (see item 27. 10 October below) has delayed progress. It may be necessary to install this facility outside partnership arrangements.</p>
27.	To support progress on the implementation of the Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre to publicise the services available.	<p><b>7 September 2005</b> This is a seven-year project and we will continue to support and lead on this most important initiative for the Council and it's customers.</p> <p><b>10 October 2006</b> It is currently considered by the SSCC partnership that the current Onyx CRM system is not meeting the business needs of partners. As a consequence the CRM system is undergoing a refocus. An option to</p>

		consider the Northgate Front Office CRM system is currently being considered.
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**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

9. There are no direct HR implications associated with this report

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

10. There are no financial implications associated with this report

**RECOMMENDATION**

11. That the report be noted.

ASIM KHAN  
ASSISTANT HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Asim Khan	5448	28 September 2006	