

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Customer Services Manager

REPORT NO. CSV33

DATE: 8th November 2004

TITLE:	Customer Service Standards
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	Service Standards
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	16th July 2004
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Policy Framework Proposal

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Access
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	Access
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	None
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	None
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	CSV5 – Report to Cabinet 8 Oct 01 – CS Charter CSV31 – Report to Cabinet 12 Jul 04 – CS Standard CSV32 – Report to Capacity & Resources DSP 9 Sep 04 – CS Standard

Introduction & Background

1. The Cabinet endorsed the principle of the Council's Customer Service Standards and referred it to consultation. Consultation has now taken place. This paper advises Cabinet of the results and seeks to start the process of adoption of the Standards.

Recommendation

2. That the Cabinet review the consultation comments below and agrees the recommendations.
3. That the Cabinet recommends to Council the approval of the amended Customer Services Standards as amended by Section 4.1 of this report.

Consultations & Comment

4. Consultation on the proposed Standards took place with internal and external consultees. Response from external consultees was minimal. Further internal consultees, including the Capacity and Resources DSP, have made the following observations:

Consultee	Suggestion	Recommendation
Cabinet	Advisory Wording. Consider wording to include such as "frivolous and vexatious" nature of a customer enquiry.	Appropriate phraseology requested from the "Plain English" Campaign and included. Advisory Wording amended.
Capacity & Resource DSP	Point 3. Recommends the removal of "wear name badges and gives names so you know who you are talking to" from point 3 because it is fundamental to the safety of Council staff that in some services, members of staff cannot be personally identified.	In line with current local authority best practise, the current policy is that Customer Service advisors have name badges which only display their forename for staff safety reasons. Other members of staff who deal with the public face-to-face may wear forename only namebadges at their manager's discretion. No change to Point 3
Service Managers	Point 5. Suggests the inclusion of the phrase "90% of the time".	Ten rings is sufficient time for all telephones to be answered. No change to Point 5
	Point 7. Suggests the addition of the phrase "in Plain English"	This supports the Council's adherence to the Plain English Campaign, but would mean little to a customer. No change to Point 7.

4.1 During the consultation process it has occurred to me that the service standards should include the following:

“Provide and advertise appropriate out-of-hours provision to deal with designated emergencies”. To be monitored by an annual audit.

Comments of Director of Finance and Strategic Resource

5. None

Comments of Corporate Manager, Democratic and Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)

6. None.

Conclusion

7. The Council benefits from corporate Customer Services Standards which are applicable to all services that are provided. Customer Service Standards declare the corporate expectations to all users of Council services. The Standards remind staff of the importance of customer service corporately and the minimum standard they are expected to deliver.

Contact Officer:

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Customer Services Manager
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Annex:

- A. Customer Services Standards including performance monitoring methodology.
- B. Public Version of Customer Services Standards

ANNEX A

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (INTERNAL)

<u>WE WILL -</u>	<u>HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS</u>
• Respond to your needs in a polite and helpful way.	Customer feedback and satisfaction survey
• Listen and consider your needs as a valued customer.	Customer feedback and satisfaction survey
• Dress appropriately, wear name badges and give names so you know who you are talking to.	Visual check
• Have private interview facilities available if you require them.	Customer feedback
• Answer telephone calls within 10 rings.	Use telephony software and set up performance monitoring tool
• Answer 80% of your enquiries at first point of contact or tell you why we can't.	Set up performance monitoring tool.
• Answer your letters within 10 working days of receipt.	Set up performance monitoring tool
• Acknowledge your e-mails within 1 working day of receipt, and answer within 8 working days of receipt.	Set up performance monitoring tool
• Provide easy to understand information in a suitable format.	Seek to gain the Crystal Mark for all public documents and forms
• See you within 10 minutes of your appointment time.	Customer feedback
• Investigate any complaint you may have by following the Council's complaints procedure.	See Complaints Procedure
• Inform all sections of your changes and major events on your behalf with your permission.	Set up performance monitoring tool

AS A CUSTOMER THE COUNCIL EXPECTS YOU

To treat Council staff and contractors properly without violence or abuse. Council staff have the right to carry out their duties without fear of being attacked or abused. Violent and/or abusive customers will be reported to the police and added to the Council's Violence To Staff Incident List. Our Customer Service Standards will not apply to you if you are violent or abusive, or make a complaint that is not justified or made only to cause a nuisance.

These are the Customer Service Standards that the Council and its contractors will deliver.

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

We will:

- Respond to your needs in a polite and helpful way.
- Listen and consider your needs as a valued customer.
- Dress appropriately, wear name badges and give names so you know who you are talking to.
- Have private interview facilities available if you require them.
- Answer telephone calls within 10 rings.
- Answer 80% of your enquiries at first point of contact or tell you why we can't.
- Answer your letters within 10 working days.
- Acknowledge your e-mails within 1 working day of receipt, and answer within 8 working days of receipt.
- Provide easy to understand information in a suitable format.
- See you within 10 minutes of your appointment time.
- Investigate any complaint you may have by following the Council's complaints procedure.
- Inform all section of your changes and major events on your behalf with your permission.

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To treat Council staff and contractors properly without violence or abuse. Council staff have the right to carry out their duties without fear of being attacked or abused. Violent and/or abusive customers will be reported to the police and added to the Council's Violence to Staff Incident List. Our Customer Service Standards will not apply to you if you are violent or abusive, or make a complaint that is not justified or made only to cause a nuisance.

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