

Putting our Customers First

Our progress June 2010



Your council working for you

Putting our customer first

Putting our customers at the heart of all we do allows us to focus on what really matters to local people and businesses to ensure we deliver the things that are important to them.

As well as planning for the future, it is important that we look at what already has been achieved. We constantly monitor our achievements which helps us to measure how well we are doing and strive to make a valued difference to lives of local people with the services we provide.

The following sets out our projects, successes and what we plan to do next. Many of the projects have been influenced by the comments and contributions we have received from our customers, which we always welcome.

The aims of our Customer First priority theme are:

- A culture where the customer at the heart of everything we do
- Understanding our customers' needs
- Getting it right first time
- Making it easy and convenient for customers to access our services



What we achieved April – June 2010

A culture where the customer is at the heart of everything we do

We do this by being clear about the service standards we aspire to achieve in everything we do. We will measure our success in this area through customer satisfaction, and by achieving customer service excellence.

Project	Progress	What next
To introduce an internal learning & development programme for all staff to focus on customer service - "customer first"	We have rolled out core service training for all customer services staff. We have introduced an improved Customer Feedback process that allows us to use customers' views to improve service delivery.	We will continue to build our skills across all services and all teams during 2010 and 2011 to increase our focus on customer service.
Introduce a programme to achieve accreditation of Customer Service Excellence Standard; commencing initially within Customer Services	Initially we have compared what we do in our customer services team, against the standard to identify our strengths and areas for further development.	We will identify how we develop a more customer focussed approach across the whole council by comparing all services to the standard. This will give us a clear view of what we need to do to develop an action plan to deliver a culture of customer first across all services and all teams during 2010 and 2011. Future achievement of accreditation to the standard across the council will provide a measure of our ongoing success in delivering customer service excellence.
Introduce a programme of mystery shopping throughout the organisation; commencing with the teams in tenancy services and customer services	We completed this first test (mystery shop) of the service provided by tenancy services (repairs) in July.	The second service test (mystery shop) will be completed during July-September in customer services. We will look at the results of both of these exercises in September, and use what we learn to improve service back to customers. We will decide whether to continue to use mystery shopping in the future based on if it delivers the service improvements we are looking for.

We're making a difference.....

How many customers are satisfied with their experience from Customer services? **94%**

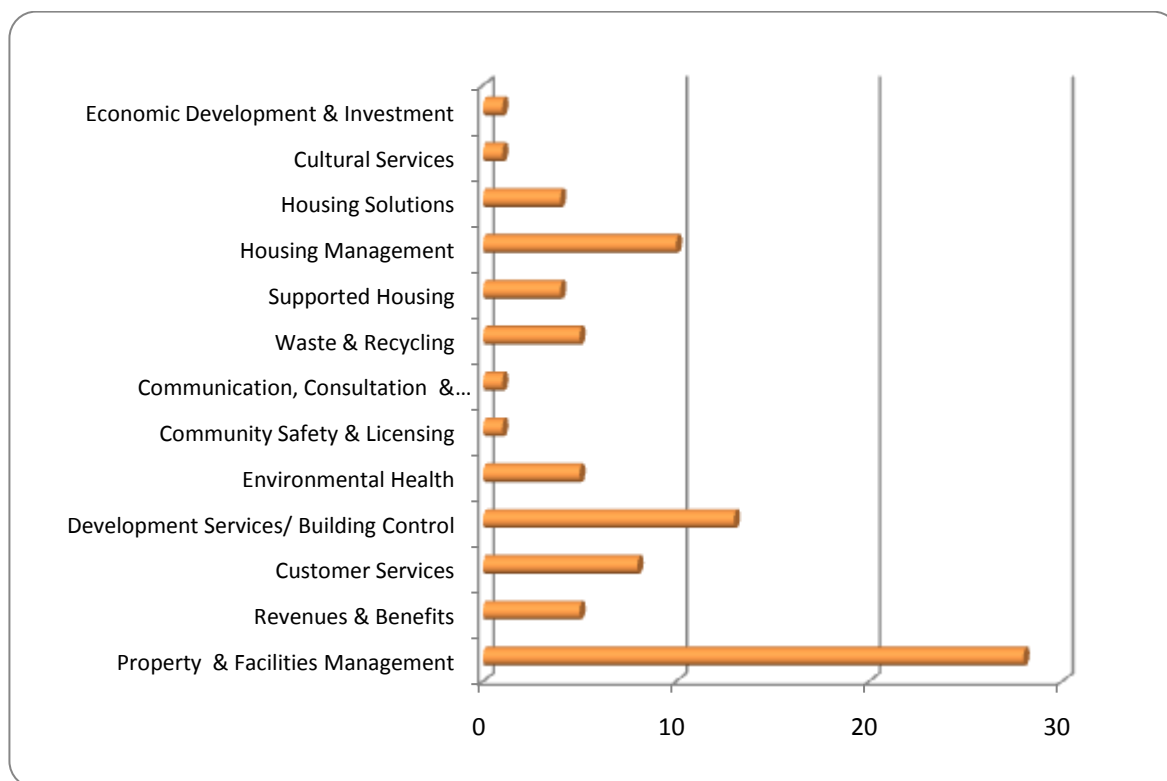
We're working on.....

Overall customer experience across the council - **84%** of our residents tell us they are satisfied with our services.

Customer Feedback

Compliments

Eighty six compliments have been received during the period. The majority of which were thanking staff for an especially good quality of service.



Customers told us:

One of our customers told us how we had "greatly improved the quality of my life" after we helped her with disabled adaptations to her home., - another customer said,

" I must congratulate SKDC on the efficiency and the professional and welcoming attitude of all members of staff I have met."

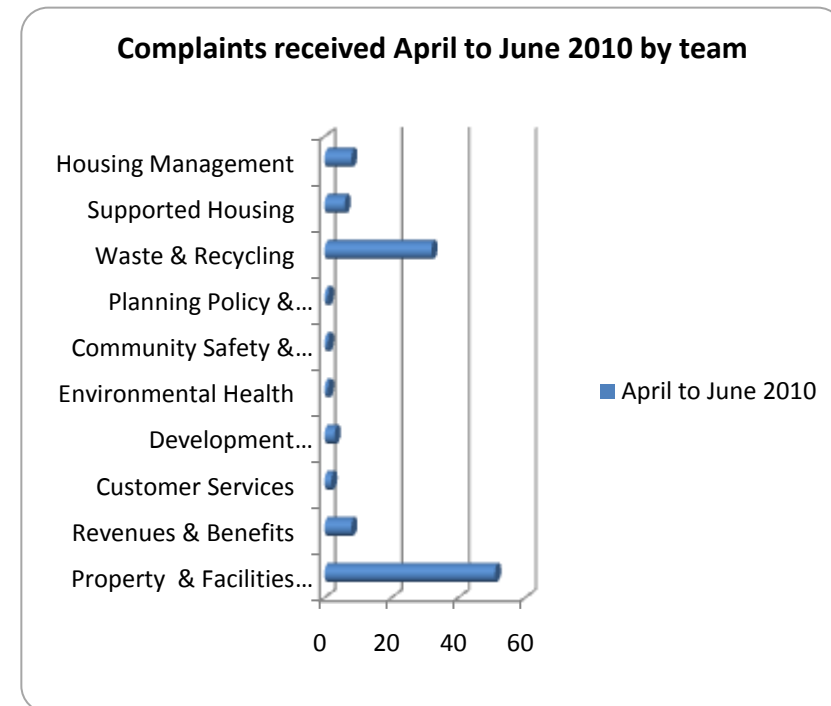
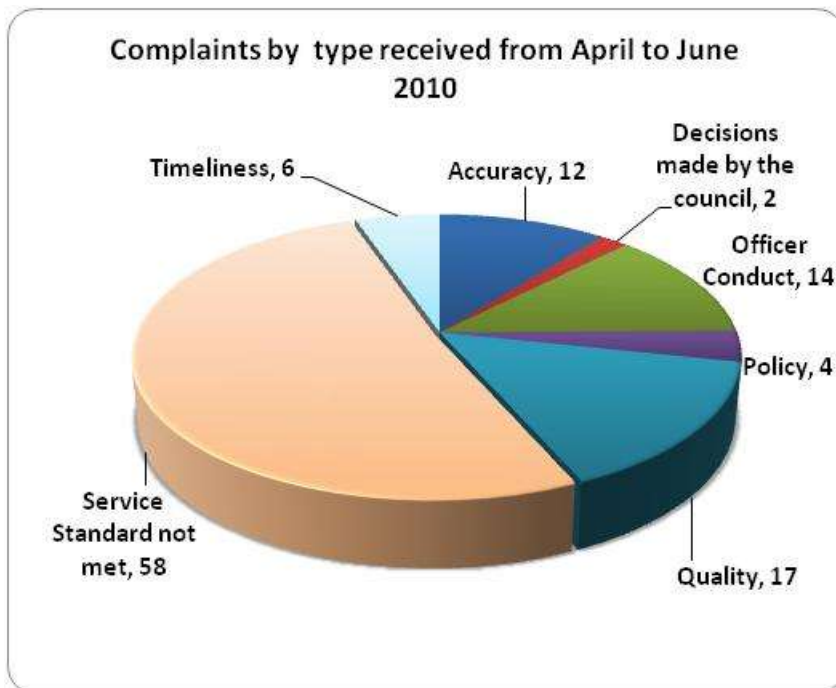
Complaints

Listening to our customers is at the heart of what we do. We always try to get things right first time. However, we appreciate this doesn't always happen. We welcome comments from our residents so we address the things that are most important to them.

We provide 100 different services to our community from maintaining 200 acres of parks and open spaces to making sure we keep our streets safe....and we empty 73,000 bins every week.

During the 3 months from April to June we received 113 customer complaints. We will use these to improve our services.

Customers told us: Several complaints have been received about the temperature of our swimming pools, particularly in Grantham. We have tackled this by extending our monitoring ensuring the temperature at the learner pool is kept to 31° and the main pool 29°.



Understanding our customers' needs

We do this by talking with customers face to face, by inviting them to forums, and at community consultation events. We also regularly survey customers via post, email, and through our website. We aim to deliver improved services based on better understanding of what customers really need.

Project	Progress	What next
<p>Improve our consultation process with customers.</p>	<p>Over the last few months more emphasis has been placed on consulting and engaging with our residents face to face rather than via postal surveys. This has been achieved by having a presence at community events including Stamford and Grantham markets, Rivercare Day, Bourne Festival and Grantham Carnival etc. The topics covered have been recycling, energy efficiency, healthy lifestyles, community safety, Grantham Growth and Bourne Core area developments. Traditional surveys held as part of the event also gathered residents' views on development ideas, community safety problems in their area and travel patterns. We have also surveyed customers' views through our online panel.</p> <p>We have also carried out 250 face to face interviews with residents to ask them about their priorities for spend on our services.</p>	<p>Future consultations will include further work on how our customers prefer to access our services, including opening times.</p> <p>We will also be consulting with our customers on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyndham Park visitors requirements • Housing needs • Taxi licensing policy • New executive arrangements <p>We will use this feedback to understand our customers' needs.</p>
<p>Increase our customer knowledge base</p>	<p>We have implemented a council-wide customer feedback process to identify the causes of problems, where we have done well and what areas of our service need to improve.</p>	<p>This is a relatively new process. We need to continue to develop the quality of the information we are collecting and how we use lessons learnt in order to understand what our customers want from our services.</p>

We're making a difference...

We have spoken to over **2500 people** at our community events, listening to their views and giving advice to help them be green, clean and safe. **440 people** voted for the Orrery as the artwork to be placed in Grantham Market Place.

We're working on...

A new programme of community events at venues across the district.

Listening to you

Grantham Market Place



Stamford community event



Listening to you

We have listened to our customers and they have influenced decisions on:

- Grantham Market Place Artwork
- Customer Services
- Our spending plans
- The website
- The repairs service
- Bourne Town Centre redevelopment

Getting it 'right first time'

We aim to do this by reducing the number of times you have to contact us to resolve an issue, by being more proactive about fully understanding the help you need from us, and by sharing information where appropriate between teams so that you do not have to.

Project	Progress	What next
Measure avoidable contact (repeated calls which should not have had to make).	Although we no longer need to collect this data to report to central Government, we believe it is a valuable measure of how we are doing, and so we are continuing to capture this information.	We will share best practice across all teams in order to learn where and how we have got it right 'first time' to reduce unnecessary avoidable contact.
Improve the way customers can tell us about a change to their circumstances	We have worked with Lincolnshire County Council to start developing an improved process for customers to tell us about changes. This will mean customers only "tell us once" for their information to be shared appropriately with other partners.	We are developing the technical links between partners. We aim to launch the process by the end of March 2011. We expect our customers to be able to tell us 'once' by March 2011.
To make sure all written communication meets 'Plain English' principles.	Training in 'Plain English' has been provided for 20 staff and members in quarter 1, part of ongoing training. We also improved the letters and website content for the Waste & Recycling service.	During July – September, we will focus on improving customer communication within the waste & recycling service. We will continue our rolling programme throughout the year to improve all written communication and other information for customers across all services.

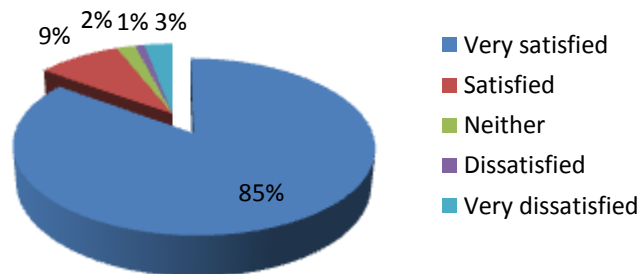
We're making a difference...

Our recent customer services survey said that **85% of our customers' enquiries were dealt with right first time.** 93% of these customers were happy with the advice /information we provided.

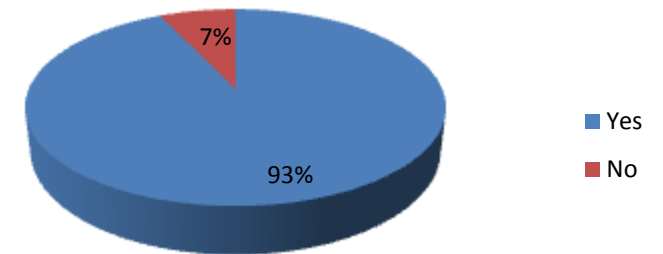
We're working on...

Improving the overall experience for everyone. We are concentrating on improving the speed we answer your calls by training more people to take more calls.

Customers satisfied with the service from customer services



Customers satisfied with the resolution of their query

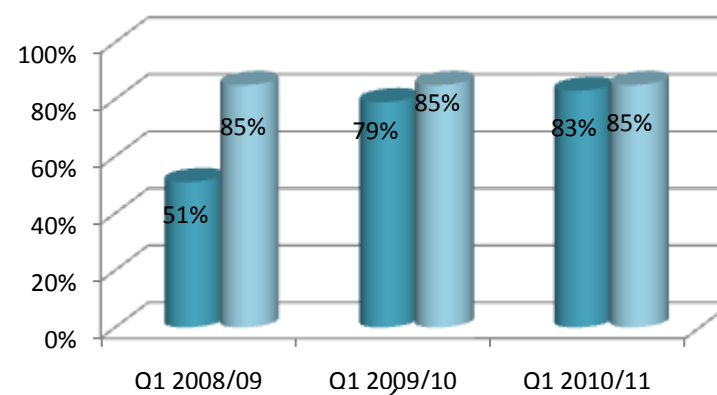


Customer satisfaction

Enquiries resolved satisfactorily

Whilst we have improved, we are working hard to answer your calls faster.

% of calls answered within 28 seconds



Making it easy and convenient for customers to access our services.

We have customer service centres across the district for customers to access services face to face, we have a dedicated call centre, and a website through which customers can access services, information or contact us 24 hours a day.

We aim to be flexible and responsive to changing customer needs.

Project	Progress	What next
Develop joint customer access arrangements with partners.	We have discussed with partners in Bourne and Stamford appropriate opportunities to share service delivery.	We will need to take account of the financial position after October in making any longer term decisions to ensure any partnership delivers value for money.
Review access options based on identified customer needs.	We undertook a customer survey on the potential for self-service, and customer preferences on opening hours for customer services. Results were inconclusive as responses were too low to be fully representative (21 replies from 140 surveyed).	Broader consultation will take place during the next 2 quarters, and results will inform the access options within the Customer Strategy by the end of March 2011.
Update and improve our website so that our customers can easily access our services	Building on the launch of the new website, we have started the process of identifying priorities for further web improvements. We also use customer comments made through the web feedback process to improve the customer experience; some are used to deliver immediate improvements, others form part of the longer term strategy.	We will develop the improvement plan during the next quarter, and will commence implementation during quarter 3. This will allow more customers to access more services online.

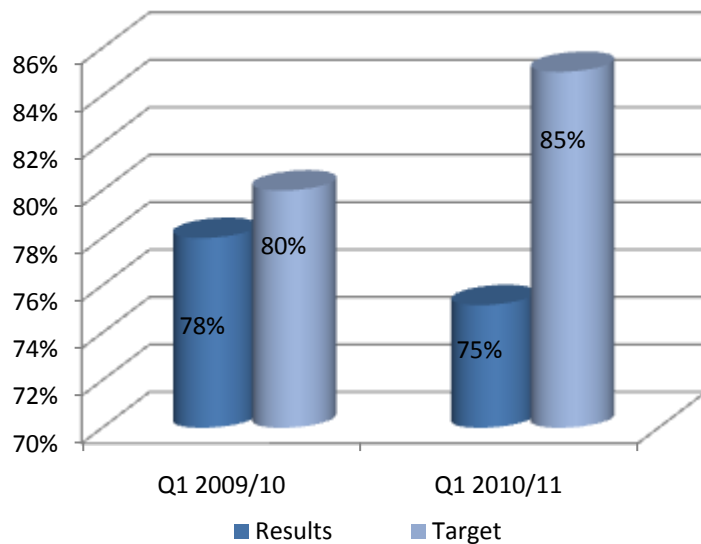
Feedback from two of our customers said ...

“This website could not be easier or more informative. a pleasure to visit.”

“Love the new look...And so easy to use...”

Table 1

% of customers overall satisfaction with the website -
(based on feedback received from 24 customers)



Feedback from 24 customers 1

We're making a difference...

We have **1,000 visits** to our website daily providing information to our customers.

We're working on...

Customers have asked us to improve tourism information, links to partner organisations and paying online.

Thank you for taking the time to look through our Customer First delivery plan.

We hope that you find it informative and interesting. If you would like to comment further or take part in one of our consultations you can do this by visiting us at

www.southkesteven.gov.uk.

Further progress on our Customer First priority projects will be available as part our Annual Report which will be available from October 2010.

Priorities, actions and performance

Putting our customer at the heart of all we do is the focus of our four priority themes which include Customer First, Quality Living, Quality Organisation and Good for Business.




This quarter we are concentrating on Customer First highlighting some of our successes through our customers' satisfaction.










A more detailed break down on Customer First and performance actions for our other three priorities are shown in the following appendices.



Progress on key performance measures for April to June 2010

	Met or exceeded target		Progressing towards target		Below target
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	Improved results compared to the same period in previous year		Results are below target compared to the same period in the previous year		No change
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Quarter 1 compared to Quarter 1 in previous year	Code & Short Name	Q1 2010/11			2009/10	
		Results	Target	Annual Target	Q1 Results	Year End Results
	NI 181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	9.7 days	12.0 days	15.5 days	10.9 days	9.5 days
	SK 271 % increase in benefit claims overall (Data Only measure)	0.39%			3.07%	7.96%
	SK 272 % increase in benefit claims from Private Tenants (Data Only measure)	1.9%			6.01%	21.78%
	SK 273 % increase in benefit claims from Local Authority Tenants (Data Only measure)	-0.22%			1.8%	1.9%
	SK 274 % increase in benefit claims from Council Tax Benefit recipients (Data Only measure)	0.3%			3.24%	7.87%
	SK 275 Number of days taken from end to end turn around time for a new benefit claim (Data only measure)	29 days			31.68 days	33.67 days
	SK 276 Number of days taken to process a "change of circumstances" (Data only measure)	7.54 days			9.31 days	7.35 days
	SK 026b % calls answered (lines in the CSC only) (YTD)	96%	96%	96%	94%	95%
	SK 245 % of customers that found what they were looking for on the website	74%	80%	80%	No comparable data	74.13%

Key projects/actions summary

How we are delivering the Customer First Priority Theme

The projects/actions below are currently being progressed in order to work towards ensuring that the customer is at the heart of everything we do, and that our services are easy to access.

	On track to meet target		Should meet target with corrective action		Not on track to meet target
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Status	Title	Code
	Introduce an internal learning & development programme for all staff to focus on customer service "customer first"	CF 1.1
	Introduce a programme to achieve accreditation of Customer Service Excellence Standard	CF 1.3
	Introduce a programme of "mystery shopping" throughout the organisation	CF 1.4
	Improve consultation process (in accordance with consultation toolkit) with customers.	CF 2.2
	Using customer knowledge, feedback and consultation, develop a Customer Strategy to deliver the outcomes customers have identified.	CF 2.3
	Utilise consultation and feedback data to build our customer knowledge base etc	CF 2.5
	Develop a programme to capture and measure 'avoidable contact' across all services	CF 3.2
	Implement improvements to the process for reporting change of circumstances "tell us once"	CF 3.3
	Ensure all publications comply with 'Plain English' and ensure communications are checked by customers	CF 3.4
	Develop 'fit for purpose' joint customer access arrangements with partners at our area offices	CF 4.1
	Review access options including the feasibility of additional self-service access points and other opportunities based on assessment of customer needs as identified through appropriate consultation	CF 4.3
	Update & improve the accessibility of online transactions and information and increase the number of self serve options	CF 4.5

