

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTES OF MEETING: SCRUTINY TASK GROUP FOR CUSTOMER SERVICES AND  
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2013

6.30pm

Evangelical Church, Bath Street, Market Harborough

Present:

Councillor Smith in the Chair.

Councillors: Beesley-Reynolds, Dr. Bremner (Ex Officio), Brodrick, Mrs. Burrell and Tomlin.

Officers: R. Felts, A. Graves, E. O'Neill and P. Whitaker.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Dann.

INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Dr. Bremner, Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission welcomed all those present to the Meeting.

The Members of the Task Group noted the locations of W.C. and fire escape facilities.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Dr. Bremner invited nominations for the election of Chairman for the Task Group. Councillor Smith was nominated and, there being no other nominations it was

RESOLVED that: Councillor Smith be elected Chairman of the Task Group.

CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

The Task Group was provided with an introduction to the proposed new Customer Services Strategy by P. Whitaker, Service Redesign Advisor. The Task Group noted that this Strategy would be presented to Council on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013 for adoption.

Following debate and discussion the Task Group RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the table on page 15 of the Strategy, paragraph 4.1.5 'Contacts by access channel and percentage increase/ (decrease) over previous year', be presented in a clearer fashion for ease of reading. These data could also include the costs associated with each contact channel.
- (ii) Officers investigate the possibility of creating a 'Call-me' icon on the Council's website. This would assist residents who struggle to use electronic resources (by clicking the icon they would be requesting telephone assistance from the Council's Call Centre).
- (iii) the document be checked thoroughly in order that the spelling and grammar used in it is of a conventional nature.
- (iv) careful consideration be given to the consistent use of the phrases 'Service User Strategy' and 'Customer Service Strategy'. Both phrases are used in the document; perhaps one could be used instead.

- (v) since the formatting of, and nomenclature applied to, the document may appear intimidating to some readers, perhaps this should be reduced or revised.
- (vi) Officers investigate the possibility of testing the document's accessibility by applying a standard, automated, online check to it (for example the SMOG Readability Formula).
- (vii) the document include a reference to clarify whether or not telephone calls to and from the Council are subject to audio recording.
- (viii) Paragraph 3.5.2 be amended to include the size and composition of the Citizens' Panel.
- (ix) Officers investigate the possibility of providing benchmarking data, on performance against other authorities, for inclusion with future versions of the document.

The Task Group RECOMMENDED that: the document be forwarded to Council for adoption with the above comments attached for information.

#### COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Task Group was provided with an introduction to the proposed new Communications Strategy by R. Felts, Communications and Consultations Manager. The Task Group noted that this Strategy would be presented to Council on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013 for adoption.

Following debate and discussion the Task Group RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the document be checked thoroughly in order that the spelling and grammar used in it is of a conventional nature.
- (ii) the wording of the following item in the table in Section 8 of the document be revised:  
  
*“Campaign by campaign measure, aggregated each year to give an overall picture of impact. This will be a largely qualitative measure that describes the extent to which communications has helped deliver Council priorities.”*
- (iii) the flowchart appended to the document titled 'The Communications Process' be revised in order that a clear starting position for the reader is created.
- (iv) Officers investigate the possibility of communicating with residents via the use of instant messaging.
- (v) The content in the box titled 'Personal phone, email and face to face content' on page 18 of the document be more clearly explained.

The Task Group RECOMMENDED that: the document be forwarded to Council for adoption with the above comments attached for information.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None reported.

The Meeting ended at 8.10p.m.