

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION SCHEDULE



Tuesday, 20 July 2010

at 3.00 pm

**in Committee Room C,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillor J Brash, Cabinet Member responsible for Performance will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS

No items

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

No items

3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 3.1 Customer & Financial Services Section - Annual Reports 2009-10 – *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

No items

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs

referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

6. KEY DECISION

No items

7. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 7.1 Temporary Special Leave Arrangement (para 1) – *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*
- 7.2 Approval for Compulsory Redundancy (para 4)– *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*
- 7.3 Progression Within Grade (paras 1 and 3) – *Director of Child and Adult Services & Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

20 July 2010



Report of: Chief Customer & Workforce Services Officer

Subject: CUSTOMER & FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION
- ANNUAL REPORTS 2009-10

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update on the various sections performance and key achievements during the year April 2009 to March 2010 including the Annual Diversity Report.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report contains background information on each of the service areas in the Customer & Financial Services Section of the Customer & Workforce Services Division together with details of performance and key achievements during 2009-10. For each the following service areas, an Annual Report is included as an appendix, each of which also contain next year's targets and the key projects/issues for 2010-11:

- Diversity
- Hartlepool Connect
- Registration & Nationality
- Revenues & Benefits
- Shared Services

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Customer & Financial Services under Performance.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Performance Portfolio Holder meeting on 20 July 2010.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That the Portfolio Holder considers the report and provides any further comments prior to extracts of this information being published more extensively in Hartbeat.

Report of: Chief Customer & Workforce Services Officer

Subject: CUSTOMER & FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION
- ANNUAL REPORTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update on the performance and key achievements for during the year April 2009 to March 2010 including the Annual Diversity Report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Customer and Financial Services Section of the Customer and Workforce Services Division was created as part of the Council's business transformation departmental review. A number of sections and teams have been brought together that were previously part of the Finance Division and Human Resources Division. The new section includes:

- Awards & Benefits Security Services;
- Customer & Support Services;
- Revenues & Partnership Development Services, and
- Shared Services

- 2.2 Each section is made up of a number of teams working to achieve improved customer service via direct and indirect contact with customers. The section is also responsible for the Council's corporate transactional services. Another corporate function that is undertaken by the section relates to the Diversity service.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Awards & Benefits Security Services

This section is responsible for the calculation, processing and payment of benefit claims and is also investigating the possibility of centralising all financial assessments to achieve efficiency savings and improve customer service by dealing with customers in one single contact. Duties also include supporting to customer groups and individuals to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled together with initiatives to combat fraud. The Awards & Benefits Security Service performance information for 2009-10 is included within the Revenues and Benefits Annual Report attached at **Appendix A**.

3.2 Customer & Support Services

Hartlepool Connect, the Registration & Nationality Service (formerly the Register office), Diversity and Performance & Development make up the Customer & Support Services section. The Council is working towards moving all initial customer contact to Hartlepool Connect and already provides access to a wide range of council services. The Hartlepool Connect Annual Report is enclosed at **Appendix B**. The Registration & Nationality Service Annual Report is enclosed at **Appendix C**. Equality and diversity are also managed within this section and the Council is required to publish an Annual Diversity Report that is attached at **Appendix D**.

3.3 Revenues & Partnership Development Services

Arrangements for annual billing and collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rating are undertaken by the Revenues & Partnership Development Section. They are also responsible for Council's cashing facility at the Civic Centre; the Council's income control arrangements and for developing new partnerships with other local authorities and service providers. The Revenues & Benefits Annual Report at **Appendix A** provides details of this section's performance during 2009-10.

3.4 Shared Services

The Shared Services Section manages the Council's insurance risks and Insurance Fund and is responsible for the Payroll functions for the Council, Cleveland Fire Authority (CFA) and the Regional Fire Control Centre. The section also ensures that arrangements are in place for the effective payment of suppliers to these three organisations, amounting to in excess of £100m a year. Technical taxation queries are handled by this section and a shared service arrangement covering sundry debt billing and recovery activity is currently being developed. It also manages Service Development across both Shared Services and Revenues and Benefits. The Shared Services Annual Report is attached at **Appendix E**.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Portfolio Holder considers the report and provides any further comments prior to extracts of this information being published more extensively and in Hartbeat.

5. CONTACT OFFICER

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Customer & Financial Services Officer
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Telephone: 01429 523003

ATTACHMENTS

Revenues & Benefits Annual Report 2009-10
Hartlepool Connect Annual Report 2009-10
Registration & Nationality Service Annual Report 2009-10
Annual Diversity Report 2009-10
Shared Services Annual Report 2009-10

Appendix A
Appendix B
Appendix C
Appendix D
Appendix E

Revenues and Benefits Services

Annual Report 2009/10

1. WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

- 1.1. **Revenues Services** bill and collect Council Tax (£33m pa) and Business rates (£25m pa) and operate the Council's Cashiering Service at the Civic Centre which processed over 108,000 customer payments in 2009/10. This section also delivers annual billing and internal bailiff services for Darlington BC under a service agreement. The ethos of the service is to take a firm but fair approach to collecting debt, seeking wherever possible to avoid hardship. In 2009/10 the Revenues service received 30,000 items of correspondence and in excess of 91% of these were dealt with within 10 working days.
- 1.2. **Benefits Services** are responsible for assessing and processing £50m of Housing and Council Tax Benefit annually. Benefits awards are strategically important to both the council and the borough, with approximately one in every three households within the borough receiving some level of financial help with their council tax. The service aim is to provide, a timely and accurate benefit service, that is accessible by the whole community, respects every customer as an individual, listens to their views and continues to meet their changing needs and expectations.
- 1.3. As well as processing benefits, the council must ensure it maintains effective arrangements for receiving and investigating potential fraudulent abuses of the benefits system and imposing appropriate sanctions i.e. fines, cautions, prosecutions, etc. as a deterrent measure.

2. WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

2.1. Revenues Services

- 2.1.1 By 31st March we had collected 97% of the Council Tax and 97.8% of the business rates due in 2009/10. The Council has maintained its positive collection levels in a difficult economic situation and importantly the council's long term collection rate still exceeds 99% which is the highest it has ever been.
- 2.1.2. The Council encourages payment of council tax by Direct Debit as this is one of the most economical ways to collect monies and is convenient for the public. By 31st March 2010, over 61% of those individuals that pay council tax have now opted to pay by direct debit.
- 2.1.3. A Self Service telephone service was introduced in March 2010 to empower customers with the ability to help themselves to obtain

Appendix A

information, to make payments and to lodge service requests without the need to speak to an officer. Consequently, this service has released front line staff so they have more time to deal with the more complicated enquiries and with those members of the public who need more personal help to resolve their enquiry. In its first 4 months over 7,500 calls have been handled by the new system.

2.1.4 Following an exercise to match council tax single person discount data with an external Credit Reference agency database, 298 awards of single person discount were removed from individuals thereby increasing the amount of council tax collected locally to support the council's budget.

2.1.5 In 2009/10, for business rates the Council:

- Processed requests to defer £238,000 of business rates due for 2009/10 to future years;
- Awarded £1.8m of empty property relief;
- Implemented a targeted campaign to maximise take up of small business rate relief including mailshots and follow contact, including assisting businesses to complete the necessary documentation. As a result, an extra £50,000 of help with business rate bills was awarded to local businesses.

2.1.6 The council actively promotes and facilitates access to reductions in Council Tax particularly amongst those that meet qualifying criteria in terms of disability, carer or being severely mentally impaired. For 2009/10, 112 new award reductions were made thereby increasing by £55,000 the level of financial resources within households.

2.2. Benefits Services

2.2.1 In response to the economic climate a range of publicity initiatives have been undertaken by the Benefits Service to encourage individuals to claim the financial help that is available. In addition, in September 2009, a leaflet was issued to every schoolchild in Hartlepool to promote the fact that Child Benefit would be disregarded from benefit assessments from November 2009. This leaflet also promoted the fact that child maintenance is also disregarded from benefit assessments and importantly also emphasised that benefit can be claimed by people who are working as well as those on benefits.

2.2.2 In 2009/10 the Benefits Service has been actively involved in a number of partnership and community based initiatives to increase financial understanding and benefits awareness in particular:

a) Skills for Life

This activity takes place in schools as part of the PHSE – Citizenship initiative. Council Benefits Officers work with pupils in workshops covering benefits, financial management and social responsibility.

b) Keys to Success

This initiative co-ordinated by Housing Hartlepool targets post school leavers who are prospective tenants, many have never had a tenancy and others have been out of the housing market for some time (e.g. ex offenders). The workshops include benefits, financial management and household skills such as shopping and cooking.

c) Workplace Health

The Benefits Team present a session on the IDEA programme on workplace health. Many medical issues often have an underlying financial stress dimension. These sessions are open to all HBC staff and are increasing awareness amongst HBC staff and those who they come into contact with about the financial help available and signposting on how to access that help.

2.2.3. The Benefits Service have continued to work closely with the Pension Service; two council benefits staff have been trained to complete Pension Service applications at the same time as a housing / council tax benefit claim ensuring the customer only needs one visit. In 2009/10 a particular joint initiative with the Pension Service involved council benefit officers following up information of pensioners who were receiving pension credit but not housing or council tax benefit. This activity resulted in 87 customers being visited and the payment of an additional £21,500 of help.

2.2.4. The Benefits Team have held surgeries at Housing Hartlepool offices for several years. New additional surgeries have been trialled at a number of locations in 2009/10 including Burbank Community Centre, Asda and Tesco.

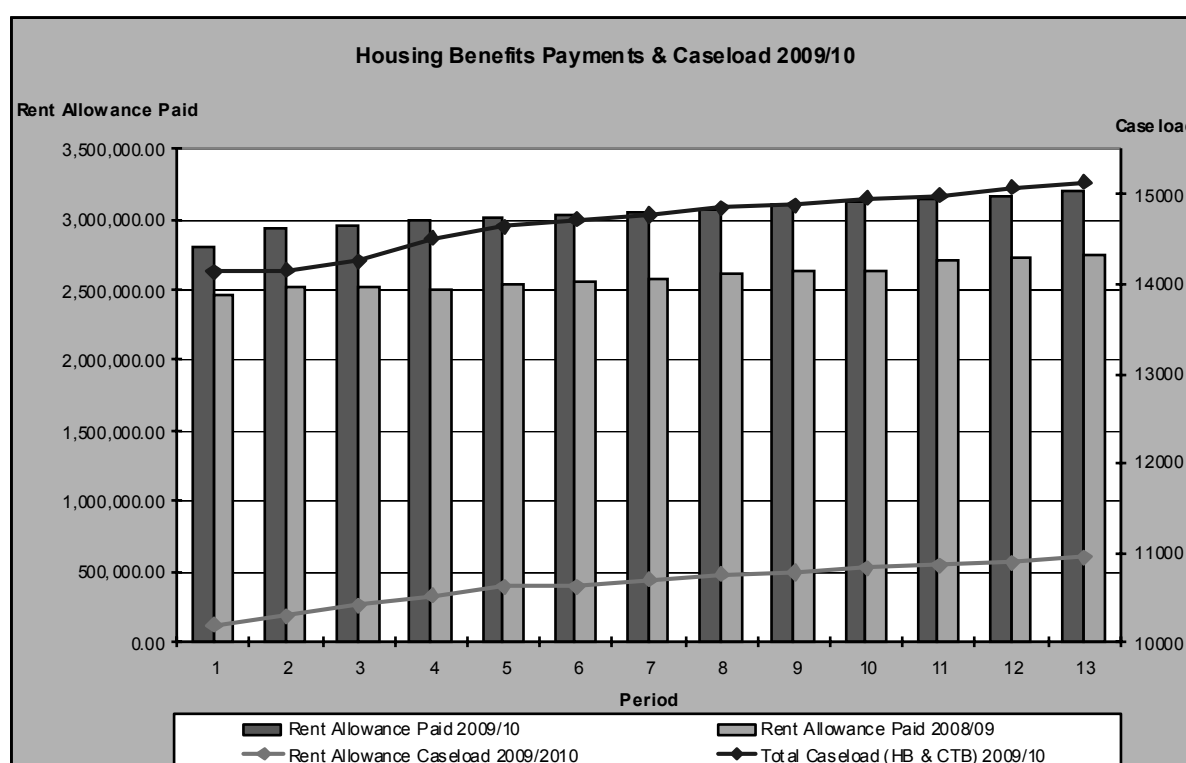
In addition at the Hartfields retirement village, benefits officers have held regular surgeries advising on housing and council tax benefit as well as signposting to other help.

2.2.5 The Benefits Service is an active member of the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership (HFIP) and have been instrumental in helping the Hartlepool Credit Union develop a new bank current account product. The Service works closely with the Credit Union to ensure that mainstream financial services and affordable credit are accessible to disadvantaged households within the borough and encourage individuals to move away from dependency on loan sharks and door step lenders.

3. BENEFITS SERVICES KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2009/10

	Target 2009/10	Actual 2009/10
Time to process New Claims	30 days	24.3 days
Time to Process Changes in Circumstances	11 days	9 days
Right Time Indicator	12 days	11.07days
Award of Annual Discretionary Housing Payments allocation	100%	98%
Customer Service Excellence Standard	Retain Status	Retained

- 3.1. These key achievements have been delivered against a background of increasing workload linked to the recession as shown in the graph below. However, this graph does not reflect the significant number of claims made for help that do not result in an award of benefit.



4. BENEFIT COUNTER FRAUD ACTIVITY

- 4.1. The Council maximises the value of its fraud investigation resources by carrying out ongoing fraud awareness training to its processing staff to ensure that only those cases that merit investigation are “referred on”.

Appendix A

- 4.2 The Council also appreciates the importance of encouraging referrals from external sources and provides a Benefit Fraud Hotline Service to allow the public to report suspicions. An answer phone service is available outside of normal working hours and this number is actively promoted by the Council. In addition the council's website allows potential fraudulent abuse to be reported on line.
- 4.3 The Council also uses information on high risk cases from the Dept for Work and Pensions to target cases for review. This review can take the form of either a formal visit to the claimant or a postal review where the claimant is required to provide details of their current financial / home circumstances.
- 4.4 In 2009/10, the Council implemented a new fraud caseload management system – INCASE, to improve the management and control of a diverse investigations workload. The system has also provided the opportunity to review operating procedures within the fraud investigation team. The 83 counter fraud sanctions achieved in 2009/10 represented an increase on the number achieved in 2008/9 of 67.

Benefit Fraud Sanctions Achieved 2009/10

	2009/10
Number of Cautions	57
Number of Administrative Penalties	8
Number of Prosecutions	18
Total	83

5. REVENUES AND BENEFITS CHALLENGES / PRIORITIES 2010/11

- Maintain Benefits processing standards in economic climate - New Claims 24 days, Changes in Circumstances 9 days.
- Improve Council Tax Collection performance to 97.2%.
- Undertake a Service Delivery Options review to generate savings of £100,800.
- Achieve 85 Counter Fraud sanctions.
- Continue to support the development of Financial Inclusion initiatives within the Borough.
- Introduce Citizen Profiling Segmentation to improve debt recovery work.

Hartlepool Connect

Annual Report 2009-10



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Hartlepool Connect

Annual Report 2009-10



1. Introduction

This is Hartlepool Connect's Annual Report for the year 2009-10. The purpose of this report is to set out how we have performed over the last twelve months, what our key highlights and achievements have been, together setting out our future plans and continuous improvement targets for the coming year.

2. Background

Hartlepool Connect's aims and objectives remain as relevant today as when they were first introduced at the outset to centralise customer service delivery in 2004.

1. To provide a professional, customer focused, centralised contact centre (Hartlepool Connect) for the majority of inbound interactions for all departments within the Council and its relevant partners.
2. To provide cost efficiencies to the council by streamlining services with the use of technology, subject to resources, and appropriate sign posting to services and providing 'simple' services at first contact.
3. To introduce a performance management culture within Hartlepool Connect, providing regular management information to managers and ensuring targets and key performance indicators are met.
4. To promote Hartlepool Connect to Hartlepool citizens as the point of contact for the local authority and integrate with partners where appropriate.
5. To improve the customer experience and satisfaction levels regarding interaction with the Council.

Business Transformation

In addition to the above aims and objectives, the authority is delivering a business transformation programme with emphasis placed upon enhanced service delivery, efficiencies and value for money.

The business transformation programme is underpinned by a number of workstreams. One of these workstreams is Customer Services, which forms close links with Hartlepool Connect.

Customer Services within Hartlepool Borough Council aims to:-

- Migrate further Council services to Hartlepool Connect.
- Encourage customers to self serve (channel shift to cheaper contact channels.)
- Minimise the amount of failure demand (National Indicator 14 - Avoidable Contact).

3. Performance 2009-10**3.1 Overview****Background**

The customer service environment is a complex area which relies heavily on the ability to collect and extract customer data. This data is used to enhance end to end service delivery and continuously improve the customer experience. Customer insight and intelligence enables Hartlepool Connect and back office services to target resources to where it matters most to Hartlepool's residents and businesses.

Performance Management

Ultimately, providing excellent customer service is top of Hartlepool Connect's agenda, but in order to do so effectively and efficiently there are a number of underpinning elements that need to be in place. Hartlepool Connect's Performance Management Framework brings together these fundamental elements, such as recruitment, retention, training, development, performance and quality monitoring, which are measured and monitored by key performance indicators and local targets.

Technology

Effective technological solutions are at the heart of Hartlepool Connect's operation. It is reliant upon systems that can collect customer data, which is carried out by its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, Contact Centre telephony and switchboard systems, together with face to face queue management software.

Statistics

The above technology enables Hartlepool Connect to collect a wide range of performance and service statistics, as follows:-

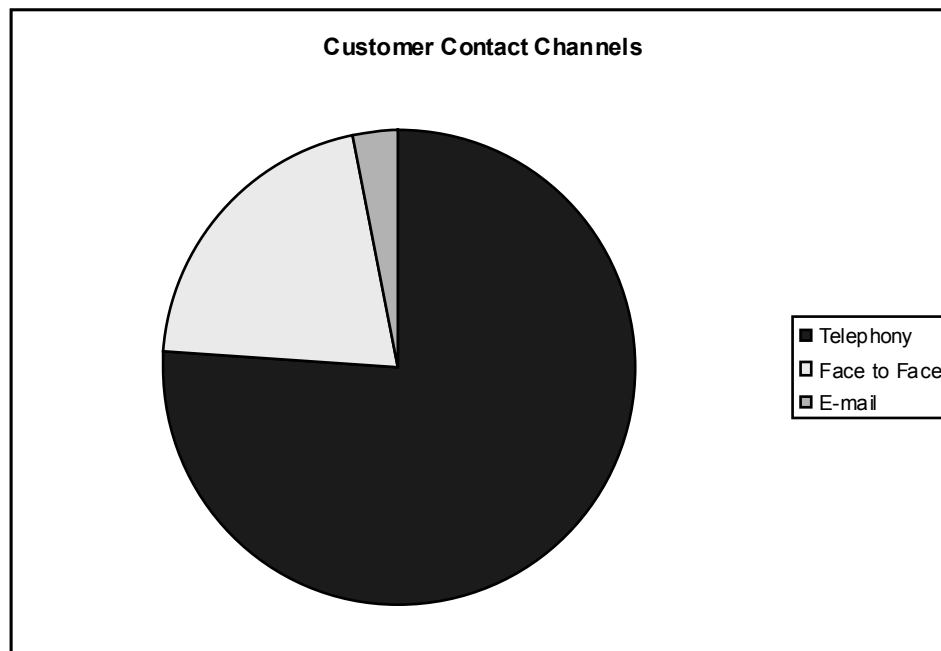
- Waiting Times
- Transaction Times
- Number of Service Requests / Quick Queries Logged
- Resolution at First Point of Contact
- Variation Demand / Service Growth
- Contact Channel
- Utilisation / Productivity
- Peaks – Site / Service

These statistics are analysed to improve customer service provision, and ensure our service meets customer need and expectation. We also use these statistics to identify daily, weekly and monthly customer contact service trends, measure productivity, utilisation, effectively forecast demand and workforce plan.

3.2 Performance Out-turn

During the year, Hartlepool Connect dealt with **424,861** customer enquiries across the three primary contact channels.

A total of 76% (322,894) of customers contacted Hartlepool Connect by telephone, 21% (89,221) were face to face visits and 3% (12,746) e-mail.

**Improvement Areas**

High on our agenda during the year was the reduction of customer wait and transaction times.

We have undertaken considerable analysis to establish service peaks and to ensure our service meets the needs of customers by efficiently staffing to meet demand.

Our statistics demonstrate that we have significantly reduced customer wait times during the year, whilst delivering the service with less full time equivalent staff (ftes) than in 2008/09.

Telephony Performance

Hartlepool Connect's telephony is broken down into two areas – switchboard and contact centre. At present, they operate on two different telephony systems; however plans are to be developed to integrate into one system.

Switchboard

The ongoing campaign to reduce switchboard calls continues to be effective. Statistics demonstrate that the number of handled contacts has fallen from 2008/09.

The number of internal callers to switchboard has fallen by **2%** during the period, which equates to approximately **5,000** less calls. Employees are encouraged to utilise the intranet to seek internal contact numbers or use e-directories such as bt.com and yell.com for external contact numbers.

Our statistics show that performance has improved, as we are answering calls more quickly and fewer customers are abandoning (or hanging up) their call. We have successfully reduced customer wait times from **14 secs** on average during 2008/09 to **12 secs** on average during 2009/10.

	Attempted Contacts	Handled Contacts	Response Times		Transaction Avg	Lost Contacts		Internal : External Ratio
			Under Target	Avg		Under Target	Total Lost	
Q1	76,464	67,683	90%	00:00:12	00:00:14	85%	11%	10%
Q2	71,669	62,576	88%	00:00:13	00:00:15	83%	13%	9%
Q3	66,396	58,638	91%	00:00:12	00:00:14	85%	12%	8%
Q4	72,860	64,636	90%	00:00:13	00:00:14	79%	11%	7%
2009/10	287,389	253,533	90%	00:00:12	00:00:14	83%	12%	8%
2008/09	309,244	293,922	77%	00:00:14	00:00:14	65%	15%	10%

Telephony – Contact Centre

Hartlepool Connect handled 70,961 telephone calls during 2009-10, which shows a reduction in calls of 13% from the previous year.

This reduction in calls was anticipated and forecasting was effective, and as a result the service was delivered with one less fte.

Although staffing numbers reduced, performance across all measurable areas improved.

Customer waiting times fell from **1 min 3 secs** in 2008-09 to **38 secs** in 2009-10.

The average transaction time fell from **2 mins 7 secs** in 2008-09 to **1 min 57 secs** in 2009-10. This reduction equates to a resource efficiency of 197 hours or 25 days (*based upon a calculation of 6.5 daily productive hours of a full time equivalent*).

The lost / abandonment (customers hanging up) rate fell from **11%** in 2008-09 to **7%** in 2009-10. A total of 43% percent of those customers hung up within just 30 seconds.

A total of **84%** of customer enquiries were resolved at the first point of contact, which is in line with our target.

	Attempted Contacts	Contacts Handled	FTE	Resolved at 1st Point	Response Times		Transaction Avg	Lost Contacts	
					Under Target	Avg		Under Target	% Lost
Q1	18,996	17,669	2.73	83%	64%	00:00:40	00:01:58	43%	7%
Q2	20,031	18,671	2.83	83%	65%	00:00:39	00:02:01	42%	7%
Q3	17,185	16,206	2.69	85%	71%	00:00:31	00:01:52	46%	6%
Q4	19,923	18,415	2.47	84%	64%	00:00:40	00:01:54	43%	8%
2009/10	76,135	70,961	2.68	84%	66%	00:00:38	00:01:57	43%	7%
2008/09	91,812	81,634	3.79	85.7%	47%	00:01:03	00:02:07	30%	11%

Face to Face

Hartlepool Connect dealt with approximately 46,750 Information Desk enquiries. These customers were dealt with immediately upon arrival at the Civic Centre.

In addition, Hartlepool Connect dealt with 39,756 service desk enquiries, which is similar to 2008-09 volumes (39,592).

The average wait time, for customers who visit without appointment, **fell significantly** from **15 mins** in 2008-09 to **7 mins** in 2009-10.

Transaction times **fell by 1 min** during 2009-10. In context, this equates to a resource efficiency of 468 hours or 72 working days (based upon a calculation of 6.5 daily productive hours of a full time equivalent).

The number of lost contacts (customers walking out before ticket was called) was low at 4% (baseline*).

90% of customer enquiries were dealt with at the first point of contact (baseline*).

** Hartlepool Connect commenced measuring these areas in 2009-10, following the upgrade of its queue management software.*

	Attempted Contacts	Contacts Handled	FTE	Resolved at 1st Point	Response Times		Transaction	% Lost Contacts
					Under Target	Avg		
Q1	10,846	10,093	3.45	93%	68%	00:08:33	00:07:52	7%
Q2	10,610	10,102	3.34	92%	73%	00:08:33	00:07:04	5%
Q3	9,337	9,143	3.00	89%	77%	00:06:32	00:06:52	2%
Q4	10,697	10,418	2.86	86%	58%	00:09:44	00:06:30	3%
2009-10	41,490	39,756	3.16	90%	69%	00:08:09	00:07:04	4%

E-mails

Hartlepool Connect dealt with 13,311 e-mails in 2009-10, which shows an increase of 29% on 2008-09 volumes.

A total of 90% of e-mails during 2009-10 were dealt with the same day.

4. Key Highlights and Achievements 2009-10

Hartlepool Connect has had yet another extremely successful year. Our key highlights and achievements are summarised below.

- Customer waiting times fell significantly across the customer contact channels.
- Hartlepool Connect received Customer Service Excellence, the Government standard, accreditation in October 2009 (see below).
- Overall utilisation across Hartlepool Connect was an excellent 76%. Contact Council benchmarking analysis demonstrates that on average utilisation for unitary authorities is around 60%. This places Hartlepool Connect in the upper quartile for benchmarking purposes.
- Further services integrated into Hartlepool Connect during 2009-10 including Planning and Building Control, Tall Ships and Payroll Hotlines and Council-wide Card Payments.
- Hartlepool Connect's CRM system has been significantly redeveloped during the year. Improvements include:-

Improved Management Information

Weekly reports are to be provided to service managers including information such as the number of contacts, service peaks, customer wait and transaction times and customer satisfaction. This data will greatly aid service managers with workforce and service planning, and to identify customer need much more easily in order to provide a responsive service.

Enhanced detail about Cause of Contact / Repeat Contacts (BT Objective)

The upgraded system has been fundamentally redeveloped to collect data on the reason why a customer has contacted us. These contacts are then analysed to determine whether it was value (*ie I need or would like*) or failure (*ie you didn't provide, I don't understand etc*). Failure demand across every service area delivered by Hartlepool Connect is to be reviewed. Where significant failure demand occurs, Hartlepool Connect will be recommending a review of the business process with a view of improving the service so that we get it right first time for our customers.

Improvement to System Speed

Dealing with customers as quickly as possible is a key priority for Hartlepool Connect. The flow of the scripts within the system has been enhanced to reduce transaction times, enabling us to deal with enquires faster. In addition, this is having a beneficial impact upon utilisation and productivity statistics.

2009-10 – Out-turn productivity 76%
2010-11 – April YTD productivity 80%

Early analysis for this year shows a significant increase in productivity by 4%.

Improved Customer Insight

The system has been developed to record customer characteristics. For example, if a customer contacts us with a visual impairment, the system will notify the Customer Service Assistant about their specific needs, meaning the customer does not have to tell us this each time they contact us.

Ability to collect data with regard to Channel Shift (BT Objective)

One of the Customer Service Business Transformation key objectives is to encourage customers to use more cost effective channels. The upgrade has enabled the system to be redeveloped to record the contact channel the customer uses. This data will be analysed at service level to identify channel shift areas. For example 12,000 telephone calls for Bulky Household Waste Collection bookings were taken last year, at present there is no on-line booking facility available. Hartlepool Connect would use this information to recommend the development of an on-line booking service for customers to self serve.

- 90% of customers rated Hartlepool Connect's overall service as either excellent or good.
- 80% of client services rates Hartlepool Connect's overall service as either excellent or good.

Customer Service Excellence

Hartlepool Connect was accredited with the prestigious and challenging Government standard, Customer Service Excellence (the replacement for Charter Mark) in October 2009, joining only a handful of north east councils to receive this award. This accreditation evidences a group of employees who demonstrate the value of co-operation in the workplace by setting aside individual needs to focus on a common goal, fully meeting the criteria for this Celebration of Success award.

To achieve Customer Service Excellence organisations must achieve full compliance in at least 80% of the 57 elements contained in each of the five criteria:-

1. Customer Insight – 11 elements
2. Culture of the Organisation – 11 elements
3. Information and Access – 12 elements
4. Delivery – 13 elements
5. Timeliness and Quality of Service – 10 elements

Hartlepool Connect achieved **full compliance in 96% of the elements** – which is a tremendous achievement demonstrating our commitment to providing a first class service to Hartlepool residents, businesses and visitors to the town.

To achieve the award, organisations have to go through a rigorous assessment process. For Hartlepool Connect this involved the assessor reviewing a raft of documentary evidence, such as performance statistics, customer satisfaction findings, consultation outcomes, training provision and an assessment of our approach to workforce and service planning (*to name but a few*). The assessor also held several meetings and focus groups with Hartlepool Connect employees, service managers, customer groups, senior officers, councillors and other key stakeholders. The assessor also observed our quality of customer service delivery, by listening into how calls are handled and witnessing face to face service delivery in a live environment.

Some of the highlights from the final assessment report are as follows:-

“Hartlepool Connect had a good understanding of their customer profile, characteristics and needs, which assisted them to provide a bespoke response.”

“Effective consultation processes existed within Hartlepool Connect which allowed customer groups to be involved in providing ongoing feedback, governance and for suggesting improvements.”

“A comprehensible corporate commitment was evident and this was underpinned by totally proficient, well trained, committed and focussed staff that appeared to be unwavering in wanting to provide the customer with an effective service.”

“Staff felt that they were very much trusted and empowered to use their considerable skills and expertise to deal with any issues or problems which may arise connected to ensuring that the customer experience was a good one.”

“Effective synergy appeared to exist between Hartlepool Connect and their partner groups. Regular meetings, reviews and analysis of approaches ensured that there were tangible benefits for the customers, resulting from an effective coordinated methodology.”

“The Assessor met a very focussed and committed staff group that appeared very dedicated to providing a high quality service for their customers.”

*“Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for the Assessor by the Cabinet Officer the Assessor **was satisfied beyond any doubt** that Hartlepool Connect meets the requirements of Customer Service Excellence.”*

5. Service Plan and Improvement Targets 2010-10

Continuous Improvement

We are continuing to reduce customer waiting times, targets set for next year:-

- Telephony target – 80% of calls answered within 30 seconds.
- Face to Face target – 80% of service desk customers seen within 6 minutes.

Service Integration – Business Transformation Objective

The transfer of further services into Hartlepool Connect over the next 12 months

1. Benefits (telephony service – face to face service already provided by Hartlepool Connect)
2. Blue Badges
3. Business and Concessionary Parking Permits
4. Revenues / Taxation
5. Public Protection and Community Safety (Review)

Customer Service Excellence – Reaccreditation

The inspector will be onsite during October 2010.

Customer Satisfaction

Increased consultation to identify how satisfied customers are with our service is to be undertaken. Areas included within the consultation will cover timeliness, delivery, accessibility and quality. In addition, consultation to find out what our customers' expectation of our service will take place and the findings will assist us with target and performance indicator setting for 20011-12.

Corporate Change of Address

Hartlepool Connect is to lead the corporate Change of Address project. This will bring together all change of address processes so that customers only need to tell the authority once that they have moved property.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking with the Tees Valley and Durham authorities is to continue. Joint working and sharing best practice with a view of reducing cost to serve is to be a priority.

Video Interpretation Equipment

Following consultation with the Deaf community, Hartlepool Connect allocated resources for the installation and usage of sign video equipment. This is to be installed in April 2010 and will enhance access to Council services for customers with hearing impairments.

HARTLEPOOL REGISTRATION SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

BACKGROUND

The Registration Service provides the public with a comprehensive service for:

- registering births, still births and deaths
- attestation of notices of civil marriage and civil partnership.
- attestation of notices of religious marriage for all non-conformist church marriages, and occasional established church marriages
- conduct and registration of civil marriages both in the Register Office and in various approved buildings in the Borough
- approving suitable premises as venues for civil marriage and civil partnership
- maintaining birth, death and marriage records from 1837 and issuing certified copies of these records on request
- providing advice and assistance is given to those persons interested in genealogy
- the provision of Citizenship Ceremonies for all successful applicants living in the Borough
- provides a nationality application checking services
- conducts civil ceremonies such as baby naming / welcoming, and renewal of vows ceremonies

In addition to registering life events at the Register Office in Raby Road, Registrars also attend to register events at the Hospital or in private homes as required; primarily still births or neo-natal deaths.

The Registration Service works in partnership with:

External bodies:

- HM Coroner,
- Medical practitioners,
- Surgeries,
- Hospitals and NHS Trusts and departments,
- Funeral Directors,
- the Clergy and free church ministry,
- the Home Office,
- UK Borders Agency
- Identity and Passport Service

And internal bodies:

- Revenues and Benefits
- Electoral Registration
- Burials and Cremations Services

The Registration Service Team comprises 8 staff equating to 5.7 FTE posts:

- One Registration Service Manager/Superintendent Registrar (statutory officer)

- Three Registrars of Births and Deaths (Deputy Superintendent Registrars)(statutory officers)
- Three Registration Assistants
- One Registration Officer

The statutory service is administered by the General Register Office (GRO), a Central Government Service. The head of service is the Registrar General.

Hartlepool participates in the North East Registration Regional Registrars Group where heads of service and managers from the 12 local authorities meet quarterly and appoint a representative to the National Registration Service Panel. The Group undertakes benchmarking and monitors national legislation and central government consultations. GRO participate in meetings. The Group has set up a dedicated Regional training body, NETworks, to which Hartlepool subscribes.

Hartlepool is currently a member of the newly formed Local Registration Services Association [LRSA] which filled the gap left when another organisation decided it could not continue to support the local registration service.

Very recently a similar sub-regional group of managers has been meeting within the Tees Valley, made up of the 5 LAs.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Statutory Services are legislation led and the preparation, training and implementation of new legislation are key achievements each year. In 2009/10 this included:

- ❖ The move to web-based registrations of births and deaths
- ❖ Implementation of Web based marriages package
- ❖ Implementation of Children and Young Persons Act i.e. the arrangements to pass information to Children's Safeguarding Boards
- ❖ Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill - Staff Training

Preparations and consultation continue in respect of:

- ❖ Welfare Bill i.e. joint registration of births
- ❖ Coroners and Justice Bill – death certification and registration of deaths

Nationality/Citizenship

Citizenship ceremonies have increased, including private ceremonies which are now more popular than group ceremonies to speed up passport application and travel rights.

Job Evaluation

During 2009 the service completed job evaluation and single status processes.

Surveys of customers were carried out throughout the year. Results are published on a monthly basis and displayed in the Register Office. Satisfaction levels have regularly achieved 100%, dropping only once to 99%.

Performance Indicators

Principal among these are those contained in the national registration 'Good Practice Guide'. Performance against targets are published on a monthly basis and displayed in the Register Office. The service constantly exceeded the national targets in respect of waiting times, customer satisfaction and issuing of certificates.

Non Statutory Services also appear in the list of key achievements including Naming/Welcoming and Renewal of Vows ceremonies which have increased slightly though advance bookings suggest a continuing rise in numbers.

Nationality Checking Service has been introduced as a response to local consultation and has been more successful than expected as a result of a high reputation and regular recommendations by individuals and agencies local, regional and further afield. In budget terms this service has recovered a major part of losses in revenue resulting from hospital re-organisation.

PERFORMANCE OUT-TURN 2009/10

The year began with anticipated pressures on income as:

- certificate sales were expected to continue to fall as they had year on year following an unprecedented climb at the turn of the century
- the loss of birth registrations to Stockton on Tees as more mothers are booked into North Tees Hospital; this sees a fall in the consolidated fee paid by GRO on behalf of central government for associated work, and the further loss of certificate sales
- the failure of central government to raise statutory fees for the 7th year in succession

Unanticipated pressures were due to:

- we were hit by long term sickness of two key members of staff over the peak summer period, which necessitated the provision of services, particularly weekend services, using overtime payments for both full and part time staff. Two members of staff worked 6 days every week, and 7 days on some weeks, for a period of 10 weeks.
- unexpected spending increase on simple maintenance was due to legislation changes in regard to work on the building roof.

To counter this all other spending was kept to an absolute minimum and other non-statutory services were promoted wherever possible. In particular the Nationality Checking Service was instrumental in this regard.

Income still fell short of target but not to the extent anticipated and the year's accounts showed a final saving of circa £8000.

Local fees set for the year 2010/11 are attempting to recover some of the increased costs of services and central government has increased some statutory fees, following a new nationwide review of true service costs, albeit not to the level expected.

TARGETS 2010-11

The effectiveness of marketing those services which are very popular will be acted upon in 2010/11 and, while all non-statutory services will continue to be offered and marketed effectively, some services, such as naming and renewal of vows, are not yet fully accepted by the public and only a slow increase is forecast.

The Nationality Checking Service, like archival certificate issue (mainly birth certificates for identity related issues i.e. passports etc.), will be at the mercy of government policy changes.

Budgetary targets will remain broadly as the previous year.

Maintenance issues are no longer part of the section's budgetary control, but some necessary improvements to the property and equipment, in line with its high public usage, will be met from the MRU.

KEY ISSUES & PROJECTS 2010/11

Legislation

Recent legislation due to be implemented includes:

- ❖ Welfare Reform Act
- ❖ Coroner and Death Certification legislation

Both will require significant procedural change and training. This training will be cascaded from GRO via the regional training group and the Hartlepool registration service's training officer.

Nationality Checking Service (NCS)

This will be affected over time by:

- changes in immigration legislation though any fall in numbers is not anticipated in the coming year.
- the introduction of the service in other neighbouring districts. Sunderland introduced the service earlier in 2010 but first reports are that numbers have been low. County Durham, Middlesbrough and Stockton on Tees are both considering introducing the service.

Hartlepool needs to:

- consolidate its position and build on its already widely accepted and fine reputation. Marketing is essential.
- Increase the number of advisors readily available as the ability to offer short term appointments is essential. This is planned and possible with training.
- Make a clear link between NCS and our similarly reputed citizenship ceremonies.

Partnership working

The Tees Valley Registration Service Managers are reviewing partnership working. One target for Hartlepool is to improve the service to Hartlepool mothers who give birth in North Tees by introducing a new concept whereby birth registrations would be

completed in Hartlepool, by the Hartlepool Service acting on behalf of Stockton B.C. Exploratory talks have been initiated.

Partnership working within the Council will be explored wherever possible to establish how the service can be improved or made more efficient.

New procedures and new technology

On line booking

An electronic booking system is currently being introduced to the service with the potential for online appointment booking by customers.

On line payment

Paye.net will be introduced to replace the current Streamline service. On line payment, including through the Tees Valley joint website will be fully explored.

Administration

The section's administrative functions are included in the CEX Admin review .

Registration Service Software (RSS)

Central Government will withdraw support for the now outdated RSS in July 2011. RSS functions are still used on a daily basis as a valuable tool in efficient certificate production. Options to ensure this system is still available for use will be reviewed in collaboration with the Corporate ICT team and Northgate.

Accommodation review

Building use will be continually monitored and new ways of using it explored. As with partnership working above, other delivery points for the service will be explored.



ANNUAL DIVERSITY REPORT

2009-2010



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SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Equality Framework for Local Government has replaced the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Council has “Achieving” status within the new framework as a consequence of having achieved Level 3 of the old Standard and is now working on ensuring that “Achieving” status is maintained following the corporate restructure as well as working towards “Excellence” status.

The Single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008-11 (which includes the statutory duties towards Race, Disability and Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation and Religion/Belief) and Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan were approved by Cabinet on 7th July 2008 following referral by the Performance Portfolio Holder.

The Single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008-11 stipulates that an Annual Diversity report will be produced detailing progress made against the scheme and action plan. The progress made during 09/10 is reported in this Annual Diversity report.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2009/10

The Annual Diversity report detailing progress against the scheme and action plan is attached as **Appendix 1**. The arrangements for requesting information (including a copy of the report) in different languages and formats are included in the report. The main achievements in 2009/10 and planned actions in 2010/11 are detailed below.

The Corporate Equality and Diversity action plan included a total of 52 actions for 2009/10, 2 actions did not achieve target and 11 actions needed intervention. This is due to the Council starting to implement Business Transformation and the corporate restructure. These outstanding actions are in progress and will be addressed in 2011/12 plans.

Key Corporate achievements in 2009/10 include: -

- The Council is going through Business Transformation and the restructure of departments has taken place. The Diversity section is placed within Customer Services making it evident that diversity is embedded in the way we serve our diverse customers.
- The Council is working on ensuring that “Achieving” status is maintained following the Corporate Restructure and is working towards achieving Excellence of the Equality Framework for Local government by delivering the actions in our Corporate Equality Plan
- Extended and improved British sign language (BSL) interpreters to be available at service counters. BSL Video Relay equipment has been installed at the Civic Centre reception to communicate with the Deaf communities instantly.
- A diversity multi-agency forum of professionals who are involved in working with or providing services to diverse communities led by the Council meets quarterly. The aim of this group is to ensure that the delivery of services to Hartlepool's diverse communities is carried out in an appropriate and accessible way. Good practices and solutions to issues pertaining to diverse communities are shared by the professionals of this group.

Appendix D

- The Stakeholder Challenge process led by the Council is funded by Community Cohesion funds for this year. It seeks to make Council Services accountable by ensuring there is a greater awareness of the diverse needs of the communities they serve. This process challenges the Council's Service plans through their Equality impact assessments and has led to changes in the provision of services. This year the Council has extended the process to some of its partners i.e. NHS Hartlepool, Cleveland Police Services and Housing Hartlepool.
- Hartlepool Multi faith forum has been set up by the Council and continues to meet regularly to discuss on services to incorporate Faith needs. The Council is working in partnership with other authorities and faith groups Tees Valley wide and hosted a regional inter faith event to mark the National Inter-faith week in November '09. The Council's Diversity Officer is also involved in the Action Research project with other North east regional authorities to determine their base line positions in working with the DCLG Framework 'Building Blocks'. Multi faith forum have decided to elect their faith representative from this forum onto the Hartlepool Partnership Board
- The Talking with Communities, Diversity Multi agency forum and the Multi faith forum all led by the Council in partnership established a drop in centre every Monday for the Asylum seekers and refugees at the St Joseph's Church centre. Further support is provided to the asylum seekers group at this drop in sessions by the HVDA's Volunteer Centre.
- Northeast Refugee Service is providing professional advice and services to Asylum seekers and refugees at the drop in centre funded by Community Cohesion funds for this year.
- Employees continue to undergo Diversity training
- Departments are responding to the Equality and Diversity outcomes from the 2009 Employee Survey

KEY ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2010/11

- Review services, policies and procedures in line with the Equality Act 2010
- Further development of service and employment information and monitoring systems appropriate for Hartlepool
- Strengthen diversity aspects of procurement and contract monitoring
- Implement Year 3 of the Diversity Steering Group plan
- Establish how equality can be achieved through partnership
- Publish the Council's Corporate Single Equality Scheme 2011-2014
- Publish the Council's Corporate Equality Plan for 2011-2014
- Continue to ensure that "Achieving" status is maintained and make progress towards achieving Excellence of the Equality framework for local government

CONTACT OFFICER

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The Annual Diversity Report (2009-2010)

Introduction:

Our Vision & Goal: “Our mission is that Hartlepool will be a prosperous, caring, confident & outward looking community in an attractive environment, realising its potential”.

This report tells you about the work Hartlepool Borough Council is doing to promote equality and diversity in Hartlepool.

We want Hartlepool to be a place where no one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of his or her age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin or faith. We believe that as a major service provider, employer and community leader we have an important role to play in making this happen.

In 2008 we published our Single Equality Scheme (2008-11). The Scheme included a commitment to produce annual progress reports like this one. The Scheme also explained the action we are taking to make sure we meet our legal duty to promote equality.

This is Hartlepool Borough Council's eighth Annual Diversity Report. We aim to put equality at the centre of policy making, service delivery and employment practices so that it is a key part of our day to day work. This report has made links on Equality and Diversity with Local Strategic Partnership themes and measured the equality outcomes. It also reports similarly on each department's progress in the field of Equality and Diversity.

If you would like a copy of this report, or would like to comment on anything in it, please contact Vijaya Kotur, Principal Diversity Officer, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY (Tel No: 01429-523060 E-mail: Vijaya.kotur@hartlepool.gov.uk).

How we measure performance:

The Council uses a mix of national and local performance indicators to set improvement targets and to measure and compare its performance year on year. Where the indicators show a need to improve performance the Council sets action plans to ensure everything possible is done to address this. The Council consults the users of that service to seek their views on what could be done differently.

The Council complements the statutory indicators with 'local' indicators that measure how its services are performing to achieve its local corporate objectives and to see whether services are improving. Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Councils are required to identify all the functions, policies, plans and strategies that have a race equality dimension and then carry out an impact assessment. The Equality Standard for Local Government builds upon this requirement and extends across the areas of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion. In 2008 the Equality Standard was revised to form the new Equality Framework for Local Government. It is based on three levels of achievement, 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent' rather than the five levels of the old standard. The new Framework assesses on five performance areas rather than the four of the old Standard. The five areas are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer services
- A modern diverse workforce

The Council is now at the 'achieving level' and is working towards the Excellence level.

Hartlepool Council uses a predictive equality impact assessment process for proposed new and changed services and a retrospective equality impact assessment process for existing services and functions every year (updated on an annual basis). These assessments form the basis of diversity objectives and target setting and identified actions inform service plans. These are directly linked to the Council's performance management arrangements and are monitored and reported quarterly.

Assessments and scrutiny of our services can only be maintained by the active involvement of our stakeholders through various consultations.

Consultations

The Council is committed to effective consultation and engagement.

The Communicating with Your Council Strategy provides an overall framework with four elements, one being the Corporate Consultation Strategy. The strategy is aimed at Council staff and offers guidance for preparing and writing departmental consultation plans and activities. It can also be used to identify different mechanisms available to customers who wish to contribute to the development and improvement of services.

Appendix D

Consultation guidelines (The Consultation Toolkit) have been produced to help officers in the Council to plan and carry out community consultation effectively. This can range from:

- providing interpreters to help a face to face interview to take place;
- producing questionnaires in large print or Braille and
- ensuring that the Council's e-consultation website is accessible through Browsealoud on the web-site for people with learning difficulties, dyslexia, mild visual impairment and also to those whose first language is not English.

Browsealoud can be accessed through this link:

<http://www.browsealoud.com/downloads.asp?dl=b>

A range of systematic corporate consultation routes have been established such as Neighbourhood Forums, Neighbourhood Action Planning (NAP) and Viewpoint panel of over a 1200 residents. A variety of techniques are used including postal surveys, face-to-face interviews, discussion groups, consultative forums, mystery shopping and e-consultation.

In addition the Council has developed arrangements to engage with specific groups and diverse communities. These arrangements include:

- Talking with Communities (an established and an effective forum for the Council to consult with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities on its services,
- Multi-faith forum to consult with faith and religious representatives
- Regular meetings with Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) community representatives through the well established Hart Gables organisation.
- The Life Chances Partnership Board, which involves all the disability groups in the town to enable Council's consultation to take place in a meaningful way. The emphasis is on appropriate and accessible consultation.
- The Learning Disabilities Partnership has promoted consultation with people with learning disabilities and increased their involvement in decision-making.
- Young People have a voice through the Youth Forum and UK Youth Parliament
- E-consultation system (for general population, employees and Viewpoint members) – on line questionnaires and discussions
- General satisfaction surveys – self-completion/postal questionnaires
- Employee Panel – range of techniques
- Employee Surveys – postal and on line surveys

The Council also works with partner organisations to use existing groups and consultation mechanisms, for example, the 50 Plus Forum and Hartlepool Young Voices Forum, the Community Empowerment Network, Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency and the Local Involvement Network (LINK).

In addition, departments carry out ad hoc consultations to meet their current demands / needs. These can be through postal surveys, face to face interviews, on-line surveys, discussion groups, consultative meetings, community conferences, residents groups etc. The Council undertakes regular employee surveys. Equality and Diversity topics are included in each survey.

Appendix D

To build on these arrangements the Council has developed the Critical Challenge process. This draws representatives from a number of these arrangements as well as bringing in other individuals. This enables consultation to be systematically built into diversity assessments, and equality planning of service objectives and targets.

There are also specific service arrangements developed in consultation with service groups e.g. the Local Implementation Teams.

The Local Joint Consultative Committee (LJCC) comprising Executive and non Executive Elected Members and trade union officials, consider employment objectives and progress made against them.

The Council also consults and engages with residents through the political process through such mechanisms as:

Neighbourhood Consultative Forums (local area meetings), Scrutiny Forums, Ward Surgeries and other individual elected member activity

However we recognize that traditional methods of consultation are not always accessible to all groups in the community. In order to provide effective consultation we will continue to do so in an appropriate way.

We will continue to:

- Go to communities rather than expecting them to come to us
- Use meeting places that are informal, people find comfortable, easy to get to and are accessible.
- Allow a reasonable timescale for the consultation
- Arrange translation/interpretation services as necessary
- Consult a range of communities and avoid selecting single minority ethnic organisations or individuals.
- Feedback at every event on issues raised at the previous consultation event.
- Encourage pro-active discussions and workshops than just presentations on topics.
- Avoid consultation overload

Council Wide achievements in 2009-10

- The Council is going through a Business Transformation and the restructure of departments has taken place. The Diversity section is placed within Customer services making it evident that diversity is embedded in the way we serve our diverse customers.
- The Council is working towards achieving Excellence of the Equality Framework for Local government by delivering the actions in our Corporate Equality Plan
- Extended and improved British sign language (BSL) interpreters to be available at service counters. BSL Video Relay equipment has been installed at the Civic Centre reception to communicate with the Deaf communities instantly.
- A diversity multi-agency forum of professionals who are involved in working with or providing services to diverse communities led by the Council meets quarterly. The aim of this group is to ensure that the delivery of services to Hartlepool's diverse communities is carried out in an appropriate and accessible way. Good practices

Appendix D

and solutions to issues pertaining to diverse communities are shared by the professionals of this group.

- The Stakeholder Challenge process led by the Council is funded by the Community Cohesion funds for this year. It seeks to make Council Services accountable for ensuring that they are more aware of the diverse needs of the communities they serve. This process challenges the Council's Service plans through their Equality impact assessments and has led to changes in the provision of services. This year the Council has extended it to its partners – NHS Hartlepool, Cleveland Police Services and Housing Hartlepool.
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- The Talking with Communities, Diversity Multi agency forum and the Multi faith forum all led by the Council in partnership established a drop in centre every Monday for the Asylum seekers and refugees at the St Joseph's Church centre. Further support is provided to the asylum seekers group at this drop in sessions by the HVDA's Volunteer Centre.
- Northeast Refugee Service is providing professional advice and services to Asylum seekers and refugees at the drop in centre funded by the Council.
- Employees undergo Diversity training (refer to Appendix 1).

What we intend to do in the coming year:

- Review services, policies and procedures in line with the Equality Act 2010
- Further development of service and employment information and monitoring systems appropriate for Hartlepool
- Strengthen diversity aspects of procurement and contract monitoring
- Implement year 3 Diversity Steering Group plan
- Establish how Equality can be achieved through Partnership
- Publish Council's Corporate Single Equality Scheme 2011-2014
- Publish Council's Corporate Equality Plan for 2011-2014
- Continue to make progress towards achieving Excellence of the Equality framework for local government

In addition to the Council wide achievements and plans, individual departments have made progress against targets and objectives and developed plans for 2009/10 as follows.

3.1 Appendix D

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

Introduction: Within the Chief Executives Department there are four divisions as detailed below:

- Corporate Strategy
- Customer and Workforce Services
- Finance
- Legal

3.1

Appendix D

Chief Executive's Department diversity progress: Equality outcomes

Strengthening Communities			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Race	Provide a holistic approach towards the needs of the Asylum seekers and Refugees in the town with all partners	Drop in centre started at St Joseph's Church every Monday. North East Refugee service providing relevant advice on application process Partner agencies involved in service provision. Asylum seekers/refugees not isolated and feel part of the community	Sustain long term future of the Asylum seekers drop in centre
	Produce DVD promoting the Council's contact centre	Promotional DVD produced demonstrating to customers who may have language barriers how to get in touch with Hartlepool and what services are provided Customers from ethnic communities visited the Civic Centre and were given a tour of Hartlepool Connect and a demonstration showing how to access services via the Big Word (translation service)	Arrange for DVD to be included at community meetings/events
Gender	Raise awareness on Transgender to employees	HR Staff have undertaken Transgender Training and this has assisted in understanding the needs of the Trans people.	Monitor trans as part of Gender monitoring
Disability	Extend and improve sign language interpreters to be available at service counters	BSL Video interpretation service available at the Civic Centre enabling the Deaf community quick access to skilled interpreters via web-cam facility	Promote/market the sign video service, monitor usage and evaluate the service
	Improve system for recording equality data	Hartlepool Connect's primary system, customer relationship management (CRM) upgraded to enable equality data to be profiled against an individual	Review additional capabilities in order to develop a system to gather and record equality information

3.1

Appendix D

Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/Outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Age	Youth and elderly participation in public duties	All ages from 14 yrs old to 84 yrs participate in stakeholder challenge process. They influence the Council plans in the way it provides services to the diverse communities.	Recruit fresh youngsters to the stakeholder process.
Religion/Belief	Develop consultation and engagement with faith groups	Multi faith forum is set up and a faith rep on the LSP is being elected from the Multi faith forum. Promoted awareness to employees of Islamic religion by training and arranging visits to the Nasir Mosque	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Faith rep's involvement at the LSP
Sexual orientation	Consultations with the LGBT community	Issues on various services raised during these consultations have been actioned accordingly, thus involving and empowering the LGBT community	New methods of involving the LGBT community and improve collating the data to measure the outcomes.
All	Extend services provided by Hartlepool Connect	Hartlepool Connect's telephone numbers have been reduced and simplified enabling easier customer contact with the authority	Develop plans to transfer further services to Hartlepool Connect including payments
		Payments Hotline for all Council goods and services integrated into Hartlepool Connect enabling easier access for customers wishing to make a payment	Undertake campaign to raise awareness of under represented groups in civic and Public Life

3.1

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Organisational Development			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/Outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
All	N/A	N/A	Corporate change of address process to be developed that supports the Council's Tell Us Once agenda
	N/A	N/A	Corporate customer service and diversity training programme to be developed and delivered by Customer Services Team
	N/A	N/A	Hartlepool Connect to retain Customer Service Excellence accreditation

The departments have undertaken 17Equality Impact Needs Requirement Assessment.
For further information on these please contact Christine Armstrong on 01429 523016.

3.1 Appendix D

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Introduction: Created in September 2009 following the merging of Neighbourhood Services and Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods works in 6 divisions:

- Neighbourhood Services
- Transport and Engineering Services
- Resources
- Regeneration and Planning Services
- Community Safety and Protection
- Emergency Planning

Appendix D**Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department's diversity progress: Equality outcomes**

Jobs and the Economy			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Race	Monitor and set targets for the beneficiaries of regeneration initiatives aimed at assisting residents into employment and training including those from BME communities.	Targets have been agreed and set for specific client groups. Links have been established through the Salaam Centre and Options Centre. Dedicated funding to be agreed from April 10.	Monitor and set targets for the beneficiaries of regeneration initiatives aimed at assisting residents into employment and training.
All	Update the current market regulations, in particular the sections that deal with diversity issues	Draft regulations complete. Due to amalgamation of the markets, further updates are required.	Analyse results of equalities monitoring of market traders

Lifelong Learning and Skills			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Age	Continue with the development of the Going Forward project to include a marketing events targeting those Not in Employment Education of Training (NEETs)	Economic Development in partnership with Childrens' Services submitted an application for European Social Fund Co-financing last year via the Youth Participation tender and was successful. A successful marketing event was held on 28 th May 09. The project is developing successfully and the Learning Skills Council are currently negotiating a ministerial visit to highlight good practice.	

3.1

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Health and Care			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Race	Consultation to be undertaken with black and ethnic minority communities regarding weight management programmes.	Taking With Communities Consultation with BME's took place to discuss various issues relating to weight management. Consultation involved discussions regarding healthy eating and awareness and answering general questions. Leaflets handed out to the group about MEND (Mind Exercise Nutrition Do it) programme and Fruit and Veg Bag Scheme.	
Disability	Investigate passenger lift and ramp capacities with manufacturer for new vehicles	Lowest lift weight for passenger lifts across the industry has now been increased to 350kg, therefore all new vehicles will have at least 350kg lifts. In Passenger Transport, three new yellow buses have 350kg lifts and one new Optare Solo has low floor access.	Investigate opportunities for customers to be able to book their Dial a Ride journey by text message and receive an automatic acknowledgement of the booking

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Age	Undertake consultation with young people of all school ages through School Nutrition Action Groups (SNAG) in schools to determine their views on school meals	SNAG groups are now up and running in most schools with regular meetings taking place throughout the town for pupils and parents to give feedback on the service. We have also reintroduced comments and suggestion books back into school dining halls. This gives children the opportunity to write suggestions to the cook. There is a section for the cook to reply to the children. If an outcome cannot be agreed then a strategy is put in place to resolve the issue where possible.	Continue to monitor feedback from suggestion book.
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3.1

Appendix D

Community Safety			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/Outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Gender	Encourage the provision and promotion of Female Driver taxi services in Hartlepool	View point questionnaires have established there is some demand for female drivers. Letters sent to all operators advising of results and encouraging provision of female only vehicles	
All	Undertake a process mapping exercise in relation to the management of domestic violence and any gaps within service provision	A process mapping exercise has taken place with partner agencies. Gaps identified were reported to Reducing Violence group for recommendations as how to best fill these areas.	The Reducing violence group and Domestic Violence Forum to continue to monitor and assess the actions and policies contained within the Domestic violence strategy and how they affect service users regarding equality of opportunity. An action plan will be developed.
	Establish community cohesion small grants fund for community group activities	Grants scheme established and grants awarded to 3 groups for community group activities	Analyse ASBU customer satisfaction survey returns to review any imbalances which may need to be addressed.

3.1

Appendix D

Environment			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/Outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Disability	Provide a programme of road safety education and training to children wheelchair users	Scheme is part of general road safety awareness scheme with Havelock Day centre attendees and has been delivered to 14 children using wheelchairs so far. It is due to recommence April 2010.	Roll out Wheelchair/Mobility Scooter Education programme to adults (similar to Whizz Kids programme)
Age	Compare annual data of the full under 16 child road safety audit	Review completed as part of a wider casualty reduction document detailing all casualties with a particular split by age.	Monitor older people involved in collisions at or around controlled crossing
Religion/Belief	Implement the training element of the all ethnic groups road safety	Critical challenge completed and awaiting feedback from feedback meeting in order to implement the changes that the challenge group have identified, This will determine the 10-11 training programme	Identification of community based workers to deliver road safety projects to ethnic minorities
Housing			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/Outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Age	Evaluate the number of referrals of young people 16-25 years old especially young females involved with youth offending and leaving care services	Access 16 team now established in housing options centres dealing with 16-17 year olds which is resulting in more referrals to supported housing. Trends emerging from referrals are domestic violence and alcohol misuse especially young females.	Continue to evaluate the number of referrals of young people 16-25 years old especially young females involved with youth offending and leaving care services.

3.1

Appendix D

Strengthening Communities			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Age	Further develop young peoples involvement in the consultative process of Neighbourhood Forums	All three Neighbourhood Forum areas have now developed 'Young Peoples Forums'. These forums link into the authorities existing mechanisms for engaging young people and play a major role in participatory budgeting work.	Further develop young people's involvement in the consultative process of Neighbourhood Forums by linking existing groups to share ideas and encouraging service providers to use these forums to consult and engage young people across all areas of the Town
Religion/Belief	Engage with BME groups to increase participation in consultation meetings and events	A number of events have been held in the Central area. BME community reps involved in consultation on new Town Centre Communities N A P via attendance at community conference, local schools and community centre.	Consider developing newsletter for Forums to be established following Forum review .
All	Review communication feedback mechanisms to elected members, resident reps and the public	Confidence plan currently being developed with Hartlepool Police to strengthen and ensure communication with broader community.	Consider developing newsletter for Forums to be established following Forum review . Also consider using 'You said We Did' in relation to Neighbourhood Consultative Forums
	Complete one new Neighbourhood Action Plan (Throston)	Throston neighbourhood Action Plans (N A P) completed and endorsed by the local Strategic Partnership at the end of June	
	Prepare and disseminate Neighbourhood Reports that summarise Household Survey results 08	Household Survey 2008 results were presented to N A P forums and uploaded onto Hartlepool Partnership website under Neighbourhood Renewal page	

3.1

Appendix D

Organisational Development			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/Outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Sexual orientation			Implement three year access audit programme to promote good practice in accessibility for all to all local authority buildings with public access and schools throughout the borough.
All	Commission 09\10 programme of schemes to access buildings	All works orders commissioned. Awaiting list of Loop Induction systems to be determined from DDA list. Accessible changing facility in Central Library meaning the building now passes DDA.	38% Council buildings open to the public pass the DDA audit. Funding for access to buildings continues into 10-11 with a £50,000 budget. These projects include accessible changing facility £30,000 - location to be agreed. Aneurau Bevan House – improved external main entrance doors and attending to minor shortcomings with a view to increasing the councils overall accessibility performance.

The department has undertaken 27 Equality Impact Needs Requirement Assessments.
For further information on these please contact: Lynne Moss. Tel no. 284125

3.1 Appendix D

Child and Adult Services

Introduction: Created in September 2009 following the merging of Adult and Community Services and Children's Services, Child and Adult Services works in six divisions:

- Adult social care (including adult commissioning)
- Children's social care
- Community services
- Performance and achievement (Education)
- Planning and service integration
- Resources and support services

Appendix D**Child and Adult Services diversity progress: Equality outcomes**

Health and Wellbeing			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Race	Roll out self directed support amongst social care service users.	The work on self directed support and personal budgets is ongoing and continues to gather momentum. Self directed support and personal budgets allows service users to make decisions about the care they receive and is therefore, responsive to individual need.	Continued promotion of self directed support and personal budgets.
Gender	Roll out self directed support amongst social care service users.	The work on self directed support and personal budgets is ongoing and continues to gather momentum. Self directed support and personal budgets allows service users to make decisions about the care they receive and is therefore, responsive to individual need.	Continued promotion of self directed support and personal budgets.

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Disability	Improve services for disabled children	<p>The Aiming High initiative for disabled children is being implemented. A steering group is in place and a parent led forum has been established. Aiming High has supported the delivery of 3 parent led conferences to encourage more parents/cares to become involved in re-shaping services and being involved with decision making.</p> <p>A grant adaptation fund has been established for individuals and settings for building adaptations and specific equipment. To date, the installation of 4 accessible changing places is being explored and new play space has been installed at Exmoor Grove.</p>	<p>Continued development and promotion of Aiming High initiative.</p> <p>Deliver the action plan to develop an increased take up of universal and specialist services.</p>
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3.1

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Age	Reducing obesity and unhealthy choices among children and young people	<p>Worked with all stakeholders to address obesity of children and young people within the town and raise awareness of the significant impact obesity has on young people's long term health implications.</p> <p>Supported schools to achieve the National Healthy school status. Established the MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it!) health and wellbeing initiative for children aged 7-13 and their parents. All schools across Hartlepool have achieved the Golden Apply Healthy eating award for food providers.</p>	<p>Continue to aim to reduce obesity and unhealthy choices among children and young people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting schools to achieve National Healthy School status – target of 100% set. • Supporting schools to retain National Healthy School status • Promote healthy eating messages and food preparation skills • Promote the MEND scheme
Religion/Belief	Roll out self directed support amongst social care service users.	The work on self directed support and personal budgets is ongoing and continues to gather momentum. Self directed support and personal budgets allows service users to make decisions about the care they receive and is therefore, responsive to individual need.	Continued promotion of self directed support and personal budgets.

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Sexual orientation	Roll out self directed support amongst social care service users.	The work on self directed support and personal budgets is ongoing and continues to gather momentum. Self directed support and personal budgets allows service users to make decisions about the care they receive and is therefore, responsive to individual need.	Continued promotion of self directed support and personal budgets.
Culture and Leisure			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Race	Provide services to people who speak languages other than English by monitoring provision of library materials in languages other than English and adapt to meet changing needs.	Service monitored and new material procured as required. Action ensures that the library provides an inclusive service and responds to need.	Continued monitoring and procurement of materials to meet changing needs.
Gender	Develop the Women Begin 2 programme	A number of activities have taken place as part of the Women Begin 2 initiative including Women Begin 2 run and Women Begin 2 gym. These have allowed women to take part in women only sessions to gain basic skills and confidence to take part in more mainstream activities.	The Women Begin 2 programme will continue to be developed. Work will begin at looking at developing a Men Begin 2 programme although this will depend on successful grant applications.

3.1

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Disability	Support the development of the allotment project at Waverley.	<p>Access to the site continues to grow with associated benefits to health and wellbeing through grow your own, fresh air and exercise.</p> <p>Funding has been secured to install a compostable toilet on the site which is suitable for wheelchair users.</p>	<p>Ongoing support of the allotment project at Waverley.</p> <p>Installation of the compostable toilet.</p>
Age	Continue to ensure the participation of older people in sport and recreation.	To ensure that the services are inclusive there has been ongoing work with the 50+ forum to identify needs. Continued promotion of the Exercise for Life Programme. Free swimming sessions for over 60s.	Continued monitoring and consultation to ensure services are inclusive.
Sexual orientation	Deliver the Big Mix diversity festival.	<p>Following consultation with Hart Gables, a Dare to Flair cabaret event was held as part of the Big Mix festival.</p> <p>Hosted by 'Think Pink' a community cabaret of music, sketches, writing and poetry was held at The Studio.</p>	Continue to consult with the LGBT community.

3.1

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Strengthening Communities			
Diversity Strand	Diversity Objectives set 09/10	Progress made/outcomes 09/10	Diversity Objectives and targets set for 2010/11
Race	Provide a holistic approach towards the needs of the Asylum seekers and Refugees in the town with all partners	Drop in centre started at St Joseph's Church every Monday. North East Refugee service providing relevant advice on application process Partner agencies involved in service provision. Asylum seekers/refugees not isolated and feel part of the community	Sustain long term future of the Asylum seekers drop in centre
Gender	Raise awareness on Transgender to employees	HR Staff have undertaken Transgender Training and this has assisted in understanding the needs of the Trans people.	Monitor trans as part of Gender monitoring.
Disability	Extend and improve sign language interpreters to be available at service counters	BSL Video interpretation service is being made available at the Civic Centre enabling the staff to communicate with the Deaf communities	Monitor the usage of the service and evaluate the service
Age	Youth and elderly participation in public duties	All ages from 14 yrs old to 84 yrs participate in stakeholder challenge process. They influence the Council plans in the way it provides services to the diverse communities.	Recruit fresh youngsters to the stakeholder process.

3.1 Appendix D

Religion/Belief	Develop consultation and engagement with faith groups	Multi faith forum is set up and a faith rep on the LSP is being elected from the Multi faith forum. Promoted awareness to employees of Islamic religion by training and arranging visits to the Nasir Mosque	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Faith rep's involvement at the LSP
Sexual orientation	Consultations with the LGBT community	Issues on various services raised during these consultations have been actioned accordingly, thus involving and empowering the LGBT community	New methods of involving the LGBT community and improve collating the data to measure the outcomes.

The departments have undertaken 13 Equality Impact Needs Requirement Assessment.

For further information on these please contact Leigh Keeble on 01429 284292.

Appendix 1

Council's Corporate Diversity Training April 2009 – March 2010

Department	Number of places offered April 09 – March 10	Number of Staff trained
Induction		
Chief Executive's	All new starters	21
Child & Adult Services	All new starters	22
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	All new starters	57
Personal Safety	108 places offered in total	
Chief Executive's		5
Child & Adult Services		8
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		48
Diversity Awareness	142 places offered in total	
Chief Executive's		17
Child & Adult Services		72
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		16
Diversity in the Workplace (e-Learning Course)	287 places offered in total	
Chief Executive's		5
Child & Adult Services		7
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		63
A1 – Assessing Candidates Using a Range of Methods	All invited to attend	
Chief Executive's		
Child & Adult Services		5
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		
NVQ 2 Team Leading	All Invited to attend	
Chief Executive's		2
Child & Adult Services		4
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		4

NVQ 2 Support Services in Health	All Passenger Assistants invited to complete	
Child & Adult Services		35
NVQ 2 Customer Service	All invited to attend	
Chief Executive's		
Child & Adult Services		1
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		14

NVQ 3 Management		
Chief Executive's		2
Child & Adult Services		2
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		5
NVQ 4 Management		
Chief Executive's		0
Child & Adult Services		7
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		1
NVQ 5 Management		
Chief Executive's		0
Child & Adult Services		5
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		2
LMDP Modules (Managing Diversity*)		
Chief Executive's		1
Child & Adult Services		0
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods		7
Member Development		
Diversity in the Workplace		1

*The LMDP Managing Diversity course ran until May 2009.

GLOSSARY

INRA	Impact Needs & Requirement Assessment
DIA	Diversity Impact Assessment
NI	National Indicator
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
BME	Black and minority ethnic
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
PMF	Performance Management Framework
LAA	Local Area Agreement
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
RMI	Racially Motivated Incidents
NDC	New Deal of Communities
ASBU	Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
AMP	Asset Management Plan
KS	Key Stage
CPD	Continuous professional development
LSC	Learning Skills Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
BSL	British Sign Language
MEND	Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it
LINK	Local Involvement Network

SHARED SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

INTRODUCTION

The Shared Services section manages activity in five separate function areas. These are;

1. Payroll
2. Insurance and Risk Management
3. Payments
4. Service Development
5. Debt Recovery

It has undergone a number of recent changes as part of the Business Transformation process. The major elements of this have been the separation of payroll and payments responsibilities to distinct business functions, the introduction of a replacement HR/Payroll system, the transfer of Integra (Financial Management System) support responsibilities to Corporate Finance from Service Development, and the movement into the section of sundry debt recovery. A brief summary of each of these areas performance for 2009/10 is included below.

1. Payroll

1.1. The **Payroll Service** unit is responsible for providing salary payments to employees of HBC, and provides a payroll service to schools, Cleveland Fire Authority and the North East Regional Fire Control Centre. The unit is also responsible for ensuring compliance with Tax, National Insurance and Pensions Regulations. A major change this year has been to consolidate into one team the three payroll units previously located within Finance, HR and Neighbourhood Services and to introduce a replacement payroll system.

1.2. Highlights and achievements during 2009/10 are;

- Introduction of a new payroll system for the Council, Cleveland Fire Authority and North-East Regional Fire Control. The payroll system is the first phase of the implementation of the new HR/Payroll system (Resourcelink).
- Consolidation of HR and Neighbourhood Services payroll staff into one payroll team. This coincided with a restructure of the section reducing staff costs by £150k.
- All HBC staff transferred onto monthly payment arrangements.
- Gross payments to employees of circa £96m processed per annum.

- Settled JE appeals completed and arrears calculated and paid.
- Office move from BHH to Civic Centre completed.
- Ongoing equal pay settlements concluded

2. Insurance / Risk Management

2.1. The **Insurance Services** unit is responsible for managing the Council's insurance arrangements, and assisting in the development and implementation of Risk Management strategies to manage the Council exposure to financial risk. The unit is also responsible for managing insurance claims.

2.2. Highlights and achievements during 2009/10 are;

- Increased repudiation rates in response to an increased number of claims received during the year, especially motor damage claims.
- Increased number of cases taken to Court.
- Civic Centre flood claim coordinated and settled.
- Claims management system amended to reflect new corporate structure.
- Highways claims processes reviewed to improve Council's defence of claims.
- Office move from BHH to Civic Centre completed.
- Working from home policy piloted and implemented.

3. Payments

3.1. The **Payments Service** unit is responsible for providing payments to employees, suppliers and housing benefit recipients. The unit is also responsible for ensuring compliance with Construction Industry Tax (CIT) returns.

3.2. Highlights and achievements during 2009/10 are;

- Total payments of circa £190m paid including £39m of Housing Benefit rent allowances.
- 91.7% of invoices paid within 30 days (2008/09 – 90.4%)
- Payment by BACS by volume increased to 96% for suppliers and 77% for Housing Benefits (2008/09 – 92% and 65% respectively).
- 92.7% of Housing benefit rent allowances by value are now paid by BACS.
- Circa 70% of local supplier's invoices paid within 10 days.
- Expansion of the Council's Purchase card scheme to 188 cardholders with spend exceeding £1m for the first time (2008/09 - £904k).
- Office move from BHH to Civic Centre completed.

4. Service Development / Support

4.1. The **Service Development** unit is responsible for co-ordinating the development of the Shared Services Division's IT strategy and systems and assisting with the roll out of key corporate IT projects. This unit has recently undergone a number of changes in structure associated with its movement from the Finance section and the creation of the CICT section. Responsibility for the Revenues and Benefits system iWorld remains, but support responsibility for the Integra Financial Management system has been retained within Corporate Finance. The support and development of the HR/Payroll system is a new responsibility for this unit.

4.2. Highlights and achievements during 2009/10 are;

- Integra E-series implemented and rolled out across Council providing remote access, improved functionality and removing the future dependency on updating client software.
- Reporting and budget arrangements reviewed and distributed electronically.
- Coordinated DWP monthly caseloads and subsidy return enabling subsidy claims for circa £50m.
- Support provided for development of corporate EDRMS system.
- Upgrades to iWorld system introduced and supported and system training provided across the Division.

5. Debt Recovery

5.1. The **Debt Recovery** unit is responsible for recovery and enforcement activity for all Council Sundry Debtors. It has recently been transferred into the Shared Services section as part of the recent restructuring activity.

5.2. Highlights and achievements during 2009/10 are;

- 97% of debt by value and 95% of debt by volume of all debt raised during 2009/10 collected by 1st July.
- Volume of credit notes produced reduced to 7% of invoices raised by volume, down from 8.3% previous year.
- Debt within all age categories over 60 days old has decreased as a proportion of overall debt. For example total debt over 60 days was 21% of total debt (2008/09 – 23%), as at 1st April.
- Debt over 1 year old reduced to £426k (2008/09 - £451k) as at 1st April
- Internal bailiff service embedded in recovery practice.

6. Challenges / Priorities 2010/11

- Embed system and staffing changes into operational arrangements of the teams following the significant changes and reductions in senior staff following business transformation.
- Introduce and develop HR aspects of the ResourceLink system in accordance with the project plan developed with North Yorkshire County Council.
- Schedule insurance premium renewals.
- Begin development work on a potential joint procurement approach by the Tees Valley authorities for arranging both insurance cover renewals and brokering arrangements.
- Introduce Direct Debit arrangements for recovery of sundry debts.
- Develop transactional services activity in conjunction with the implementation of a centralised support services section for Chief Executive's department.