

# **FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION SCHEDULE**



**15 August 2012**

**at 4.00 p.m.**

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

Councillor Paul Thompson, Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Corporate Services will consider the following items.

**1. KEY DECISIONS**

No Items

**2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 2.1 Sale of Land at Less than Best Consideration – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods / Chief Solicitor / Chief Finance Officer*
- 2.2 Customer and Support Services Annual Report – *Assistant Chief Executive*
- 2.3 Single Status Agreement Appeals – *Organisational Development Manager*

**3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Annual Complaints Report 2011/12 – *Assistant Chief Executive*
- 3.2 Open Data White Paper – Unleashing the Potential – *Assistant Chief Executive*

**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. EXEMPT KEY DECISIONS**

No items

### **7. OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 7.1 Potential Lease of Land at Gladsworthy Close and Kipling Road –  
*Assistant Director of Resources* (para 3)

## **FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report To Portfolio Holder  
15<sup>TH</sup> August 2012



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and  
Neighbourhoods/Chief Solicitor/Chief Finance  
Officer

**Subject:** SALE OF LAND AT LESS THAN BEST  
CONSIDERATION

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### **1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY**

Non key.

### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 To review the Local Government Act General Disposal Consent 2003, and, recommend a protocol to ensure a standardised approach for adoption by the Council to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Act.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Government's Plan for Growth Strategy encourages Councils to dispose of Surplus Assets to increase the supply of land for development to stimulate the economy. Where assets are released, the Council generally seeks to maximise the value of capital receipts achieved from the sale of land and buildings. Over the next three financial years the Council needs to achieve capital receipts of £4.5m to fund existing capital expenditure commitments identified within the Medium Term Financial Strategy report referred to Cabinet and Council in February 2012.
- 3.2 On specific occasions it is appropriate to consider disposing of land at less than best consideration. This situation is specifically recognised within national regulations - The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, which provides a general consent for Local Authorities to dispose of land or grant a lease in excess of 7 years for less than best consideration where;

- i) The Authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed of is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole or any part of its area or any persons resident or present in its area.
  - ii) The difference between the full market value and the actual consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2 million.
- 3.3 In determining whether or not to dispose of land for less than best consideration, the Estates and Asset Manager, a professional qualified valuer needs to assess the likely amount of the under value. Additionally, the Chief Solicitor's advice should be obtained on the question as to whether the disposal is capable of falling within the terms of the consent. The Authority's Chief Finance Officer should also be consulted to provide advice on the impact on the proposal on the Authority's overall financial position. The Government advise that it maybe useful for the Council to keep its appointed external Auditor informed of any legal advice it receives and the proposed action it wishes to take.
- 3.4 Authorities are reminded that the consent does not override restrictions on State Aid arising under European legislation. This would not however, adversely restrict proposals to dispose of land at less than Best Consideration to Public or Private sectors, provided that justification can be demonstrated in terms of the alternate benefit.
- 3.5 The use of the consent should have regard to the Council's Community Strategy and whilst a proposal need not necessary be specifically referred to in the strategy, the Government would expect Councils to think very carefully before using the power in a way which ran counter to the aims and objectives of its strategies.
- 3.6 Authorities must be able to demonstrate that they have acted reasonably in agreeing under value transactions; it is unlikely that aggrieved, unsuccessful or potential purchasers (or indeed local residents) will in all cases accept the decision. A fundamental issue would be the ability to demonstrate reasonableness having regard to the legislation.

#### **4. POTENTIAL AREAS REQUIRING USE OF POWERS**

- 4.1 The Council works closely with Housing Associations in relation to the provision of both social housing schemes and the implementation of regeneration schemes, as prioritised through the Housing Strategy. Funding to Housing Associations is governed by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). In many cases, the total allowance is inadequate to fund both the payment of development costs, and the acquisition of land at market value.

- 4.2 The HCA consider, that Local Authorities should take into account overall scheme costs, and they actively encourage the Council to use their powers under the provision of the Act. From the Council's perspective supporting Housing Associations in this way achieves additional rented accommodation which would otherwise not have been achieved. Councils also benefit from nomination rights which provide the Council with the opportunity to require accommodation to be provided to priority tenants.
- 4.3 Although the Estates and Asset Manager, will continue to promote maximising the returns from the sale of land and property, on occasions it is considered that the use of these powers could contribute towards achieving the provision of social housing schemes and the implementation of wider regeneration projects. In such circumstances, the Executive may wish to agree to the sale of land at less than the market value.
- 4.4 In addition to Housing Associations, the Council may also wish to facilitate the transfer of assets of Community Value under the provisions of the Localism Act 2012 or more generally enable development through private house builders/Commercial developers in order to facilitate economic regeneration and enable the delivery of investment projects that will benefit the wider community. The Council already has in place a Community Asset Transfer policy which includes criteria to be met in any transfer.
- 4.5 Overall, provided that the wider alternate benefits can be identified, justified, evidenced and the correct safeguards are incorporated, the legislation provides greater flexibility to the Council to facilitate its requirements.

## **5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council may dispose of land and buildings for a consideration which is less than the best obtainable provided that the disposal can be shown to enhance the well-being of the area and provided the discount does not exceed £2 million. This enables, the Council to take account of factors which have no specific financial value.
- 5.2 As one of the Council's key priorities is to ensure sound financial management, a critical element of this is to obtain best value from the disposal of the Council's surplus property assets in order to achieve a level of Capital Receipts sufficient to meet the existing capital receipts target of £4.5m. Consequently, where any sale at an undervalue is recommended, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the outcome will be at least as beneficial as the opportunities foregone by agreeing a reduced receipt. More importantly an assessment of the impact on achieving £4.5m capital receipts target will need to be completed to ensure this is not jeopardised as any shortfall will need to be funded

from Prudential Borrowing. The repayment costs of using Prudential Borrowing will then increased the budgets deficits facing the Council and therefore the level of cuts which need to be made.

- 5.3 In view of the significant revenue budget deficits facing the Council over the next 3 years and the need to achieve capital receipts of £4.5m to fund existing commitments it is unlikely that there will be any significant proposals brought forward for disposing of land for less than best consideration.
- 5.4 It is, however, the smaller sites that are sometimes disposed of at undervalue which, when accumulated, can amount to a substantial sum.

## **6. LEGAL AND RISK CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Although the Council has flexibility within the provisions of the General Disposals Consent, and, many of the relatively rigid legal restrictions previously applicable have been removed, it is still necessary for the Council to show it is acting reasonably and to satisfy its own Auditors. It would therefore be appropriate for the Council to have clear procedures for handling disposals in the light of the General Disposals Consent and to reduce any potential risk to the Council.

## **7. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 It is proposed, that consideration be given to adopting the following arrangements in relation to satisfying the 2003 General Disposal Consent regulations. The arrangements would cover all disposals at undervalue.
- 7.2 As the majority of decisions to dispose of land at less than the best price obtainable are subjective in nature, it is suggested, that such decisions should be initially referred to the Portfolio Holder.
- 7.3 Proposals will also be discussed with District Audit to keep them informed and seek views as appropriate.
- 7.4 Where there is a proposal to dispose of land at less than the best consideration which is reasonably obtainable, using the provisions of the 2003 General Disposal Consent, it is suggested that as a minimum, the following items of information should be included in the report to enable the Council to make a reasoned judgement:
- a. A description of the property and a valuation report undertaken by the Estates and Asset Manager, as a member of The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors setting out the restricted and unrestricted value of the property.

- b. An assessment with supporting evidence, undertaken by the department promoting the scheme, of the financial value to the Council of those benefits of the proposal which are capable of monetary assessment (eg operational savings, or income generation, or leveraging in of additional financial resources) together with an assessment and supporting evidence of the values of non monetary benefits (economic benefits such as job creation, environmental improvement, health and safety benefits, design quality etc, social benefits to the community and access to future social housing provision).
- c. Confirmation that the disposal contributes positively to an agreed Council priority and that it will not adversely affect a higher priority, project or area, together with a clear statement showing where the scheme fits within their service priorities.
- d. A clear statement from the department promoting the scheme that the benefits the Borough or its residents will derive cannot be achieved unless the sale takes place at an under value, together with confirmation that no alternative means of funding is available. In cases where the proposed disposal is to a person/organisation without undergoing a tender process, this would normally only be possible by provision of a robust business plan and analysis of the financial standing of the organisation.
- e. An assessment of the impact of the proposal on achieving existing £4.5m capital receipts target by the Section 151 Officer.
- f. An assessment of the value of capital receipt which would be foregone and the alternative uses of achieving a best consideration capital receipts once the existing £4.5m target is achieved, which could include funding for Council capital priorities, or repayment on long term borrowing to provide ongoing revenue savings;
- g. A statement from the Council's Chief Solicitor, as to whether he considers a disposal is capable of falling within the terms of consent, enabling the Council to sell at an under value.
- h. The report to the Executive, must contain sufficient information to enable Members to come to a conclusion as to whether the disposal would be proper use of the consent, having regard to the Council's fiduciary duties to local people.
- i. An independent valuation where appropriate.
- j. A statement from the department promoting the scheme outlining whether the proposal is likely to infringe state aid.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Any equality or diversity implications will be addressed as each case is brought forward.

## **9. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 Any Section 17 implications will be addressed as each case is brought forward.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is recommended, that the Portfolio Holder approves the approach, as set out in the report, recognising that although the legislation provides an opportunity to introduce greater flexibility in relation to the acceptance of monetary and non-monetary benefits as part of best consideration in terms of disposal of assets, substantial control measures need to be adopted to ensure that this is correctly applied.

## **11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The legislation provides an opportunity for the Council to adopt a flexible approach to achieving its wider objectives through the use of property assets. It is however important to ensure that any decision takes account of best practice and considers the financial impact of any decision to sell at less than best consideration.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 There are no background papers to this report.

## **13. CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder  
15 August 2012



**Report of:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Subject:** CUSTOMER & SUPPORT SERVICES ANNUAL  
REPORT 2011-12

### **1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY**

Non-key decision

### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update on the Customer & Support Services section's performance over the last 12 months including key highlights and achievements and setting out future plans and continuous improvement targets for 2012-13.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Hartlepool Connect, the Registration & Nationality Service and Chief Executive's Department Support Services make up the Customer & Support Services section. The section also leads on and co-ordinates activities to ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty that is included in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 The service was brought together in a single location in April 2011 when the Register Office moved to the Civic Centre. Work is ongoing to align the service areas by transferring tasks and activities to the most appropriate team to create more efficient and effective processes for both internal and external customers. The Customer & Support Services section is known by departments as the Contact Centre.
- 3.3 Hartlepool Connect is the customer service centre of Hartlepool Borough Council. It aims to resolve the majority of customer interactions at the first point of contact and to provide a helpful, professional and efficient service.

Customers can access Council services in a one-stop-shop type approach, negating the need to be passed from department to department to have their enquiry dealt with.

- 3.4 Chief Executive's Dept Support Services is an administrative and transactional function that provides support across the whole of the Chief Executive's Department. The team aims to deliver services by the most cost effective and efficient means. To date, saving targets have been achieved by reviewing tasks/activities, improving processes, and bringing small teams together to improve resilience and create economies of scale.
- 3.5 The Registration and Nationality Service is a statutory service that is responsible for registering birth, marriages/civil partnerships, deaths and for providing civil ceremonies. The service works closely with the General Register Office, part of the government's Identity and Passport Office. During 2011-12 initial customer contacts relating to appointment bookings and certificate requests transferred to Hartlepool Connect increasing the capacity of the service. Further activities are being reviewed for transfer that will further enhance the customer journey by providing a one-stop shop approach in relation to life events.
- 3.6 To ensure that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and in particular the specific duties included in the Public Sector Equality Duty, a sub-group of the Strategic Customer Service Group has been set up led by the Customer & Support Services Manager. The group includes officers from each department who co-ordinate equality and diversity activities in their own department. They also review equality impact assessments that are undertaken in relation to service changes. On behalf of the Council, the sub-group published equalities information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty and developed and published equality objectives in April 2012.
- 3.7 Each of the teams has previously had their own individual business, service and/or work plans. As staff within the Customer & Support Services section now work more closely together and across teams, all plans have been collated and refreshed and a business plan for the next 3 years has been produced. The draft business plan is attached at **Appendix 1**. By co-ordinating our plans we are –
- able to focus our staffing resources where they are needed most
  - enhancing our processes by utilising existing and new technology across teams
  - improving resilience and considering succession planning.
- 3.8 Our service/work plan for 2012-13 is included at **Appendix 2** of the Business Plan.

#### **4. KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

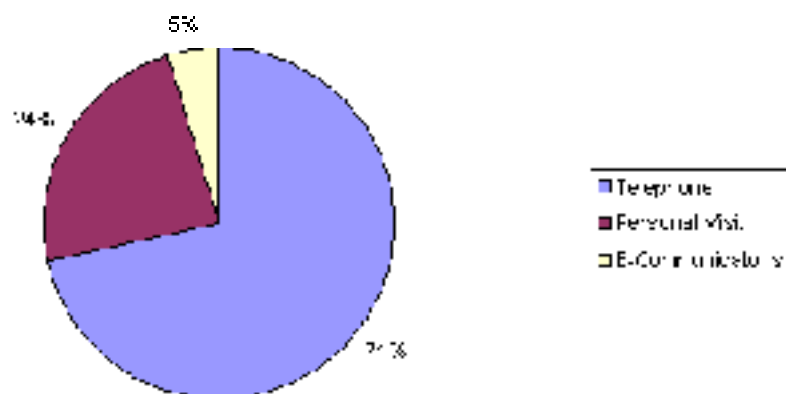
- 4.1 Hartlepool Connect has continued to develop and expand. A significant proportion of customer service activities from across the Chief Executive's and Regeneration and Neighbourhood departments have been successfully migrated.
- 4.2 The planning and implementation of the CEX Support Services team has been successful, enabling the achievement of savings targets. A transformational programme is continuing and benefits are being realised across the department, demonstrated by encouraging feedback from service managers.
- 4.3 The transfer and embedding of the Registration and Nationality Service into the section has been a significant undertaking. General Register Office findings have been very positive and supportive of the transformational service enhancements.
- 4.4 To meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) included in the Equality Act 2010, we published equality information in January 2012 and an Equality and Diversity Policy in April 2012 that includes our equality objectives. We have raised awareness of the PSED within departments by briefing management teams and service managers.
- 4.5 Equality impact assessment processes have been refreshed and are a requirement for any policy changes and service reviews. They are used to inform decision makers of any adverse impacts that may arise from policy and/or service implementations or changes.
- 4.6 The development of technology, including CRM and queue management solutions, has enabled the effective analysis of management information to facilitate improved service and workforce planning.
- 4.7 The section has made significant budget savings over the last 12-14 months, contributing to the Council's saving targets. Details are included in the Business Plan.

#### **5. PERFORMANCE 2011-12**

- 5.1 During the year, Hartlepool Connect handled 368,763 customer enquiries across the 3 primary contact channels which is a slight decrease in overall contacts since last year due to reduced signposting.

A total of 71% (263,717) of customers contacted Hartlepool Connect by telephone, 24% (88,076) were personal visits and 5% (16,970) by e-communications. E-communications have increased as expected as we attempt to move customer to cheaper channels.

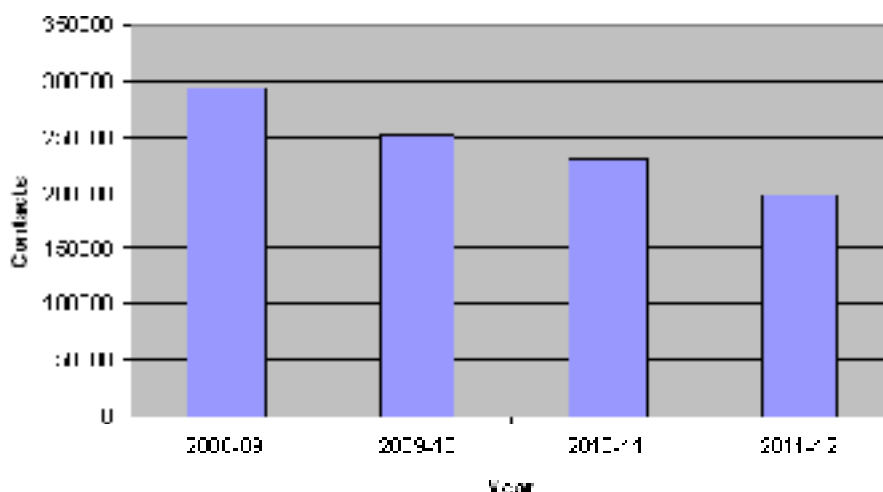
Contact Channel



## 5.2 Telephone Service

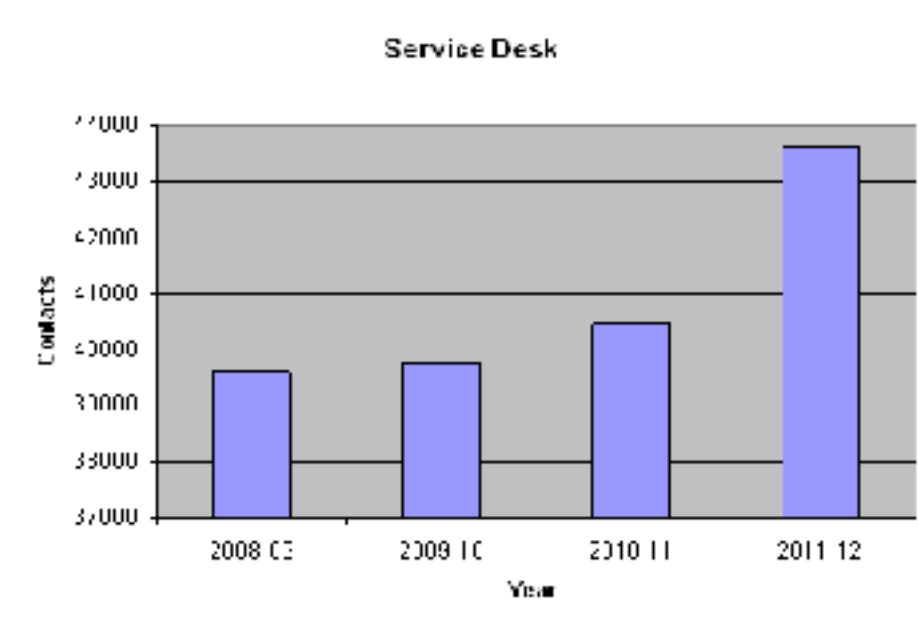
The telephone service is broken down into switchboard and contact centre. Switchboard calls continue to reduce in line with our continued campaign of encouraging staff to use the intranet staff directory and departments publicising their direct extension numbers.

Switchboard

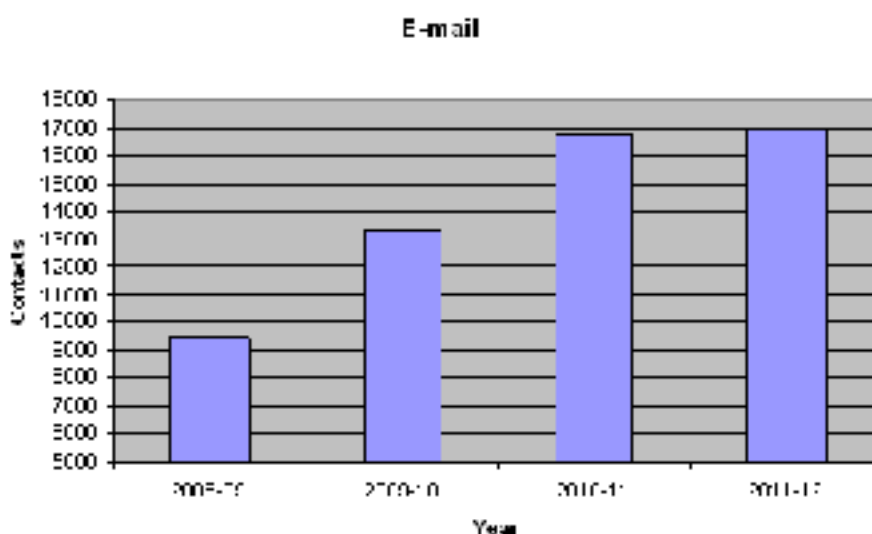


## 5.3 Personal Callers and Visitors

Service desk contacts have increased due to the transfer of the Registrars service and Blue Badge enquiries. Waiting times have increased since the transfer of Revenues and Benefits officers who undertake full assessment of claims. Also, Registrars customer are now included in our statistics. However, although waiting times have increased, customers no longer have to join 2 queues as they are dealt with at our single point of contact.



## 5.4 E-communications continue to show a slight increase as more customers choose to self-serve via the web or to contact us via email. Work is continuing, in conjunction with our Corporate ICT team, on further technology solutions to move customers to e-channels.



5.5 Registrars

Performance is reported annually to the Registrar General via their Annual Performance Report that was well received by our account manager. A copy of the report is attached at **Appendix 2**.

**6. KEY ISSUES AND PRIORITIES FOR 2012-13**

6.1 We recognise that customer interaction preferences are changing, with the ongoing popularity of web-interactions, social networking and smart phone applications. Our statistics demonstrate that web-interactions are increasing on an annual basis, and a Channel Strategy setting out the Council's vision for customer contact will provide a roadmap for the authority.

6.2 Our Identified priorities in the medium term are:-

- Continue to implement the Contact Centre programme of service integrations
- Proactively work with other Service Managers to seek further integration opportunities and joint working initiatives
- Undertake a fundamental review of the Registrars' service and implement the recommendations of the General Register Office evaluation report
- Progress the CEX Support Services transformation programme
- Strengthen ICT development capacity through the transfer of skills across the service
- Install a multi-media solution to replace the current telephony solution
- Development of a Channel Strategy considering relevant technology solutions
- Further embed equality and diversity by reviewing training materials and provision

6.3 Our priorities have been incorporated into our service plan and progress will be monitored in accordance with our service planning arrangements.

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That the Portfolio Holder considers the report and

- a) endorses the Business Plan 2012-15
- b) provides any further comments prior to extracts of this information being published on our website and via the corporate Communications Team.

**8. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE**

Appendix 1 – Customer & Support Services Business Plan 2012-15

Appendix 2 – Registrars Annual Performance Report 2011-12

**9. CONTACT OFFICER**

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**Hartlepool Borough Council  
Customer and Support Services**



**Business Plan 2012-15**

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Hartlepool Borough Council  
Customer and Support Services

Business Plan 2012-15

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**Document History**

Author	Version	Date
Initial draft Contact Centre and Administration Manager	1.0	28 April 2012
Second draft Customer and Support Services Manager	2.0	May 2012
Third draft Assistant Chief Executive	3.0	July 2012

**Document Review**

Post	Version	Date
Assistant Chief Executive	3.0	July 2012

**Document Sign-off**

Post	Date
Assistant Chief Executive	



**Document Circulation**

Date	
Finance & Corporate Services Portfolio Holder	
Customer Service Strategic Group	
CMT Support Group	
Customer and Support Services Team	

**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

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**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

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**1. Introduction**

**1.1 Purpose**

This Business Plan has been produced to internally communicate our strategy for service delivery in the medium term (*over the next three years*).

This plan provides detail about who we are and what we do, our current position and future priorities. It also aims to explain how we strategically and operationally plan, together with how our performance will be monitored, evaluated and reported.

We will use this document to support our Annual Report, and will review it on an ongoing basis to ensure it remains relevant and reflects any emerging challenges.

**1.2 Statement of Purpose**

***“Customer and Support Services will deliver customer service excellence by providing cost effective and efficient services that are of high quality and meet customer need.”***

**1.3 Values**

Core values are:-

- Putting the customer first and valuing diversity
- Delivering high quality services that provide value for money
- Valuing our employees
- Making best use of our resources

**1.4 Background**

The Customer and Support Services section is located within the Corporate Strategy Division. The service is strategically managed by the Customer and Support Services Manager, with operational and technical support provided by the Contact Centre and Administration Manager, Registration and Development Services Manager and Customer and Support Team Leaders.

Business areas within the Customer and Support Services' section are:-

- Hartlepool Connect
- Support Services
- Registration and Nationality Services

These three areas are collectively titled the corporate Contact Centre.

**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

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The section also is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Corporate Customer Service Strategy and Corporate Equality and Diversity Plan.

**1.4.1 Hartlepool Connect**

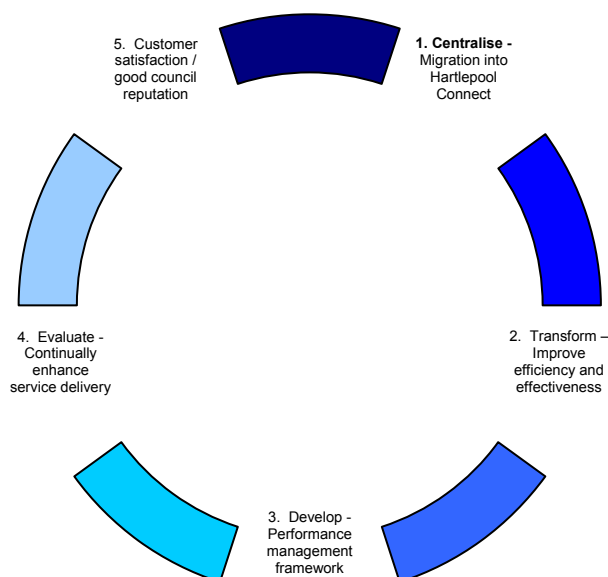
Hartlepool Connect is the corporate customer services function of the Council, providing first point of contact to residents, businesses and visitors. The service was officially launched in February 2007 as part of the Council's centralisation agenda.

As set out within the original Business Case, the principal role of Hartlepool Connect is to enhance / improve customer interactions through the centralisation of customer service delivery, at the same time as achieving efficiencies and cost savings.

Significant resource has been invested by the Council to ensure service delivery is of a high standard and meets the needs and expectations of customers. This investment has included the procurement of core technology solutions and the renovation of the Civic Centre reception area.

To date, centralisation has been successful and this is demonstrated by reduced operating costs and high customer satisfaction. Reduced costs have been achieved by supporting the Council's programme of premise rationalisation and customer service reception points, sharing technology with back office services and reducing staffing resources through economies of scale and natural wastage.

Service transfer into Hartlepool Connect has been successful with many Council services already transferred or programmed to transfer. The service transfer process follows a five point plan:-



**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

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Each step of the process is supported by a range of underpinning objectives that ensures successful integration and effective service delivery. To facilitate service integration, a range of activities are undertaken, such as customer journey mapping, the development of supporting performance frameworks, an understanding of current volumes and contact preferences together with an Equality Impact Assessment. These activities help to enable continuous service enhancements and ultimately high levels of customer satisfaction.

Hartlepool Connect aims to provide customers with an easily recognisable brand to facilitate straightforward access to services regardless of contact channel. Centralisation also enables customers to deal with a range of issues in one easy contact. The migration of further services into the corporate function will continue to contribute toward the aims of the Customer Service Strategy and strengthen customer service delivery across the authority.

Future service delivery opportunities are currently being explored to establish whether partnership / collaborative working can bring further benefits.

**1.4.2 CEX Support Services**

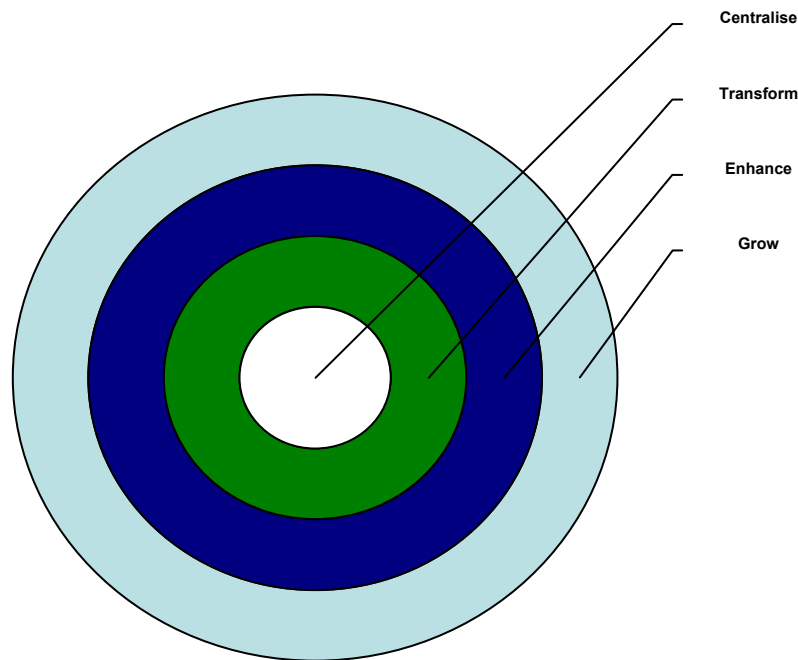
CEX Support Services is an administrative function that provides support across the Chief Executive's Department.

As part of the Council's Business Transformation agenda, a cross departmental administration review was undertaken during 2009-11. The purpose of the review was to identify transactional roles and activities that could be centralised, with the primary objective of reducing operating costs through economies of scale. CEX Support Services was launched in April 2011.

All three Council departments have a centralised support services team, and each is progressing transformational programmes. These programmes aim to deliver services by the most cost efficient and effective means. To date, the success of administration centralisation has been evidenced by the achievement of departmental saving targets.

**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

There are four core elements that shape the CEX Support Services' transformation programme:-



The centralisation phase is now complete with the majority of administrative roles and processes transferred into the corporate team. The second stage, transform, is commencing and activities include reviewing and standardising business processes, identifying new ways of working, the transfer of skills across the team, maximising the use of corporate technology and reducing tasks that add moderate value to the authority.

The enhancement stage will commence when baseline data across high transactional service areas has been collected. A performance management framework will be developed and supported by a range of performance indicators and local targets. It is anticipated that this framework will be in place by the end of 2012-13.

Opportunities exist to centralise tasks and activities that are undertaken by all three Support Services' teams, enabling further efficiencies and economies of scale.

**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

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**1.4.3 Registration and Nationality Services**

The Registration and Nationality Service is responsible for civil registrations, including births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships.

The delivery and administration of civil registration is a statutory duty and is performed in partnership with the General Register Office, which forms part of the Identity and Passport Service.

The creation of a new governance framework in 2007 has provided local authorities with greater responsibility and opportunities to develop the delivery of local registration services. The service adopted new governance arrangements in April 2010. During this time, and as part of a Council restructure, the service was transferred into the remit of Customer and Support Services.

During 2011-12 the service has undergone substantial transformation to align registration with other customer-facing services. This has been carried out in accordance with the Hartlepool Connect integration plan and the Support Services transformation programme.

Relocation to the Civic Centre in April 2011 has seen the service further integrated into the corporate fold and allowed it to take good advantage of corporate resource and expertise. This has particularly been the case with initial customer contact and administrative back office functions which have been embedded across the section.

The success of the service transfer and relocation is demonstrated by a General Register Office inspection that was carried out during November 2011. Their findings concluded that the recent service changes have strengthened registration provision and that the service is in a strong position to further enhance and develop.

A fundamental review of Superintendent Registrar and Registrar of Birth and Death duties is progressing with focus upon succession planning, income budgets, performance management and business process enhancements. It is anticipated that the findings of this review will be implemented during 2012-13.

## **1.5 Strategic Outcomes and Service Delivery Aims**

### **1.5.1 Strategic Outcomes**

The performance of the section contributes toward a number of corporate strategic outcomes, which form part of the Council's Corporate Plan and underpinning Organisational Development theme.

Strategic outcomes:-

1. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.
2. Deliver effective customer focused services, meeting the needs of diverse groups and maintaining customer satisfaction.

### **1.5.2 Service Delivery Aims**

The section has developed a range of service delivery aims that contribute toward achievement of the strategic outcomes:-

- *To provide a centralised, professional and customer focused Contact Centre for all appropriate transactions through service integration with relevant Council services and partners.*
- *To promote the Contact Centre as the first point of contact for the local authority, to engage with customers and to improve the customer experience and satisfaction levels regarding interactions with the Council.*
- *To develop the Corporate Customer Service Strategy and Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy and to ensure it is communicated, monitored and evaluated.*
- *To provide business enhancements and cost efficiencies to the Council through centralisation, transformation, innovation and best practice.*
- *To ensure the effective and efficient management of resources.*
- *To ensure effective Performance Management arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate key performance indicators and targets, and to provide management information to relevant parties.*

Service planning arrangements are detailed at section 3 of the plan.



**Customer and Support Services  
Business Plan 2012-15**

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**1.6 Links with other Council Strategies and Plans**

The Customer and Support Services section is responsible for the development of the Corporate Customer Services Strategy and Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy. These two strategic documents fall under the umbrella of the Communicating with Your Council suite of strategies which also encompasses the Corporate Communications Strategy, Corporate Consultation Strategy and Corporate Complaints Policy.

In addition to the above, strategic planning and operational service delivery across the function forms close links with a wide range of Council strategies and plans, but primarily the ICT Strategy, HR Policies and Procedures, the Workforce Development Strategy and the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

**1.7 Savings Achieved to Date**

The progression of transformational programmes has enabled the section to make significant baseline budget reductions, contributing to the Council's challenging targets.

<b>Business Area</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Savings Total</b>
Hartlepool Connect	24,000	13,000	<b>37,000</b>
Diversity	8,000	3,000	<b>11,000</b>
Registrars	0*	12,000	<b>12,000</b>
Support Services	61,000	83,000	<b>144,000</b>

Management Structure	32,000	36,000	<b>68,000</b>
<b>Savings Total</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>147,000</b>	<b>272,000</b>

*\* Relocation of the Registrar's Office from Raby Road to the Civic Centre released an Asset Management saving of £28,000.*

Baseline budgets have been reduced and it is anticipated that operational costs will need to reduce for the foreseeable future.

## **2. Service Provision – What do we do and how do we do it?**

### **2.1 Hartlepool Connect**

Hartlepool Connect is the first point of contact for customers undertaking business with the authority and operates from within the Civic Centre. We handle customer contacts across a range of channels, including telephone, personal visits and web interactions. We provide customer service assistance on behalf of Council sections, including Refuse and Recycling, Parking, Housing Benefits, Council Tax and Environmental Services. A full list of services is provided at Appendix A.

We strive to deliver upon the aims of the Corporate Customer Service Strategy and the promises set out in the Customer Charter and Equality and Diversity statement. We ensure that all information we record about our customers is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

We have a highly skilled team of Customer Service Assistants and Officers, who aim to provide a professional, helpful and efficient service. The team undertakes frequent training and development to ensure knowledge and skills are up to date, and they work together to achieve overall service targets and high levels of customer satisfaction.

Service fulfilment is performed to varying levels, from simple transactions such as signposting and taking payments, to more complex enquiries such as eligibility assessments. We have standardised processes across transaction types such as payments, bookings, applications and assessments, as this enables us to provide a consistent service and to ensure the most efficient and effective delivery methods are in place. These processes are frequently refreshed to reflect service developments, technology enhancements and legislative changes.

Effective technology solutions are important to our operation. We are reliant upon systems that can collect customer intelligence, and use our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) application and queue management solutions to record information. We use this data to enhance customer service provision by analysing our performance, both historically and in real time, to assist us in the monitoring of targets and performance indicators and to facilitate accurate forecasting and workforce planning.

We are committed to delivering a high standard of customer service and undertake regular customer satisfaction monitoring to ensure we are meeting the needs and expectations of all our customers.

## 2.2 CEX Support Services (Internal Customers)

CEX Support Services provides support to all Council departments but primarily to the four divisions of the Chief Executive's Department - Workforce Services, Corporate Strategy, Corporate Finance and Legal Services.

We provide transactional and business support across a diverse range of areas such as postal services, workforce services, service development and finance. We aim to provide an efficient, effective and resilient service. We provide service resilience through the development of a multi-discipline team with a wide-ranging skills base that divisions may not have access to independently, together with ensuring service peaks are identified and planned for without affecting performance.

We are also responsible for the management and monitoring of postal provider contracts, the maintenance of the department's Business Continuity Plan and Employee Protection Register and the recording and co-ordination of complaints and freedom of information requests. We ensure that we handle information in accordance with the Council's Information Governance and Security policies.

We recognise the benefits of a multi-skilled team and address knowledge and competency gaps through the implementation of tailored staff development programmes. We provide departmental placements for Business Administration and Customer Service apprenticeships and support them to achieve vocational qualifications and gain workplace knowledge and experience.

We are committed to delivering upon the Council's business transformation aims and are moving ahead with a programme of transformation. Current projects within the programme include the creation of a Workforce Contact Centre, assisting with the development of the HR / Payroll application and supporting the roll-out of the corporate document management solution.

A performance management framework is in its infancy, and once developed it will assist us to monitor and evaluate how well we are meeting the needs of the department.

We work closely with other departmental support teams to deliver upon corporate projects, standardise business processes and to share best practice and experiences.

### 2.3 Registration and Nationality Service

The Registration and Nationality Service operates in partnership with the General Register Office (GRO) and is statutorily responsible for the registration of births, deaths and marriages, ensuring the availability of suitable venues for ceremonies and to maintain the district's civil registration records.

Customers can book a registration appointment by contacting Hartlepool Connect or by visiting the Civic Centre. We perform a range of registration activities, in line with statutory targets, including the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. We recognise that our customers are dealing with life changing events and that some registrations can be daunting. Our team of professional Registration Officers aim to make the process straightforward for customers together with ensuring confidentiality is maintained at all times.

We are responsible for the maintenance and security of civil registration records within the borough. These records are stored within the Council's Strong Room and date back to 1837. We issue copy certificates and undertake historical searches upon request.

We arrange and officiate at a range of ceremonial services, including marriages, civil partnerships, naming and renewal of vows. We offer a bespoke service to suit individual requirements and budgets. Ceremonies can be performed at the Civic Centre, the Borough Hall's Ceremony Room or at an approved premise. We are responsible for issuing and renewing licenses for approved premises, the maintenance of the approved register and undertaking suitability inspections.

We provide the Nationality Checking Service, on behalf of the UK Border Agency, which includes validating documentation and assisting with the application process for future citizens. Citizenship Ceremonies are performed from within the Civic Suite, and are undertaken in accordance with The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. During these ceremonies, we celebrate the significance of becoming a British citizen and provide attendees a warm welcome into the community. A commemorative plaque is given to newly inducted citizens to mark the occasion.

We monitor our performance via a range of indicators, and we are required to submit an annual report to the GRO who undertake service evaluations and carry out routine inspections.

**3. Service Planning – How do we plan our activities and what do we consider?**

Service planning is about how we prioritise the activities we need to undertake to meet the needs of our customers, together with contributing toward the strategic objectives of the authority.

Our service is subject to continuous change, whether it be new national priorities, new local priorities (such as Business Transformation) or existing services that need to be developed, improved or renewed. We therefore need to have in place a process to ensure our priorities are assessed and translated into actions and targets and to be sure we deliver on them.

When assessing our priorities we need to balance value v cost, importance v urgency, meeting the will of the majority v protecting minority interests, risk and control, together with short term v long term. We also consider whether the activity will achieve benefits such as increased user satisfaction, efficiency savings and better performance.

We build customer views into our plans and wherever possible we seek to provide the services our customers want within the resources available. In support of the Equality and Diversity Policy, we undertake Impact Assessments when considering all changes to our plans.

**3.1 Our Process**

We develop our service plan on an annual basis and continuously monitor and evaluate our progress throughout the year. As a management team we are responsible for setting both strategic and operational objectives, together with contributing to the objectives of other Council services as well as our own.

We monitor progress on a weekly basis during our management team meetings, update plans and reprioritise activities.

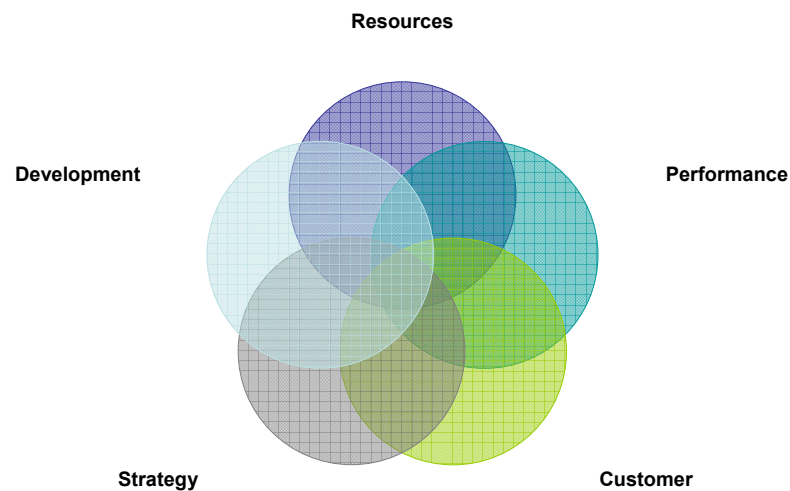
We input our key priorities into Covalent, the Council's Performance Management system, and provide a progress update on a quarterly basis.

Our Service Plan is attached at Appendix B.

### 3.2 Service Planning Framework

To facilitate our planning activities, we have developed a service planning framework. There are five interdependent areas that make up the profile of our framework.

#### Customer and Support Services – Service Planning Framework

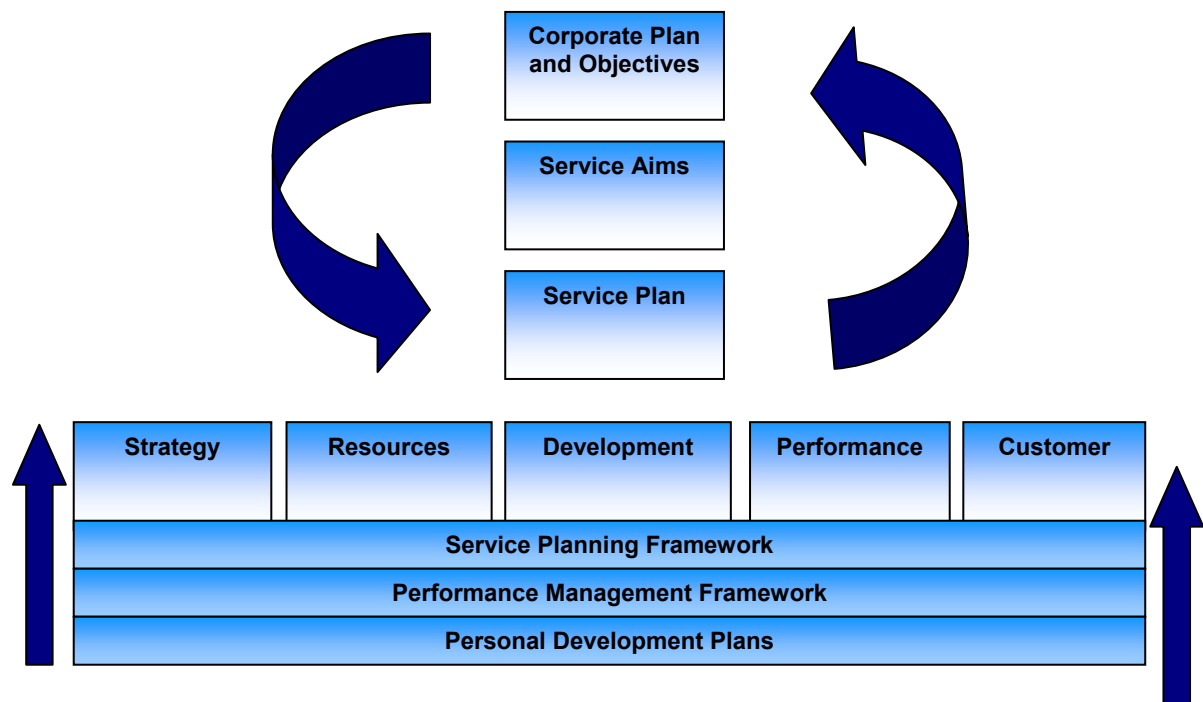


Our service planning framework helps us to assess which profile the priority or activity falls within. Each profile contains a range of strategies or plans we need to take into account at the planning stage, or it contains an annual service objective. This framework allows us to identify what arrangements the Council already has in place, together with assisting us to ensure our plans, schemes and procedures are appropriately aligned.

The five profile areas have individual plans that feed into our overarching service plan.

**Customer and Support Services  
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Our service planning framework does not aim to identify all Council strategies, policies and plans, just the areas that are most relevant to our section. Our framework is attached at Appendix C.

### **3.3 Risk Management**

Risks are considered in accordance with the Corporate Risk Management framework. Our responsibilities are to:-

- ensure that existing control measures are operating effectively as part of day to day management arrangements
- be alert to opportunities for introducing effective control measures
- be alert to changes in the impact or likelihood of the risk occurring and therefore the need to reevaluate the risk

Departments formally review the evaluation of the risks on the Accepted Risk Register on an annual basis and review the adequacy of control measures currently in place quarterly.

### **3.4 Business Continuity**

Business Continuity plans have been developed and form part of the Corporate Business Continuity Plan.



**4. Performance – How will we know what success will look like?****4.1 Performance Measures**

We measure our success by monitoring and evaluating performance against our priorities within our service plan and local performance indicators.

**Strategy - Customer Service Strategic Group**

The Customer Service Strategic Group meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Customer and Support Services Manager. Membership comprises of strategic managers from all three departments.

The primary remit of this group is to:-

- set strategic objectives for customer service delivery across the organisation;
- ensure customer service delivery is consistently applied across the organisation;
- develop and review related strategies;
- ensure the Council meets its equality objectives
- oversee the implementation of legislative changes;
- identify interdependencies with other Council strategies; and
- monitor and evaluate performance.

Strategic performance is evaluated by the group by reviewing progress against the objectives of the Customer Services and Channel Strategy Action Plan.

**Customer**

We evaluate our customer facing performance by obtaining customer feedback and undertaking surveys. We have a range of satisfaction indicators, including overall performance, quality, accessibility and timeliness.

Performance Indicator (PI)	Target
Overall customer satisfaction rated as excellent or good	85%
Complaints received as a percentage of service requests	0.5%

We use customer feedback to help us have a better understanding our service from a customers' perspective and we implement any appropriate enhancements, subject to resources.



**Customer and Support Services  
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### Development

We monitor and evaluate our performance by reviewing progress against the development objectives in our service plan.

### Performance

We have developed a performance management framework which is underpinned by a range of key performance indicators and targets. Prior to setting our performance indicators we analyze baseline and historical data, consider national targets and benchmark across the Tees Valley to ensure they are competitive and challenging.

Performance Indicators (PI)	Target	Outturn	Target
	2011-12	2011-12	2012-13
Telephone calls answered within target (30 seconds)	80%	81%	80%
Customers without appointment seen within target (8 mins)	80%	45%	80%
E-mails handled within target (same day)	90%	91%	90%
Enquiries resolved at the first point of contact	80%	89%	80%
Births registered within 42 days (National PI)	98%	100%	98%
Stillbirths registered within 42 days (National PI)	98%	100%	98%

Deaths registered within 5 days, excluding registrations following inquests (National PI)	98%	98%	98%
Percentage deaths registered on day of receipt following inquest (National PI)	95%	90%	95%
Certificates produced from deposited registers within 5 days	95%	99%	95%
Contact Centre customer satisfaction	n/a	n/a	98%

#### Customer and Support Services Business Plan 2012-15

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#### Resources

Performance across this area contributes toward a range of corporate performance indicators such as the Employee Survey, Attendance Management targets and Risk Management practices.

Annual Health and Safety inspections are carried out to ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy. We are regularly inspected by Internal Audit to ensure we have adequate control measures in place across the services we are responsible for.

We are required to provide financial information on a timely basis in support of the Council's Budget and Policy Monitoring Framework.

#### 4.2 Performance Reporting

##### Covalent

We report our performance on a quarterly basis via Covalent, the Council's corporate performance management system, which enables our progress to form part of the wider council picture of progression towards the delivery of corporate objectives.

##### Annual Report

We produce an annual report for consideration by the Finance and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder.

**External**

We externally report our progress on an annual basis via the Council's magazine, Hartbeat, and the Council's website.

## 5. Key Achievements, Challenges and Priorities

Our key achievements to date are set out below.

### 5.1 Key Achievements

Hartlepool Connect has continued to develop and expand. A significant proportion of customer service activities from across the Chief Executive's and Regeneration and Neighbourhood departments have been successfully migrated. Service integration plans continue to evolve and further services, including areas across the Child and Adult Services Department, are programmed for review / transfer.

Hartlepool Connect achieved Customer Service Excellence (CSE) in October 2009, which is the Government's national standard. A re-inspection in 2010 awarded Hartlepool Connect Compliance Plus status as we were 100% compliant with the standard. However, as the Council is no longer seeking external validations, Hartlepool Connect is not progressing with this award but will continue to work to maintain the CSE standard.

The planning and implementation of the CEX Support Services team has been successful, enabling the achievement of savings targets. A transformational programme is continuing and benefits are being realised across the department, demonstrated by encouraging feedback from service managers.

The transfer and embedding of the Registration and Nationality Service into the section has been a significant undertaking. GRO findings have been very positive and supportive of the transformational service enhancements.

To meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) included in the Equality Act 2010, we published equality information in January 2012 and an Equality and Diversity Policy in April 2012 that includes our equality objectives.

Equality impact assessments are undertaken as part of any service review and are used to inform decision makers of any adverse impacts that may arise from service implementations/changes.

The development of technology, including CRM and queue management solutions, has enabled the effective analysis of management information to facilitate improved service and workforce planning.

The section has made significant budget savings over the last 12-14 months, contributing to the Council's challenging targets.

**Customer and Support Services  
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## 5.2 Challenges

As part of our service planning process in March 2012, we carried out a performance evaluation or health-check. This annual evaluation helps us gain an informed understanding of what we do well, together with what we could do better.

Strengths	Development
High customer resolution at first point	CRM development
High customer satisfaction	CRM management information
Telephone and e-mail response – above target	Service desks customer wait – above target
Embedded performance management arrangements	Succession Planning ( <i>Registration Service</i> )
Low turnover	Telephone system unsupported and no longer meets current and future business requirements
High productivity ( <i>Contact Council benchmarking</i> )	Channel Strategy
	Child and Adult Services customer service review

Opportunities	Risks
Grow business to other areas across the Council and to external organisations	Budget reductions
Make better use of Corporate ICT, ie additional support and development expertise with regard to core IT solutions	Centralisation agenda not accepted by some service managers
Income generation	
Collaborative working	

This evaluation has been integral to shaping our service planning priorities in the medium term. We recognise that we need to develop in some areas and we are addressing these as priorities.



**Customer and Support Services  
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**5.3 Priorities**

We recognise that customer interaction preferences are changing, with the ongoing popularity of web-interactions, social networking and smart phone applications.

Our statistics demonstrate that web-interactions are increasing on an annual basis, and a Channel Strategy setting out the Council's vision for customer contact will provide a roadmap for the authority.

Our Identified priorities in the medium term are:-

- Continue to implement the Contact Centre programme of service integrations.
- Proactively work with other Service Managers to seek further integration opportunities and joint working initiatives.
- Undertake a fundamental review of the Registrars' service and implement the recommendations of the General Register Office evaluation report.
- Progress the CEX Support Services transformation programme.
- Strengthen ICT development capacity through the transfer of skills across the service.
- Install a multi-media solution to replace the current telephony solution.
- Development of a Channel Strategy considering relevant technology solutions.

Our priorities have been incorporated into our service plan and progress will be monitored in accordance with our service planning arrangements.

**6. Overview of Governance Arrangements**

Governance will be carried out in accordance with the Council's internal processes.

All key decisions (type 1 and 2) will be reported via the Forward Plan, and will include sufficient information for those looking at the forward plan to understand the issue, the decision making route and how to make representation. Key decisions will be considered by the Performance Management Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.

Registration and Nationality Service annual reporting will be undertaken in accordance with the General Register Office requirements.

## Hartlepool Connect – Customer Services - Service Fulfilment

## Appendix 1A

<b>Customer Services - Hartlepool Connect</b>				
<b>Service Detail</b>	<b>Telephony</b>	<b>Personal Visit</b>	<b>Web</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
Abandoned / Untaxed Vehicles <i>Information, Validation and Payment</i>	2	3	1	0
Blue Badges <i>Information, Assessment and Payment</i>	1	2	1	0
Bulky Household Waste Collections <i>Information, Assessment, Booking and Payment</i>	2	2	1	0
Business & Concessionary Parking Permits <i>Information, Assessment, Booking, Payment and Process</i>	2	3	1	0
Cash Office (Part-time support) <i>Payment</i>	N/A	3	3	0
Change of Address <i>Information, Report and Process</i>	2	2	2	0
Community Centres <i>Information, Assessment, Booking and Payment</i>	2	2	1	0
Concessionary Travel <i>Information, Assessment, Report, Payment and Process</i>	1	2	1	0
Council Tax (Revenues) <i>Information, Assessment, Report and Payment</i>	N/A	2	2	0
CRB Checks <i>Information, Validation, Booking, Payment and Process</i>	2	3	1	0
Dog Warden Service <i>Information, Validation, Payment and Process</i>	2	3	2	2
Environmental Services (Fly tipping, Grot Spots) <i>Information and Report</i>	2	2	2	0
Fixed Penalty Notices <i>Information, Validation, Payment and Process</i>	2	3	1	0
Foreign Pensions <i>Information and Validation</i>	1	3	0	0
Free School Meals <i>Information, Assessment and Report</i>	N/A	2	1	0

<b>Customer Services - Hartlepool Connect</b>				
<b>Service Detail</b>	<b>Telephony</b>	<b>Personal Visit</b>	<b>Web</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
Housing / Council Tax Benefits <i>Information, Validation, Report and Payment</i>	N/A	2	1	0
Highways <i>Information and Report</i>	2	2	2	0
Horticulture <i>Information and Report</i>	2	2	2	0
Payments (all Council services) <i>Information, Validation and Payment</i>	3	3	3	0
Pest Control <i>Information and Report</i>	2	2	1	0
Planning & Building Control <i>Information and Application</i>	1	1	1	0
Registrars <i>Information, Validation, Report, Booking, Payment and Process</i>	2	3	1	0
Recruitment <i>Information, Validation and Process</i>	2	3	2	0
Refuse and Recycling <i>Information, Assessment, Validation, Report, Payment and Process</i>	2	2	2	0
Residential Parking Permits <i>Information, Assessment, Validation, Report, Payment and Process</i>	3	3	1	0
Signposting / Switchboard / Reception	1	1	1	0
Social Care <i>Information</i>	N/A	1	1	0
Street Lighting <i>Information and Report</i>	2	2	2	0
Street Maintenance <i>Information and Report</i>	2	2	2	0
Trade Waste <i>Information, Application, Validation, Booking, Payment and Process</i>	2	2	2	0

<b><u>Customer Services - Hartlepool Connect</u></b>				
<b><u>Service Detail</u></b>	<b>Telephony</b>	<b>Personal Visit</b>	<b>Web</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>Depth of Service Delivery</b>				
Level 0	Not Developed			
Level 1	Light touch - advice / guidance / information on service			
Level 2	Fulfilled by Service Department - customer assumes dealt with but back office/other service work still required			
Level 3	Fulfilled by Contact Centre - no involvement/work by other department/back office			

## Customer &amp; Support Services Service/Work Plan 2012-13

## Appendix 1B

Outcome Ref	Outcome/Action	Responsible Officer
<b>26</b>	<b>Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation</b>	Andrew Atkin
26.1	Provide business enhancements and cost efficiencies through service centralisation, transformation, innovation and by implementing best practice across CSS function of the CEx Dept.	Christine Armstrong
26.1.1	Service Development Plan (extend & enhance)	Christine Armstrong
26.1.1.1	Transfer of corporate scanning of invoices	Julie Howard
26.1.1.2	Formalise CRM change control procedures	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.3	Replace Registrars' RSS system	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.4	Review Nationality Service	Julie Howard
26.1.1.5	Review Non-Statutory R&N Services	Julie Howard
26.1.1.6	Review CRM users & security	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.7	Implement changes to CRM security	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.8	Review Telephony / Upgrade	Julie Howard
26.1.1.9	Implement Tell Us Once Service (phase A)	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.10	Enhance Tell Us Once Service (Phase B)	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.11	Local Land Property Gazetteer/CRM Integration - update with new wards	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.12	Review original /CRM integration process	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.13	Implement Driver Document Checking	Julie Howard
26.1.1.14	Enhance & Review Occupational Health Service	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.15	Implement workforce enquiry service	Julie Howard
26.1.1.16	Review Booking System - Environmental	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.17	Review Booking System - Rooms	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.18	Review Corporate Postal Services	Julie Howard
26.1.1.19	Enhance Street Maintenance - Develop area officer assign	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.20	Parking Enhancements	Julie Howard
26.1.1.21	Review/Enhance E Learning packages	Julie Howard
26.1.1.22	Implement Resource Link - Sickness Module	Julie Howard
26.1.1.23	Implement Iclipse - Legal	Julie Howard
26.1.1.24	Recruitment Process Review	Julie Howard

Outcome Ref	Outcome/Action	Responsible Officer
26.1.1.25	Management Academy Support	Julie Howard
26.1.1.26	Implement CRB changes	Julie Howard
26.1.1.27	Implement Gifts & Hospitality process	Julie Howard
26.1.1.28	Transfer ID Cards	Julie Howard
26.1.1.29	Implement phase 1 of Room Booking system (replace Integrated Resources)	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.30	Develop and implement phase 2 of Room Bookings (roll out to other rooms)	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.31	Environmental Waste bookings migration to corporate system	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.32	Environmental Waste Review	Julie Howard
26.1.1.33	Develop CRM modules & enhancements	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.34	Implement public self-service bookings	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.35	Improve Change of Address process (utilising workflow)	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.36	Develop CRM Email Integration	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.37	Develop CRM campaigns module	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.38	Develop & Roll Out CRM Complaints Module	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.39	Enhance LLPG importer to remove deleted properties	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.40	Implement appropriate Printing & Scanning Services	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.41	Develop CRM script - area officers	Elaine Cook
26.1.1.42	Corporate Complaints Process	Julie Howard
26.1.1.43	Implement legislation in relation to extended statutory ceremony times	Christine Armstrong
26.1.1.44	Review Assisted Collections process	Julie Howard
26.1.1.45	Implement GIS	Julie Howard
26.1.1.46	HR Contractual Changes e-form development	Julie Howard
26.1.2	Resources & Performance	Christine Armstrong
26.1.2.1	Job Evaluation / Task Review	Julie Howard
26.1.2.2	Development of quality monitoring framework	Julie Howard
26.1.2.3	Develop & implement Customer Service Assistant development scheme (band 5-8)	Julie Howard
26.1.2.4	Develop and Implement R & NS PMF	Elaine Cook
26.1.2.5	Review Registration Service staffing structure	Christine Armstrong
26.1.2.6	CRM Skills Transfer	Elaine Cook

Outcome Ref	Outcome/Action	Responsible Officer
26.1.2.7	Develop CRM reporting (SSRS)	Elaine Cook
26.1.2.8	Update knowledge on SR Role	Elaine Cook
26.1.2.9	Review Web Forms (most appropriate tools / integration methods)	Elaine Cook
26.1.2.10	Review System Integration	Elaine Cook
26.1.2.11	Develop MI frameworks across appropriate Support Services functions	Julie Howard
26.1.2.12	Review/Refresh Business Plan	Julie Howard
26.1.2.13	Review Apprenticeship Scheme	Julie Howard
26.1.2.14	Publish Annual Report - Customer & Support Services	Christine Armstrong
26.1.2.15	Produce Annual Report – Registration & Nationality Service (General Register Office)	Elaine Cook
<b>27</b>	<b>Deliver effective customer focussed services, meeting the needs of diverse groups and maintaining customer satisfaction</b>	Andrew Atkin
27.1	Implement the Strategic Customer Service action plan to improve the Customer experience and satisfaction, provide access via multiple channels and promote the contract centre as the 1st point of contact for all transactions	Christine Armstrong
27.1.1	Implement Contact Centre Roll-In Programme	Christine Armstrong
27.1.1.1	Transfer Pest Control Service	Elaine Cook
27.1.1.2	Transfer Registrars Service	Christine Armstrong
27.1.1.3	Review Allotment Service	Julie Howard
27.1.1.4	Review and integrate ITU Customer Service Element	Julie Howard
27.1.1.5	Review/Enhance Burn Road Permits	Julie Howard
27.1.1.6	Implement Cash Payments	Julie Howard
27.1.1.7	Implement New Statutory Services (Registrars)	Elaine Cook
27.1.1.8	Review Social Services Initial Contact	Julie Howard
27.1.1.9	Transfer Public Protection (Noise & Housing Disrepair)	Julie Howard
27.1.1.10	Review Revs & Bens	Julie Howard
27.1.1.11	Review Town Hall Bookings	Julie Howard
27.1.2	Strategic Customer Service Action Plan	Christine Armstrong
27.1.2.1	Undertake Access to Services Impact Assessment (IA) across all customer service areas	Christine Armstrong
27.1.2.2	Review existing Access to Services' contracts to ensure they meet customer requirements and offer value for money	Christine Armstrong
27.1.2.3	Refresh Customer Charter	Julie Howard
27.2	Implement Registration & Nationality Service Delivery Plan to ensure service meets statutory and customer requirements	Christine Armstrong

Outcome Ref	Outcome/Action	Responsible Officer
27.2.1	Registration & Nationality Checking Service Action Plan	Christine Armstrong
27.3	Ensure that the Council has procedures in place to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by co-coordinating activities across departments to meet the items included in the Equality & Diversity action plan	Andrew Atkin
27.3.1	Monitor Equality & Diversity Action Plan	Christine Armstrong



**Customer and Support Services - Business Plan 2012-15**  
**Service Planning Framework**

Appendix 1C
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Strategy	Development	Performance	Resources	Customer
Corporate Customer Service Strategy	Registration service statutory instruments	Develop, implement and monitor the annual service plan	Contact Centre Ground Rules	Corporate Customer Charter promises
			Contact Centre Self Roster Scheme	
Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy	Contact Centre programme of service integrations	Report service plan and KPI progress on a quarterly basis via Covalent	Contact Centre Call Recording Policy	Corporate Equality and Diversity statement
Corporate Customer Service and Channel Strategy Action Plan	Contact Centre programme of continuous improvement	Develop and implement performance management frameworks	Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy	Corporate Access Strategy
			Corporate Employee Development and Performance Appraisal Policy	Corporate Complaints Policy
	Contact Centre service integration and delivery framework	Set individual, service and site SMART objectives and targets and monitor	Corporate Workforce Development Strategy	Corporate Communications Strategy
		Provide management		

Strategy	Development	Performance	Resources	Customer
		information to client services	Corporate HR Policies and Procedures	
	Contact Centre service standards			Corporate Consultation Strategy
		Produce service annual report	Corporate Health and Safety Policy	
	Contact Centre annual task plan		Corporate ICT Strategy	Data Protection Act
	Support Services transformation programme	Communicate performance via Hartbeat and web-site	Corporate Information Security Policy	Freedom of Information
	CRM Change Control	Produce a registration annual report for GRO purposes	Corporate Risk Management Framework	Payment Card Industry
		Undertake benchmarking to ensure performance and targets are competitive and challenging	Corporate Procurement protocols / Contract Procedure Rules	
			Corporate Budget and Policy Framework	

Strategy	Development	Performance	Resources	Customer
			Corporate Business Continuity Policy	
			Corporate Workplace Standards	

**Local Authority; Hartlepool Borough Council****Part A. Level of service**

Has the delivery of the local registration service been undertaken in line with the Good Practice Guide?

Yes

No

Comments

✓

*If no, please comment*

**Part B. Good Practice Attainment****B1. Key Performance Indicators**

*Level of performance measured against the following key performance indicators for registration*

**Activity (NS = National Standard)**

1	Events registered within statutory timescales	Compliance Level %	Comments
	(i) % births registered within 42 days (NS 98%)	100%	
	(ii) % still-births registered within 42 days (NS 98%)	100%	
	(iii) % deaths registered within 5 days, excluding registrations following post mortems and inquests (NS 95%)	98%	
	(iv) % deaths after post mortem registered within 7 days (NS 95%)	90%	

Monitoring methodology used RON extracts		
<b>2</b>	<b>Waiting times</b>	<b>Compliance Level %</b>
<b>A. Offices with appointment system</b>		<b>Comments</b>
1. Waiting times for appointment (NS 95%) for:		Currently unable to provide required information.
(i) birth registration/declaration within 5 working days		Not available All appointments now made via electronic booking system. Reports to be developed during 2012/13 to allow full and accurate reporting and provide figures excluding customer requests for appointments over 5 days.
(ii) still-birth registration/declaration within 2 working days		100% Reporting by exception. Only 1 still birth has been registered in Hartlepool which was dealt with immediately.
(iii) death registration/declaration within 2 working days		100% Calendar checks are undertaken daily to ensure appointments are always available either the same day or the following day.
(iv) notices for marriage and civil partnership within 5 working days		Not available Currently unable to provide required information. Random proportionate sample taken (as explained within births) shows 75% of appointments took place within 5 days of initial contact.
2. % of customers seen within 10 minutes of appointment time (NS 90%)		91.2% The booking system relies upon the registrar updating the status of the appointment at various stages in order to generate this report. It is acknowledged that further staff training is required to ensure accurate reporting in the future.
Monitoring methodology used		

2A.1 Random sample taken from 10% of overall appointments made, (without taking into consideration customer requests for appointments over 5 days) shows 83% of appointment requests were actually carried out within 5 days

2A.2 Purpose built report from electronic booking system used to attain competence level.

Waiting times	Compliance Level %	Comments
<b>B. Offices without appointment system</b>		
% of customers seen within 30 minutes of arrival (NS 90%) for:		
(i) birth registration/declaration		
(ii) still-birth registration/declaration		
(iii) death registration/declaration		
(iv) notices for marriage and civil partnership		
<b>Monitoring methodology used</b>		

*Section not applicable as appointment system is in place at Hartlepool*

3 Certificate applications	Compliance Level %	Comments
% dealt with within 7 days of receipt (from deposited registers) (NS 95%)	99.2%	
<b>Monitoring methodology used</b>		
Random sample taken from 10% of overall certificate requests,		

All requests are now made via electronic system. Reports to be developed during 2012/13 to allow full and accurate reporting.

4 Customer satisfaction	Compliance Level %	Comments
% of satisfied customers, evidenced from response to customer satisfaction surveys and actual number of returned forms (NS above 90%, or corporate standard, in which case, identify corporate standard)	98%	
<b>Monitoring methodology used</b>		

98% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall provision of service.

Included within overall customer service satisfaction survey which has been carried out on a face to face basis.

5 Complaints	Compliance Level %	Comments (including total number of complaints)
Total number of upheld formal complaints received (actual and as % of all registrations) (NS 0.5%)	0.01%	One formal complaint was received during the period and was partially upheld.
Monitoring methodology used		

## B2. Statutory Standards relating to tasks not in KPI Table

*Summary of performance against the statutory standards in the Good Practice Guide as a whole. Please include details of any work planned, in progress or undertaken to address any issues of areas of weakness.*

Overall, Hartlepool has performed well against the statutory KPI's during 2011/12 achieving all but one of the national standards in areas measured.

We have been able to measure our achieved competency level in more areas than at the time of our 2010/11 performance summary and plan to further develop robust reporting tools during 2012/13 to allow specific and accurate reporting against all statutory standards in the future.

Phase 1 of the Registrars service review was completed during quarter 3 of 2011/12 which has contributed towards improvements in end of year performance, overall service resilience and increased reporting and monitoring capabilities.

Some examples of this include;

- All initial customer enquires are now handled by a team of multi skilled and highly trained customer service assistants
- Customer contact, requests and bookings handled utilising contact centre technologies including telephony management systems, corporate customer

database (CRM system)

- Additionally, all calls are now recorded and used for training and development

An extract from the Customer & Support Services Section service plan\* is attached at Appendix 1. The extract details activities relevant to the Registration Service that are planned to be undertaken during 2012-13.

Plans for phase 2 of the Registrars service review\*\* will continue to strengthen performance against statutory standards and ensure the service operates as efficiently and effectively as possible in line with statutory standards by;

- Reviewing the role of RBD within Hartlepool. This will involve fully documenting processes, clarifying current roles and responsibilities of RBD's (and deputies). Customer demand and opinion will be analysed.
- Further integrating non-customer facing administrative duties within the Support Services team. This will provide resilience to the service and better equip the team to deal with increases in demand for service provision.

\* *Service Plan for 2012/13 attached at Appendix 1*

\*\* *Registration Review scoping document attached at Appendix 2*



**B3. Operational and Service Delivery Standards relating to activities not in KPI Table**

*Summary of performance against the non-statutory standards in the Good Practice Guide as a whole. Please include details of any work planned, in progress or undertaken to address any issues of areas of weakness, and details of significant achievements and measures taken to improve customer service standards.*

As detailed in section B2, Phase 1 of Hartlepool Service Delivery Review has been carried out and a number of changes and controls were put in place mid way through 2011/12 that will contribute towards the further attainment of non statutory standards. Whilst the service continues to operate at a high standard some additional processes have been put in place to ensure the timely processing and submission of QCCs and associated documentation. Waiting areas and interview room facilities have also been reviewed and the website redesigned. A review of all literature is being considered as part of the ongoing service review.

Phase 2 of the planned review\* will continue to make improvements by further developing the service in line with the good practice guide during 2012/13. That review will consider how we can ensure that the Registration Service staffing requirements are robust going forward including a detailed succession plan.

\* Registration Review scoping document attached at Appendix 2

**Part C. Wider service achievements and developments**

*Summary of attainment against wider service delivery plans and any other significant developments.*

There is effective strategic and operational management across the service with a delivery model that integrates the registration service into customer services by utilising corporate resources and expertise. The service offers a very good standard of customer care in line with the Council's Corporate Customer Charter. Register indexes are computerised and are available on the Tees Valley Indexes website.

2011/12 has been a challenging but overall successful year for the Registration service in Hartlepool.

Significant developments have included;

- The successful transfer of all customer enquires to the corporate Contact Centre
- Implementation of a new ceremonies room
- A review of the pricing structure for ceremonies
- A review of the management structure across the customer service section\*
- Re-location of the “strong room”
- Inclusion of registration customers in overall customer service satisfaction survey
- A review of public website layout and content on corporate site

2012/13 will see the service continue to develop in Hartlepool with plans in place to;

- Implement new Superintendent Registrar appointment and changes to management structure\*
- Review of the role of the RBD within Hartlepool
- Evaluate the benefits of the continued provision of non statutory services
- Consider changes to options available to customers around structure of ceremonies
- Enhance financial arrangements with neighbouring authorities for declaration payments
- Develop reporting tools and capabilities
- Continue to actively participate in the North East Regional Training Group
- Continue to embed changes implemented during 2011/12

*\* Revised staffing structure attached at Appendix 3*

Part D. Scheme related issues				
D1	<b>Service delivery plan</b>	Yes	No	Comments
	Has the service delivery plan for the registration service for the forthcoming year been produced?	✓		
D2	<b>Service delivery plan – prescribed content</b> <i>Please confirm that the following information, <b>which is required for scheme purposes</b>, has or will be included in your 2012/13 service delivery plan, and has not been subject to change since submission of your previous plan to GRO.</i>			
		Confirm Included	Confirm No Change	Change – (please provide details at D3 or D4 as appropriate)
	The number, names and boundaries of registration districts and sub-districts within the local authority		✓	
	The number of principal officer posts appointed within each district and sub-district		✓	
	The location of register offices, head offices and other service delivery points within each registration district (e.g. including hospitals and other outstations)		✓	
	Access and service availability times including emergency 'out of hours' arrangements; telephone numbers		✓	
D3	<b>Registration service provision changes made <u>during the reporting period</u></b> <i>If changes made, provide details with dates.</i>	Yes	No	Comments
	7. Boundaries and districts		✓	

	(ii) Posts abolished and/or created		✓	
	(iii) Service point locations		✓	
	(iv) Service opening times; telephone numbers		✓	

<b>D4</b>	<b>Registration service provision</b> <u><b>future changes</b></u>  <i>If changes planned, provide details with dates.</i>	Yes	No	Comments
	7. Boundaries and districts		✓	
	(ii) Posts abolished and/or created	✓		<p>With effect from 01/04/12 the post Registration Officer will be removed from the staffing structure. The duties of the role have been absorbed within the existing structure of the Customer and Support Services section as identified with a dotted line on the attached structure.</p> <p>The role of Superintendent Registrar will be merged with the role of Development and Performance Officer with effect from 01/04/12 as a result of the Customer Service Management structure review.</p> <p><i>* New structures attached at Appendix 3</i></p>
	(iii) Service point locations		✓	
	(iv) Service opening times; telephone numbers		✓	
<b>D 5 Service Delivery Plan Summary – 2012/13.</b>				
<i>Please provide details of the key developments and deliverables planned for the local registration service for 2012/13.</i>				
Service Plan for 2013 attached at Appendix 1				
<b>D6</b>	<b>Business Continuity Plan</b>	Yes	No	Comments

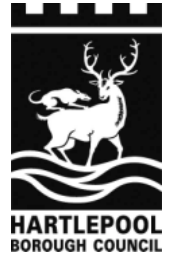
	Please confirm that a business continuity plan is in place and has been reviewed and updated as necessary?  <i>If no, when will this action be taken?</i>	✓		
<b>D7</b>	<b>Register storage</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	Are all registration records in the charge of the superintendent registrar stored centrally at the district register office?  <i>If no, provide details.</i>  <i>If changes planned, provide details with dates.</i>	✓		

<b>Part E Acknowledgement</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The local authority continues to commit to meeting the national standards contained in the Good Practice Guide.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
The local authority continues to commit to the principles of the Code of Practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
The local authority agrees to sharing statistical data contained in this report with other local authorities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Signed     A Atkin  ( Proper Officer for Registration Matters)	Date 30/04/2012		

**The completed report should be returned to [dpsupport@ips.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dpsupport@ips.gsi.gov.uk) by**

## **FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder  
15<sup>th</sup> August 2012



**Report of:** Organisational Development Manager

**Subject:** SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT APPEALS

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### **1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY**

Non Key Decision.

### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 To obtain ratification of Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of appeals arising from the implementation of the Single Status Agreement.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Single Status Agreement was formally agreed in May 2010 and implemented with effect from 1 April 2007. The Appeals Procedure for appeals submitted in relation to the implementation of the Single Status Agreement (i.e. between 1 April 2007 and 30 June 2012) was originally agreed at the Performance Portfolio Holder meeting on 27 June 2008. This has been reviewed in the light of experience of operating it for High Priority Appeals and a revised Appeals Procedure has been implemented following Performance Portfolio ratification.

- 3.2 The revised procedure provides:

- “The Executive Member with responsibility for Workforce Services will be regularly advised of appeals received and progress made in dealing with them” and;
- “All Appeal Panel outcomes must be ratified by the Executive Member with responsibility for Workforce Services or Governors (Governing Body, Pay Review Committee or Appeals Committee), as appropriate, prior to any changes being implemented.



- the Appeals Panel comprises 1 management representative, 1 trade union official and an independent chair”

3.3 Appeals are prioritised in accordance with the Single Status Agreement as detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Type of Appeal</b>
<b>High</b>	Appeals received from current employees who are continuing to receive protection at 1 July 2008/Appeals which do not need an Appeals Panel to meet/ Appeals from employees who leave the Council from areas where job losses are needed/ Appeals from employees who retire from the Council due to ill health and the Teesside Pension Fund Doctor (for LGPS members) or the Council's Occupational Health Advisor (for non LGPS members) has determined that they meet the Local Government Pension Fund Tier 3 Ill Health criteria
<b>Medium</b>	Appeals received from current employees who were receiving protection prior to 1 July 2008/Appeals received from current employees who do not gain initially
<b>Low</b>	Appeals received from current employees who gained initially
<b>Very Low</b>	Former employees

3.4 In order to ensure equality of treatment, as far as possible, the revised Appeals Procedure, as detailed in 3.1 above, made provision for employees whose high priority appeals were considered under the original Appeals Procedure to

- receive the same documentation (i.e. Directors comments on the appeal, including the sore-thumbed factors and any subsequent clarification provided to the Appeals Panel by the Director) as appellants whose appeals have been considered since April 2011
- challenge, clarify or expand upon information already provided by the Director or appellants but not provide new information in respect of appealed factors
- provide new evidence in respect of the sore thumb factors
- attend the Appeals Panel to present their case (in which case the Director or representative will also present their case to the Appeals Panel)

3.5 There is no obligation on appellants to do anything in respect of 3.4 a) - d) above. For example they may decide

- i) to do nothing
- ii) to receive the documentation and then not submit any additional information
- iii) to receive the documentation and submit additional written information and subsequently decide not to proceed at any time up to the day before the Appeals Panel actually meeting to consider any additional information provided to them in writing and/or verbally and review the appeal outcome in light of the additional information provided.
- iv) to receive the documentation and submit additional written information and decide not to attend the Appeals Panel
- v) to receive the documentation and submit additional information and decide to attend the Appeals Panel.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION ON APPEALS ARISING FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT

- 4.1 Outstanding appeals arising from the implementation of the Single Status Agreement (including where the outcome has not yet been ratified) are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Department	Posts Appealed (and number of appellants)/Priority				
	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Total
Chief Executive's	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Child and Adults	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Schools	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>

- 4.2 As can be seen from Table 2, there is only one outstanding appeal to be ratified through this report.
- 4.3 The initial outcomes of Appeals ratified previously are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3**

	Pay band increased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no. of appellants)	Pay band stayed the same on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no. of appellants)	Pay band decreased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no. of appellants)
Chief Executive's	8 (12)	21 (36)	1 (1)
Child and Adults	12 (25)	36 (88)	6 (7)
Regeneration and	22 (29)	58 (73)	7 (11)

Neighbourhoods			
Schools	2 (4)	8 (8)	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>44 (70)</b>	<b>123 (205)</b>	<b>14 (19)</b>

- 4.4 As indicated in Section 2, appellants whose appeals were considered under the previous Appeals procedure are being given the opportunity to have their appeals reconsidered under the current Appeals Procedure. The current position is set out in Table 4 overleaf.

**Table 4**

	<b>No. of appeals (no. of appellants) who requested copies of the additional information submitted to the Appeals Panel</b>	<b>No. of appeals (no. of appellants) who have indicated they wish to have their appeals reconsidered by the Appeals Panel</b>
Priority 1	4 (6)	3 (5)
Priority 2	46 (93)	15 (28)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 (99)</b>	<b>18 (33)</b>

- 4.5 A summary of previously ratified outcomes, of the Appeals Panels in respect of revisited appeals as detailed in 4.4 above is set out in Table 5.

**Table 5**

	<b>Pay band increased when appeal revisited and Outcome Ratified (no. of appellants)</b>	<b>Pay band stayed the same on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no. of appellants)</b>	<b>Pay band decreased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no. of appellants)</b>
Chief Executive's	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Child and Adults	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Schools	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 (2)</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>

## 5. PROGRESS ON APPEALS ARISING FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT

- 5.1 Since the last report the Appeals Panel has determined an outcome on the 1 remaining appeal as detailed in Table 6.

**Table 6**

	Pay band increased on Appeal (no. of appellants)	Pay band stayed the same on Appeal no. of appellants)	Pay band decreased on Appeal (no. of appellants)
Chief Executive's	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Child and Adults	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Schools	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)

- 5.2 In determining the appeal outcome, the Appeal Panels have considered the submissions made by the appellant as well as 'sore-thumbing' the original evaluation. This is essential to ensure the robustness of individual evaluations and the job evaluation scheme as a whole. Whilst there are three possible overall outcomes (pay band increases, pay band remains the same or pay band decreases), this may mask changes to particular factor levels and/or 'tidying up' of evaluations which does not affect overall pay bands.
- 5.3 Since the last report the Appeals Panel has determined the outcome of revisited appeals which had originally been considered under the previous Appeals Procedure as set out in Table 7 overleaf

**Table 7**

	<b>Pay band increased when appeal revisited (no. of appellants)</b>	<b>Pay band stayed the same on Appeal (no. of appellants)</b>	<b>Pay band decreased on Appeal (no. of appellants)</b>
Chief Executive's	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Child and Adults	1 (1)	3 (14)	0 (0)
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	2 (3)	3 (3)	0 (0)
Schools	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 (5)</b>	<b>6 (17)</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>

In addition the pay band has increased in respect of 1 appeal (and 4 appellants) in respect of a temporary acting up arrangement.

- 5.4 In reconsidering the appeals, the Appeals Panel has only considered those factors potentially affected by any additional information presented to the Appeals Panel.
- 5.5 As indicated above, the Portfolio Holder is responsible for ratifying the outcomes in respect of Council employees whereas Governors are responsible for ratifying the outcomes in respect of school employees. Similarly, the Council is responsible for any changes in employee costs for Council employees whereas schools are responsible for any changes in employee costs for school employees.
- 5.6 Further details of the outcomes of individual appeals is included in the "Not for Publication" **Appendix A** attached to this report.

**This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of the Council (para 1).**

- 5.7 The lower than expected cost of appeals has been reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecasts and these figures need to be updated upon completion of the appeals process to reflect the above outcomes and the outcomes of the appeals which are still to be revisited. At this stage it is not expected that there will be any significant change from the current forecast.

## **6. APPEALS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT**

- 6.1 The appeals received subsequent to the implementation of the Single Status Agreement are detailed in Table 8 overleaf

**Table 8**

	<b>Appeals received (no. of appellants)</b>
Chief Executive's	2 (3)
Child and Adults	1 (3)
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	3 (4)
Schools	2 (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 (12)</b>

6.2 The appeals procedure to be followed is similar to the procedure which applied in respect of appeals arising from the implementation of the Single Status Agreement, although the composition of the Appeals Panel changes. There will no longer being an independent chair and the Appeals Panel will comprise 2 management and 2 trade union members. Where, exceptionally, the Appeals Panel has a "Failure to Agree", the Regional Joint Secretaries will be requested to assist. If no agreement can subsequently be reached, the original match and pay band will apply.

6.3 It is envisaged that the outstanding appeals will be considered by the Appeals Panel in early 2013.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 The Portfolio Holder ratifies the Appeals Panel Outcomes in respect of Council employees (as detailed in the "Not for Publication" schedule attached to this report) and notes the situation in relation to appeals.

## **8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Appeals Procedure is an integral part of the Single Status agreement and requires that the Executive Member with responsibility for Workforce Services be regularly advised of progress made in dealing with appeals received and ratifies the outcomes of Appeals Panels in respect of Council employees.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet report 23 December 2007.

Cabinet report 27 May 2008.

Performance Portfolio report 27 June 2008

Performance Portfolio report 26 September 2008

Performance Portfolio report 2 February 2009

Performance Portfolio report 26 February 2009

Performance Portfolio report 16 April 2009

Finance and Performance Portfolio report 14 July 2009

Finance and Performance Portfolio report 5 November 2009

Finance and Performance Portfolio report 23 February 2010  
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 23 March 2010  
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 30 April 2010  
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 18 May 2010  
Cabinet report 16 August 2010  
Performance Portfolio report 26 October 2010  
Cabinet report 21 February 2011  
Performance Portfolio report 22 February 2011  
Performance Portfolio report 23 March 2011  
Performance Portfolio report 14 September 2011  
Performance Portfolio report 8 November 2011  
Performance Portfolio report 7 December 2011  
Performance Portfolio report 18 January 2012  
Performance Portfolio report 14 February 2012  
Performance Portfolio report 25 April 2012

**10. CONTACT OFFICER**

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# FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

15<sup>th</sup> August 2012



**Report of:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Subject:** ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2011/12

## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key Decision.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To inform Portfolio Holder of performance in relation to complaints made against the Council and on the content of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter detailing a summary of complaints made to them against the authority in 2011/12.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's Complaints Procedure was agreed by the Performance Portfolio Holder at the meeting on 15 June 2011. Complaints received by the Council are recorded across the Council, by the investigating department, and on a quarterly basis a summary report is prepared by the Performance and Partnerships Team in Corporate Strategy.
- 3.2 For each complaint the outcome of the complaint is recorded, as well as the length of time the investigation into the complaint took. Where the Council is found to be at fault the remedy offered to the complainant and any lessons learnt are also recorded. A summary of this information can be found later in this report.
- 3.3 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) provides an independent, impartial investigation of complaints against local authorities where complainants remain dissatisfied with their local Council's actions or failure to act. The LGO will only investigate a complaint once the local authority has had the opportunity to take the complaint through its own complaints process.



3.4 The LGO reports complaints performance to local authorities annually. All councils receive an annual review letter from the LGO which details: -

- the complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman;
- decisions made on complaints received; and
- current developments in the Ombudsman's work.

#### 4. COMPLAINTS INFORMATION – 2011/12

##### Corporate Complaints

4.1 In 2011/12, a total of 35 corporate complaints were recorded by departments. This is a slight decrease from the number of corporate complaints recorded in 2010/11 (39), and the table below provides further information on how the complaints are split between departments: -

Department	Number of Complaints	
	2010/11	2011/12
Chief Executive's Department	5	4
Child and Adults Services	17	11
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	17	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>

4.2 The departments and sections that have high levels of contact with the public tend to receive higher numbers of complaints.

##### Social Care Complaints

4.3 The social care complaints dealt with by the Child and Adult Services Department follow statutory procedures which differ from the corporate procedure in terms of timescales and investigative process. However, for the sake of completeness, basic statistics on numbers of complaints concluded are included in this report to give the Portfolio Holder an overall picture of complaint levels across the authority.

4.4 In 2011/12 there were a total of 30 social care complaints made to the council, which is lower than the figure in 2010/11 (39 complaints). The table below details the split between Adult and Children's social care complaints.

	Number of Complaints	
	2010/11	2011/12
Children's Social Care	27	15
Adult Social Care	12	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>30</b>

4.5 It can be seen that the number of Children's social care complaints have dropped considerably, from 27 in 2010/11 to 15 in 2011/12 (a drop of 44%). Over the same period the number of Adult social care complaints increased slightly from 12 in 2010/11 to 15 in 2011/12, although due to the relatively small numbers involved this is actually a rise of 25%.

## Complaint Investigation Timescales

- 4.6 The Complaints Procedure sets a deadline of 15 working days for investigating a corporate complaint and reporting the outcome of the investigation to the complainant.
- 4.7 For social care complaints deadlines vary depending on the level of the complaint. For Children's Social Care complaints officers have an initial 20 days to try to resolve a formal complaint at stage 1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this, the complaint is escalated to a more formal 'stage 2' investigation, and a further 45 days are allocated for the investigation. For Adult Social Care complaints there are no statutory deadlines in which to investigate the complaint. Rather, the investigating officer agrees an appropriate timescale with the complainant, although this can be flexible should the need to extend the timescale become necessary. Prompt investigation is always a priority for all types of complaints, but in some cases the complexity of a complaint and/or the number of people to be contacted during the investigation can mean that the process can be a lengthy one.
- 4.8 The percentage of corporate complaints investigated within the 15 working day target was 75% in 2011/12, which was slightly lower than the 2010/11 figure, of 80%. The percentage of social care complaints investigated within target was 69.23%, which is an increase from 53.85% in 2010/11. The table below gives more information: -

Department	Corporate Complaints	
	No. of complaints	% investigated within target (15 Days)
Chief Executive's Department	4	75%
Child and Adults Services	12*	75%
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	20	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36*</b>	<b>75%</b>

\*The number of complaints investigated differs from the number of complaints received as there is some overlap between years so this figure includes **all** complaints where the investigation was completed in 2011/12, regardless of when the complaint was received.

	Social Care Complaints	
	No. of complaints	% investigated within target*
All Social Care Complaints	26**	69.23%

\*See para 4.7 for details on targets for Social Care complaints

\*\*The number of complaints investigated differs from the number of complaints received as there is some overlap between years so this figure includes **all** complaints where the investigation was completed in 2011/12, regardless of when the complaint was received.

## Complaint Outcomes

- 4.9 When a complaint investigation has been completed a judgement is made by the investigating officer as to whether the authority has been at fault and hence the complaint is upheld, either fully or in part. In 2011/12 31% of

corporate complaints were either fully or partly upheld, which is a decrease from the 2010/11 level of 46%. The table below provides more detail: -

Department	Corporate Complaints		
	Total	Upheld (inc. Partly Upheld)	Percentage
Chief Executive's Department	4	2	50%
Child and Adults Services	12	4	33%
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	20	5	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31%</b>

- 4.10 The proportion of Social Care complaints that were upheld, either in full or in part, was slightly lower in 2011/12, at 65.4% when compared to the previous year when 69.2% of social care complaints were upheld (either in full or in part). The table below provides more detail: -

	Social Care Complaints		
	Total	Upheld (inc. Partly Upheld)	Percentage
Adult Social Care	11	5	45%
Children's Social Care	15	12	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>65%</b>

### Remedies for Complainants

- 4.11 When reporting complaints performance, Departments are asked to provide information on what remedies have been offered to people whose complaints have been upheld either in part or in full. In all cases where the complaint was upheld fully or in part, remedies were offered to complainants. The remedies vary depending on the circumstances of the complaints, and can range from an apology and/or explanation of what went wrong to financial recompense should the complainant have been disadvantaged or lost out in some way; for example refunding of fees if they had been incorrectly charged to the complainant. Wherever required, and possible, every effort is made to place the complainant back in the position they would have been in, had the problem not arisen.

### Learning from Complaints

- 4.12 Departments are also asked to outline what has been done to prevent recurrence of the complaints which have been upheld. Wherever it has been possible to do so actions have been taken to avoid further complaints, including: -

- Signage and privacy features have been installed in leisure centres in relation to changing facilities being cleaned/checked by members of the opposite sex;
- Early support for foster carers in relation to the management of behavioural issues has been reviewed;
- Horticultural work in the Civic Centre reception has been scheduled outside of opening hours;
- Where appropriate, staff have been reminded of existing policies and procedures;
- Staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring all information is included and accurate information is relayed when initial enquiries are dealt with.

Please note that a number of specific actions undertaken have not been included due to the sensitive nature of the complaints received.

## **5. ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – 2011/12**

### **Enquiries and Complaints received**

- 5.1 In the year to 31 March 2012 the Ombudsman received a total of 18 enquiries and complaints, which was a fall of 33% on the previous year (27 enquiries and complaints in 2010/11).
- 5.2 The Ombudsman produces an annual report for each authority, and Hartlepool's report is attached at **Appendix A**. This report explains that of the 18 enquiries and complaints received by the LGO: -
- In five cases advice was given to the complainant;
  - Six complaints were judged to be premature. These complaints were either sent on to the Council with a request that the matter be put through our own complaints procedure or, alternatively, the complainant was advised to make a formal complaint themselves to the Council;
  - A further two complaints had been initially determined by the Ombudsman as premature but re-submitted by complainants dissatisfied with the way in which the Council had dealt with their complaint;
  - The remaining five complaints were new complaints and forwarded to the Ombudsman's investigative team.
- 5.3 The actual number of complaints forwarded to the Ombudsman's investigative team therefore decreased from 18 in 2010/11 (4 resubmitted and 14 new complaints) to seven in 2011/12 (two resubmitted and five new) – a decrease of just over 61%.

### **Complaints Outcomes**

- 5.4 16 complaints were determined during the year, a figure which differs from the number of complaints received because of work still in hand at the beginning and the end of the year. To put this figure into context, there are only 6 single tier authorities (from a total of 123) with fewer complaints determined in 2011/12. The way in which the Ombudsman classifies complaints outcomes has changed in 2011/12 and both the old, where appropriate, and new classifications are included below for information: -

- The Ombudsman did not investigate three complaints – due to either having no power to do so, having no reason to use exceptional power to investigate or having no justification to investigate
- In 10 complaints the Ombudsman did not find enough evidence of fault (formerly Ombudsman's discretion)
- In 2 of the remaining complaints the Ombudsman found 'no or minor injustice'
- the one remaining complaint was classified as 'injustice remedied during enquiries' (formerly local settlement).

### **Complaints handling**

- 5.5 All authorities are asked to respond to Local Government Ombudsman enquiries within 28 calendar days. In 2011/12 the Council were asked to respond to only 1 enquiry and responded within the 28 days deadline. An 'enquiry' is different to a complaint and occurs when the Ombudsman requires further information from a Council in order to formulate a response to the complainant or make a decision as to whether to investigate or not.

### **Recommendations from the Ombudsman**

- 5.6 The 2011/12 Annual Review by the Local Government Ombudsman is positive in tone and does not highlight any areas of concern or make any recommendations for action. No public reports against the Council were issued.

### **Local Government Ombudsman Developments**

- 5.7 The review letter, attached at **Appendix B**, outlines some current developments in the LGO's work, including changes to their role and how they are going to communicate decisions in the future: -
- From July 2012 all complaints about internal school matters will cease to be under the jurisdiction of the LGO and instead will return to the Secretary of State for Education;
  - Following consultation with Councils the LGO are planning to launch an open publication scheme during 2012/13 where they will be publishing on their website the final decision statements on all complaints, increasing openness and transparency and enhancing their accountability.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Portfolio Holder is asked to note the report.

**7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Portfolio Holder has overall responsibility for Complaints monitoring across the Council.

**8. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE**

- Local Government Ombudsman Local Authority Report – Hartlepool 2011/12 (Appendix A)
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter (Appendix B)

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1 There were no background papers used in the preparation of this report.

**10. CONTACT OFFICER**

- 10.1 David Hunt  
Strategy and Performance Officer  
Chief Executives Department  
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## LGO advice team

## 3.1 Appendix A

Enquiries and complaints received	Adult Care Services	Benefits & Tax	Corporate & Other Services	Education & Childrens Services	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Housing	Planning & Development	Total
Advice given	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	5
Premature complaints	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	6
Forwarded to Investigative team (resubmitted)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Forwarded to Investigative team (new)	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	5
Total	3	1	3	1	4	1	5	18

## Investigative team - Decisions

Not investigated			Investigated			Report	Total
No power to investigate	No reason to use exceptional power to investigate	Investigation not justified & Other	Not enough evidence of fault	No or minor injustice & Other	Injustice remedied during enquiries		
1	1	1	10	2	1	0	16

Response times to first enquiries	No of first enquiries	Avg no of days to respond
	1	28.0

# Local Government OMBUDSMAN

22 June 2012

*By email*

Mrs N Bailey  
Chief Executive  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
HARTLEPOOL TS24 8AY

Dear Ms Bailey

## **Annual Review Letter**

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to me about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2012. I hope the information set out in the enclosed tables will be useful to you.

The statistics include the number of enquiries and complaints received by our Advice Team, the number forwarded by the Advice Team to my office, and decisions made on complaints about your authority. The decision descriptions have been changed to more closely follow the wording in our legislation and to give greater precision. Our guidance on statistics provides further explanation ([see our website](#)).

The statistics also show the time taken by your authority to respond to written enquiries.

I am pleased to say that I have no concerns about your authority's response times and there are no issues arising from the complaints that I want to bring to your attention.

## **Changes to our role**

I am also pleased to have this opportunity to update you on changes to our role. Since April 2010 we have been exercising jurisdiction over the internal management of schools on a pilot basis in 14 local authority areas. This was repealed in the Education Act 2011 and the power restored to the Secretary of State for Education. During the short period of the pilot we believe we have had a positive impact on the way in which schools handle complaints. This was endorsed by independent research commissioned by the Department for Education which is available [on their website](#).



Our jurisdiction will end in July 2012 and all complaints about internal school matters will be completed by 31 January 2013.

From April 2013, as a result of the Localism Act 2011, local authority tenants will take complaints about their landlord to the Independent Housing Ombudsman (IHO). We are working with the IHO to ensure a smooth transition that will include information for local authority officers and members.

### ***Supporting good local public administration***

We launched a new series of Focus reports during 2011/12 to develop our role in supporting good local public administration and service improvement. They draw on the learning arising from our casework in specific service areas. Subjects have included school admissions, children out of school, homelessness and use of bankruptcy powers. The reports describe good practice and highlight what can go wrong and the injustice caused. They also make recommendations on priority areas for improvement.

We were pleased that a survey of local government revenue officers provided positive feedback on the bankruptcy focus report. Some 85% said they found it useful.

In July 2011, we also published a report with the Centre for Public Scrutiny about how complaints can feed into local authority scrutiny and business planning arrangements.

We support local complaint resolution as the most speedy route to remedy. Our training programme on effective complaint handling is an important part of our work in this area. In 2011/12 we delivered 76 courses to councils, reaching 1,230 individual learners.

We have developed our course evaluation to measure the impact of our training more effectively. It has shown that 87% of learners gained new skills and knowledge to help them improve complaint-handling practice, 83% made changes to complaint-handling practice after training, and 73% said the improvements they made resulted in greater efficiency.

Further details of publications and training opportunities are on [our website](#).

### ***Publishing decisions***

Following consultation with councils, we are planning to launch an open publication scheme during the next year where we will be publishing on our website the final decision statements on all complaints. Making more information publicly available will increase our openness and transparency, and enhance our accountability.

Our aim is to provide a comprehensive picture of complaint decisions and reasons for councils and the public. This will help inform citizens about local services and create a new source of information on maladministration, service failure and injustice.

We will publish a copy of this annual review with those of all other English local authorities on our website on 12 July 2012. This will be the same day as publication of our Annual Report 2011/12 where you will find further information about our work.

We always welcome feedback from councils and would be pleased to receive your views. If it would be helpful, I should be pleased to arrange a meeting for myself or a senior manager to discuss our work in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Seex'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Seex  
Local Government Ombudsman

# FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

15<sup>th</sup> August 2012



**Report of:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Subject:** OPEN DATA WHITE PAPER – UNLEASHING THE  
POTENTIAL

## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For information only.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To inform Portfolio Holder of the Government's Open Data White Paper – Unleashing the Potential and to outline its implications for the Council.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published, in late 2011, the Code of Recommended Practice for local authorities on Data Transparency. The code set out to define 'public data' and included some general statements in relation to satisfying other legal requirements, technical details for licensing and file formats, timeliness of publication and dealing with errors.
- 3.2 On 28 June 2012 the Cabinet Office published the "Open Data White Paper – Unleashing the Potential" and the full version can be accessed via the Cabinet Office website, at: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/open-data-white-paper-unleashing-potential>.

## 4. OPEN DATA WHITE PAPER – UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL

- 4.1 The White Paper aims to develop a 'Transparent Society' and plans to do this by getting "more data into the public domain". As previously stated, in the DCLG Code of Recommended Practice, the Government are aiming to

make it easier to access public data and to make the information available in a number of different formats, making it easier to use, re-use and share.

- 4.2 The White Paper sets out the ‘presumption to publish’ – meaning that data owners in the public sector should look to release data, where it does not impact on the propriety of the data, as part of ‘business as usual’ (as opposed to only producing it upon request).
- 4.3 The Code of Recommended Practice stated that any public data that would be released, if requested, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) should be included in an inventory available to the public so they can see what data is available to them. The White Paper states that the FOIA has been amended to ensure when a dataset is made available it should be made available in a format that is ‘useful’. The Government have officially adopted, as Government Policy, a number of Public Data Principles to clarify what is meant by the term ‘useful’.

#### 4.4 **Public Data Principles**

- 1) Public data policy and practise will be clearly driven by the public and businesses that want and use the data, including what data is released and in what form;
- 2) Public data will be published in re-usable machine-readable form;
- 3) Public data will be released under the same open licence which enable free re-use, including commercial re-use;
- 4) Public data will be available and easy to find through a single, easy-to-use, online access point ([www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk));
- 5) Public data will be published using open standards, and following relevant recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C);
- 6) Public data from different departments about the same subject will be published in the same, standard formats and with the same definitions;
- 7) Public data underlying the Government’s own websites will be published in re-usable form;
- 8) Public data will be timely and fine grained;
- 9) Release data quickly and then work to make sure that it is available in open standard formats, including linked data forms;
- 10) Public data will be freely available to use in any lawful way;
- 11) Public data will be available without application or registration, and without requiring details of the user;

- 12) Public bodies should actively encourage the re-use of their public data;
  - 13) Public bodies should maintain and publish inventories of their data holdings;
  - 14) Public bodies should publish relevant metadata about their datasets and this should be available through a single online access point; and they should publish supporting descriptions of the format provenance and meaning of the data.
- 4.5 The White Paper also seeks to clarify what is meant by a dataset – it states that it is the raw, factual or source information behind a public function – to allow for a better understanding between the person requesting the dataset and the public authority holding the data. It goes further to state that where the FOIA requires release of a dataset, a public authority will now have a responsibility to release the dataset in a form that can be used and re-used. In the past under the FOIA a release of data has not included an automatic right of re-use. Under the amendment to the FOIA datasets that are accessible will be able to be re-used without the need to additionally request permission from the Public Sector organisation providing the data.
- 4.6 The White Paper includes details on the possible process surrounding a FOI access request for data. Whilst it is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the steps involved it does give an indication of the route a requestor of information may follow, with decisions ultimately being made by the Court of Appeal or Supreme Court in extreme cases.
- 4.7 Although there is a ‘presumption to publish’ the right balance must be struck between publishing data and protecting individuals’ rights to privacy and confidentiality. Care must be exercised when releasing anonymous data as there may be the ability to identify an individual using the ‘mosaic’ effect if a number of independently anonymous data can be ‘mashed together’. Whilst this is something that the Council currently take care to do, the increase in data publically available from other organisations may have an impact on what the Council can release publically. The Information Commissioner’s Office launched a consultation on 31 May 2012 on a new anonymisation code of practice, which will look to provide guidance on how information can be successfully anonymised and how to assess the risks of identification. The consultation closes on 23 August 2012 and the consultation document is available on the ICO website, at:  
[http://www.ico.gov.uk/about\\_us/consultations/our\\_consultations.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/about_us/consultations/our_consultations.aspx)
- 4.8 The White Paper does not just look at providing data to the public, but also how data can be better shared between organisations, with the aim of pooling data to improve services. The Law Commission have announced that, later this year, it will be taking a comprehensive look at the current legislative landscape for data sharing. The report is not expected until late 2013 – in the meantime the White Paper states that where it is in the public interest and within legislative boundaries the Government will challenge outdated and unhelpful perceptions of data sharing in order to deliver better

and more efficient public services – in other words we should share data with partner organisations if it will help deliver better services and there are no valid reasons why we should not share the data.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL**

- 5.1 It is difficult to clearly state what the implications will be for the Council as, to a certain extent, this could depend on the number of FOIA requests we receive in relation to the release of data.
- 5.2 Officers within the Council are considering what information should already be available on the Council's website, based on what was suggested in the 'Recommended Code of Practice'. A range of the requirements in terms of available information are already being met by the council, including expenditure over £500, senior employee salaries and Councillor allowances and expenses. Requests for additional datasets under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) would then be assessed upon receipt and where available these will be released. Where datasets are released under the FOIA then the Council will need to take account of the 'presumption to publish' as set out in the White Paper and consider whether this should be made readily available to others.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder is asked to note the report.

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder has overall responsibility for Performance Management.

## **8. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE**

- 8.1 There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1 The full version of the Open Data White Paper – Unleashing the Potential can be accessed via the Cabinet Office website, at:  
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/open-data-white-paper-unleashing-potential>

**10. CONTACT OFFICER**

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