

STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: Customer Services Manager
DATE: 12 October 2006
SUBJECT: Customer Services

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Committee on the Customer Services (CS) Section since we joined the Community Services Department.

Planning for CS started to gain momentum from November 2005 with the establishment of a Management Lead Project Team and a Customer Focus Group which involved staff who dealt with the “nuts and bolts” issues that make a CS area work, for example, a Frequently Asked Questions programme. Through these groups, a target of dealing with 80% of enquires either at the counter or via the telephone was set.

Staff were recruited in February/March 2006 and although we have had some changes since the original appointments, we now have a great team of eight FTE who are rotate weekly between answering telephones in the call centre environment or are available at the counter for cash receipting or answering enquires. All the team are enjoying the challenge, take pride in their work and provide the highest level of service that they can achieve.

At the time the CS centre became operational on 1 July, Council asked Projex Unlimited to carry out customer surveying for us to benchmark CS performance. The survey consisted of face to face interviews, a correspondence survey and call centre interviews.

The following are comments from the report.

COUNTER

The satisfaction with staff at the counter was extremely high. 97% of those surveyed considered the staff member who assisted them to be “helpful” or better. The majority saying the staff were “completely helpful” (74%) No-one considered staff to be “unhelpful”. This is a better result than indicated in the 2005 Communitrak survey which measured a 82% satisfaction rate when contacting the council in person. Comments about the service included

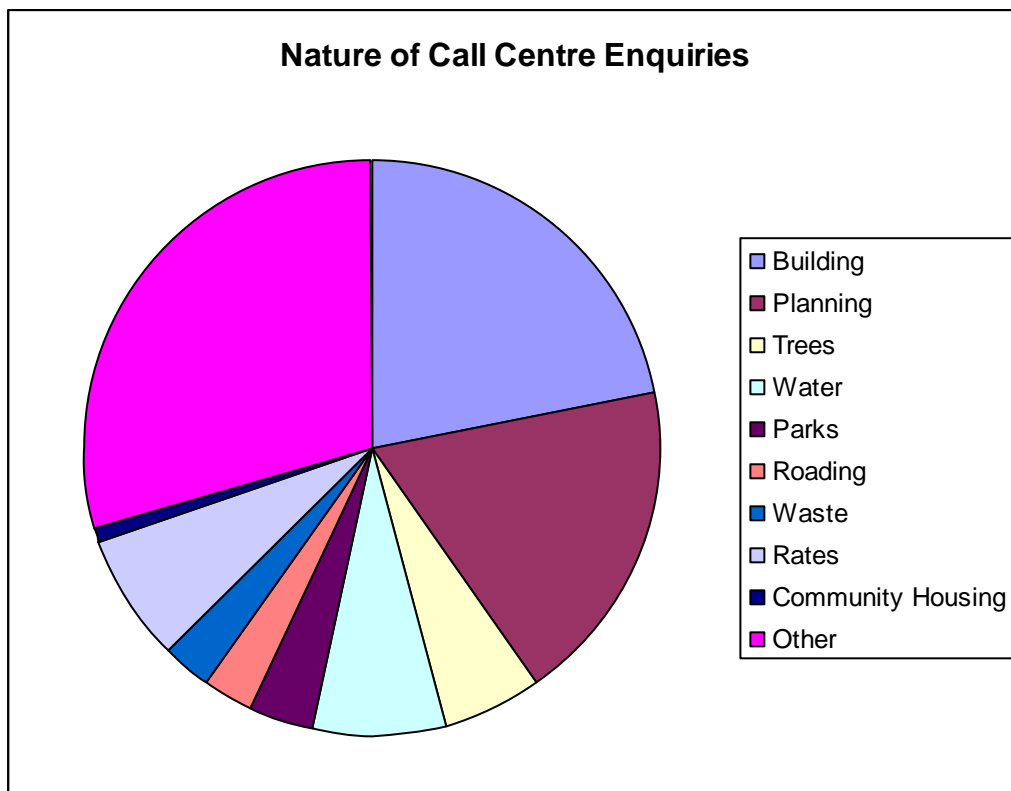
- *“first class service”*
- *“nice girls – know their job”*

- *“Swift and helpful”*
- *“They’re good on the phone too”*
- *“Very pleasant - I know she is learning”*

CALL CENTRE

The Call Centre surveying was undertaken by call-back of willing participants. Whilst this is not strictly random sampling, it avoids the invasiveness of unsolicited phone-calls. The Customer Services Officers questioned customers on incoming calls whether they would be happy for Projex Unlimited to call them back at a later time (after a week approximately). There was not a great deal of willingness to participate, with fewer than 10% offering their details in order to be called back.

40% of calls were in regard to planning or building, these were clearly the predominant reasons for calling the Council. Many of those surveyed regularly phoned the council.



88% of those surveyed were satisfied with the time taken to have their call answered. 21% of calls were handled at point of first contact.

The report has provided us with some key indicators of our strengths and weaknesses which we are addressing before surveying again in the future to measure standards.

Training is an ongoing part of CS weekly routine. The Customer Focus Group identified 38 main knowledge areas that CS needed to have some

skill/knowledge (the list is always being expanded). Next week we commence six weeks of training with the Engineering Staff.

I hope that the above provides you with some background on our section and we look forward to a positive working relationship with the Community Services Committee.

Suzanne Westley
Customer Services Manager

http://tdctoday:82/shared_documents/meetings/council/committees_and_subcommittees/community_services_committee/reports/2006/rsc061018_report_manager_customer_services.doc