MINUTES OF CUSTOMER SERVICE RECEPTION TASK GROUP

29 NOVEMBER 2010

PRESENT:

Councillors Butlin (Chairman), Mrs Avis, Mrs Bragg, Lewis, Srivastava and Helen Walton.

Raj Chand (Head of Customer and Information Services), Debbie McCarthy (Customer Services Manager), Paul Ansell (Scrutiny Officer), Claire Waleczek (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (Team Leader))

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE RECEPTION AREA

The Task Group considered a briefing paper (Part 1 – agenda item 4) concerning an update on evidence gathered since its last meeting.

Following discussion, the points listed below were raised.

• The GovMetric point needed to be simpler to use and also would be better used if relocated in a different position in the reception area. The Chairman had spoken to officers at Warwickshire County Council to ascertain if the system could be simplified and made more user friendly. This was being investigated. The Task Group considered that the GovMetric point would be better used if relocated to the right hand side of the reception hall.

The GovMetric feedback had yet to be reported to Leadership and Operations Team, as planned, as the system was not working fully in all access channels. Once this had been rectified, outcomes would be reported on a quarterly basis.

• It was encouraging to note that officers were complimented by name. However, it appeared that some of these compliments were not being fed back to individual staff by managers. The Head of Customer and Information Services undertook to ensure that this process became more robust.

• The Task Group queried whether there were any staff incentives for good customer service (eg ‘employee of the month’). Although these had been considered in the past, it had been acknowledged that some employees did not like public recognition of their work. However, all positive feedback by customers was discussed as part of the Employee Review and Development Scheme.

• There was general concern regarding the lack of provision for cash payments. Officers explained that payments had been monitored as part of the Planning Services End to End review and only five customers per month had required this type of service. The implementation of the Chip and PIN payment method, as part of the new income management system, would help some customers. The new system would be implemented in March 2011. It was agreed that this would be monitored and reviewed in September 2011.
The Equality Impact Assessment had been completed and actions arising from it were being addressed. It was emphasised that the assessment was a statutory function now.

It was considered that the television screen in the reception area could be used to promote local businesses. The Task Group was informed that this issue was being investigated by the Communications team.

The Customer Services Manager circulated at the meeting details of wait times of customers during the week commencing 22 November 2010. The standard target wait time for a customer was a maximum of ten minutes. It was acknowledged that wait times fluctuated depending on customer demand and officer availability. As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, officers were looking at offering the best service with resources available.

The feasibility of a queue management system was being explored although it was emphasised that these could be expensive.

### 13. NOTES FROM SERVICE OFFICERS’ FOCUS GROUP

The Task Group considered the notes of a service officers’ focus group held on 22 November which were circulated at the meeting.

Councillors Lewis and Helen Walton had attended the focus group and had been grateful to the officers at the meeting for their feedback and comments.

In addition to the points made in the focus group notes, the following recommendations were made.

- Interview room 2 had a desk across its full width. It was considered that the space in the room would be better used if a smaller desk were installed and would provide a further room with provision for a pushchair.

- Security generally within the reception area was a concern and needed reviewing.

- The focus group was the first time that officers from all service areas had discussed common issues with regard to the reception area. It was suggested that this service officers’ group meet bi-monthly to consider any ongoing or new issues within this area.

### 14. TENANT FEEDBACK – RESULTS FROM SURVEY OF UCHOOSE CUSTOMERS

The Task Group considered results from a survey of UChoose customers (Part 1 – agenda item 6) which was conducted in the reception area from 22 to 24 November.

It was emphasised that, although the sample of customers interviewed was small, there appeared to be little concern and most of the feedback was positive.
15. ONE PAGE STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

The Task Group considered a revised one page strategy which was circulated at the meeting.

It was noted that the reference to the ‘likely short-term arrangements’ in the ambition of the review had been made in the context of the need to provide a stopgap measure after the economic downturn had prevented the one-stop-shop project at the Rugby Art Gallery, Museum and Library from being implemented. Since then, changing views on the merits of that type of scheme, combined with continuing economic stringency, had led to the Town Hall reception being regarded as a longer term solution.

It was agreed that all new recommendations and actions from the service officers’ focus group, the task list attached at Appendix 2 to the briefing paper and those listed in the minutes above, be amalgamated and used to compile the review report’s recommendations.

It was agreed that the Task Group’s next meeting be held at 5.30pm on Monday 24 January 2011 in Committee Room 1 to consider its draft interim report and proposed Action Plan. As part of the new procedure of scrutiny reviews agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, relevant officers and the Resources and Corporate Governance Portfolio Holder would be consulted on the feasibility of any recommendations and actions. The Head of Customer and Information Services agreed to provide costings for any proposed actions in order that these could be prioritised.

The Chairman would attend the next meeting of the Warwickshire Direct Partnership Steering Group on 16 December 2010 and report any outcomes to the next meeting of the Task Group.

CHAIRMAN