

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Customer Service and Access**  
**Strategy**  
**2009 - 2011**

**This Strategy addresses the following Corporate Aims:**



CUSTOMER  
FOCUSED SERVICES



SOCIAL INCLUSION



STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



## **The District of Bolsover Equalities Statement**

The District of Bolsover is committed to equalities as an employer and in all the services provided to all sections of the community.

□ The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination in compliance with the Equality Strategy.

□ The Council also has due regard to eliminate racial discrimination and to proactively promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups when performing it's functions.

This document is available in large print and other formats from any of the Council Offices or by contacting the Chief Executives Directorate on 01246 242323. Please bear in mind we will need a few days to arrange this facility.

If you need help to read this document please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our Equality and Diversity Officer can be contacted via [Email](#) or by telephoning 01246 242407.

Minicom: 01246 242450

Fax: 01246 242423

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# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	5
2. Scope	6
3. Customer Service and Access Strategy	6
4. Implementation and Monitoring	7
5. Implementation Plan	8

# Customer Service and Access Strategy

## Introduction

'Providing excellent customer focused services' is one of the Council's corporate objectives. One of the targets set to achieve this in the Corporate Plan (2007-2011) is to produce a Customer Service and Access Strategy and achieve all milestones by March 2011.

This strategy builds upon the significant achievements made under the previous three strategies covering the period 2005 – 2009 and continues with the work to become a truly customer focused organisation.

The previous Customer Service and Access Strategy 2007-2009 has been reviewed and evaluated. The long term vision and workstreams are still valid and important today. As such, and to enable future strategies to dovetail with the Corporate Plan, this strategy will run upto March 2011 and concentrate on achieving further improvements under the respective workstreams.

The need to become a truly customer focused organisation is as important as ever and this is clearly referenced in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). CAA is the new framework for the independent assessment of local public services in England. It is area based and focused on outcomes delivered by councils working alone or in partnership. "Citizens expect local services to work together to make efficient and effective use of their collective resources to meet the needs and priorities of the community. They expect maximum value for their money and easy access to high quality and responsive services."<sup>1</sup> The need to achieve greater efficiencies will require the transformation of services to deliver what people want and need but at a sustainable cost.

One of the new national indicators NI 14 (Avoidable Contact) reinforces this by requiring Local Authorities to record the volumes of contacts made by customers which could have been avoided, for example, ringing to chase up when a service has not been delivered when promised, or seeking clarification on a form which is not clear.

The drive to deliver services around the needs of our customers and communities gathers momentum as we strive to achieve greater levels of satisfaction with our services and with the 'place' were people live. The new Place Survey<sup>2</sup> will ask local people for their perceptions about the area in which they live. The results of the survey will provide data for 20 of the new National Indicators.

The duty to involve is contained within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The duty is intended to represent a step

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<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive Area Assessment Framework Document (Audit Commission)

<sup>2</sup> New Government survey, which is run every two years and replaces the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey

change in the way in which councils engage with local people in the design and delivery of services. The duty to involve goes further than consultation, setting out three ways of securing the involvement of representatives of local people, informing them, consulting them or involving them in other ways. Guidance on the duty has only recently been issued and will require consideration.

The Council has a target of achieving Customer Service Excellence<sup>3</sup> by March 2010. The achievement of the milestones contained within this strategy will provide evidence for the national Standard and both will drive continuous improvement.

### **Scope of the Strategy**

The strategy whilst providing a long term vision for customer service and access concentrates on the activities to be undertaken over the period July 2009 to March 2011.

This strategy document has linkages with the ICT Strategy 2009-2011 which has as one of its key strands improving services to customers through the 'transformation agenda'.

This strategy applies to all departments.

### **Customer Service and Access Strategy**

#### **Summary of Customer Service and Access Strategy**

The Council's Customer Service and Access Strategy aims to improve the quality and consistency of services received by its customers and to deliver such services in the most effective manner possible in support of a long term vision that:

- Services meet the needs of customers. Service users can identify where services have improved.
- Increases levels of access to, and, satisfaction with, council services.
- Empowers its employees to manage and respond to customer contact positively.
- Improves access to services for hard to reach and minority groups.
- Continues to evaluate and progress joint working opportunities with partner organisations where this is mutually beneficial to the Council and its customers.

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<sup>3</sup> New Government national standard for customer service excellence, which replaced Charter Mark

In delivering against these aims and the vision, and given the work undertaken to date, the Council is going to focus on six main areas:

- a. Improving customer data collection and performance measurement
- b. Embedding customer service standards and achieving national recognition
- c. Reviewing and recommending how best to deliver customer service and access
- d. Continuing to design and deliver services to meet the needs of customers
- e. Continuing to improve internal and external communication
- f. Expanding user engagement and consultation

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

The Customer Service and Access Strategy will be implemented by the Customer Service and Performance Department in partnership with the ICT Department and service departments where required. The Head of Customer Service and Performance has overall responsibility for the strategy.

The Head of Customer Service and Performance will be responsible for identifying any training and development implications related to the strategy. A generic customer service course is currently delivered internally and will be amended as new developments are implemented. Customer Service Excellence Workshops have been delivered recently to support our target of achieving Customer Service Excellence by March 2010. All training and development will be planned with Human Resources and be included in the Corporate Training and Development Plan.

Progress against the action plan will be reported through the PERFORM system with quarterly performance reports being submitted to PPMG2 and Senior Management Team. The Council's Customer Excellence Group will contribute to the development and implementation of this strategy.

## Customer Service and Access Strategy May 2009 to March 2011 – Implementation Plan

Activity	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Resources	Progress Update	Actual Outcome
<b>(a) Improving customer data collection and performance measurement</b>						
Develop an Access Channel Strategy	Customer Service and Access Officer	March 2010	Consistent approach to promoting channels and information available by channel Efficiency savings	Staff time to research, attend relevant events and produce strategy		
Continue with some form of mystery shopping	Customer Service and Access Officer	March 2011	Mystery shopping benchmark for telephone and email improved by 5% Benchmarking data	Staff time to co-ordinate <b>Departments to action improvements</b>		
Implement new Satisfaction Policy	Customer Service and Access Officer	March 2010	Consistent approach to measurement for benchmarking purposes Better informed about satisfaction levels	Staff time to support departments <b>Departments to implement recommendations</b>		
Undertake some mapping of customer experiences when contacting the Council (Pilot in Contact Centres) and produce guidance	Customer Service and Access Officer	March 2011	Better understanding of customers' experiences Improved service delivery	Staff time to track and document Training on methodology required <b>Departments to provide information</b>		



Activity	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Resources	Progress Update	Actual Outcome
Produce guidance on Customer Segmentation	Customer Service and Access Officer	October 2009	Better understanding of customer groups and respective needs Improved service delivery	Staff time to research and produce <b>Departments to adopt guidance</b>		
<b>(b) Embedding customer service standards and achieving national recognition</b>						
Prepare for Customer Service Excellence assessment	Head of Customer Service & Performance	March 2010	Improved services to customers, enhanced reputation, national recognition Customer Service Excellence accreditation	Staff time to go through the accreditation process, collate and produce evidence Training and development of Managers <b>All departments to contribute towards the process</b>		
Ensuring mechanisms in place for monitoring and reporting on service standards within customer information booklets	Head of Customer Service and Performance	March 2010	2% increase in % of customers who feel well informed about the Council's standards of service Improved services	Staff time to consider and check Staff time to measure any standards not currently measured		
<b>(c) Reviewing and recommending how best to deliver customer service and access</b>						
Implement the recommendations of the best value review of Customer Service and Access	Head of Customer Service and Performance	March 2010	Improved telephony performance Consistent satisfaction results	Staff time to implement		

Activity	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Resources	Progress Update	Actual Outcome
Review methods of payment across the Council and establish and implement a corporate efficiency project	Head of Customer Service and Performance	March 2011	Continued choice of payment options Efficiency savings	Staff time		
Develop an internal mechanism for sharing and applying best practice within BDC	Head of Customer Service and Performance	December 2009	Improved service delivery	Staff time		
<b>(d) Continuing to design and deliver services to meet the needs of customers</b>						
To make the website transactional	Senior Projects Officer	March 2010	More choice and access for customers. Reduced costs due to increased on-line service provision	Staff time to develop		
Develop and implement Business Process Improvement (BPI) programme	Head of Customer Service & Performance	March 2011	Improved service delivery Efficiency savings	Staff time to deliver <b>Departments to contribute to programme</b>		
Facilitating the move into Joint Service Centre at South Normanton	Head of Customer Service and Performance	Nov 2010	Greater range of services from one location Effective partnership working	Staff time Funding resources already committed		

Activity	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Resources	Progress Update	Actual Outcome
Implement the customer service recommendations from efficiency projects e.g. repairs mobile working	Head of Customer Service and Performance	March 2011	Improved service delivery Efficiency savings	Staff time to implement changes		
NI14 – develop and implement a mechanism for reviewing and monitoring action plans and evidencing service Improvement outcomes	Head of Customer Service & Performance	March 2010	Improved service delivery and reduction in low or of no value customer contact. Efficiency savings	Staff time Departments to analyse data and produce action plans		
<b>(e) Continuing to improve internal and external communication</b>						
Raise awareness of and publicise the website for council services and information	Communications Officer	March 2011	2% increase in % of residents who use the website to find out information	Staff time <b>Departments to contribute to raising awareness and content</b>		
Develop Intranet – make it easier to navigate and provide an area for Members	Communications Officer	March 2011	Improved access to information for employees and elected members	Staff time to develop <b>Departments to contribute content</b>		

Activity	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Resources	Progress Update	Actual Outcome
Develop Website – make more user friendly for customers including improving the accessibility to the web for users with disabilities	Communications Officer Programmer	March 2011	Improved access to council services for users of the site	Staff time to develop <b>Departments to contribute via Content Management Representative</b>		
		March 2011	Conform to W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) standards and achieve conformance level AA. Improved rating in SOCITM Better Connected annual report.			
Continue to improve external communication including producing guidance to staff	Communications Officer	March 2011	Provide better and more targeted information on Council activities and services to keep residents well informed. Maintain and build upon the 72% of residents who felt well informed. <i>(data from Citizens Panel Survey November 2008)</i>	Budgets within CSPD Staff time		

Activity	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Resources	Progress Update	Actual Outcome
Continue to improve internal communication	Communications Officer	March 2011	Provide better and more targeted information on Council activities and services to keep employees and elected members well informed. Maintain and build upon the 82% of employees who feel that the Council keeps them well informed. <i>(data from Employee Survey October 2007)</i>	Staff time Budgets within CSPD		
Consider how best to and implement periodic checks/scheduled reviews of published information	Head of Customer Service and Performance Communications Officer	March 2010	Improved service delivery Improved customer satisfaction Reduction in avoidable contact Enhanced reputation	Staff time		
<b>(f) Expanding user engagement and consultation</b>						
Consider the guidance for the Duty to Involve and produce a Community Engagement and Empowerment improvement plan. Also	Customer Service and Access Officer	October 2009	Compliance with the guidance Increased involvement of local persons in the shaping of services and functions	Staff time		

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>	<b>Actual Outcome</b>
finalise draft Consultation Policy						
Continue to develop mechanisms for user engagement and consultation especially face to face	Customer Service and Access Officer	March 2011	5% improvement on the % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (new NI) Improved service delivery through involving users and non users	Staff time Budgets within CSPD for the Young Voice specifically and developing engagement generally		
Raise awareness of Ask Derbyshire (Electronic Consultation Warehouse) and evaluate	User Engagement Officer	March 2010	5% improvement on the % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (new NI)	Staff time		
Develop on-line surveys (and incorporate guidance into consultation toolkit)	User Engagement Officer	October 2009	More opportunities to consult 5% improvement on the % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (new NI)	Staff time		
Develop a more user friendly version of the consultation toolkit and publicise as a corporate resource	User Engagement Officer	March 2010	An improved consultation resource for departments to use	Staff time		