

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

8th September 2006

Customer First Scrutiny Task Group:- 2005-2006
Executive Summary

In 2003 Wiltshire County Council (WCC) committed itself to a 3 year programme to 'Transform the Customer's Experience' of dealing with the Authority. Integral to this transformation was the creation of a Customer Care Unit (CCU), which would handle 80% of telephone calls taken within the organisation. July 2006 marked the end of the original 3 year period set to meet this target, and in response to this milestone the Customer First Task Group has reviewed how successful the Authority has been towards achieving this goal.

In terms of facilities WCC now has an established CCU, equipped with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to record customer interactions. However, the transfer of calls has not taken place in the volumes originally anticipated, with the CCU in 05/06 handling 21% of the total County Hall telephone calls. The slippage has resulted from the failure to implement some of the major Business Process Re-engineering Projects (BPRs), which identified the areas of work suitable for transfer to the front office (CCU). The evidence gathering process suggested that implementation of the BPRs has proved to be challenging for the following reasons:

1. **Allocation of resource** – there was a clear concern from service departments that investing resources into the implementation of the BPR Projects would be detrimental to service delivery.
2. **Impact of transfer**- there was a fear that the transfer of telephone calls would lead to customers receiving a poorer service.
3. **Lack of ownership** – this is more of a cultural factor and resulted from a failure to drive the change through from the most senior to junior officers.
4. **Fear of losing jobs** – staff have not embraced the change because they are worried that the efficiencies will lead to job cuts.

The Task Group has recognised the challenge facing the Authority and through the recommendations will attempt to reinforce the cultural, political and officer support necessary to achieve the target of 80% of calls being handled by the CCU.
