

**Joint Staff and Employer Forum
26th August 2008**

This report is for information

**Evaluation of processes to recruit internal staff to the
Customer Service Centre**

1. Background

The Joint Staff Employer Forum has received briefing notes since October 2006 on progress with the staffing implications of setting up the Customer Service Centre. In particular, in January 2008, members received a short report containing details of a brief survey, which had been carried out with staff who had priority to apply for new jobs in the Customer Service Centre and who had chosen **not** to apply for any of the posts. There were 58 staff in the original ring-fence from across all services and a breakdown of the applications for new posts is attached (Appendix 1).

At that time and to conclude a major milestone in the introduction of the Customer Service Centre, we confirmed that a fuller evaluation with **all** the affected staff was planned to take place during January/February 2008.

The research/evaluation would be carried out by an independent research company (MRUK Research), who had been commissioned by the City Council. The aim of the research was an evaluation of how the programme has been managed and communicated.

Following successful internal and external recruitment, 33 staff have been appointed. However there are still some vacancies that will be recruited for on a tranche by tranche basis as services transfer into the Customer Service Centre. The transition plan is attached for information (Appendix 2). Recruitment will be mainstreamed into the ongoing operational work of the Head of Customer Services.

2. MRUK research/evaluation

In January/February 2008, MRUK Researchers carried out a series of telephone interviews with the entire ring-fenced group (41 staff) apart from those people who had already responded to the earlier survey (11 staff members). A semi structured questionnaire covering; communication, support, training and the how the overall process had been handled was used to seek staff views. A response rate of 68% was obtained overall, which made this a representative study.

A copy of the Executive Summary and Conclusions is attached for information (Appendix 3).

A copy of the full report can be sent to any member who wishes this. The Trades Unions have received a full copy of the report and the summary and conclusions has also been sent to all the staff in the ring-fence and their managers. The report has been discussed with the Trade Unions and Human Resources will take forward learning from this for future organisational changes and in particular for service restructuring which is taking place over the next 18 months as a result of the Customer Access Strategy.

3. Learning points

Things that went well:

- The use of an external partner/organisation to provide independent assessment of the skills and competencies of internal applicants against the specifications for the new roles
- We provided training sessions to prepare staff for new roles, prior to being interviewed for posts in the Customer Service Centre.
- There was excellent support from line managers and Heads of Service
- A comprehensive communication strategy would appear to be essential to success

Things that we need to consider and be aware of for the success of any future organisational change programmes:

- Understanding the needs of staff for honest and ongoing communications through the change process
- Training to support staff to prepare for any organisational structure changes
- Facilitating the needs of all staff to attend briefings/meetings, to keep up-to-date, including part-timers and those on any form of leave
- Being fully understanding of the emotions of staff going through change and facilitating any support needed, through Counsel Care, training and communication
- The importance of having a well-thought through communication strategy for the success of future change programmes

4. Conclusion

Overall, the change management involved in setting up the Customer Service Centre has been very successful as a result of having a well-planned HR Strategy, which met the needs of the staff involved and the Head of Customer Services.

Vicki Davidson
Human Resources Manager (Customer Access)
August, 2008

Appendix 1

Department	Total number of Ring Fenced Staff	TL Applications	SCSA Applications	CSA Applications	No Applications
Reception & Office Services	4	0	3	3	1
City Services Customer Support	4	1	3	3	0
Revenue Services	11	4	7	4	3
Community Services Strategy	1	0	0	0	1
Environmental Services	6	0	1	4	2
E&P Customer & Support Services	7	2	1	2	4
City Homes North	6	0	0	1	5
City Homes South	8	2	5	6	1
Parking Services	11	0	0	0	11
GRAND TOTAL	58	9	20	23	28

Overview -

There are 30 Individuals with a total of 52 Applications

25 People Successfully Recruited

2 Successfully Recruited, then resigned.

3 Unsuccessful

28 Individuals Did not Apply

2 Left CCC

2 Redeployed

24 to be Redeployed

Appendix 2

	Go Live in 2008		Go Live in 2009		
Channel	Tranche 1 6 months 1 April 08 – 31 September 08	Tranche 2 3 months 1 October 08 – 31 December 08	Tranche 3 2 months 2 January 09 – 28 February 09	Tranche 4 3 months 1 March 09 – 31 May 09	Tranche 5/6 5 months (2.5 each) 1 June 09 – 31 October 09

Telephone	Switch Board, Helpdesk, Generic Processes	Revenue, Benefits, NNDR (BO), Housing Needs, Aid & Temporary Housing	Environmental Services, Community Development, Active Communities, Safer Communities	Housing Repairs & Technical Services	Development Control, Building Control, Policy & Projects, City Centre Management LAPE Housing Rents and Tenancy Management
Face to Face	Revenues, Benefits, NNDR (Advice Centre) Cashiers, Housing Aid Housing Need				
Self Service (Via Web)	Switch Board, Helpdesk, Generic Processes Revenues Benefits NNDR (Advice Centre) Cashiers				

**Customer Access Strategy Conclusions
Report**

Summary and Conclusions

March 2008

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Executive Summary

- This report summarises the key results from a series of depth telephone interviews with staff at Cambridge City Council. The Council commissioned **mruk** research, an independent market research organisation, to undertake the depth interviews.
- The interviews looked at the Customer Access Strategy and the experience of staff who were involved in the process. The survey aimed to look at how the process was managed and communicated.
- A total of 28 interviewees were undertaken with staff. The response rate was 68%.

Staff Profile

- The majority of respondents we spoke to had applied for a position in the Customer Service Centre (79%).
- Two thirds of respondents who had applied for a position had applied for more than one role (68%).
- The main reasons for not applying for a role were the location of the Customer Service Centre and the type of work.

Communication

- The most common methods of communication about the process were by email, letter and via staff briefings.
- The preferred method of being kept informed was via group meetings and email.
- Four fifths of respondents (82%) were satisfied with the communication received.
- Nearly all staff felt they were kept updated with information (93%).
- Staff would have like more detailed information at the start of the process, for example how the process was going to work and how the Customer Service Centre would work.

Support Provided

- Overall, staff were satisfied with support provided by their line manager and head of service (81% expressed satisfaction).
- Some respondents commented on the difficulty of attending briefings and sessions as they needed to find cover as they had customer-facing roles.

- The majority of respondents were satisfied with the support provided by PPS (87%). Many commented on the personal support they received and found this a positive aspect of the process.
- Half the respondents were satisfied with the support provided by HR (48%). The main comment made by staff about support from HR was that staff didn't have ongoing contact with HR during the process and therefore did not use HR for support.

Training Sessions

- Four fifths of respondents (79%) attended a training session with the Interview Skills and the Coaching and Mentoring sessions being the most popular.
- Staff rated the courses positively but many said they would have like the courses to have been longer, for example a day, so they could have covered more aspects in depth.

Management of the Process

- Nearly all respondents (81%) said they thought the Council had managed the process well.
- Two thirds (65%) thought the process was fair to all staff. Of the staff who did not think the process was fair, some commented it was not fair as previous experience wasn't taken into account. One person said the process was difficult to fit in around part-time hours.

Positive Aspects of the Process

Staff rated the following as positive aspects:

- Communication,
- The use of an independent company;
- The support provided by PPS;
- Training and development.

Negative Aspects of the Process

Staff rated the following as negative aspects:

- The intensity of the process in terms of length and activities:
- Lack of communication at the start of process in terms of how the process would work;
- Lack of support to cover staff when they needed to attend sessions and meetings.

Role of PPS

- Two thirds of staff (68%) agreed the Council should use an external agency for any similar recruitment processes.

Overall Satisfaction with the Process

- Two thirds of staff (68%) said they were satisfied with the overall process.
- Less than one in five said they were dissatisfied (16%).

2 Conclusion

Overall, staff were satisfied with the process for the Customer Service Centre with two thirds expressing satisfaction with the overall process. The majority felt the process had been well managed and many commented on it being a difficult process to manage.

Respondents felt they were well informed about the process and felt the training before the selection centres prepared them for interview. A large number of the staff surveyed commented on the use of external agency, PSS, and felt it was good to have an independent agency. Many were impressed with the support provided by PPS.

The main issues for staff were the lack of communication at the start of the process and the intensity of the process.

Overall, staff felt they were kept informed about the process by the Council and PPS. However the one aspect that staff would have liked improved was the amount of information at the start of the process. Many staff felt information on how the process would work was important in helping staff make their decisions. If the Council is to undertake a similar exercise, they may want to consider the issues that staff will ask about and address these at the start of the process. If it is not possible to answer all the questions at the start of the process, staff said it was important to let staff know when the information would be provided. Staff said it was important they were kept updated on any changes, in particular changes to timescales.

Many respondents felt the process took too long to complete and was too intense for the level of the roles. A number of staff said they would have liked their previous experience to be taken into account.

Overall, staff were satisfied with the support they received from their line managers and heads of service. Many staff were happy with the support from PPS and a large number commented on the personal nature of the support. Staff felt they had less support from HR during the process however this was not an issue for the majority of staff.

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the training session, although many felt that the courses could have been longer in length and more detailed. Many of the respondents who attended the Interview Skills course commented that the session prepared them for the selection centres.

One issue that arose was the availability of support to allow staff to attend briefings and sessions. Many staff had customer-facing roles and found it hard to get cover to attend briefings. This may be an issue for future consideration.

A minority of staff had concerns to ensure that part-time workers hours were accommodated in processes. This may be an issue to consider if a similar process is undertaken

A few staff commented on communication after the process. Many had not been informed when they would be starting work and would like further information. This is an issue that the Council may wish to review immediately.

A number of respondents asked about feedback from the survey and felt it was important for the Council to let respondents know the results from the consultation and how the results have been acted upon. We would suggest communicating the results to all stakeholders.