

Name of Review: Customer Services

What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review

- To review the operation of the Gateway, in particular:
 - Establish what resident's awareness of the services provided in the gateway was;
 - Determine the suitability of the Gateway operations, including opening times and accessibility
 - Identify whether there is a suitable provision for rural residents;
 - Establish whether the Gateway offered value for money and provided a good use of space;
 - Determine whether the Gateway resources were appropriate;
 - Identify opportunities to release service pressures through removing avoidable contact and channel migration;
 - Identify the provision and suitability of facilities available for staff;
 - Identify the provision and range of services available to residents in the Gateway and establish if this is fit for purpose and what benefits each service provides residents through their presence;
 - Identify how the presence of partner organisations is communicated and marketed by the organisations to Maidstone's residents;
 - Identify opportunities for new service provisions in the gateway (this could include interviews with Kent County Council Partners and Citizen Advice Bureau regarding their experiences);
 - Identify funding arrangements with partners and make recommendations as required;
 - Consider performance standards and performance targets; and
- To review Customer Services, in particular:
 - To identify the practice of authorities with superb service delivery reputations amongst their local populations and identify how they attained that reputation, including consideration of Councils in affluent and less affluent areas;
 - To determine the type of customer complaints received and identify how the Council had responded to them; and
 - To establish how the Council's welfare and benefits services are communicated and marketed to Maidstone's residents.

What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 6 strands:

- Are Council services widely accessible to people regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, faith or disability?
- Are Council communications and marketing accessible to all?
- Are customer services targeted towards particular groups? If so, is this justified?
- Are staff trained to deal sensitively with individuals with specific needs/ faith/race/sexual orientation?
- Is help available for those who need it e.g. those who cannot access IT, those who do not have English as their first language?

Which witnesses are required?

- Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
- Director of Regeneration and Communities
- Head of Finance and Customer Services
- Customer Services Manager
- Gateway Team Manager
- Kent County Council Partners
- Partners operating in the Gateway such as Citizen Advice Bureau and Hi-Kent
- Academics
- Best Practice Local Authorities

Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation.

- Working Groups
- Visit the Gateway
- Visit other Gateways
- Gateway staff surveys
- Residents questionnaire for those who use the Gateway service
- Press release for why some residents do not use Gateway service
- Consult local representatives of suitable services who have/have not used the Gateway

What information/training is needed?

- Gateway data
- Mosaic data

Suggested time for review and report completion date

- Nine months: Gateway sub section by end of September 2010 to feed into the Council budget setting process

How does the review link to council priorities?

- A place with efficient and effective public services

How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?

- Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- Drives improvement in public services

Any co-optees or expert witnesses?

- None required