

South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

t: 03450 450 500
f: 01954 713149
dx: DX 729500 Cambridge 15
minicom: 01480 376743
www.scambs.gov.uk

16 September 2009



To: Councillor TD Bygott, Portfolio Holder

Dr SA Harangozo	Opposition Spokesman
MJ Mason	Scrutiny Monitor
Mrs BZD Smith	Opposition Spokesman and Scrutiny Monitor
Dr SEK van de Ven	Opposition Spokesman

Dear Sir / Madam

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **SUSTAINABILITY, PROCUREMENT AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING**, which will be held in **MONKFIELD ROOM, FIRST FLOOR** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2009 at 10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully
GJ HARLOCK
Chief Executive

Requests for a large print agenda must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting.

AGENDA		PAGES
PROCEDURAL ITEMS		
1.	Declarations of Interest	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting The Portfolio Holder is asked to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2009 as a correct record.	1 - 4
DECISION ITEMS		
3.	Policy for Handling Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complainants	5 - 16
4.	Customer Service Excellence Project Plan	17 - 34
STANDING ITEMS		
5.	Forward Plan The Portfolio Holder will maintain, for agreement at each meeting, a Forward Plan identifying all matters relevant to the Portfolio which it is believed are likely to be the subject of consideration and / or decision by the Portfolio Holder, or recommendation to, or referral by, the Portfolio Holder to Cabinet, Council, or any other constituent part of the Council. The plan will be updated as necessary. The Portfolio Holder will be	35 - 36

responsible for the content and accuracy of the forward plan.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10 December 2009 at 11 am.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL

While the District Council endeavours to ensure that visitors come to no harm when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall, those visitors also have a responsibility to make sure that they do not risk their own or others' safety.

Increased hygiene at South Cambridgeshire Hall

In light of the swine flu pandemic, we have intensified our usual cleaning routines in council buildings. We have also introduced hand gel dispensers throughout the offices, including public areas. When visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall you are encouraged to use these facilities if and when required to help limit the spread of flu.

Security

Members of the public attending meetings in non-public areas of the Council offices must report to Reception, sign in, and at all times wear the Visitor badges issued. Before leaving the building, such visitors must sign out and return their Visitor badges to Reception.

Emergency and Evacuation

In the event of a fire, a continuous alarm will sound. Evacuate the building using the nearest escape route; from the Council Chamber or Mezzanine viewing gallery this would be via the staircase just outside the door. Go to the assembly point at the far side of the staff car park.

- **Do not** use the lifts to exit the building. If you are unable to negotiate stairs by yourself, the emergency staircase landings are provided with fire refuge areas, which afford protection for a minimum of 1.5 hours. Press the alarm button and wait for assistance from the Council fire wardens or the fire brigade.
- **Do not** re-enter the building until the officer in charge or the fire brigade confirms that it is safe to do so.

First Aid

If someone feels unwell or needs first aid, please alert a member of staff.

Access for People with Disabilities

The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you. All meeting rooms are accessible to wheelchair users. There are disabled toilet facilities on each floor of the building. Hearing loops and earphones are available from reception and can be used in all meeting rooms.

Toilets

Public toilets are available on each floor of the building next to the lifts.

Recording of Business

Unless specifically authorised by resolution, no audio and / or visual or photographic recording in any format is allowed at any meeting of the Council, the executive (Cabinet), or any committee, sub-committee or other sub-group of the Council or the executive.

Banners, Placards and similar items

No member of the public shall be allowed to bring into or display at any Council meeting any banner, placard, poster or other similar item. The Chairman may require any such item to be removed.

Disturbance by Public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

Smoking

Since 1 July 2008, the Council has operated a new Smoke Free Policy. Visitors are not allowed to smoke at any time within the Council offices, or in the car park or other grounds forming part of those offices.

Food and Drink

Vending machines and a water dispenser are available on the ground floor near the lifts at the front of the building. Visitors are not allowed to bring food or drink into the meeting room.

Mobile Phones

Visitors are asked to make sure that their phones and other mobile devices are set on silent / vibrate mode during meetings or are switched off altogether.

This page is left blank intentionally.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio Holder's Meeting
held on
Thursday, 23 July 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: TD Bygott

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor: MJ Mason
Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor and Mrs BZD Smith
Opposition spokesman:
Opposition spokesmen: Dr SA Harangozo and Dr SEK van de Ven
Also in attendance: Mrs SM Ellington

Officers:

Holly Adams Democratic Services Officer
Richard Hales Strategic Sustainability Officer
Paul Knight Customer Service Co-ordinator
Pat Matthews Drainage Manager
Jo Mills Corporate Manager, New Communities
Sean Missin Procurement Officer
Dale Robinson Corporate Manager, Health & Environmental Services

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in items 2 (Awarded Watercourses Service – Tendering Results), 3 (Capital Programme – Awarded Watercourses Service) and 4 (Floods and Water Management Bill: Consultation Response) as a member of the Meldreth Parish Council Flood Avoidance Sub-Committee, and in item 4 as an elected member of Cambridgeshire County Council who had recommended to that authority joint working with South Cambridgeshire District Council on this issue.

2. AWARDED WATERCOURSES SERVICE - TENDERING RESULTS

Cabinet on 11 September 2008, in response to member concerns over the operational costs of the Awarded Watercourses Service, resolved to open the process to competitive tender, the results of which were presented to the Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio Holder for decision. Four tenders were returned, three from external companies and one from the Council's in-house service, of which the in-house service was considerably less expensive and, when evaluated and scored in terms of reporting and programming, knowledge and experience, health and safety, contract and project management proposals and quality and capacity, had scored the highest of the four bids.

Officers confirmed that the process had been thorough and done in accordance with EU procurement procedures, which the Council was legally obliged to follow. There had been twenty-five initial expressions of interest, but although the process had been simplified as much as possible, allowing tendering on individual aspects of the service and including a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to help the Council identify interested parties and tailor the process accordingly, no submissions had been received from local farmers and it was difficult to identify what more the Council could have done to encourage their interest. The uncertainty experienced by officers in the service during the tendering process was commented on and the Portfolio Holder appreciated their hard work and the successful outcome of the tender, which confirmed that the Council's own service was providing the

best value for money and retained with the authority invaluable local knowledge.

The Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to award the contract to the South Cambridgeshire District Council in-house team as the lowest bid and the Most Economical Advantageous Tender; and **NOTED** the changes made to working practices, terms and conditions and numbers of permanent posts on the establishment, as described in paragraphs 18 and 19 of this report.

3. CAPITAL PROGRAMME - AWARDED WATERCOURSES SERVICE

In November 2008 a tractor and flail mower owned by the authority were stolen from the depot in Lolworth where the awarded watercourses plant and equipment were stored. Replacement of the equipment or hiring of new equipment was delayed pending the outcome of the awarded watercourses services tender, and the tender documents had included the cost of providing replacement equipment.

Having compared the cost of hiring equipment versus purchasing the equipment outright, the Portfolio Holder concluded that it would cost the authority more to spot hire equipment each year and that this, coupled with the uncertainty of obtaining equipment during the fifteen-week period it was needed annually, confirmed that outright purchase was the better option. The Council was bound by certain purchasing regulations, mostly relating to health and safety requirements, which limited the range of equipment available, and it was essential that the flail mower and tractor were compatible, as the cost of custom-fitting the two pieces could cost the authority approximately an additional £1,500 annually. The initial estimate for the purchase of a new tractor and flail mower was £94,000, of which the insurance for the stolen equipment would pay about £33,000. In light of the economic circumstances and the pressures on the Council's budget, the Portfolio Holder asked officers to investigate purchasing second-hand equipment in the first instance, but, should this be unsuccessful, to be able to demonstrate that the purchase of new equipment provided the best value for money.

The Drainage Manager explained that South Cambridgeshire was unique in the amount of watercourses it had and the amount of work it undertook, so opportunities for sharing the equipment were limited, as it was essential only during a specific period each year. The Portfolio Holder was discussing with the Ecology Officer use of the equipment for maintaining and restoring ecological habitats in the district. Officers confirmed that the equipment storage facility had been moved within a compounded area with guard dogs, and with on-site staff living nearby, and that GPS tracker units had been ordered and would be installed as soon as they had been delivered.

The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) agreed to speak to the Accountancy service to identify a better way to publish the Awarded Watercourses Drainage Infrastructure Fund in the Council's budget book.

The Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio Holder:

- (a) **AGREED** that £100,000 be included in the 2009/10 Capital programme on the basis that the financing of this amount be met from the insurance theft claim payment (as outlined above) and the Awarded Watercourses Drainage Infrastructure Fund; and
- (b) **REQUESTED** that the Council uses its best endeavours to purchase second hand plant and that, should this be unsuccessful, the Portfolio Holder be informed of the reasons why before any order for new plant is placed.

4. FLOODS AND WATER MANAGEMENT BILL: CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Council had been asked to respond to the draft Floods and Water Management Bill, the deadline for which was 24 July 2009. Although he welcomed the proposals to nominate Cambridgeshire County Council as the lead authority for the county, the Portfolio Holder emphasised the need for the legislation to state clearly which authority would be responsible for the powers proposed. He expressed concern at the powers being given to local government without a support grant commensurate to the level of responsibility.

The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) accepted that the draft bill was strong on flooding issues but not as detailed with water management issues, but advised the Portfolio Holder to respond based only upon the services for which the District Council was responsible.

The Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency **AGREED** the consultation response provided as Appendix A to the report, with the additional comments the Portfolio Holder raised at the meeting with regards to the importance clarifying in the Bill which level of local government will have overall responsibility for which services, and a caution of the danger of giving additional powers to local government without adequate funding grant support, the exact wording to be determined by the Portfolio Holder, Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) and the Drainage Manager.

5. CAMBRIDGE CLIMATE CHANGE CHARTER

Cambridge City Council had adopted a voluntary Climate Change Charter for local companies, schools, businesses and organisations to sign up to, demonstrating their commitment to eight actions to tackle climate change. The Climate Change Working Group had considered and supported the idea of a similar charter, without specific geographic references, which could be adopted across South Cambridgeshire and elsewhere. The Strategic Sustainability Officer confirmed that Parish Councils would be able to sign it, and it would work in tandem with the Council's Sustainable Parish Energy Programme. The District and City Councils would be using Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) reward grant to promote the charter through a two-year programme of events at the SmartLIFE Centre, Cambridge. The Charter would also be promoted through the economic development events the Council was running, which had been well-attended, and could even form the subject for a business forum. Members were encouraged to help raise awareness of the Charter.

The Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to the launch and promotion of an appropriately amended (i.e., geographically non-specific) version of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter for organisations, schools and businesses across South Cambridgeshire.

6. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2009-2012: OUTCOME OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Portfolio Holder received the statistics supporting the Council's first quarter performance against its Customer Service Standards and commended officers on their achievements, drawing specific attention to the performance of Reception staff. He noted that there was room to improve, particularly in the area of avoidable contact, for which a National Indicator, NI14, had been created.

The Customer Service Coordinator explained that the Service First team was looking to move its focus away from monitoring performance to working on how the Council interacted with residents. More detailed information about NI14 was now available, including customer comments to provide context, and it was expected that work in this area would have a positive effect on the authority. The Customer Services Coordinator confirmed that a new complaints process would be ready by the autumn, for consideration

by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in October 2009.

The Portfolio Holder hoped that the Council would continue to deal openly and honestly with issues raised by residents, and that lessons were learnt from complaints and the manner in which complaints were handled, even if this affected the targets set by the national government. It was acknowledged that members also provided customer service, and members were encouraged to use their discretion when information the Customer Services Coordinator of complaints they had received directly, as there would be instances where it would be suitable for certain issues to be logged on the corporate complaints system, although most matters would be addressed without recourse to the formal complaints process.

The Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the performance against the customer service standard.

7. FORWARD PLAN

There were no additions or amendments made to the Forward Plan.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of future meetings were **NOTED**. It was possible that the meeting scheduled for 22 January 2010 might be moved to 21 January 2010 and members were advised to check their e-mail for details.

The Meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Sustainability, Procurement and
Efficiency Portfolio Holder

AUTHOR/S: Customer Services Coordinator

24 September 2009

**HANDLING UNREASONABLE OR UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS
POLICY****Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to propose a Policy for handling unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants. This is not a key decision because it is an operational matter.

Background

2. The Council publishes corporate customer service standards, which clearly set out what customers can expect from the Council, including a formal complaints procedure. In the majority of cases investigating complaints is a straightforward process. However, a small minority of complainants may pursue their complaints in ways that can impede the investigation of their complaint or impose a significant and disproportionate resource requirement on the Council. These complaints may be justified but inappropriately pursued.
3. This policy outlines the procedure for identifying such complainants, suggested actions, which may be taken, and the ways in which decisions will be taken and reviewed. The policy is attached as **Appendix 1**.
4. The Council has a zero tolerance approach to abusive and aggressive behaviour and does not expect its officers or Members to tolerate such behaviour and has processes in place to protect them.

Considerations

5. Before the policy is applied the Council must ensure that the complaint is being or has been investigated properly according to the complaints procedure. The Council must also be satisfied that any decisions reached are the right ones, the complainant has been communicated with adequately and that the complainant is not just trying to bring new information to the attention of officers.
6. The Local Government Ombudsman has issued guidance notes on “unreasonably persistent” complainants and unreasonable complaint behaviour. This provides that the Ombudsman is unlikely to be critical of a council’s action if it can be shown that the council has designated a complainant as unreasonably persistent in accordance with a policy that has been operated properly and fairly.
7. Decisions under the policy will be made at Corporate Manager level in conjunction with a member of Senior Management Team. The policy provides a list of characteristics of unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants, the potential restrictions that could be made, a form to standardise the level of information required for action to be taken and a review process.

Options

8. The Council needs to have a policy in place. A small number of complainants, after exhausting the Council's complaints procedure, have continued to pursue their complaint in an unreasonable manner taking up much officer time. These circumstances have highlighted the need for a policy of this nature.

Implications

9. Financial	Decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman could have financial implications for the Council
Legal	None specific
Staffing	The Council must consider Health & Safety implications for staff
Risk Management	There is reputational risk if situations are not dealt with appropriately
Equal Opportunities	All complainants need to be dealt with in a fair and open manner

Consultations

10. The draft policy was discussed at the EMT meeting on 25 March 2009. The policy was supported and recommended for the Portfolio Holder to approve for adoption.

Effect on Strategic Aims

11.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all. Appropriate processes for dealing with complaints and complainants are important to providing first class services.
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all. None specific.
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live. None specific.
	Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all. None specific.
	Commitment to providing a voice for rural life. None specific.

Recommendations

12. That the Portfolio Holder agrees the adoption and publication of the Policy detailed in **Appendix 1** to this report.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Local Government Ombudsman Guidance note on "Unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable complainant behaviour", January 2007

Contact Officer: Paul Knight – Customer Services Coordinator
Telephone: (01954) 713299

**Policy for handling unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants
(151008)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognises that whilst efforts are made to provide a consistently high level of service for all service users, there are occasions when dissatisfaction will arise, and complaints will be made.
- 1.2 The Council publishes corporate customer service standards, which clearly set out what customers can expect from the Council, including a formal complaints procedure through which dissatisfaction with services can be expressed. The complaints procedure is designed to ensure that mutually satisfactory resolutions are reached in a timely fashion.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to providing a consistent and equitable service to all its customers. This policy is designed to provide guidance for officers and Members regarding appropriate procedures for dealing with unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants in ways which are demonstrably consistent and fair.
- 1.4 In the majority of cases, investigating complaints is a straightforward process. SCDC recognises that customers will exert pressure on the Council when making a complaint, as they believe that the Council has failed in its service to them. Such pressure may be persistent, but in most cases this is reasonable and acceptable.
- 1.5 However, a small minority of complainants may pursue their complaints in ways that can impede the investigation of their complaint, or impose a significant and disproportionate resource requirement on the authority. Such actions can occur during the investigation of a complaint, or once investigations have been completed. In these cases, a complainant can reasonably be defined as unreasonably persistent.
- 1.6 It should be noted that complaints pursued by unreasonable and / or unreasonably persistent complainants may be justified, but inappropriately pursued. It is also possible that they are pursuing complaints without merit, or those which have already been investigated and determined.
- 1.7 The Council does not normally seek to limit the contact complainants may make with officers or Members. However, as the Local Government Ombudsmen identify in their guidance for Local Authorities, a small minority of complainants may be considered to exhibit 'unreasonable complainant behaviour' or to be 'unreasonably persistent complainants'.¹
- 1.8 This policy outlines the procedure for identifying such complainants, suggested actions which may be taken and the ways in which decisions will be taken and reviewed. The aim of the policy is to ensure that unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants are dealt with fairly, honestly and properly, whilst protecting other service users, officers, Members and the Council against unnecessary detriment.

¹ *Local Government Ombudsman Guidance note on 'unreasonably persistent' complainants and 'unreasonable complainant behaviour', January 2007, p2*

- 1.9 The Council has a zero tolerance approach to abusive and aggressive behaviour, and does not expect its officers or Members to tolerate such behaviour. The Council understands that the circumstances under which complaints are made may be frustrating for the complainant, but requests that complainants remain calm and work with it to ensure that complaints can be quickly and satisfactorily resolved.
- 1.10 The Council recognises that a part of the role of Members and other elected officials (MPs, MEPs etc) is to pursue matters on behalf of their constituents. This policy is not intended to constrain or inhibit this role.

2. Application of policy

- 2.1 Prior to the application of this policy, the Council must ensure that the complaint is being, or has been, investigated properly according to the corporate complaints procedure. This means that whilst every complaint is unique, each complaint will have been handled in line with other complaints of a similar nature in order to ensure a consistent approach.
- 2.2 The Council must also be satisfied that any decisions reached thus far are the right ones, communications with the complainant have been adequate and that the complainant is not providing any significant new information that might affect the authority's views.
- 2.3 Before this policy is applied, Corporate Managers should ensure that appropriate steps have been taken to discuss the complainant's behaviour with the complainant, explain why their behaviour is considered to be unacceptable, and that the complainant has been asked to modify the way in which they approach officers or Members. At this stage, the complainant should be sent a written warning, stating that failure to modify their behaviour may result in restrictions being applied to their contacts with the Council under this policy. A copy of this policy should be sent to the complainant for their reference.
- 2.4 If a meeting between the complainant and senior managers has not taken place, and the Council knows of no reason why such a meeting would be inadvisable, the Council should consider offering such a meeting to the complainant with a view to dispelling misunderstandings and moving matters towards an amicable resolution.
- 2.5 It may be considered appropriate to offer to assist the complainant in finding an independent advocate.
- 2.6 It should also be noted that whilst the Ombudsman would usually require a complaint to have exhausted the local complaints procedure before investigation, they also recognise that:
In some cases, relations between authorities and unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants break down badly while complaints are under investigation and there is little prospect of achieving a satisfactory outcome. In such circumstances there is often little purpose in following through all stages of the council's complaints procedure and where this occurs the Ombudsmen may be prepared to consider complaints before complaints procedures have been exhausted. This is the case even in respect of statutory complaints procedures.

A complainant who has been designated an unreasonably persistent complainant may make a complaint to the Ombudsman about the way in which he or she has been treated. The Ombudsman is unlikely to be critical of

the council's action if it can show that its policy has been operated properly and fairly"²

3. Decision making process

- 3.1 If employees are concerned about the behaviour of a specific complainant, who they believe to be acting in an unreasonable or unreasonably persistent manner, they should report their concerns to their Line Manger or Corporate Manager. If the employee has immediate concerns with regards to a complainant who has been verbally or physically abusive, they should make use of existing arrangements to report incidents of verbal or physical abuse to the Health and Safety Adviser. Such reports will be taken into account by the relevant Corporate Manager and Chief Officer when considering whether this policy should be implemented.
- 3.2 Any decision as to the application of this policy is an exceptional decision, and must be made by senior officers. If a Corporate Manager, in consultation with a Chief Officer, believes the policy may appropriately be applied to a complainant, Form A, attached at Appendix C should be completed.
- 3.3 Consideration should be given to:
- Whether the complainant is raising legitimate concerns
 - Whether the complaint is being, or has been, investigated properly
 - Whether any decisions reached thus far were the correct ones
 - Whether communications with the complainant have been adequate
 - Whether the complainant is now providing any significant new information that might affect the Council's view on the complaint
 - Whether any circumstances relating to the complainant's mental health, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability have been considered
 - Whether possible steps have been taken to inform the complainant that their behaviour is unacceptable.
 - How to strike the appropriate balance between the rights of the individual complainant and the need to ensure that other complainants and our staff and Members suffer no detriment, and the Council's resources are used as effectively as possible.
 - The appropriate restrictions to be applied.
- 3.4 Such details should be recorded on the corporate complaints log, and on a register of unreasonably persistent or abusive complainants.

4. Appeal and review process

- 4.1 Once a decision has been reached, the Chief Officer will write to the complainant, clearly outlining the reasons for which they have been designated as an Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complainant, and explaining the restrictions which will be applied to future contacts regarding their complaint, the period of time for which these restrictions will apply and the appropriate appeals / review process. A copy of this policy will be included for the complainant's reference.
- 4.2 If the complainant disagrees with their classification under this policy, or with the particular restrictions which have been applied, they will have the right to appeal against the decision. A Chief Officer who was not involved in the original decision should receive the appeal.

² Local Government Ombudsman *Guidance note on 'unreasonably persistent' complainants and 'unreasonable complainant behaviour'*, January 2007, p8

- 4.3 The Chief Officer will notify the complainant in writing of the result of the appeal, and will clearly state whether the initial restrictions will be applied, whether a different course of action has been agreed or whether the decision to apply the policy has been overturned.
- 4.4 Any applications of the policy must be reviewed after no more than six months. The review should consider whether the complainant has adhered to the restrictions imposed, and whether the complaint is still under investigation.
- 4.5 If the review determines that restrictions should be lifted, the complainant should be notified in writing, and warned that any repeat of the previous unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour will result in reapplication of the restrictions.
- 4.6 Any new complaints from unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants should be treated on their merits. However, if the complainant engages in unreasonably persistent or abusive behaviour with regards to their new complaint, urgent consideration should be given to the application of appropriate restrictions.

5. Communication to officers / Members

- 5.1 It is not recommended that details of the individual cases be widely distributed. Details of the complaint and the restrictions applied should be circulated to:
- Executive Management Team
 - The Leader of the Council
 - The appropriate portfolio holder
 - The appropriate local Member in whose ward the complainant resides, or to whose ward the complaint applies
- 5.2 Details of the complaint should not be circulated beyond those listed above, but the names of persistent complainants, together with instructions regarding the appropriate actions which should be taken if contacted by the complainant, for example, the appropriate officer to whom they should be directed, may be circulated to all staff and Members likely to come into contact with the complainant.

6. Examples of identifying actions / behaviours

- 6.1 The Council defines unreasonably persistent and abusive complainants as those who, by the frequency or the nature of their contacts with the Council, hinder the Council's consideration of their or other people's complaints. Contacts from such complainants may be amicable, but place disproportionate demands on Council resources, or they may be distressing for all involved. Contacts may relate to justified complaints, those with no substance, or those which have already been investigated and completed. The descriptions 'unreasonably persistent' and 'unreasonable' may apply separately or jointly to a particular complainant.
- 6.2 It should be noted that SCDC recognises that complainants may sometimes act out of character in times of stress, anxiety or distress and will make reasonable allowances for this. However, this does not imply that continued unreasonable behaviour will be tolerated.
- 6.3 Unreasonable behaviour may occur during one or two isolated incidents, whereas unreasonably persistent behaviour would usually be an accumulation of incidents or behaviour over a period of time. It should be noted that the raising of legitimate queries and concerns regarding the application of the complaints procedure is not a

just reason for designating an individual as an unreasonably persistent complainant. Similarly, if a complainant expresses dissatisfaction with the outcome of the investigation of a complaint, and seeks to challenge it, this should not necessarily lead to labelling as an unreasonably persistent complainant. Such instances should be progressed through the established complaints procedure.

- 6.4 The list in Appendix A, largely taken from the Ombudsman guidance document, identifies some behaviours which may be indicative of unreasonably persistent or abusive complainants. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is the presence of any of these actions in isolation to be used as justification for the application of this policy. It is merely intended to act as a guide to assist in the identification of unreasonable or unreasonably persistent behaviour.

7. Examples of restrictions / actions

- 7.1 Before any actions are taken to restrict contact, the complainant will, wherever possible, be warned. Where behaviour is of such an extreme nature that the immediate safety or welfare of staff or Members is threatened, options outside this policy will be considered.³ Prior warning to the complainant that such action will be taken will not necessarily be given.
- 7.2 The appropriate actions to be taken will depend on the stage the complaint has reached in the complaints process. If the complaint has been completed, and referred to the Ombudsman if appropriate, then the authority has the option of ending all communication with the correspondent. In these instances, correspondence must still be monitored and filed to ensure that no new information is supplied. It is a matter of managerial discretion whether correspondence should continue to be acknowledged.
- 7.3 If, however, the complaint is still under investigation, some channels of communication must remain open.
- 7.4 The list in Appendix B is not intended to be exhaustive. It merely seeks to provide guidance with regards to the restrictions which may be considered when dealing with an unreasonably persistent or abusive complainant. The particular circumstances of the case will determine which actions are appropriate. Corporate managers may use actions from the list, or may, if the circumstances require, introduce other restrictions. It is essential that any restrictions to be applied are appropriate and proportionate to the nature and frequency of the complainant's unreasonable or unreasonably persistent contacts, and that a review process, as outlined in section 4.1, is put in place.

8. Support for officers / Members

- 8.1 It is recognised that when dealing with unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants, members of staff may, from time to time, be subjected to abusive or aggressive contacts from members of the public. The Council does not expect its employees to tolerate being subjected to this type of behaviour and will fully support its staff in the event they are placed in this position. Any member of staff who is subjected to verbal abuse such as swearing, shouting or belittling should initially inform the caller of their unacceptable behaviour. In the event that such behaviour continues, employees are empowered by the Council to terminate the call

³ See *Prevention of Violence at Work Guidance*, July 2006 and *Lone Working Policy and Arrangements*

immediately and report the incident to their line manager, who should then refer the matter to the appropriate corporate manager.

- 8.2 Subsequent to any incident the Line Manager will discuss the incident with the employee involved. The incident should be reviewed as to how the situation arose, and to identify any change of practice or staff preparedness for such situations. If appropriate, the Line Manager will remind the employee of the availability of the PPC advice and support telephone line.
- 8.3 In no circumstances should incidents of verbal or physical abuse be interpreted as an indication that employees are unable to discharge their duties effectively. Employees need to know that their concerns are taken seriously and they will not be made to feel foolish or inadequate if they resort to the use of alarms or call for help in situations that prove to be false alarms. However, employees are expected to adhere to advice contained in the Security Guidelines and reasons for not doing so will be examined in the incident review.
- 8.4 Where there is an identified need of counselling for officers who have received unreasonable or unreasonably persistent contact from complainants, the Council will ensure that it is provided in consultation with the employee concerned.
- 8.5 Where an employee wishes, the Council will assist by reporting any incident to the Police, and give any reasonable assistance in furthering any subsequent prosecution.

9. Links to other policies

- 9.1 This policy is designed to complement or reflect the following existing policies:
- the Complaints Procedure and Customer Care Standards;
 - the Council's statement of zero tolerance of abusive and aggressive behaviour;
 - the Council's commitment to equality and fairness in delivering its core objective, to provide high quality, accessible, value for money services;
 - the Prevention of Violence at Work guidance;
 - the Stress Management policy;
 - the Bullying and Harassment policy.
- 9.2 This policy is not designed to cover Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations or Data Protection requests. All members of the public have statutory rights to information as determined and described in the relevant legislation. Councils must respond to such requests except under the circumstances outline in the relevant legislation.

10. Policy reporting and review

- 10.1 Applications of this policy should be reported annually as part of the complaints reporting process. This report will include the number of times that the policy has been invoked and the restrictions imposed. The report will not include details of individual complaints, or information by which the complainant could be identified.
- 10.2 It is anticipated that this policy should be reviewed after six months, and thereafter on an annual basis.

Appendix A – Identifying characteristics of unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants.

- Refusal to identify specific grounds for a complaint, despite offers of assistance from the authority's staff.
- Refusal to cooperate with the complaints investigation process whilst still wishing for their complaint to be resolved.
- Refusal to accept the difficulty of verifying events and facts after a significant period of time has passed.
- Refusal to accept information provided without providing good reasons why the information should be refused.
- Attempting to use the complaints procedure in order to pursue a personal vendetta against an employee or team.
- Making repeated groundless complaints about the officers handling their complaint.
- Lodging numbers of complaints in batches over a period of time, resulting in related complaints being at different stages of the complaints procedure.
- Refusal to accept that the issues about which they are complaining are not within the scope of the complaints procedure despite having been provided with information regarding the procedure's scope.
- Demanding outcomes that the complaints procedure is unable to provide e.g. overturning of court decisions, dismissal or criminal prosecution of staff, actions that would be illegal or infringe the rights of others.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or good practice.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds, and / or denying statements made at an earlier stage.
- Pursuing the same complaint with multiple authorities / bodies at the same time, for example with the authority and, at the same time, with an MP / a Member / the independent auditor / the Standards Board / the police / solicitors / the Ombudsman.
- Using valid new complaints to resurrect issues which were included in previous complaints
- Submitting repeat complaints, after complaints processes have been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions / variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure.
- Raising, at a late stage in the process, significant information which was in the complainant's possession when he or she first submitted a complaint, and which the complainant knew to be of relevance to the case.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting that they are fully answered.
- Repeated denials of receipt of adequate responses in spite of records of correspondence specifically addressing their questions.
- Making unreasonable demands on council resources and failing to accept that these may be unreasonable. For example, insistence on responses to complaints or enquiries being provided more urgently than is reasonable.

- Persistent contact via multiple channels demanding responses or meetings with officers when the complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted.
- Making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff whilst a complaint is being looked into, by, for example, excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous council staff, writing lengthy complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.
- Making statements that they know are not true, or persuading others to do so.
- Supplying manufactured 'evidence' or other information that the complainant knows is incorrect.
- Electronically recording meetings, telephone calls and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other persons involved.
- Using obscene, racist, homophobic, sexist, ageist, gender or sexuality related, religion or belief based offensive or threatening language or behaviour in any method of contact with the Council.
- Seeking to coerce or intimidate staff, or abusing or distressing them by the language and tone of voice or behaviour, including body language, in personal contacts or telephone conversations.
- Threatening, aggressive or abusive behaviour in direct personal contacts with staff.
- Threatening, abusive or violent behaviour or actions directed at other people involved in the events that gave rise to the complaint.
- Repeated refusals to accept the final outcome of the complaints procedure and further complaints about the outcome.
- Repeatedly pressing for further investigation of matters that have already been addressed.

Appendix B – Potential restrictions

- Placing time limits on telephone conversations and personal contacts.
- Restricting the number of telephone calls that will be taken in terms of number and time period e.g. one call on one morning per week.
- Limiting the access channels by which the complainant may contact the council.
- Requiring the complainant to communicate only with a designated member of staff.
- Requiring an independent witness to any personal contacts.
- Asking the complainant to enter a written agreement regarding their future conduct whilst a complaint is being progressed.
- Banning a complainant from entering the Council's premises.
- Involving the police where a complainant is suspected of having committed a criminal offence e.g. harassment, assault (actual or threatened).
- Refusal to register or process any further complaints on the same matter.
- If the complaint has exhausted the complaints process: providing only acknowledgements to correspondence, or informing the complainant that future correspondence will be read and filed but not acknowledged. A designated officer should monitor all future correspondence for new information.

FORM A – Case for designation of a complainant as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent

**Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complainant Policy
Case for application of policy**

Name of Customer:

Name of Corporate Manager:

Date of Submission:

Background leading to referral *(include details of relevant supporting documentation, including reports, notes of telephone conversations or meetings, written correspondence etc. Such documentation should be attached):*

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Sustainability, Procurement and
Efficiency Portfolio Holder

AUTHOR/S: Customer Services Coordinator

24 September 2009

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE – THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD**Purpose**

1. To provide information on and seek Portfolio Holder endorsement for the Customer Service Excellence Project.
2. To provide the Portfolio Holder with a position statement in relation to the project.
3. This is not a key decision.

Background

4. The Government wants public services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering – with the citizen always and everywhere at the heart of public service provision. By indentifying customer service as a key value, the Council is supporting the Government's desire to place customers at the centre of service provision. Customer Service Excellence (CSE) provides a framework which supports the actions and approaches underpinning the Council values.
5. CSE replaces the previous Charter Mark and emphasises areas that research has shown are a priority for customers: delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also emphasis on understanding customers and the user's experience and the robust measurement of customer satisfaction.
6. CSE is designed to operate on three distinct levels:
 - As a driver of continuous improvement. By allowing organisations to self assess their capability in relation to customer focussed service delivery, identifying areas and methods for improvement
 - As a skills development tool. By allowing individuals and teams within the organisation to explore and acquire new skills in the area of customer focus and customer engagement, thus building their capacity for delivering improved services
 - As an independent validation of achievement. By allowing organisations to seek formal accreditation, demonstrate their competence, identify key areas for improvement and celebrate their success.
7. Working towards CSE accreditation brings a number of benefits to the customer and organisation. The primary benefit for the organisation is increased efficiency and effectiveness by the bringing together of all service areas through joined up working, common best practices and shared understanding and experiences.
8. The benefits for the customer are extensive. The customer will benefit from a truly customer focussed organisation that places the public at the heart of service design and delivery. Key benefits will include:
 - Making the consultation of customers integral to the improvement of services

- Using customer journey mapping to reduce barriers and increase access
 - Improved range, quality and access of information
 - Reducing unnecessary and duplicated contacts
 - A can do, customer focused culture that exceeds customer expectations
9. In May / June 2009, a large section of customer facing services took part in a Council wide self-assessment against the 51 criteria of CSE. Service areas were asked to rate how their services met the criteria. Four options were available: 100%, >50%, <50%, 0%. Results indicate the level of meeting the criteria differs from service to service, but at least one service meets 50 of the 51 criteria in full. See **Appendix 1**.
10. To gain CSE accreditation the Council must meet all 51 criteria (see **Appendix 2**) in full and be able to provide comprehensive evidence of doing so. The Service First Steering Group have reviewed the results of the self-assessment and have concluded that the standard is achievable and both Council and customer would benefit from a commitment to gain formal CSE accreditation.
11. There were three options available when considering working towards CSE:
- (i) Seek Council-wide formal accreditation
 - (ii) Seek formal accreditation by specific service area
 - (iii) Use CSE as an improvement tool but not seek formal accreditation
12. The Service First Steering Group discussed all three options and carefully considered which option would bring the most benefits to the organisation and customer. The group recommended that the Council seek Council-wide accreditation within the next financial year 2010/11.

Considerations

Position Statement

13. On 10 September 2009 Cabinet agreed the achievement of CSE as a 2010/11 Council action. Consultation and research has indicated 18 months as a realistic timescale for this project which includes initial preparation. As a result the Service First Steering Group have started work on the project to ensure the action is achieved on time.
14. The CSE project is currently in the planning phase and good progress has been made preparing to work towards CSE accreditation. The Customer Service Coordinator is in the process of arranging meetings with the five assessment centres detailed by the standard, which is on schedule with the draft project timeline detailed in **Appendix 3**.
15. The chosen assessment centre will play a large role in structuring the project to ensure the Council is working towards a structure that supports CSE accreditation within our timescale. The draft project timeline will be finalised after meeting and selecting the assessment centre.
16. The Service First Steering Group are in the process of developing a draft project structure detailed in **Appendix 4** and are approaching staff for key roles in the project. The draft project structure will be finalised after meeting and selecting the assessment centre.
17. It is anticipated that work on meeting the CSE criteria will begin no later than December 2009.

Implications

18. Financial	The Service First Steering Group have estimated the cost of achieving CSE at £20,000 which will be met from the 2009/10 & 2010/11 combined budget of £24,600. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £600 Pre Assessment Check • £15,000 Formal Assessment • £3,000 CSE Training • £4,000 Meeting CSE Criteria e.g. Customer Service Training, Licensing of Mosaic Database
Legal	None
Staffing	The Customer Service Excellence project will require an estimated total of 864 work days. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 Days Project Sponsor • 104 Days Project Manager • 72 Days Project Assurance Group • 104 Days Project Support • 154 Days Work Stream Leaders • 418 Days Work Stream Members
Risk Management	Project risks are detailed in Appendix 5 .
Equal Opportunities	The Customer Service Excellence Standard will support the Council's statutory Equality and Diversity requirements.

Consultations

19. The Service First Steering Group has been consulted and is centrally involved in the planning and preparation of the CSE Project.
20. A summary of CSE and the self-assessment has been reported to EMT on 22 July 2009 and the Lead Member for Customer Service Cllr Tom Bygott on 23 July 2009.
21. CSE information has been provided to Cabinet on 10 September 2009.

Effect on Strategic Aims

22.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
	CSE supports and encourages the Council to engage, consult and listen to its customers and use this information to improve performance and access to services.
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.
	None
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
	CSE supports services that place the customer at the heart of service planning and delivery. Tailoring services in this way will bring increased customer satisfaction and further improve Council reputation.
	Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.
	None
	Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.
	CSE promotes engagement of public in a variety of ways that ensure all cross sections of the community have a voice.

Recommendations

23. That the Portfolio Holder support and endorse the achievement of Council-wide CSE accreditation within the next financial year 20010/11.
24. That the Portfolio Holder note the current position of the project.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None.

Contact Officer: Paul Knight – Customer Service Coordinator
Telephone: (01954) 713309

Appendix 1 – Self-assessment overview

Appendix 2 – CSE Criteria

Appendix 3 – CSE Project Gantt Chart

Appendix 4 – CSE Project Structure

Appendix 5 – CSE Project Risks

Appendix 1 – Self-assessment overview

Customer Service Excellence Standard Self Assessment														
Meeting Requirement														
Key	Affordable Housing	Finance		Health & Environmental Services				Planning & Sustainable Communities				New Communities		
100%	Affordable Housing	Benefits	Revenues	Food Safety	Licensing	Pest Control	Waste Management & Recycling	Building Control	Conservation	Development Control	Planning Policy	Community Engagement	Cultural Services	Major Developments
>50%														
<50%														
0%														
1 Customer Insight														
1.1 Customer Identification														
1.1.1	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	<50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	0%
1.1.2	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%
1.1.3	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%
1.2 Engagement & Consultation														
1.2.1	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%
1.2.2	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	0%
1.2.3	<50%	>50%	<50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	100%	<50%	0%
1.3 Customer Satisfaction														
1.3.1	>50%	100%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	0%	<50%	<50%	0%
1.3.2	<50%	100%	<50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	<50%	>50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1.3.3	<50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	0%	100%	<50%	0%
1.3.4	<50%	100%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	100%	0%	100%	<50%	<50%
1.3.5	<50%	100%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	0%	100%	<50%	<50%
2 The Culture of the Organisation														
2.1 Leadership, Policy & Culture														
2.1.1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
2.1.2	>50%	100%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	0%	0%	<50%
2.1.3	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%
2.1.4	>50%	100%	>50%	<50%	100%	<50%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
2.1.5	100%	<50%	100%	>50%	100%	>50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	100%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
2.1.6	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
2.2 Staff Professionalism & Attitude														
2.2.1	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	100%
2.2.2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	>50%
2.2.3	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	>50%	0%	0%	<50%	>50%
2.2.4	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
2.2.5	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%

3 Information & Access															
3.1 Range of Information															
3.1.1	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	
3.1.2	100%	100%	100%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	100%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	
3.2 Quality of Information															
3.2.1	>50%	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	
3.2.2	>50%	100%	100%	<50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	0%	
3.2.3	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	
3.2.4	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	
3.3 Access															
3.3.1	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	100%	
3.3.2	<50%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	0%	<50%	>50%	0%	<50%	<50%	
3.3.3	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	
3.4 Cooperative working with other providers, partners & communities															
3.4.1	>50%	0%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	
3.4.2	<50%	0%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	
3.4.3	>50%	0%	0%	<50%	100%	<50%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	
4 Delivery															
4.1 Delivery Standards															
4.1.1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	100%	
4.1.1	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	0%	<50%	<50%	>50%	
4.1.3	<50%	100%	100%	>50%	100%	>50%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	0%	<50%	<50%	0%	
4.2 Achieved Delivery & Outcomes															
4.2.1	<50%	100%	100%	<50%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	
4.2.2	>50%	<50%	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	>50%	0%	<50%	>50%	<50%	
4.2.3	<50%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	<50%	100%	0%	<50%	>50%	
4.2.4	>50%	0%	0%	<50%	>50%	<50%	100%	<50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	100%	
4.3 Deal effectively with problems															
4.3.1	<50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	0%	<50%	>50%	
4.3.2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	
4.3.3	<50%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	
4.3.4	<50%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	
4.3.5	>50%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	0%	<50%	<50%	0%	
4.3.6	>50%	100%	100%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	
5 Timeliness & Quality of Services															
5.1 Standards for timeliness & quality															
5.1.1	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	
5.1.2	>50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	
5.2 Timly Outcomes															
5.2.1	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
5.2.2	100%	100%	>50%	<50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	
5.2.3	<50%	100%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
5.2.4	>50%	100%	100%	<50%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	
5.2.5	>50%	100%	100%	<50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	<50%	<50%	
5.3 Achieved Time Delivery															
5.3.1	>50%	100%	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	0%	<50%	<50%	<50%	
5.3.2	>50%	<50%	<50%	>50%	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	0%	<50%	<50%	<50%	
5.3.3	>50%	100%	100%	>50%	>50%	>50%	100%	>50%	>50%	<50%	0%	<50%	<50%	<50%	

Appendix 2 – CSE Criteria

1.1	CUSTOMER IDENTIFICATION
	Element
1.1.1	We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.
1.1.2	We have developed Customer Insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.
1.1.3	We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and Disadvantaged Groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.
1.2	ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION
1.2.1	We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.
1.2.2	We have made the consultation of Customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.
1.2.3	We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with Customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.
1.3	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
1.3.1	We use reliable and accurate methods to measure Customer satisfaction on a regular basis.
1.3.2	We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of Customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.
1.3.3	We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of Customer service, as well as specific questions which are informed by customer Insight.
1.3.4	We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.
1.3.5	We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing Customer experience, including improved customer satisfaction.
2.1	LEADERSHIP, POLICY & CULTURE
2.1.1	There is corporate commitment to putting the Customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.
2.1.2	We use Customer Insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.
2.1.3	We have policies and procedures which support the right of all Customers to expect excellent levels of service.
2.1.4	We ensure that all Customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by Feedback and the measurement of customer experience.

2.1.5	We protect Customers' privacy both in face-to-face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.
2.1.6	We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.
2.2	STAFF PROFESSIONALISM & ATTITUDE
2.2.1	We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering Customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.
2.2.2	Our staff are polite and friendly to Customers and have an understanding of customer needs.
2.2.3	We prioritise Customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.
2.2.4	We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.
2.2.5	We value the contribution our staff make to delivering Customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.
3.1	RANGE OF INFORMATION
3.1.1	We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our Customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge.
3.1.2	Where there is a charge for services, we tell our Customers how much they will have to pay.
3.2	QUALITY OF INFORMATION
3.2.1	We provide our Customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels.
3.2.2	We take reasonable steps to make sure our Customers have received and understood the information we provide.
3.2.3	We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of Customers.
3.2.4	We can demonstrate that information we provide to our Customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.
3.3	ACCESS
3.3.1	We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.
3.3.2	We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements and offer better choices.
3.3.3	We ensure that where Customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.

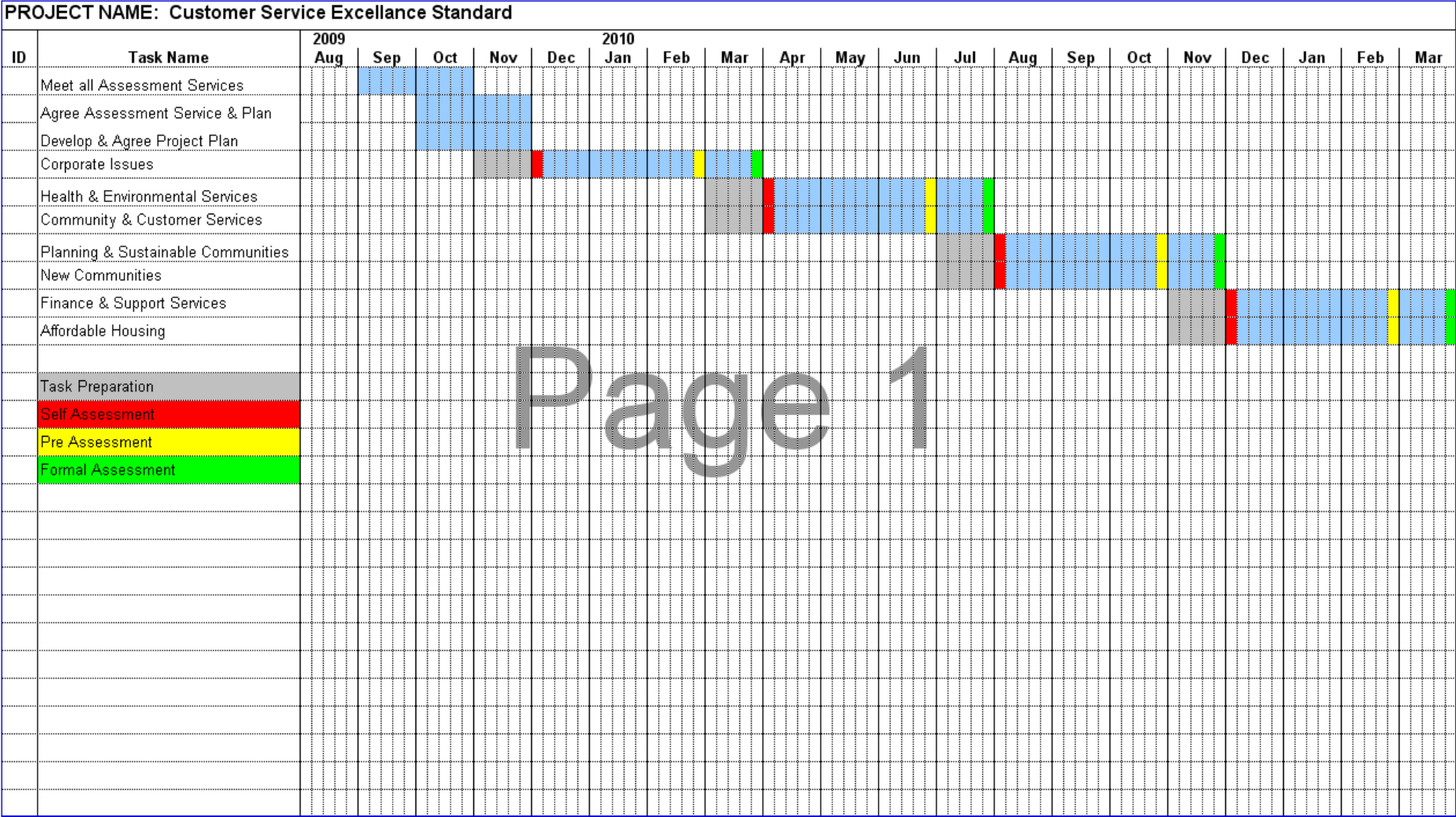
3.4	COOPERATIVE WORKING WITH OTHER PROVIDERS, PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES
3.4.1	We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our Customers.
3.4.2	We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.
3.4.3	We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.
4.1	DELIVERY STANDARDS
4.1.1	We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.
4.1.2	We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.
4.1.3	We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.
4.2	ACHIEVED DELIVERY & OUTCOMES
4.2.1	We agree with our Customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.
4.2.2	We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual Customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.
4.2.3	We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.
4.2.4	We have developed and learned from Best Practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.
4.3	DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH PROBLEMS
4.3.1	We identify any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to Customers, together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.
4.3.2	We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.
4.3.3	We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively, and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.
4.3.4	We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and Comments from Customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.
4.3.5	We regularly review and improve our Complaints procedure, taking account of the views of Customers, complainants and staff.
4.3.6	We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for Customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.

5.1	STANDARDS FOR TIMELINESS & QUALITY
5.1.1	We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of Customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.
5.1.2	We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.

5.2	TIMELY OUTCOMES
5.2.1	We advise our Customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.
5.2.2	We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.
5.2.3	We promptly share Customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.
5.2.4	Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the Customer the next steps and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.
5.2.5	We respond to initial enquiries promptly, if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.
5.3	ACHIEVED TIME DELIVERY
5.3.1	We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness and quality of Customer service and we take action if problems are identified.
5.3.2	We are meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of Customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards.
5.3.3	Our performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.

This page is left blank intentionally.

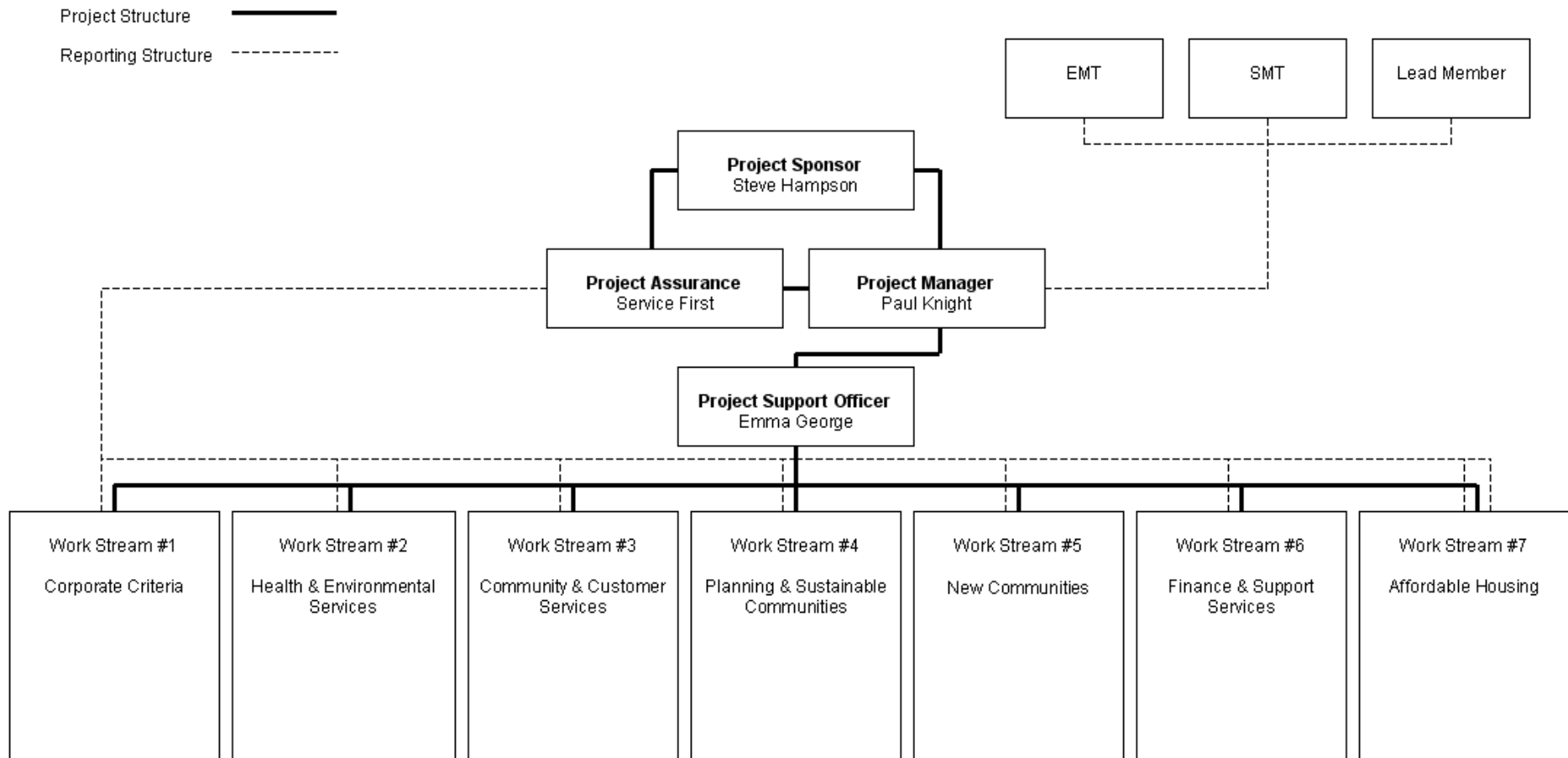
Appendix 3 – CSE Project Gantt Chart



Page 1

This page is left blank intentionally.

Appendix 4 – CSE Project Structure



This page is left blank intentionally.

Appendix 5 – CSE Project Risks

Risk No	<i>Risk Description</i>	Probability H/M/L	Impact H/M/L	Owner	<i>Countermeasures</i>	Action Date	Status (Open/Closed)
01	Cabinet does not endorse CSE	L	H	PK	Present a sound business case for the CSE.	Sep 09	Closed
02	Service First Budget Inadequate	H	H	PK	Identify and secure additional finance within the organisation.	Sep 09	Closed
03	Other Council Priorities	H	H	PK	SMT prioritise CSE Standard & free capacity from other projects.	Ongoing	Open
04	Limited member and/or officer buy in.	H	H	PK	Effective communication plan for both members & officers, sell the benefits & business case.	Ongoing	Open
05	Prolonged absence of Community & Customer Service Corporate Manager.	M	M	PK	Ensure EMT is kept well informed of progress via project Manager.	Sep 09- Nov 09	Open
06	Demoralisation in the event of a pre-assessment check failure.	L	M	PK	Present feedback in a constructive manner. Plan positive actions to ensure all criteria is met.	Ongoing	Open
07	Demoralisation in the event of a formal assessment failure.	L	M	PK	Plan positive actions to ensure all criteria is met. Re-assess.	Ongoing	Open

This page is left blank intentionally.

Date of Portfolio Holder Meeting	Agenda Item	Key	Purpose	Corporate Manager(s)	Responsible Officer(s)	Council Values / 3As
10-Dec-09	Draft Service Plan 2010/11	Y	Consideration of draft	Alex Colyer, Jo Mills, Dale Robinson	Alex Colyer, Jo Mills, Dale Robinson	All
	Responding to Customer Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy		Approval for Implementation & Publication	Paul Howes	Paul Knight	Listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all
21-Jan-10	Capital & Revenue Estimates for the Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency Portfolio 2010/11	Y	Consideration of estimates prior to Scrutiny and Cabinet consideration and Council agreement	Alex Colyer	Peter Harris	All
	Final Service Plan 2010/11	Y	Approval of final plan	Alex Colyer, Jo Mills, Dale Robinson	Alex Colyer, Jo Mills, Dale Robinson	All
04-Mar-10						
08-Apr-10						
Unscheduled	South Cambs Sustainable Parish Energy Programme	Y	For decision following Climate Change WG consideration	Gareth Jones	Richard Hales	

This page is left blank intentionally.