

Report to: Resources Decision Meeting, 22nd January 2009
Report by: Louise Wilders
Report title: Tell Us Two Things Pilot

1. PURPOSE

To provide an update on the Tell Us Two Things (TUTT) pilot and to initiate discussion on the future of the scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Matters for Consideration are noted
- That Members agree a way forward

3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Should we continue with the scheme for both residents and staff or should we utilise and publicise the Corporate Compliment, Comment and Complaints brand for suggestions from residents and re-launch TUTT for staff suggestions for the Efficiency Programme?
- Should we provide some monetary or other reward for adopted suggestions – particularly those realising efficiency savings?
- If the scheme is to continue as both resident and staff suggestions funding will have to be made available.

3. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The Tell Us Two Things pilot was launched on 19th May 2008 in response to the Key Delivery Target of 'introduce public and employee suggestion schemes to encourage innovative ideas and save money and improve services'. It was agreed by SDB that the pilot should be reviewed and a decision made after 6 months about its' continuation.

Whilst the scheme has resulted in a reasonable amount of contributions from the public, very few have resulted in any change to services and none have realised any efficiencies. This may be in part due to the fact that the vast majority of contributions were complaints or service requests rather than actual suggestions. However, what the scheme has demonstrated quite powerfully is that there are a lot of positive things we do as an authority, which are important to our customers and should therefore be noted. If we did not have this scheme we should consider how we would capture this data. In addition the scheme has demonstrated to all services the importance of effective communications in preventing confusion or lack of understanding for our customers.

The scheme has been less successful as a tool for staff suggestions, with very small take up. This may be as a result of poor buy-in and/or internal communications. With the Efficiency Programme about to be launched, it may be an opportunity to re-launch TUTT (supported by an appropriate communications strategy) specifically to attract suggestions from staff about being more efficient .

4. RESPONSES RECEIVED VIA TUTT

There have been a total of 289 respondents providing between them 512 comments/suggestions.

It may be of interest to note that during the same period 428 customers contacted us via the corporate comments, compliments and complaints scheme.

Flagship produced the largest number of responses, a total of 301, with peaks of 117 in June and 120 in September. Generally, following an initial surge the suggestions have tailed off.

Monthly breakdown of comments and suggestions by channel

| | Flagship | Survey Form | Email | Letter | TOTAL |
|-----------|----------|-------------|-------|--------|-------|
| May | | | 19 | 1 | 20 |
| June | 117 | 38 | 45 | 4 | 204 |
| July | 48 | 45 | 10 | 3 | 106 |
| August | 19 | 24 | 4 | | 47 |
| September | 120 | 5 | 10 | | 135 |
| October | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 304 | 112 | 88 | 8 | 512 |

A similar trend could be seen with staff suggestions, tailing off after initial launch. With only 26 suggestions in total being clearly attributable to staff, it is clear that the scheme has not been that successful for this particular audience.

Monthly breakdown of comments and suggestions by respondent type

| | PCC staff | External/ not known | TOTAL |
|-----------|-----------|------------------------|-------|
| May | 14 | 6 | 20 |
| June | 8 | 196 | 204 |
| July | 1 | 105 | 106 |
| August | 2 | 45 | 47 |
| September | 1 | 134 | 135 |
| October | | | |
| TOTAL | 26 | 486 | 512 |

During the same period 428 responses were received via our corporate comments, compliments and complaints process, which when broken down equated to 254 complaints, 145 service requests, 24 compliments and 5 comments.

Monthly breakdown of CCC responses

| Month and channel | Complaint | Compliment | Comment | Service request | TOTAL |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| May | 51 | 6 | 2 | 14 | 73 |
| June | 47 | 4 | 1 | 21 | 73 |
| July | 59 | 1 | | 41 | 101 |
| August | 47 | 6 | 1 | 26 | 80 |
| September | 50 | 7 | 1 | 43 | 101 |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 254 | 24 | 5 | 145 | 428 |

The services receiving the most comments/suggestions, from both the 'what we do well' and what we could do better', are Culture, Environment & Public Protection and Transport & Street Management and it would therefore appear that the areas covered by these services are very important to the public.

Breakdown by service and response type

| Service | "What do we do well?" ¹ | "What can we do better?" ² | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Adult Care | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Asset Management | | 2 | 2 |
| Audit & Performance Improvement | | 2 | 2 |
| Building Schools for the Future | | 1 | 1 |
| Children & Young People | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| Community Housing | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Community Learning | | | 0 |
| Community Safety | 1 | 20 | 21 |
| Culture | 62 | 67 | 129 |
| Customer Services ³ | 39 | 31 | 70 |
| Democratic & Community Engagement | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| Environment & Public Protection | 21 | 43 | 64 |
| Finance | 1 | | 1 |
| Health Improvement & Development | | 1 | 1 |
| Housing Management | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Human Resources | | 6 | 6 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| ICT | | 1 | 1 |
| Learning & Achievement | | | 0 |
| Legal, Licensing & Registrars | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Planning | | 10 | 10 |
| Regeneration & Business | | 3 | 3 |
| Revenues & Benefits | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Safeguarding | | | 0 |
| Transport & Street Management | 44 | 114 | 158 |
| TOTAL | 182 | 330 | 512 |

¹ The answers given by some respondents to 'What do we do well?' were not necessarily of a positive nature

² In some cases suggestions made were actually service requests

³ 'Corporate' comments and suggestions have been counted against Customer Services

5. OUTCOMES

Having evaluated individual responses and consulted with all service areas we have identified the following examples of outcomes which can also be found on the corporate website:

5.1 The suggestion said and we did...

- The suggestion said** - The transport system could be improved by banning lorries from day time deliveries, thus avoiding any more deaths like Mrs XXX.
We did - We agreed that we should protect pedestrians from risk in areas of high pedestrian activity such as main shopping streets and this would also assist our efforts to improve air quality. This suggestion has been proposed for presentation to the Cabinet.
- The suggestion said** - The Victorian Fountain at Kingston Cemetery hasn't worked for years. In a place where people are visiting their lost loved ones wouldn't it make a nice reminder of their visit to see the fountain restored to it's working glory.
We did - We agreed and the fountain has been repaired.
- The suggestion said** - Rearrange the book return at Elm Grove Library.
We did - We agreed and the counter has been rearranged with the book return on the left hand side.
- The suggestion said** – Let's have a dress down day once a month for charity.
We did – SDB agreed and following consultation with T2 and T3 this has now commenced.
- The suggestion said** – Let's do something about the internal telephone directory

We did – SDB agreed and a working party has been set-up to undertake this project.

5.2 Things we have learnt

Although the suggestion scheme has not produced any major transformational suggestions, it has shown us which issues are important to the public. It has also shown how effective Flagship is as a communication tool.

- The pilot has shown that in some areas we need to look at the information / publicity we have supplied to the public. For example, there have been a significant number of comments regarding recycling and why we cannot recycle more. Also the collection of garden waste was a significant issue, with many comments asking why we could not do this.
- The number of comments/compliments received regarding our parks and gardens shows how important these are to the public and how much they are appreciated.
- As most of the responses received from the public were either comments or compliments we need to look at the awareness around the 'comments, compliments and complaints' leaflet.

These matters have been discussed at SDB and highlighted to the relevant areas for action planning.

6.0 COST OF RUNNING THE SCHEME TO DATE

The cost of running the scheme can be broken down into two areas, being cost of publicity and forms and cost of administration resource as follow:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Publicity and forms | £ 2500 (per annum based on 6 months) |
| Resource | £ 10,000 (per annum based on 6 months) |

No funding was provided for this scheme and has been met to date from existing cash limits but this is not sustainable.

6.0 CHANGES REQUIRED TO ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME

An interim process was put in place to manage the pilot. This process involves considerable amount of hand-offs in order to corporately monitor outcomes and utilised where possible the corporate complaints database.

The administration process would need to be changed if we are to continue with the scheme and to this end we have been investigating software solutions such as TalkFreely (www.talkfreely.com). Such a solution would not only be able reduce the process administration and provide a more efficient system but would also encourage wider participation and provide far better management information. Estimated cost for such a solution is around £6000 a year and it would reduce the amount of resource time by about 50%.

Report Author: Louise Wilders

Signed:

Dated:

Checked by Legal Services: The City Solicitor has checked the report and has no comment to make on its contents.

Equality Impact: An impact assessment is not relevant as an interim assessment was undertaken with the launch of TUTT.

Background List of Documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972
None