

36 RECORDING OF TELEPHONE CALLS

The Committee heard from the Customer Strategy and Services Manager regarding the updated policy for recording of customer telephone calls. She explained that the Council created a call recording policy in 2009 however, following an upgrade to the telephone system and requirements to adhere to new legislation and compliance, the policy required a refresh. The Committee was asked to support the amended policy and recommend to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that the policy be adopted.

The Customer Strategy and Services Manager explained the main amendments to the policy, including a reduction in recording retention periods from 12 to six months and the option for customers to opt out of having their call recorded, although this would mean the call would be terminated. There was now a way to effectively pause the call recording whilst customers completed payment details, meaning no personal payment details would be kept and the call recording facility was to be rolled out to teams outside of Customer Services, as well as authority given to the People and Organisation Development Manager should calls be needed as evidence in disciplinary cases. There would be the means to email audio files to customers, should they request a copy of their recorded call, and there would be one telephone extension exempt from call recording in order for staff members to make confidential calls to their trade union or suchlike.

The Chairman enquired whether the customer would be informed that the choice to opt out of call recording would terminate their call and it was confirmed that they would be, they would also have the option to return to the call should they change their mind after they had pressed the corresponding opt out button. For example, it would be a recorded message informing them they could opt out and to press the # button. They would then be reminded this would terminate the call, if they wanted to return to the call, press 1.

There was a concern raised as to whether the retention period of six months was sufficient. It was clarified that, if relating to an open case, the calls would be kept for as long as the case remained open and would then come under the relevant retention policy, for example for complaints. It was also clarified that should a complaint be received in relation to a telephone call or specific incident, this complaint would usually be received very soon after the event, not six months or more after it occurred. This was accepted and the suitability of the six month retention period was agreed.

The Chairman noted that it would also work to protect staff members with regards to abusive phone calls, both by gathering the evidence of inappropriate language or behaviour from customers over the telephone but also by acting as a deterrent in the first instance once customers knew they would be recorded.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Members, unions and staff representatives support, note and recommend the amended policy to the Corporate Policy & Resources committee for formal adoption; and
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in

consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy & Resources committee and Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.