

THE SERVICE

The Member Services Unit provides the central management and administration of the Council's decision making process.

The continual development of the Constitution under the Local Government Act 2000 guides the working practices of this Section.

This unit is responsible for providing holistic support to: -

- Co-ordinate the Executive decisions making process
- Manage the co-ordination of decision making between Area Committees and the Executive
- Provide administrative and organisational support to Executive members holding portfolios
- Keeping all registers required under the constitution
- Keeping the signed and bound minutes of all meetings of the authority
- Maintaining the democracy pages of the Council's intranet and website
- Providing support for councillors including their training and development needs.

The unit also co-ordinates and provides committee management support to the following central committees/bodies: -

- Council
- Executive
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Standards Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Staff Consultation Panel
- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Audit Committee
- Local Strategic Partnership Delivery Board

CONTACTING US

When you contact us we will:

- be approachable, helpful and considerate
- treat you with courtesy and politeness
- listen and understand customer needs
- treat all customers equally

You can contact us in any of the following ways



By **telephone** on 01271 388253/388254

- We aim to answer 96% of all telephone calls within 6 rings (20 seconds)
- When we speak to you we will say good morning or afternoon, give the name of the service or person you are speaking to and ask how we can help you.
- If we cannot help you immediately we will let you know who you have been speaking to and when we will contact you
- If your call needs to be transferred to another section, the details of your enquiry will be passed on
- We aim to answer all messages left on answer machines within 24 hours (Monday to Friday)
- If you leave a message on an answer machine and it is likely to take more than 24 hours, the message will tell you when we will contact you.



In **person** (Mondays-Thursdays 8:30am to 5:00pm and Fridays 8:30am to 4:30pm)

- Visitors will usually be seen upon arrival
- We aim to see 80% of callers within 15 minutes of visiting one of our reception areas
- All staff will wear name badges
- You will be seen in a private place if you want to



In **writing** (Member Services Unit, North Devon District Council, 3rd Floor (Room 306), Civic Centre, Barnstaple, North Devon EX31 1EA.)

- We aim to reply to 98% of letters within 10 working days
- Where we are unable to respond in the above time, we will advise when a response can be expected and who is dealing with the matter
- Responses will be typed and easy to understand



By **computer** by sending us an e-mail (member.services@northdevon.gov.uk)

- Contact through e-mail will be subject to the same standards as contacting us in writing.
- We aim to reply to 100 of emails within 24 hours

STANDARDS OF SERVICE

We will tell you when we are reaching our standards through the local press, on the Council's website at www.northdevon.gov.uk and in the Council newspaper.

In addition to the above standards, the following are specific to this service :

Agenda and reports for meetings that are available for public inspection shall be made available to the public at least five clear working days before the meeting except that

- where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, a copy of the agenda and associated reports shall be available for inspection at the time the meeting is convened; and

Minutes of Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings shall be published within at least two clear working days. Minutes for all other Committee meetings shall be published within at least five clear working days.

LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1972

Access to Information Act 1985

Local Government & Housing Act 1989

Local Government Act 2000

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000

NEW IDEAS AND IMPROVEMENTS

We will undertake surveys annually with our Members, the Press, other Business Units and our website for the public to help improve our services. We would appreciate your help and welcome any comments you wish to make. We will take into account your views and give feedback through the local press, Council's newspaper and website.

PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

We intend to get things right first time, but if things do go wrong we want you to feel comfortable about challenging us and making a complaint.

You can make a complaint by contacting the service direct by any of the methods previously listed, or you can ring the Complaints Line on 01271 388260.

We will acknowledge all complaints received within 3 working days and send a full response within 10 working days.

Should the response be longer than 10 working days we will contact you and let you know when we will be able to reply.

If you are unhappy with the response, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed. This will normally be undertaken by Customer Services.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you would like this information or any information we produce to be provided in alternative languages, in braille or on audio tape, please contact Customer Services on 388240 or e-mail us on customer_services@northdevon.gov.uk.

We aim to provide this information within 15 working days of any request. We will let you know if this is likely to take longer.

REVIEW

We intend to review our Charter every 2 years.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information on any of the services we provide or have any comments about how this Charter could be improved, please contact us on 01271 388253/388254

This Charter was produced on 8th June 2007