



Report To: Scrutiny and Overview Committee 7 September 2017
Lead Officer: Head of People & Organisational Development

Customer Contact Service Review of Performance 2017

Purpose

1. To present to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, performance information for the Customer Contact Service 2017 (**Appendix A**) for information and comment.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the information provided is noted, in particular the improvement in performance in comparison with 2016.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The report provides the mid year review of the operational performance of the Customer Contact Service from 1 January 2017 until 31 July 2017 inclusive.

Background

4. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee conducted the 2016 annual review of the operational performance of the Customer Contact Service in February 2017 and requested a mid year review of the current year's performance.
5. The Customer Contact Service was launched in December 2012 and, whilst performance in terms of the number of calls answered and resolved at first point of contact has been consistently good, the time taken to answer calls and the number of calls answered has been variable.

Considerations

6. During 2017, telephone calls have been managed in a more effective way and this has improved the performance of the contact centre significantly compared to 2016.
7. The service have used a number of methods during this year to effectively manage the volume of calls including:-
 - a) Third-party call centre to manage increased call volumes which resulted as the joint waste service implemented changes to bin collection within the district.
 - b) Temporary staff during peak periods to provide extra support.
 - c) Back office teams taking overflow calls during peak call periods.
 - d) Customer Contact Assistant role created following postal duties transfer.

8. The contact centre has been successful at recruiting excellent staff that start their career in local government by taking roles within the contact centre and then progress their career within the contact centre or other service areas of the Council.
9. There have been a number of staff who during 2017, have progressed their careers within the Council; this means that recruitment is a key activity for the contact centre and the council alike.
10. The service is working on agile solutions to enable the retention of staff within the contact centre for a longer period. These include the introduction of:-
 - a) Customer Service Apprenticeship
 - b) Senior Advisor role which will provide support to advisors/service area expert
 - c) Part-time Customer Contact Advisor roles.
11. The Customer Contact Service's operational performance is demonstrating an ongoing improvement. This follows a reduction in performance during 2017, as seen in **Appendix A**. This table shows performance for 2016/2017.

The key improvements are:-

- a) Call answered times averages have reduced
 - b) Call abandonment level rate has reduced
 - c) Performance Targets being met
12. Whilst there is an ongoing improvement in performance of the Customer Contact Service there are now opportunities to expand the scope and complexity of transactions taken.
13. The contact centre service is changing and will need to be more agile as the demands of the service change as residents contact the council using more electronic channels. The service will be looking at how they support back office teams as the digital by default project comes to its conclusion.

Effect on Strategic Aims

An innovative and dynamic organisation- Adopt a more commercial and business-like approach to ensure that we can continue to deliver the best possible service at the lowest cost.

14. The in-house customer contact service is providing a service to residents at substantially reduced cost; the current changes to the contact centre and reception are providing a continuously improving service to our residents, including an increase in the percentage of calls being handled. The service will look to build on this improvement further and actively promote self-service options to residents as service areas provide digital access to residents.

Report Author: Dawn Graham – Benefits Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713085