



Report To: Scrutiny and Overview Committee 4 February 2017
Lead Officer: Head of People & Organisational Development

Customer Contact Service Annual Performance 2016 – Performance Review

Purpose

1. To present to Scrutiny and Overview Committee the annual performance report for 2016 (**Appendix A**) for information and comment.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the information provided in therefor be noted, in particular the improvement in performance in the 3rd quarter of 2016/2017.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The report provides the annual review of the operational performance of the Customer Contact Service from 1 January 2016 until 31 December 2016 inclusive.

Background

4. Scrutiny and Overview Committee have conducted annual review of the operational performance of the Customer Contact Service since the service returned to in house in December 2012
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 performance for number of calls answered has been variable.
6. The service has been very successful in the recruitment of enthusiastic, dynamic and able staff who over a period have secured roles within the council as part of back office teams.
7. There is a work plan (see 12 below) which is being implemented within the service to improve the long-term performance of the team. This has many elements which means the performance of the team will improve incrementally as each part of the plan is completed.

Considerations

8. As already noted in 6 above the Customer Contact Service has been successful at recruiting excellent staff who progress their career is local government by taking roles with other areas of the organisation. There have been opportunities within the Contact Centre Team for career progression this year with two Team Leader vacancies. Following a recruitment and selection process this resulted in both roles been secured internally by Customer Contact Advisors who are keen to progress their local government careers.

9. It is proposed to establish a formal apprenticeship in Customer Services in line with the corporate apprenticeship programme. The Contact Centre would provide an ideal opportunity for this career option to be delivered and provide staff on training agreements who would be employed within the Customer Contact Centre for fixed periods of time.
10. The responsibility for postal services will transfer from the Revenues Team to the Customer Contact Service from the beginning of February 2017 following the retirement of the current post holder.
11. Following a recruitment and selection process two new staff have been appointed to a joint role which covers Postal Duties and Customer Contact Advisor duties. It is expected that these roles will provide additional support as they will take calls within the Contact Centre during the busier times (Mornings before post is delivered and early afternoon before post is dispatched).
12. The Councils "Digital by Default" project is already providing online forms; the next stage of the project will provide more options via the website for residents to access council services. The Revenues project is a key project and will shortly commence and is likely to be fully implemented by the end of 2017.
13. It is expected that following the completion of the project with some active promotion of self service options that the number of calls to the contact centre can be reduced significantly; currently call volumes for revenues and benefits amount to around 30% of the total call volume (3000-4000 calls monthly).
14. The Digital by Default corporate project will enable incremental performance improvement in the Customer Contact Service as service areas embrace and enable residents to access their services using electronic means.
15. **Customer Contact Service Work Plan**

Completed since November 2016:

- Advanced Call Coaching has commenced and continues for all advisors
- Training of Environmental Health resources team to take calls during peaks
- Recruitment of two new staff for twin Postal/Customer Advisor Role

The work plan has several parts to this plan and is agile as work is completed and new opportunities identified.

Current Plan

- Complete the review and refresh business processes for handling calls for all service areas with aim to reduce processes and minimise the administration time
- Review of options with current telephony provider to manage calls more effectively during busy periods.

- Investigate alternative options to provide overflow call handling in times of peak demand periods.
- Contribute to corporate wide strategy to encourage greater website take up from those residents who can use online service options
- Implement a digital reception service to improve customer service
- Contribute to the Review of Reception and Public Meeting Room Accommodation
- Implement corporate postal arrangements and work with service areas to reduce paper mail and increase email and digital options

16. The Customer Contact Service operational performance is demonstrating an ongoing improvement. This follows a reduction to performance during the 2nd quarter of 2016/2017 because of staff vacancies and annual leave which can be seen in **Appendix A**. This table shows performance for both 2015 and 2016.

The key improvements are:-

- a) Call answered times have reduced and have been at target since October 2016
- b) Call abandonment level rate has reduced
- c) Calls dealt at first point of contact percentage continues to exceeds the target of 80%.

17. Whilst there is an ongoing improvement in performance of the Customer Contact Service there are opportunities to expand the scope and complexity of transactions taken and increase the number of calls which can be dealt with at first point of contact.

Implications

18. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

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.

19. 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.

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