

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Portfolio Holder 11 March 2010  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Corporate Services) / Corporate Manager,  
Community and Customer Services

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### CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS PERFORMANCE MONITORING

#### Purpose

1. To review third quarter (01 October – 31 December 2009) performance against the Council's Customer Service Standards.

#### Background

2. In April 2009 the Service First Steering Group agreed to monitor performance against the Council's Customer Service Standards and other key areas of work including; national Indicator 14, complaints management and satisfaction with the reception service.

#### Considerations

##### Telephone Performance

3. Table one details telephone performance at the Cambourne offices including calls abandoned, the average call waiting time and calls answered within 20 seconds. Data is automatically collected by a software package called the TIM Professional System. During the first and second quarters it was not possible to extract data to measure the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds. During the third quarter it has not been possible to extract any data from the system. ICT have been made aware of this issue and are making efforts to rectify the situation.

**Table 1 Cambourne telephone performance**

Measure	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
<b>Calls abandoned</b>	<5%	4%	4%	Data Unavailable
<b>Average wait time</b>	<30secs	7secs	6secs	Data Unavailable
<b>Call Answered &lt;20</b>	80%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable

4. Table two details Contact Centre performance including calls abandoned, average call waiting time, calls answered within 20 seconds and switchboard calls answered within 10 seconds. The table shows that the Contact Centre continue to meet the targets set out in the service level agreement.

**Table 2 Contact Centre telephone performance**

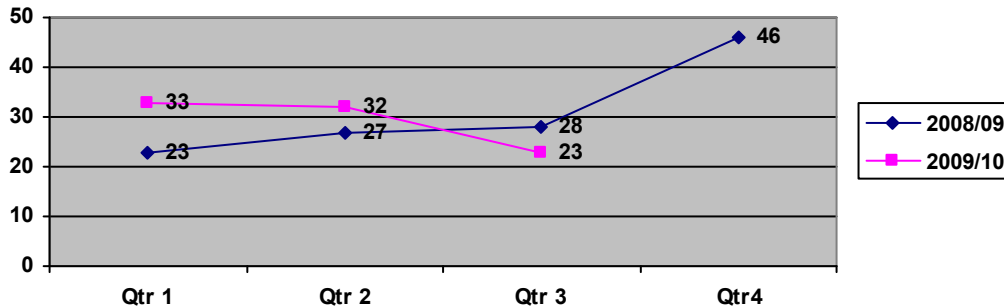
Measure	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
<b>Calls abandoned</b>	<5%	2%	3%	2%
<b>Average wait time</b>	<30secs	13secs	9secs	8secs
<b>Calls Answered &lt;20</b>	80%	84%	88%	89%
<b>Switchboard Calls Answered &lt;10</b>	80%	90%	92%	92%

##### Complaints Performance

5. Please note minor amendments to first and second quarter data have been made as a result of an internal data quality check.

6. In the third quarter of 2009/10 the Council registered 17 complaints at stage one and six complaints at stage two of the formal process. Chart one details the number of complaints (stage one & two combined) per quarter in comparison to the first and second quarters of 2009/10 and all quarters of the previous financial year 2008/09.

**Chart 1 – No. complaints (stage one & two combined) per quarter**



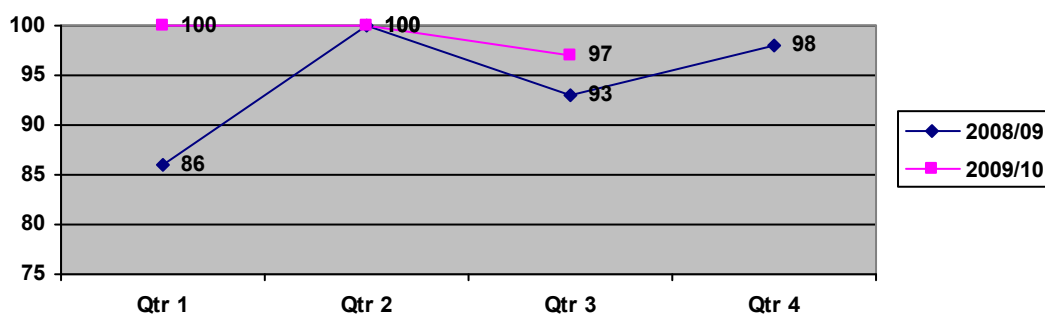
7. Table three details the number & percentage of complaints received by each Corporate Area.

**Table 3 – % complaints (stage one, two & three combined) per corporate area**

	Qtr 1		Qtr 2		Qtr 3	
<b>Planning &amp; Sustainable Communities</b>	11	29%	9	26%	10	35%
<b>Health &amp; Environmental Services</b>	5	13%	3	9%	5	17%
<b>Affordable Homes</b>	19	50%	17	49%	6	21%
<b>Corporate Services</b>	3	8%	5	14%	7	24%
<b>New Communities</b>	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
<b>Community &amp; Customer Services</b>	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%

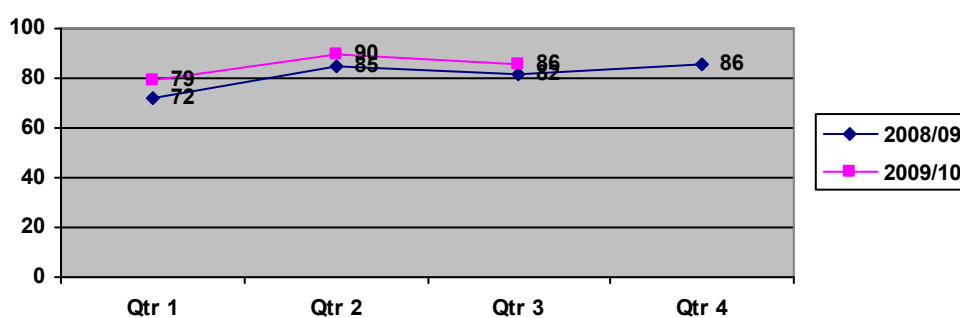
8. During the third quarter 97% of all complaints were acknowledged within three working days. One complaint failed to be acknowledged within target and has resulted in a 3% drop in performance.

**Chart 2 – % complaints (stage one, two, three combined) acknowledged within target**



9. During the third quarter 86% of all complaints were responded to within 10 working days for stage one, 20 working days for stage two and 28 days for stage three. Third quarter performance continues to exceed reported performance during the same period last year. It does however show a reduction of 4% when compared with second quarter data.

Chart 3 - % complaints (stage one, two & three combined) responded to within target



10. Table four details the number and percentage of responses meeting target by corporate area.

Table 4 – Corporate area performance - Complaints responded to within target

	Qtr 1		Qtr 2		Qtr 3	
<b>Planning &amp; Sustainable Communities</b>	7	64%	8	89%	7	70%
<b>Health &amp; Environmental Services</b>	4	80%	3	100%	5	100%
<b>Affordable Homes</b>	17	89%	16	94%	5	83%
<b>Corporate Services</b>	2	67%	4	80%	7	100%
<b>New Communities</b>	0	n/a	0	n/a	1	100%
<b>Community &amp; Customer Services</b>	0	n/a	1	100%	0	n/a

11. Table five details the broad theme of complaints by both total number and percentage. The predominant themes recorded in the third quarter were service delivery and processes and/or procedures. For the first time this in the 2009/10 financial year zero complaints were categorised as a failure to communicate.

Table 5 - Complaint breakdown by broad theme

	Qtr 1		Qtr 2		Qtr 3	
<b>Failure to communicate</b>	6	16%	3	9%	0	0%
<b>Failure to act</b>	4	11%	3	9%	2	7%
<b>Misinformation</b>	3	8%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Council Charges</b>	3	8%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Service Delivery</b>	7	18%	6	17%	9	31%
<b>Staff Conduct</b>	3	8%	4	11%	4	14%
<b>Processes and/or procedures</b>	12	31%	19	54%	14	48%

12. Satisfaction surveys were sent to all complainants registered within the first, second and third quarters; but only seven were returned. Only two respondents were satisfied with every aspect:
- (a) The way the complaint was handled
  - (b) The way in which we kept you informed
  - (c) The complaints process overall
  - (d) The length of time taken to respond to the complaint
13. This equates to a score of 29% against each aspect. The respective scores in 2008/09 were 24%, 38%, 24% and 29%. However, the number of respondents was also very low (10) and it is therefore not possible to draw reliable conclusions regarding progress.

#### Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints

14. The Local Government Ombudsman referred five complaints for investigation during the first quarter, three in the second quarter, and six in the third quarter. Table six breaks down the complaints by corporate area.

**Table 6 - Breakdown of LGO contacts by service area**

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	2	3	1
<b>Planning &amp; Sustainable Communities</b>	3		3
<b>Health &amp; Environmental Services</b>			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

15. The Local Government Ombudsman continues to investigate five of the 14 complaints. Of the nine completed investigations, the Ombudsman has found no evidence of maladministration.
16. Table seven shows the Council continues to meet the 28day average response time set by the Local Government Ombudsman. During the third quarter two responses failed to meet the target responding in 44 and 37 days. The average response time has risen from 22 days to 28 days as a result of this failure.

**Table 7 - Average response time for LGO complaints**

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
<b>Average Response Time</b>	23 days	22 days	28 days

- Learning from complaints**
17. Learning from complaints forms continue to accompany complaints when forwarded to officers to respond. A number of forms have been completed but significant improvement is needed to increase the number completed and returned.
18. Additional support has been sourced for the administration of the complaints system and it is expected that this will allow time to ensure officers submit this valuable information.

**Compliments**

19. 20 compliments were registered by the Customer Service Coordinator during the first quarter, 35 in the second quarter and 33 in the third quarter. Notable comments included:
- "I found your approach most helpful, informative and supportive"
  - "It's so nice to talk to someone who is so friendly and helpful"
  - "What a fantastic Service"
  - "Thank you for the prompt repairs on Christmas Eve"
  - "I greatly appreciate the swift and friendly way in which you dealt with my inquiry"
20. Table eight shows the number and percentage of compliments registered in the third quarter. The table shows that whilst the planning service generate a significant proportion of complaints, they continue to register the majority of compliments.

**Table 8 - Compliments (Qtr 3) by Corporate Area**

	Qtr 3	
<b>Planning &amp; Sustainable Communities</b>	11	34%
<b>Health &amp; Environmental Services</b>	10	30%
<b>Affordable Homes</b>	8	24%
<b>Corporate Services</b>	2	6%
<b>New Communities</b>	2	6%
<b>Community &amp; Customer Services</b>	0	0%

**Customer Satisfaction**

21. The Council has commissioned CELLO MRUK Research, an independent market research organisation, to conduct a survey with visitors to the Council offices in Cambourne.

22. The survey is undertaken using face-to-face exit interviews. CELLO MRUK use its own fieldwork teams of social interviewers all trained to Interviewer Quality Control Scheme Standards (IQCS) in accordance with the Market Research Society. Interviewers were present for two days in the first, second and third quarters. A total of 172 customers have been surveyed.

23. Respondents were asked a number of questions. The questions and results relating to our Customer Service Standards are detailed in the following tables.

**Table 9 - Length of time customer waited to be seen by a receptionist**

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
<b>Did not have to wait</b>	83%	66%	59%
<b>1-2 minutes</b>	10%	29%	33%
<b>3-5 Minutes</b>	3%	2%	4%
<b>6-10 minutes</b>	3%	3%	4%

*Base: Qtr 1 = 59 respondents; Qtr 2 – 58 respondents; Qtr 3 – 54 respondents*

**Table 10 - Percentage of customers offered a private room if requested**

Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
100%	100%	100%

*Base: Qtr 1 = 9 respondents; Qtr 2 – 2 respondents; Qtr 3 – 10 respondents*

**Table 11 - Percentage of customers seen within 10 minutes of appointment**

Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
100%	80%	80%

*Base: Qtr 1 = 13 respondents; Qtr 2 = 5 respondents; Qtr 3 = 10 respondents*

**Table 12 - Overall rating of reception service**

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
<b>Excellent</b>	68%	38%	47%
<b>Good</b>	30%	57%	51%
<b>Fair</b>	2%	5%	2%
<b>Poor</b>	0%	0%	0%

*Base: Qtr 1 = 60 respondents; Qtr 2 = 58 respondents; Qtr 3 = 54 respondents*

24. Results of the third quarter survey remain positive with 92% of customers not having to wait longer than 2 minutes to be seen by a receptionist and 98% rating the reception service as good or excellent. The third quarter results have however seen a decrease of customers not having to wait at all. There is also concern that two customers had to wait longer than 10 minutes for a pre-arranged appointment.

**National Indicator 14**

25. NI14: Reducing avoidable contact. By identifying customer contact that is 'avoidable', the Council and its partners are better placed to redesign the way services are delivered and information communicated. NI14 aims to assist the Council in reducing unnecessary, valueless contacts which are frustrating for the customer and inefficient for the provider.

26. Third quarter data capture took place on weeks commencing 30 November and 7 December 2009. The Contact Centre collected data throughout the whole quarter. Services collecting data include:

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Benefits           | Waste Collection      |
| Non Domestic Rates | Property Services     |
| Council Tax        | Options & Allocations |
| Planning Services  | Electoral Register    |
| Building Control   | Rents                 |

Licensing  
Pollution  
Street Cleaning

Food Safety  
Pest Control

27. Tables 13 and 14 detail the percentage of contact deemed avoidable and their classification.

**Table 13 - Percentage of avoidable contact**

Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
38%	31%	29%

Base: Qtr 1 = 3000 contacts; Qtr 2 = 6406 contacts; Qtr 3 = 3287 contacts

**Table 14 - Avoidable contact categories**

Unnecessary Clarification	Poor Signposting	Repeat Notification	Progress Chasing	Repeat Contact
<b>Qtr 1</b>				
34%	23%	8%	31%	4%
<b>Qtr 2</b>				
35%	26%	4%	31%	4%
<b>Qtr 3</b>				
25%	32%	3%	37%	3%

Base: Qtr 1 = 1122 contacts; Qtr 2 = 1996 contacts; Qtr 3 = 949 contacts

### Implications

28. Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Risk Management	Poor perception of local services / Council, leading to low NI scores on satisfaction ratings, resulting in low CAA performance and poor reputation.
Equal Opportunities	None

### Consultations

29. Performance against the Customer Service Standards was reported to the Service First Steering Group on 05 February 2010.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

30.	<b>Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b> The Customer Service Strategy sets out how the Council will meet its short and longer-term objectives to provide first class and accessible services to its customers.
	<b>Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.</b> None specific.
	<b>Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.</b> None specific.
	<b>Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.</b> None specific.
	<b>Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.</b> None specific.

## **Recommendation**

31. That the performance against the customer service standards is noted.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

South Cambridgeshire District Council Reception Survey Wave 3.  
National Indicator 14 Quarter 3 Report

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