

**To: Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 2 February 2016**

**Report of: Head of Business Improvement**

**Title of Report: Customer Contact Performance Report**

## **Summary**

**Purpose of report:** This report provides information regarding the performance of the Customer Contact Centre over a twelve month period December 2014 to November 2015, and the performance related service improvements implemented during that time.

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services

**Report author:** Helen Bishop, Head of Business Improvement

**Recommendations:** The Committee is recommended to:

- i) note the content of the report
- ii) make any recommendations that it sees fit to do so; and
- iii) consider when it may wish to receive any future update in relation to the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Service.

***Appendix 1 – December 2014 to November 2015 Performance Results***

***Appendix 2 – Capita’s Performance Results***

## **Background**

The Scrutiny Committee requested an update in December 2015 on the performance of the Council’s Customer Contact service

1. The Contact Centre aims to provide one point of contact for all enquiries related to Council services. Our Customer Service Standards provide detail of our performance commitment.
2. For our telephone customers we aim to ensure that 95% of our customers can reach us first time on our main service lines and that 90% of those enquiries are resolved at the 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact. This is in line with the industry standard.
3. For customers requesting an appointment, we aim to find a suitable appointment time within 3 working days, and see 90% of our customers within 15 minutes of that appointment time.
4. We survey our customers on the quality of service they have received both on the telephone, face to face and on the web and aim to have an overall customer satisfaction rating of 80%. To do this we use a system called Gov-Metric which categorises the feedback into Good, Average and Poor. We use the feedback to identify trends and work closely with other service areas to improve processes and customer service. Our performance is also benchmarked against over 100 other public sector organisations

#### **Contact Centre performance summary December 2014 – November 2015**

5. The following summary highlights our performance progress. Telephony performance for the period has been strong, achieving 94.40% of calls answered (refer to Appendix 1). This is an improvement on our year end performance for the financial years 2013/14 (93.13%) and 2014 15 (93.42%) and only 0.6% below our 95% target. Month on month we have resolved over 90% of enquiries 1<sup>st</sup> time. We have also delivered a high quality of service to our customers over the telephone which is demonstrated by the excellent survey results with well above 90% (refer to quality results in Appendix 1) of customers happy with the service they received.
6. Face to Face service has also been strong with 98.1% of customers who booked an appointment being seen within 5 minutes of their arrival time. Whilst customer satisfaction has not been as strong as over the telephone, we have seen a general improvement since April 2015 with over 80% of customers happy with the service they have received. It is worth noting that Gov-Metric evidence in general shows that customer satisfaction is scored lower for face to face contact as typically there is a higher expectation from customers who use this channel and feedback is generally based on the outcomes of their visit (the majority being Housing or Benefits related) rather than the standard of service they received.

Full details of our performance is attached at **Appendix 1**

## Performance Improvements Implemented During the Year

### Resilience Contract

7. Since 2012, Capita have managed our resilience contract for the overflow of all Council Tax and Housing Benefits calls. Capita's performance over this time has been consistently poor achieving on average below 90% of the 95% target, (see **Appendix 2 attached**). We were able to mitigate this with focused training to increase multi skilling of our staff. However, even with lower call volumes being sent to them they have been consistently unable to achieve our performance target.
8. Our resilience contract was retendered in 2015. However, it became clear from bid submissions that providers could not commit to our performance standards at a price which was affordable within the budget. Consequently, a business case was developed to bring the resilience service back in-house and employ 4 full time Customer Service Officers (CSOs) and 1 part-time CSO on 12 month fixed term contracts. Bringing staff back in house means we are able to train staff to our own standards and flex our resource when we needed to without being reliant on a supplier.
9. Following approval of the business case staff were successfully recruited in October and have followed an intensive training programme. . The Contract with Capita will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016. By removing the reliance of an external supplier and moving the resilience service in house we expect to see consistently higher performance on our call answering target.

### Review of holiday allowance

10. In conjunction with the review of the resilience contract we also carried out a review of the number of Customer Service Officers (CSOs) that were allowed to be on annual leave at any one time. The allowance was set at 5 CSOs on a Monday and 10 for the rest of the week. This accounted for 25% of our available resource and affected our ability to hit our performance targets, particularly throughout the summer months when annual leave requests are always at capacity. After completing a review and discussing options with the Union and staff it was agreed that there would be no change to the allowance of 5 CSOs on a Monday, but that it would reduce to 8 for the rest of the week. This was introduced at the start of the new holiday year on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and has already helped us manage our resources more effectively.

### Staff training

11. Since November 2014 we have invested 5,276 hours of internal Contact Centre training which has increased our multi-skilled workforce from 74% to 86%. CSO's trained to work with customers face to face has increased from 38% of our workforce to 60%. The increase in multi-skilled staff both on the telephone and face to face has provided greater capacity and flexibility within the team, enabling us to provide a faster and more efficient service to our customers.

12. This has been achieved by offering training out of hours over a period of a few weeks (we agreed to pay a set amount to encourage and gain commitment from CSO's to complete the training in full) this has enabled us to get existing and new staff quickly and efficiently trained. Evidence has shown that if we have 80% or more staff multi-skilled across the Contact Centre combined with a fully resourced staffing pool then we are best placed to achieve our performance standards. The impact of cross skilling and homeworking means we have been able to reduce our overtime.

### **Home working**

13. We have been working closely with ICT colleagues and coupled with continuing improvements to remote system access now have 10 CSO's who regularly work from home. A further 7 have expressed an interest and we will be looking to set these up early in the New Year. The benefits we have realised to date from home working are:

- A better resourced contact centre
- Staff retention
- Staff are more flexible and willing to work early/late shifts as they do not have to factor time taken on commutes to work
- Increases in performance as there are no distractions
- Staff personal resilience has improved – CSOs are telling us how much happier and less stressed they feel from being given the opportunity to home work
- Opportunities to create more hot desk spaces

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**List of background papers: None**

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