

Report to: **Resources Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **16 September, 2008**

Report of: **Head of Customer Services**

Subject: **Customer Services Update**

Ward: **All**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report seeks to update Resources Scrutiny Committee on the progress and performance of the Customer Services unit.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 In preparing this report consultation has taken place with the Executive Member for Customer Services and the Assistant Chief Executive.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following a period of poor performance in the summer of 2007 many actions were taken to alleviate the issues identified and several longer-term solutions were implemented (as reported previously to this committee).
- 3.2 The performance of the Customer Services Centre has improved throughout 2008 and temporary extra resources were identified with the aid of the Director of Finance & Corporate Services to try to prevent a reoccurrence of the poor performance experienced in 2007.

4. Current position

- 4.1 The current performance levels can be seen in the following chart:

Customer Service Centre Monthly Performance Report August 2008

	June			July			August			CSC Target
	CSC	Envirocall		CSC	Envirocall		CSC	Envirocall		
Volume of calls offered	23156	5063		23532	5339		19480	4600		
Number of calls answered	21639	4918		23152	5093		19285	4337		
% answered in 20 seconds	62	85		87	77		93	73		80
Average time to answer (secs)	40	10		9	17		4	25		20
% Calls abandoned	6.5	2.9		1.6	4.6		0.9	5.7		3.9
Calls abd less short calls	5.8	1.9		1.0	3.0		0.4	3.7		3.9

% Calls dissuaded	0.03	0		0.05	0		0.07	0		0.1
Average call duration (secs)	97	-		92	-		84	-		
Number of e-mails	128	-		118	-		103	-		
Number of faxes	14	-		5	-		3	-		
Number of reception visits	1024	-		1075	-		1006	-		
Number of Data Protection requests	0	-		0	-		1	-		
Average DPA turnaround (days)	N/A	-		N/A	-		2	-		40
Number of FOI requests	13	-		19	-		17	-		
Average FOI turnaround (days)	4	-		7	-		2	-		21
Number of formal complaints (including premature LGO)	7	-		15	-		5	-		
Average complaint turnaround (days)	Data not available yet			Data not available yet			7			10
Number of compliments	0	-		1	-		1	-		
Number of Ombudsman Complaints	0	-		0	-		3	-		
Average LGO Turnaround (days)	N/A 16 (YTD)	-		N/A 16 (YTD)	-		21 18 (YTD)	-		28
Customer Satisfaction (% Satisfied/Good/Excellent)	93	-		87	-		83	-		80

Comments:

Calls transferred to EDH via IVR option 1 = 977 (5.0% of total calls)
Calls routed via IVR option 2 (PC Consoles) = 5695

- 4.2 All Customer Service Advisors now handle information requests and give advice on over 20 services (including Council Tax, Planning & Development Control, Environmental Services, Sports Development and Asset & Property Management) as well as taking credit & debit card payments, sending out relevant forms and completing requests for service for a number of services e.g. bin deliveries, bin removals, missed bin collections, bin repairs and assisted pull-outs.
- 4.3 Customer Services also deal with e-mails, letters and faxes from customers as well as the main switchboard number for the council.
- 4.4 The CSA's also staff the reception area of Building 9 which is now the main reception area for customers on the site.

- 4.5 During mid-2008 the corporate Post Room function was transferred to Customer Services as identified under the Best Value Review of Support Services and the department is working with Internal Audit to improve security and processes for the handling of incoming and outgoing post.
- 4.6 Customer Services also deals with, and investigates, all formal complaints about the council's services and also handles all investigations of complaints received from the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 4.7 The department is also the point of contact for all requests for information via the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act, which is an area that is growing on an almost month by month basis.
- 4.8 During the spring of 2008 the Audit Commission inspected the council on the quality of Access to Services for customers. We are still awaiting the final report from the Audit Commission but any recommendations will be used by the Customers and Access workstream of the LGR programme when they are designing the service for the new council.
- 4.9 As of 1st September 2008 the Concessionary Travel section has transferred to Customer Services and customers will now be able to use Building 9 to apply for a bus pass rather than Building 5. This helps customers with mobility issues as there is parking directly outside of the building, it has flat access, and it is nearer to the bus stop for those using public transport.
- 4.10 It is unlikely that any further services will be migrated to Customer Services, due to the LGR process.
- 4.11 The Head of Customer Services is heavily involved in the Customers and Access workstream and is leading on several key projects, including: a new complaints process, a new customer charter, service standards and accreditation of the new customer service function within the new authority.
- 4.12 It is expected that this workload will increase as the LGR process moves towards Vesting Day and therefore some aspects of the day to day management of the Customer Services department will be handled by the Supervisors.

5. Implications

- 5.1 **Financial** - There are no financial implications.
- 5.2 **Legal** - There are no legal implications.
- 5.3 **Policy** - There are no policy implications.
- 5.4 **Risk** - There are no risks as this report is for information only.
- 5.5 **Communications** - There are no communications implications.
- 5.6 **Corporate** - There are no implications although the continued development of the Customer Service Centre is central to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority of Quality services for all and of improving access to services for customers.

5.7 **LGR** – The work of the Customer Services department will be merged into the work of the Customer & Access workstream and then into the work of the new council.

5.8 **Equality and diversity** - There are no equality and diversity implications.

5.9 **E-Government** - There are no implications for the e-Government agenda of the Council.

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Resources Scrutiny Committee notes the information within this report and recognises the work undertaken so far in the development of the Council's Customer Services Centre.