



## **REPORT TO BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE – 10 JANUARY 2019**

### **PROPOSED SCRUTINY PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **1 Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1.1 Discuss and agree the development of a scrutiny programme for the Business Services Committee for the coming 12 month period.**
- 1.2 Note that Customer Services will be the first service area to consider and that an initial informal workshop has been set up to take place after the Committee meets on 10 January, 2019, to take this forward.**

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1** When the new Scheme of Governance was adopted by the Council two years ago, it was envisaged that policy committees would undertake appropriate scrutiny in their own service areas, in lieu of the scrutiny work no longer resting with what is now the Audit Committee. This report seeks to set out the focus and method for appropriate scrutiny for the Committee and the initial topic areas for consideration. This is in addition to the power that the Committee has to decide to follow the committee review process, should it wish to do so, on an issue before it.
- 2.2** The method is expected to be through informal workshops throughout the year, which will aim to be inclusive in relation to involving both internal and external stakeholders who can appropriately contribute to the area/service in question. This includes impacts/linkages with all Council/Integrated Joint Board services and therefore other committees. It is proposed that this is covered as part of the informal workshop.
- 2.3** Customer Services delivers a wide range of services to customers at first point of contact from a variety of different channels, including telephony, face to face, @Abshirehelp twitter feed and internet enquiries. Additionally, Customer Services administers and oversees all feedback information, including corporate complaints, and acts as mediator between services and customers for escalated complaints.
- 2.4** The objective is to provide a high-quality customer service where customers are able to get the information they need, and to transact with the Council in a way that meets their needs. To do this, the service must maximise the benefits that new technology can offer, making the service as efficient as

possible, in order to free up time for frontline advisors to focus on the customers who need to transact with the Council, using more traditional methods, either on the telephone or in person.

- 2.5 The data supporting a review of the service is attached at Appendix 1. This highlights high satisfaction with call handling through the Contact Centre, and the depth of service provided at first point of contact. However, it also highlights the significant number of calls that are currently going unanswered. It also highlights that the number of calls being made to the Contact Centre remains static, despite more services than ever before being made available online and the increased wait time to get through to a Contact Centre advisor.
- 2.6 The data in Appendix 1 also demonstrates the continued increase in customers making use of Service Points (with a predicted increase of 1,000 customers in 2018/19). In addition to serving customers with a range of Council services, the Service Point team also handles internet enquiries on behalf of Housing, Roads, Waste and many aspects of Social Care.
- 2.7 Making a payment is one of the most frequent routine transactions between the Council and a customer/service user. In 2017/18, some 174,231 counter payment transactions were made across the Service Point and Collection Office network, with 122,162 payments relating to cash and cheque payments, to a value of £25,787,548.28. From a business perspective, this relates to anything from 38% to 52% of the footfall, dependent on the Service Point location. There has been a year on year reduction in the number of cash/cheque counter transactions as service users migrate to other forms of payment more convenient to their needs.
- 2.8 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that it complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

### 3 Discussion

- 3.1 In order to modernise the service offered to customers, a potential scope for the review of Customer Services is as follows:
- To provide modern and efficient contact channels for our customers, incorporating appropriate use of digital and automated services.
  - To deliver **all** frontline customer contact channels by a multi-skilled, professional Customer Services team (phone, face to face, web chat, email)
  - Develop Service Points which offer services tailored to the needs of the community, including self-serve and community hubs
  - Deliver customer service training based on job profiles and supporting service improvement
  - Deliver a more streamlined way to handle the internet enquiries completed on behalf of services
  - Support customers who don't know how to use a computer to be able to access services online

- Deliver improvements through telephony, including voice recognition option, waiting time notification, automated options for simple transactions, and integrated messaging, where voicemails left by customers are queued and handled by advisors
- Deliver improvements through Customer Relationship Management (CRM), including streamlining processes, integration with legacy systems and web chat functionality
- Review funding models to support the delivery of the service

3.2 For clarity, the effectiveness of the service provided as an outcome of this work will be a key consideration. Equally, the expectation will also be that we fully assess the opportunity for efficiencies and savings as part of this work. These two principles will be applied consistently through any review/scrutiny work undertaken through the work with the Committee.

3.3 Additional topic areas for future consideration include ICT Services and Repairs and Maintenance – both across the Council and not restricted to Business Services. Both these areas have been identified by members as areas of interest and, subject to Committee approval, will be taken forward as part of a programme of work in 2019.

#### **4. Scheme of Governance**

The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section C.6.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance, as it relates to scrutinising and reviewing the effectiveness of policy implementation or service delivery.

#### **5. Implications and Risks**

5.1 An equality impact assessment (EIA) will be developed to support the programme plan and to ensure that equalities considerations are given a high profile throughout the review and any subsequent changes to service delivery.

5.2 The purpose of this report is to update, so there are no staffing, financial and Town Centre First implications arising from the report at this time. However, there are likely to be significant implications across all areas as the review comes forward with recommendations and these matters will all be carefully considered as part of the review.

5.3 The following risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Corporate Level](#):

- ACORP004 Business and organisational transformation

**Ritchie Johnson**  
**Director of Business Services**

November, 2018



## Appendix 1

The Contact Centre is the Council's main telephony channel within Aberdeenshire Council. The team consists of 22.4 full time equivalent staff and is presented with up to 22,000 calls per month, with around 85% of the calls being resolved at first point of contact by our multi-skilled advisors. Contact Centre annual statistics are as follows:

### **Contact Centre**

Annual statistics, Jan – Dec 2015: **249,476 calls answered**

Annual statistics, Jan – Dec 2016: **226,580 calls answered**

Annual statistics, Jan – Dec 2017: **225,270 calls answered**

10 month statistics, Jan – Oct 2018: **145,165 calls answered**

Call volumes, average waiting times and associated figures for comments and complaints around the Contact Centre for the period April to October 2018 are as follows:

Month	Presented Call Volume	Answered Call Volume	Average Wait Time (mins)	Maximum Wait Time (mins)	Comment Received	Complaints Received
April	23072	14359	4.18	20.07	58	5
May	27106	15075	4.43	20.25	63	3
June	21106	13834	4.26	32.48	39	2
July	23460	12183	7.19	32.33	68	2
August	22664	14222	5.16	32.07	52	6
September	19457	13467	4.26	31.10	36	2
October	24324	14150	5.00	29.14	22	5

Average incoming presented call volumes since 2015 to date have remained fairly static, averaging at around 272,555 per annum.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys around our service delivery are completed on a percentage of calls incoming to the Contact Centre. All survey results are provided below:

### **Satisfaction Surveys (Target 95% Satisfaction)**

Year	No. of Customers Surveyed	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2017/18	410	96.04%	93.81%	92.77%	91.15%
Apr - Sept 2018	201	93.81%	89.77%	---	---

*Satisfaction Surveys not meeting target due predominately to lack of service delivery (i.e. bins not being emptied or delivered, roads not being gritted. There is however a small amount of dissatisfaction due to call wait time.)*

### **First Point of Contact Resolution in the Contact Centre (84%)**

Year	No. Resolved at First Point	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2017/18	194996	90.1%	96.3%	91.3%	93.7%
Apr - Sept 2018	79763	95.7%	96.2%	---	---

## Service Points

Our Service Point team have 17.15 full time equivalent staff, split over 6 offices. The Service Point Network at present is: Peterhead, Banff, Turriff, Ellon, Huntly & Inverurie.

Opening times at present for all Service Points are 8.45 to 17.00, Monday to Friday, with the standard practice of lunchtime opening in the majority of locations.

Annual statistics, Jan – Dec 2015: **75,777 customers served**  
 Annual statistics, Jan – Dec 2016: **108,226 customers served**  
 Annual statistics, Jan – Dec 2017: **133,990 customers served**  
 10 month statistics, Jan – Oct 2018: **112,590 customer served**

On analysing the average monthly figures to date this calendar year, we are predicting an increase of around 1000 customers this year visiting Service Points. Additionally the team handle the majority of the internet enquiries at front-line for Housing, Roads, Waste and many aspects of Social Care.

Service Points are self funded at the initial workspace project outset via a review, where monies are transferred from services around current costs to support individual receptions.

### Cash/Cheque Collection Analysis

Making a payment is one of the most frequent routine transactions between the Council and a customer/service user. In 2015/16 some 213,698 counter payment transactions were made across the Service Point and Collection Office network, with 153,153 payments relating to cash and cheque payments to a value of £31,569,777. From a business perspective, this relates to anything from 38% to 52% on our footfall dependent on the Service Point location. There has been a predominate year on year reduction in the number of cash/cheque counter transactions as service users migrate to other forms of payment more convenient to their needs. Customer trends indicate that attitudes towards how individuals wish to pay have slowly changed, as indicated in the undernoted table:

	<b>Service Point Cash % reduction</b>	<b>Service Point Cheque % reduction</b>
2013-2014	4.26%	10.41%
2014-2015	9.26%	13.45%
2015-2016	10.21%	11.55%
2016-2017	15.06%	10.70%
2017-2018**	+2.91% **	+ 74.84% **
Apr 2018 to Oct 2018	38.53% to date	32.38%

*\*\*Increase in cash and cheques in 2017/18 due to Inverurie Service Point opening on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2017.*

A number of councils have chosen to move cash and cheque payments back into local communities to strengthen partnership with local businesses and assist in economic sustainability, in addition to offering customers more flexible opening times – including Fife,

Argyll & Bute, Highland, Angus, Shetland & Stirling.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys around service delivery are completed on a percentage of customers visiting Service Points. In addition, staff are performance managed around first point of contact resolution. Both survey results are provided below:

Satisfaction Surveys (Target 95% Satisfaction)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Customers Surveyed</u>	<u>Quarter 1</u>	<u>Quarter 2</u>	<u>Quarter 3</u>	<u>Quarter 4</u>
2017/18	187	100%	100%	100%	100%
Apr - Sept 2018	81	100%	100%	---	---

First Point of Contact Resolution in Service Points (84%)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. Resolved at First Point</u>	<u>Quarter 1</u>	<u>Quarter 2</u>	<u>Quarter 3</u>	<u>Quarter 4</u>
2017/18	131353	99.8%	99.4%	99.3%	99.4%
Apr - Sept 2018	67752	97.8%	99.3%	---	---

