

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023  
**Subject:** Customer Portfolio  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Alan Lion

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Customer Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Customer Service**

### **Data Capture**

Our challenge to date has been a lack of data on analytics to help us improve our customer service. Namely, why customers need to call us, what the blockers are to using digital as well as visibility of our end-to-end customer journey for calls which needs to be transferred to Technical Officers. We are shortly launching the Data Capture process which will address these challenges.

When customers call our contact centre the Officer will capture the reason for the call, whether it's a repeat call chasing a lack of response and feedback on why the customer chose to make a phone call rather than self-serve online.

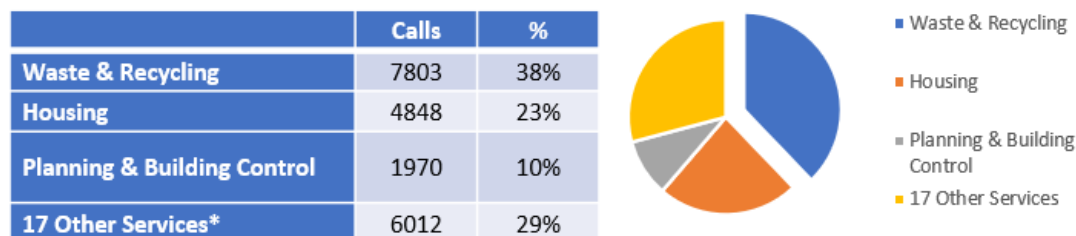
If the call requires a technical response the relevant area will receive a 'contact request' and the customer will be provided with a reference number. Customers will no longer be transferred to a voicemail and asked to leave a message, with this new process all calls will be logged and tracked until resolution. Corporately we are looking to agree an SLA of 24 hours for the initial customer call to be responded to. The relevant Officer will be required to respond to the 'contact request' confirming the customer has been contacted and adding notes as to what action has been taken.

The benefits of this process are:

- Customer service and confidence improves with timely responses
- The issue of phones not being answered will be resolved – as long as initial contact is made via the contact centre
- First point resolution within the contact centre increases as transparency of technical replies will increase Officer knowledge
- Visibility and transparency on service area performance through reporting
- Improved responses will reduce repeat calls
- Digital blockers identified and those residents who will benefit from digital coaching are identified

## Contact Centre

The contact centre continues to be impacted by the ongoing waste situation with 38% of calls received relating purely to missed collections for quarter 3 (see breakdown below). We are also experiencing significantly high volumes of formal complaints, 128 in total for quarter 3 of which 40% are missed waste collection related. Q3 2021 (same period for comparison) 64 formal complaints were received.



\*Rolled up 17 Service Areas as the data is small compared to the top 3 who are the "Big Hitters"

## Community Hub

Footfall and use of The Hub continue to increase, for quarter 3 592 residents used The Hub a 30% increase on the previous quarter. Popular services continue to be EFDC Homelessness, Epping Forest Foodbank and EFDC Benefits. Some new partners have come onboard such Essex Wellbeing Services, Essex Family Support Solutions and Essex Police.

## Members Portal

Customer Services have been working in conjunction with ICT to develop the Members Portal and the anticipated launch will be March. The portal will be the one stop shop for Members, providing access to all forms and information in the one place as well as single sign on. Members attending the January coffee morning received a demonstration of the portal and an opportunity to provide their feedback. Further engagement sessions for coaching are being planned, these will be tailored based on Member feedback. Coaching sessions will be offered as either virtually, one to one or group sessions.

## Payment Solutions

Following the closure of Debden cash office and the roll out of Allpay cards to Council Tax and Business Rate customers in November over £50,000 of income has been received using this new scheme.

Monthly income from the Debden Cash Office accounted for between 0.2%-0.5% of total income, and with total income variance each month considerably more than this it's not possible to identify which channels customers have shifted to globally. However, examining average Council Tax income at Debden for the last year and comparing it to the income of the new Allpay service at this early stage around 60% of income has channel shifted to this service.

To ensure we are offering the most cost-effective payment solutions as well as offering our residents the flexibility and choice of locations to make payments, we have now removed the payment kiosk from Waltham Abbey library and issued Allpay cards to residents. Likewise, the intention is to issue Allpay cards to Epping residents and remove the kiosks at the Civic offices.