

Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee

Date of meeting: 14 January 2021

**Portfolio: Customer and Corporate Support Services
Councillor Sam Kane**

Subject: Customer Service Update

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the update on 'what our customers are telling us' plus an update on our Customer strategy.

What our customers are telling us

Overall customer satisfaction – KPI 80%

Key customer frustration has been around missed waste collections and bin deliveries, which is being addressed plus feedback on ease of finding information on our website which will be addressed via our digital strategy. On a positive note, customers who have used our online forms have given good feedback on ease of self-serve.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
69%	71%	71%	

First point resolution – KPI 45%

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
49%	50%	47%	

Call causation codes were re-introduced 1/11/20 after a period of significant under resourcing in the Contact Centre. Call volumes since that date were 11,102 of which 673 calls were straight forward transfers to Qualis. If this significant volume continues, we will look at ways of improving. The next highest area for call transfers was Planning with customers requiring technical support.

Complaints - KPI 85% within SLA

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
88%	98%	89%	

Points to note;

A total of eighty-one complaints received. Some examples for complaints include noise issues taking longer to resolve as lack of access to resident houses to set up noise equipment. Qualis have seen a delay in parts supply causing some delays. Waste complaints related to crew behaviour and missed collection which is being addressed by the service area.

Call volumes as at 11th December

Call volumes remain on track to be consistent with previous quarters by end of Q3.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
27,556	28,169	21,506	

Corporate Communications

Looking forward to 2021, the current Council chamber webcasting kit is to be upgraded for hybrid meetings allowing Members and other participants to integrate seamlessly whether attending a meeting in person or remotely. Options are being explored to develop a new online community news application. Options include combining news output with other statutory and voluntary partners into a community focused platform provisionally titled 'District Matters'.

Customer Strategy

Note. The launch of the strategy to customers was delayed due to Covid-19 however this has now been launched via our website. Customers were invited to send feedback to customerstrategy@eppingforestdc.gov.uk but as yet no feedback has been received.

Internal Audit have conducted an audit of our Customer Service transformation plans and provide substantial assurance over the performance management of customer services and delivery of our transformation plans. Key actions from the audit are for Managers who have not completed the internal customer service health check to get it completed and for a long-term solution to be found for the 35% of cash paying customers who do not wish to switch to an alternative method of payment

'Fix the Basic's

Starting in Q4 the Contact Centre will be looking at how we currently capture customer feedback and how this data insight can be used to improve our customer experience.

For complaints, our policy has been reviewed and updated based on recommendations received from the Housing Ombudsman's Self-Assessment recommendations. New Team Managers will be attending complaints management training and further work will take place on root cause analysis for contact centre calls to determine trends and improvements required.

To ensure we are meeting our residents needs we are developing a new scheduling and call demand tool which will analyse calls received outside of current opening hours and call volume trends throughout the day. Key findings from this work will be used to review our call centre operations. Early indications are showing a significant number of calls on a Monday between 8am and 9am, our call centre currently opens at 9am.

To streamline incoming customer emails and enable effective reporting we have removed our 'contact us' email account which means all email traffic now comes through the one route. We previously had two routes in via 'contact us' and 'general enquiries'. Customers can still click on the 'contact us' link on the first page of our website directing them to the general enquiries form, from here they either self-serve using an online form or complete a general form sending their query to the contact centre.

'Customer Shoes'

The pilot for this behavioural training has now been held, with eighteen staff from across all service areas attending two one day sessions. Feedback has been extremely positive the next stage is for training videos to be made enabling the content to be available for all staff, this will be developed and launched in quarter 4. There will be a particular focus on managing difficult customer conversations, particularly when we cannot meet customers needs due to legislation. The emphasis will be on the fact that it is now what we do but how we do it that makes the biggest difference to customers.

A 'Customer Shoes' knowledge hub is being set up on Teams for all staff access. This will include *'all things customer'* with access to a wide range of information such as the internal customer service health check, phone guide by service area, complaints procedures/training for Managers, Digital Buddy information plus the Customer Shoes training once available.

Our 'Service Superstars' initiative proved very popular when launched during National Customer Service week and as a result will be run as a quarterly initiative via Perkbox.

Embracing New Technology

A programme working group will be developed in the New Year to bring structure and clarity on roles, accountabilities and most importantly the outcomes we are striving to achieve as a Council in terms of our Digital Inclusion programme.

New welcome lounge at the Civic Office

Our customer experience will be enhanced via a visitor management system enabling self-check in/out and ability to leave us customer feedback. In addition, once checked in Officers will be automatically notified their visitors have arrived for those who have booked appointments. For those customers arriving with general enquiries they will be greeted by a floor walker who will assist them via I Pads or coach them on using our online service via customer terminals.

Members Technology & Members Contact process review

Feedback was captured from Members and Officers on the use of the Members Contact process. Short term the decision has been made that all new Members enquiries are to be raised via Members Contact. Once Members are in discussion with Officers the conversation will then continue on a one to one basis with confirmation back to Members Contact once a query has been resolved. Longer term this process will feed into the development of the Members Portal.

A review of Members technology requirements is also underway to ensure the tools provided are fit for purpose and meet Member's needs. A working group has been set up and recommendations will be provided in due course.

Reason for decision: none

Options considered and rejected: none

Consultation undertaken: none

Resource implications: none

Legal and Governance Implications: none

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: none

Consultation Undertaken: none

Background Papers: none

Impact Assessments: none

Risk Management: none