

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR CUSTOMERS AND HUMAN
RESOURCES.****CUSTOMER SERVICES CENTRE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update members on the level of performance and customer satisfaction with the services provided by the Customer Service Centre and seek approval for the celebrations and associated communication planned to recognise this and mark the ten year anniversary of the centre.

Information and Advice

2. The Customer Service Centre was opened in September 2007. Originally it dealt with enquiries for a small number of Council services, the largest being Highways and Adult Social Care, with the aims of adding more services over time. The vision for customer services was to centralise the front door of Nottinghamshire County Council to enable a consistently high level of customer service to be delivered; improve efficiency; deliver back office savings; improve the experience for the public and ensure that more enquiries were resolved first time.
3. Since that time additional services have been moved to the Customer Services Centre and there is now a centralised approach to enquiry handling. The centre currently manages enquiries on behalf of the Council for over 400 services including Social Care, Highways, Waste, Blue Badges, Social Care payments, Travel and Transport, Registration and School Admission enquiries. The centre currently deals with approximately 700,000 enquiries a year on average.
4. Since opening there has been an ongoing efficiency and change programme which has resulted in a 300% increase in the volume and a significant increase in the complexity of enquiries. This is alongside a 60% reduction in the Customer Service budget. The nature of enquiries have changed as more straightforward enquires are moved to the Council's website with more complex adult social care enquiries resolved at the Customer Services Centre without the need for referral to professionally qualified social work or occupational therapy staff. This has contributed to savings in adult social care budgets and been supported by having an Adult Social Care team based at the Customer Service Centre and the co-location and joint use of infrastructure and technology with Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) colleagues.
5. The Infographic appended to the report provides a high level summary of activity over the 10 year period since the centre opened.

6. Current performance levels are good and in line with target Service Levels:

Target Service Level	Average performance level for Apr-Aug17
Call abandon rate less than 8%	7%
Call waiting time less than 30 seconds	34 seconds
80% of calls answered within 30 seconds	80%
ICS Servcheck* score more than 70% (*Qualitative customer survey conducted independently by the Institute of Customer Service)	89%
Complaints as a percentage of enquiries processed within the range of 0.25%-1%	0.04%

7. Earlier this year the Institute of Customer Services (ICS) undertook an independent survey of customers and staff. Following analysis of the feedback they have calculated 89% customer satisfaction rating with the service provided by the centre. ICS have then benchmarked the Council's results across a range of other private and public organisations. The Council scored higher than any other public service they sampled and scored higher than John Lewis and Amazon in relation to call handling.

8. The next improvement and transformation phases include:

- a. Working closely with Adult Social Care colleagues to implement a model which will provide customers with more advice and guidance, triage, signposting and support during their first contact with the Authority, resolving more enquiries at the front door, reducing hand-off and delays and the implementation of new approaches (known as the 3-tier model) to support customers more effectively by helping them to help themselves.
- b. Working with Concessionary Travel to introduce self-service for all bus pass applications.
- c. Increasing the channels available for customers, improving online self-service, webchat and providing text update functionality for reminders and information provision.
- d. Continuing to work with Highways to look at how multiple faults can be reported online and in a more streamline, efficient way.
- e. Supporting the School Admissions Service with their drive to move parents to online self-service.

9. As this is the 10 year anniversary of the Customer Service Centre some events are planned to coincide with National Customer Service Week. These include:

- a. Staff achievement awards celebration
- b. Member event planned for Thursday 5th October to recognise achievement of the ICS Servcheck results and officially celebrate the 10 year anniversary.
- c. Internal communication to staff every day during National Customer Services Week to raise awareness and celebrate good customer service across the Council. This will include items on the Chief Executive's blog; Intranet news items; Team Talk articles and sharing Customer feedback taken from letters, email and calls.

- d. External communications in celebration of being open for 10 years and the level of performance and customer satisfaction achieved (89% customer satisfaction rate).

Other Options Considered

10. Different options in terms of the events and communications plan to support this have been considered. The approach set out in the report is the most appropriate to recognise and value the additional effort and hard work of staff at the Customer Service Centre and positive impact of this for people who have received a service from the centre over a ten year period. The events are also designed to promote good customer service more widely and engage employees from across the organisation.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. To inform members about the performance of and customer satisfaction levels with services provided by the Customer Service Centre. To invite members to be part of the events and seek agreement to the arrangements to celebrate this and the ten year anniversary as part of National Customer Services week in October.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

There are no implications arising directly from the contents of the report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of the report.

Human Resources Implications

As part of the celebrations staff at the Customer Services Centre will be presented with certificates from the Institute of Customer Services recognising their excellent levels of performance and achievement of externally awarded qualifications. Recognising and celebrating good performance is a key part of the Council's approach to employee engagement which is essential to underpin good customer services.

The programme of activities as part of national Customer Service Week will also include the promotion of training opportunities and apprenticeships in customer services as well as information and advice more widely to employees to embed good customer service standards and practice across the whole Council.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

The Customer Service Centre designs, develops and provides services in a variety of ways which are accessible to service users and the wider public and ensure access to services by disadvantaged groups.

Implications for Service Users

Feedback from customers and service users in relation to the service provided by the Customer Service Centre has been independently analysed and resulted in an 89% satisfaction rating by the people using the services. This reflects how friendly and helpful staff were; whether inquiries were resolved at first point of contact and improved outcomes for service users. This feedback will be used and referred to during the programme of activity to celebrate 10 years of the Customer Service Centre as part of National Customer Service Week.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That members consider the performance of the Customer Services Centre and level of customer satisfaction and agree the programme of activities with associated communications as set out in paragraph 9 to celebrate this and ten years of operation of the Customer Service Centre.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 15/9/2017)

13. The proposals set out in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 15/09/17)

14. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (MT 17/9/17)

15. These are set out in the body of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All