

North East Derbyshire District Council

Organisation Scrutiny Committee

5 September 2018

Purpose of Report

To consider the report below that was recently considered at Cabinet on Wednesday, 1 August 2018 on the Customer Service Report 2017/18.

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

1 August 2018

Customer Service Report 2017/18

Report of the Customer Services Manager

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To provide information on the Contact Centres performance in relation to its Customer Service Standards for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018;
- To provide information on the number of compliments, comments and complaints for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018;
- To provide the Ombudsman complaints summary for 2017/18;
- To provide an Annual Summary on the above.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to its Customer Service Standards across the organisation and provides supporting evidence for Customer Service Excellence. Elected Members will note that Customer Service Excellence is compliance checked annually to ensure that the organisation still meets the standard.

Customer Service Standards

Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of the key customer service standards by quarterly period, together with the target and the cumulative performance for each standard. Although calls are currently only monitored via the Contact Centre at present it's with a view that Corporate calls will be reported by the next financial year following the implementation of the new telephony.

Telephones via the Contact Centre – See Appendix 1

Current targets within the contact centre are as follows:

- Average wait time is not to exceed 20 seconds
- 95% of calls to be dealt with by the Contact Centre without referral
- At least 80% of calls are to be answered within 20 seconds
- Not to exceed a 5% abandonment rate

Wait time – we endeavour to answer calls within 20 seconds (5 rings):

This shows the performance between 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 broken down quarterly. The report identifies at the end of quarter 4 the annual answered response rate; the Contact Centre had achieved 95% answered within the 22 seconds. Although out of target the call is still based on quality rather than quantity.

Not to exceed the 5% abandonment rate:

This shows the performance between 01st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, cumulatively the Contact Centre had a 2.7% abandonment rate on calls which exceeds their target.

Calls dealt with via the Contact Centre without referral to a back office:

Cumulatively the contact centre had achieved their target of 95%.

E-mails via the Contact Centre – See Appendix 1

Target 1 - 100% to be acknowledged within 1 working day

Target 2 - 100% to be replied to within 8 working days

For this reporting period, 01st April 2017 to 31st March 2018:

- 6,897 email enquiries cumulatively from the public were received through ConnectNE@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk
- All were acknowledged within one working day
- 100% were replied to by the Contact Centre within 8 working days

Cumulatively, performance over the year is 100%, which meets the target.

Reception 'Meet and Greet' monitoring – See Appendix 1

For the period between 01st April 2017 to 31st March 2018:

- 9,891 customers attended the DCO at Mill Lane with service requests or enquiries
- 100% of customers that required a service from the Contact Centre had all been seen within 20 minutes of their arrival in line with the Corporate standards

Web Chat – See Appendix 1

Web Chat is an access channel offered to customers via the Contact Centre, this access channel only went live on the 12th December 2016. This appears to be getting increasingly popular to NEDDC's customers without reducing other access channels footfall at this moment in time. If proven successful other departments within the organisation will have the opportunity to utilise this access channel within their own service area. Since implementing web chat within Customer Services during 2017 / 2018 web chat has also been rolled out to Revenues and Planning Development. An ongoing programme will continue throughout 2018 / 2019 to add more front line services i.e. Leisure.

Some Benefits of using web chat are:

- Support the council to meet the Corporate Plan aim of improving customer services.
- Support the Council in meeting its Corporate Plan target of increasing on line transactions of 20% each year.
- Support Customer Access to meet the Corporate Code of Practice and Standards and contribute to Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.
- Replacing enquiries made via face to face, telephony and email channels to self-serve channels (where appropriate) by providing more contact channel choice to customers. Increase service take-up among under-represented and vulnerable groups by providing a more convenient and flexible means of contact.
- Provides customers with immediate support \ another access channel to contact their council online.
- Data can be gathered for customer profiling, highlighting which areas of the website need updating with the latest information, hence reducing traffic for repetitive enquiries and also reducing the number of customers 'giving up' trying to find what they're looking for.
- Raises the authority's online profile as a modern forward-thinking authority.
- Links to the Strategic Alliance Transformational Programme 2015 – 2019 to support the realisation of service improvements and efficiency through technology.

For the period between 01st April 2017 – 31st March 2018:

- 2346 chats have taken place, 90 chats abandoned.
- Target of no more than 10% of chats to be abandoned, during the above period the abandonment rate at the end of quarter 4 there had only been a 3.9% abandonment rate.
- Target of 80% satisfaction rating during the above period

Customer Satisfaction Surveys in relation to web chat:

A customer satisfaction survey is available to the customer at the end of each chat following the Council's responses to the customer's enquiries / service requests. During 2017 / 2018 the percentage of customers that were satisfied with the outcome of their web chat was:

- 37.3% rated the service as Excellent
- 42.8% rated the service as Excellent
- 6.9% rated the service as Good
- 5.6% rated the service as Fair
- 7.4% rated the service as Poor

Overall rating for 2017 / 2018 rating good and above was 87%

Corporate Compliments, Comments and Complaints – Appendix 2

Compliments

Appendix 2 (A) shows the number of written compliments received for the period by department. In total 122 written compliments were received.

A good cross section of compliments was received from customers appreciating excellent service, including 49 for the Street Scene Services Department. 23 compliments were received for the Customer Services department, 23 compliments were received for the Leisure departments, 15 compliments were received for the Revenues department, Environmental Health received 5 compliments, Economic Development and Housing Options received 2 compliments each and Communications received 3 compliments.

Comments

Appendix 2 (B) shows the number of written comments received for the period. All 43 were acknowledged and passed to the respective department within the target time of 3 working days, for consideration when reviewing their service areas. 16 comments were received by the Street Scene Department, 10 comments were received for Leisure, 1 for Estates, 4 for Customer Services, 2 for Environmental Health amongst others showing within the appendices. Some of the comments received made changes and published on the website under 'You Said We Did'.

Complaints

➤ **Frontline resolution (stage one – 3 day verbal complaints)**

Appendix 2 (C) shows the number of Frontline Resolution complaints received by the Contact Centre service and recorded on the Complaints system by department where an investigation doesn't need to be carried out. The customer service standard for responding to these complaints is 3 working days. The majority of complaints do require some element of investigation that may take longer than 3 days; these are logged as a formal complaint.

➤ **Formal Investigation (stage two)**

Appendix 2 (D) shows the number of Formal Investigation complaints by department. 201 complaints were received during this period, with the exception of 6 complaints that were out of standard; all the other 195 complaints were responded to within our customer service standard of 15 working days.

➤ **Internal Review (stage three)**

Appendix 2 (E) shows the number of stage three complaints received for each directorate and service area. These are complainants who have already made a stage two complaint (formal Investigation) and still feel dissatisfied and would like to appeal against the outcome of the formal complaint. During this period, 17 stage three complaints were received, 15 of which were responded to within the standard of 20 working days, however 2 of the internal reviews were out of standard.

➤ Ombudsman (LGO)

Appendix 2 (F) shows the status of Ombudsman complaints for 2017/18. During this period, the Ombudsman had received 7 cases some of which were classed as premature as they had not exceeded the full Council's Corporate Complaints system and others were not upheld by the LGO.

Performance

Target for answering complaints within timescale is currently 100%.

Cumulatively, 98% of Formal Investigation complaints were responded to within 15 working days and 88% of Internal Review complaints were answered within timescale.

Summary for 2017/18

The following provides a summary of performance for compliments, comments and complaints for 2017/18 compared to the previous financial year of 2016/17, the following is noted.

- We have received 5 less comments compared to the last financial year
- We have received no verbal complaints compared to last year
- We received 70 more formal investigation complaints than last year
- We have received the same amount of internal reviews (appeal) complaints as last year
- We have had no cases upheld by the LGO during 2017/2018 compared to last year where 2 cases were upheld by the LGO, they had found Maladministration & Injustice and fined the authority.
- We have received 22 less compliments this year compared to last year

The above would appear to indicate that the Council has an easy to access complaints system, as recommended by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Customer satisfaction in relation to complaints

A customer satisfaction survey is issued to the customer following the Council's response to their complaint. During 2017/2018 the percentage of customers that were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint was:

- 60% of customers were very satisfied with the outcome of their complaint
- 20% of customers were fairly satisfied with the outcome of their complaint
- 15% of customers were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint
- 0% of customers were fairly dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint
- 5% of customers were very dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The report is to keep Elected Members informed of volumes and trends regarding customer service standards and compliments, comments, complaints and to remain compliant with the Customer Service Excellence standard.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 The report is to keep Elected Members regularly informed of volumes and trends regarding customer service standards and compliments, comments and complaints. No consultation or equality impact assessment is required.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Not applicable as the report is keep Elected Members informed rather than to aid decision making.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications with regard to the report, the Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well.
- 5.1.2 In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 5.1.3 In the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information requests, the Information Commissioner's Office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 The Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman in the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information requests, the Information Commissioner's Office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines. There are no Data Protection implications.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 Not applicable as the report is to keep Elected Members informed.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Cabinet note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: <i>BDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed	Yes/No
District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	➤ Providing Our Customers with Excellent Service ➤ Transforming Our Organisation

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Annual Summary of Customer Service Standards performance by quarterly period 1/4/17 – 31/3/18 for the Contact Centre.
Appendix 2	Corporate Compliments, Comments and Complaints information
A:	Compliments by department 01.04.17 – 31/3/18
B:	Comments by department 01.04.17 – 31/3/18
C:	Frontline resolution complaints by department 01.04.17 – 31/3/18
D:	Formal complaints by department 01.04.17 – 01/3/18
E:	Internal Review complaints by department 01.04.17 – 31/3/18
F:	Ombudsman complaints summary for 2017/18 - official LGO report for 2017 / 2018 will be received in July 2018
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
Rachael Pope - Customer Service Manager	Tel (01246) 217544