

Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee

Agenda

Members of the Committee:

Cllr J L Thomas (Chairman)
Cllr P E Bulman
Cllr S J Catchpole
Cllr S M Clancy
Cllr S I Holland
Cllr G K Nurden

Cllr K S Kelly (Vice Chairman)
Cllr I J Mackie
Cllr M L Murrell
Cllr D Roper
Cllr A Crotch

Cllr J J Emsell (ex officio)

Date:

Monday 27 March 2023 at 6pm

Place:

Council Chamber, Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich

Contact:

Leah Arthurton tel (01508) 533610 Email: committee.bdc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk
Website: www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

If a member of the public would like to attend to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to committee.bdc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk, no later than 5.00pm on Wednesday 22 March 2023.

Large print version can be made available

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance.

AGENDA

- 1. To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8** (page 3)
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022** (minutes attached – page 5)
- 4. Telephony Update** (report attached - page 10)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

<p>Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.</p>
<p>Does the interest directly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position? 2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner? 3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council 4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own 5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in <p>If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.</p> <p>Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.</p>
<p>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</p> <p>If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.</p>
<p>Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.</p>
<p>Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</p>

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE**

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee of Broadland District Council, held on Monday 17 October 2022 at 6pm at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: J Thomas (Chairman), S Beadle (sub for Roper), P Bulman, S Catchpole, K Kelly, I Mackie, M Murrell and G Nurden

Cabinet Members Present: Councillors: J Emsell and J Leggett

Officers in Attendance: The Director Place, the Assistant Director ICT/Digital and Transformation, the Food Safety and Licensing Team Manager and the Democratic Services Officer (DM).

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs: S Holland, S Prutton and D Roper.

10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute no: 4 – Collaboration Work Group

Members asked for progress on the Committee's decision to "*defer consideration of the report of the Collaboration Working Group and to request members of the Working Group meet and arrange a meeting with the Leader and Deputy Leader and report back to the Committee*". The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development advised the Committee that the meeting had taken place but as yet nothing had been decided with

regard to the next course of action. Members were keen to hear further on this matter and it was

RESOLVED that a further report be made to the next meeting of the Committee on progress with the Collaboration Working Group report and that members of the Working Group be invited to attend the meeting.

11 FIRST CLASS CUSTOMER SERVICE – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PHASE ONE

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation which set out a proposal for initiating a discovery exercise to identify and map out the current end-to-end customer journeys and the associated customer experience at each touchpoint and interaction with the two Councils.

The Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation pointed out that the recommendations in the report needed to be changed to recommend the proposals to Cabinet. She reminded members that Cabinet had already agreed to earmark £49,500 towards the development of the business case for Customer Relations Management and the report was seeking authority from Cabinet to use these earmarked reserves for the Council's contribution to the £110k cost of the discovery phase. The discovery phase was necessary to fully understand the benefits of customer relations management, and the proposal would involve the engagement of expert consultants to help with this. The ICT and Digital Strategy set out the need to improve and transform the Council's offer through innovative use of technology with a focus on first class customer service and a reduction in the cost of end-to-end service delivery whilst enabling customers to interact in a more efficient way – at a time that suits them using a channel of their choice and automated services when appropriate. The Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation then highlighted the potential benefits in terms of cost and efficiency savings.

Discussion then took place with the Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation answering questions from members. She confirmed that the total cost of the proposed discovery phase was £110k across the two councils with Broadland's share of the cost being £49,500. It was suggested and agreed that the second recommendation in the report be amended to more accurately reflect this. She also confirmed that the discovery work undertaken would be a hybrid of internal officer resource working together with consultants with experience in this field in local government.

A number of concerns were raised and comments made about the existing telephone service and difficulties in accessing officers via the telephone. It was feared that some customers were being forced to find alternative means of contacting officers which was not their preferred method of contact as they could not get through on a telephone. . Some members gave examples of these difficulties including those experienced recently by a parish clerk. The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development reported

that the issues experienced by the parish clerk had been raised and was being looked at and the issue of contacting officers would be discussed at the forthcoming Parish/Town Council forum. Members were encouraged to raise any specific areas of concern with officers at the time so that these could be addressed.

Members were keen to ensure that other options for contacting the Council in addition to accessing the website were retained.

The Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation responded to concerns pointing out that the discovery phase would help to identify and understand customer preferences and needs and help target services where needed most. The telephony system was one channel of contact with the Council and was currently the most frequently used channel. Development of an enhanced on line experience could provide a better alternative option for some customers. More was known about the use of the telephone system now than ever before with data not previously available now being collected. Demand had increased and consideration needed to be given to how to respond to the increase in demand. It was possible that many callers could find what they needed on line at a time to suit them.

In response to a question as to where key performance indicators would be detailed to ensure a measure existed by which the customer experience could be monitored, the Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation explained that the deliverables would be fully outlined in the business case including strategic measurements, savings and cost benefit analysis. With regard to operational indicators, details of volume and demand would be available but key performance indicators would not form part of the business case – this would be a separate piece of work. Operational data was reviewed by the Corporate Management Leadership Team on a weekly basis and quarterly performance data was available to members as part of the quarterly performance reports. Managers had a live link to telephone data to facilitate management of resources according to demand. A concern was raised that it was difficult to actually understand current performance as no baseline data was available to monitor future performance. The transformation agenda made it very difficult to undertake performance monitoring due to the lack of comparable data. The Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation responded that the discovery project being proposed would establish the baseline data and form part of the transformation programme to track benefits realised.

A comment was made that there was a need to have regard to the quality of the service and not just a focus on costs and savings.

There was still some concern that the digitalisation of services would result in the loss of the personal touch and would not suit the needs of some residents who preferred a more personal approach. The Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation reiterated that the aim was to see the right service provided at the right time by the right method. Shifting 80% of demand to an online solution would enable focus to be given to the channels needed to serve the remaining 20%.

In response to questions about the indicative timescales for the delivery of a fully costed business case, the Assistant Director of ICT/Digital and Transformation confirmed she was satisfied with the lead in times and the proposal to submit a full business case to Cabinet in Quarter 4 was realistic.

.RESOLVED to recommend Cabinet to

1. agree to initiate the discovery phase as the first phase towards establishing the current state, the future state and the underpinning technology to inform a fully- costed business case for investment to deliver a First-Class Customer Service.
2. utilise the Broadland District Council's contribution of £49,500 from Earmarked Reserves agreed by Cabinet on 8 February 2022 on consultancy resource to support in the development of a full outline business case.

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

13 LICENSING SERVICE REVIEW

Members considered the exempt report of the Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager setting out findings of a Licensing service review and proposals for changes to the service structure and capacity, in order to ensure the Council had a robust and sustainable Licensing service which could deliver with assurance against the service aims and the licensing objectives.

The Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager took members through the report in detail emphasising that the proposals would add no additional growth the base revenue budget as the funding of the proposed structure would be met from licensing fee income. Workloads had increased in the service and remained at a high level, with team resources at a low level when benchmarked with similar neighbouring authorities. This was currently being managed by way of temporary agency staff which was expensive. There was a limited professional licensing workforce available and the Council was keen to continue to train and develop its own licensing professionals. The new structure would support this and maximise staff retention. A recent Internal Audit of the service identified capacity as a key risk with the potential risk of

loss of institutional knowledge. There would be difficulty replacing staff and delivering statutory work or resuming proactive work.

If approved, the resources senior officer structure would enable additional licensing activities to be undertaken to enhance the protection offered to communities, including development of policies for sexual entertainment licensing in the event of such an application being received.

The Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager then answered questions from members. He explained the reasoning for the proposed allocations on the pay grades of the revised posts and confirmed he was satisfied the timeframes set out in the report for Cabinet authorisation, consultation and implementation were achievable to be effective from 1 April 2023.

In response to a question about apprenticeships, the Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager confirmed that there were already apprentices within the wider team and that other opportunities to extend this were being explored. He also confirmed that costings for outsourcing the service had not been explored as this was not considered a viable option given the shortage of professional licensing services.

RESOLVED to recommend Cabinet

to agree the Licensing Service Review proposals detailed in the report (at paragraph 4.2 and Appendix 2), to be implemented with effect from 1st April 2023, both for team structure and an increase in establishment of Licensing service staffing to 6.04 FTE (full time equivalent) officer provision, plus 0.6 FTE (1-year temporary staffing).

(The meeting concluded at 7.20pm)

Chairman

Agenda Item: 4
Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee
27th March 2023

Telephony Update

Report Author(s): Hannah Mawson
Customer Experience and Insight Lead
01508 533774
hannah.mawson@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Portfolio: Transformation and Organisational Development

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

This report provides an update and overview of the performance of our contact centre and call queue lines as requested by Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee.

Recommendations:

1. Committee to take note of the current performance and update provided.
2. Customer Experience and Insight Lead to ensure improvements to performance continues throughout the year.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of our performance through our telephony channels. When reading this report it's important to remember that although this communication channel services most of our demand, we also serve customers through face-to-face visits, via email, post and social media.
- 1.2. The recent concentrated continuous improvement activity on our telephone channels, combined with better access to data has enabled significant improvements in our abandonment rates but also transparency of customer satisfaction. For example, we have seen a significant drop in overall abandonment on our contact centre lines, reducing from an average of 12% from February 2022 to an average of 7% to date and now have no service areas within the red RAG status for abandonment.
- 1.3. Since implementing our customer strategy, we have introduced a customer panel and have launched our customer satisfaction survey on the contact centre lines to better understand customer behaviour, demand and extract greater insight for further improvements.
- 1.4. The next stage of focus is our First-Class Customer Service transformation programme to support the Councils in baselining current customer experience, outlining what good customer experience could look like from a technology, people, process and financial perspective to form a programme of transformation for the benefit of our customers. As we continue to see demand grow driven by external factors the driver to do more with less enabled by technology will continue to ensure we can focus our resource on the customers who need our support the most.

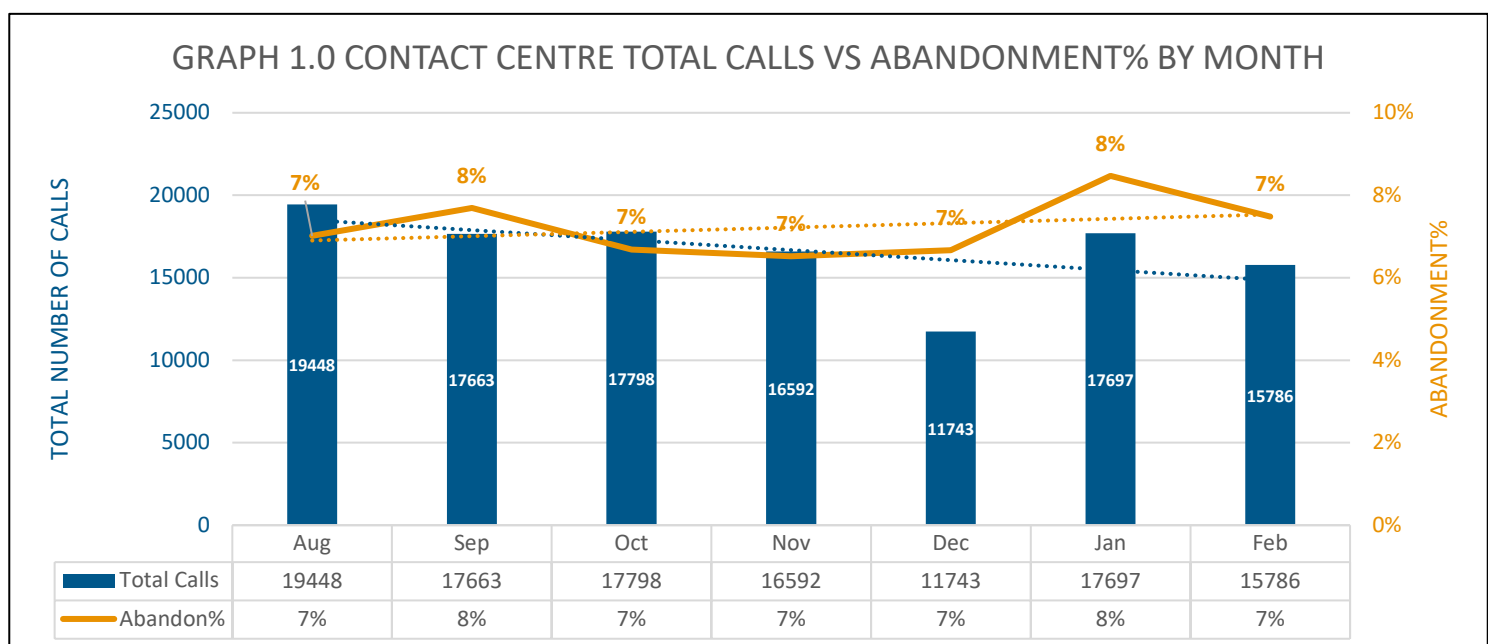
2. Background

- 2.1. Telephony remains one of our highest used customer contact channels. However this is just one of the ways customers can contact us. We estimate that our telephony channels receive around 60% of our overall demand but this comes in peaks and troughs and is highly influenced by our own organisational communications, driven by service areas.
- 2.2. South Norfolk and Broadland District Council moved to a new telephony platform last year. The new platform provided several feature enhancements which we have taken advantage of for example, call tagging, call back queues and our customer satisfaction survey. As a result of this move, we now have greater visibility of performance than ever before. This coupled with the ability to track customer satisfaction on our high demand contact centre lines has led to the continuous improvement activity that has driven a far improved customer experience and can be evidenced in the performance data provided in this report.

2.3. A PowerBI facilitated dashboard our contact centre has enabled managers to access near-time operational KPIs to continually monitor their performance and adjust resource according to demand. We continue to measure and report performance of our telephone channels through strategic performance reports.

3. Contact centre demand

3.1. When looking at the total performance of all our contact centre lines collectively, as illustrated in graph 1.0 below. These lines tend to take the highest volume of customer calls. We can see a decreasing trend in the volume of calls received, indicating a decrease in demand. The decrease in demand could be attributed to the decrease in demand through the Energy and Council Tax Rebate Schemes.



3.2. Our contact centre lines continue to perform well with the abandonment rate consistently remain falling in the green RAG status. From August '22 to February '23 none of the abandonment rates on our individual contact centre lines fell within the red RAG status. However, compared to February 2022, three of our contact centre services areas were within the red RAG status and therefore, we have seen a significant improvement in performance.

3.3. Call tagging has been implemented in 7 out of 8 of our contact centre service areas to help us to better understand call demand. Service areas are analysing this data to identify where improvements can be made. This information will help us inform the website channel changes and will also feed into the First-Class Customer Service work.

3.4. Within customer services by enabling call tagging, we have identified a large volume of calls are for the licensing team who do not currently have an option on our main lines. To reduce demand in customer services and enable the customer

to get to the right service first time we are currently implementing a licensing option on our main lines.

4. Contact Centre Performance by Service Area

4.1. The below table shows all contact centre teams and their performance in February this year.

Queue	Entered	Accepted	Total Abandoned	Total Abandoned %	Average Abandon Time	Average Wait Time	Average Handling Time
Council Tax	4270	3776	494	12%	00:02:37	00:03:14	00:04:39
Housing	2463	2234	229	9%	00:02:35	00:00:31	00:05:11
CNC	2075	1901	174	8%	00:03:15	00:01:57	00:02:46
Elections	262	247	15	6%	00:03:14	00:00:13	00:02:20
Reception	2277	2148	129	6%	00:01:50	00:00:39	00:01:58
ICT	272	259	13	5%	00:02:06	00:00:27	00:02:07
Planning Admin	970	926	44	5%	00:00:48	00:00:20	00:03:58
Benefits	1495	1458	37	2%	00:04:00	00:00:38	00:04:32
Waste and Recycling	1672	1640	32	2%	00:00:52	00:00:26	00:03:22

4.2. Looking at our individual Contact Centre lines in February, the following becomes apparent:

4.2.1. Council Tax continue to have the highest abandonment rates but do also have significantly higher call volumes. Call volumes did increase due to Energy and Council Tax Rebate schemes however, these calls have now reduced/ceased. As a result of high abandonment and demand, our Internal Consultancy team have been working with the service to map customer demand against staff resource and to identify areas for improvement and ways to manage the customer demand more effectively.

4.2.2. We have seen an increase in abandonment on our Housing contact centre lines, increasing from 4% in December to 9% in January and February, however, we have also seen an increase in their call volumes by 75% from December to February. The increase in call volumes, coupled with an increase in call handling times could be attributed to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

4.2.3. The abandonment rate on our Waste and Recycling lines has significantly decreased since August 2022 and fell to just 2% in February.

4.3. Average abandonment time; the average time of all calls in the queue wait before abandoning, can be an indicator of customer expectation. Looking across our Contact Centre lines in February the average abandonment times ranging significantly from 27 seconds to around 6 minutes. Indicating that the time a caller is willing to wait is largely dependent on the query type.

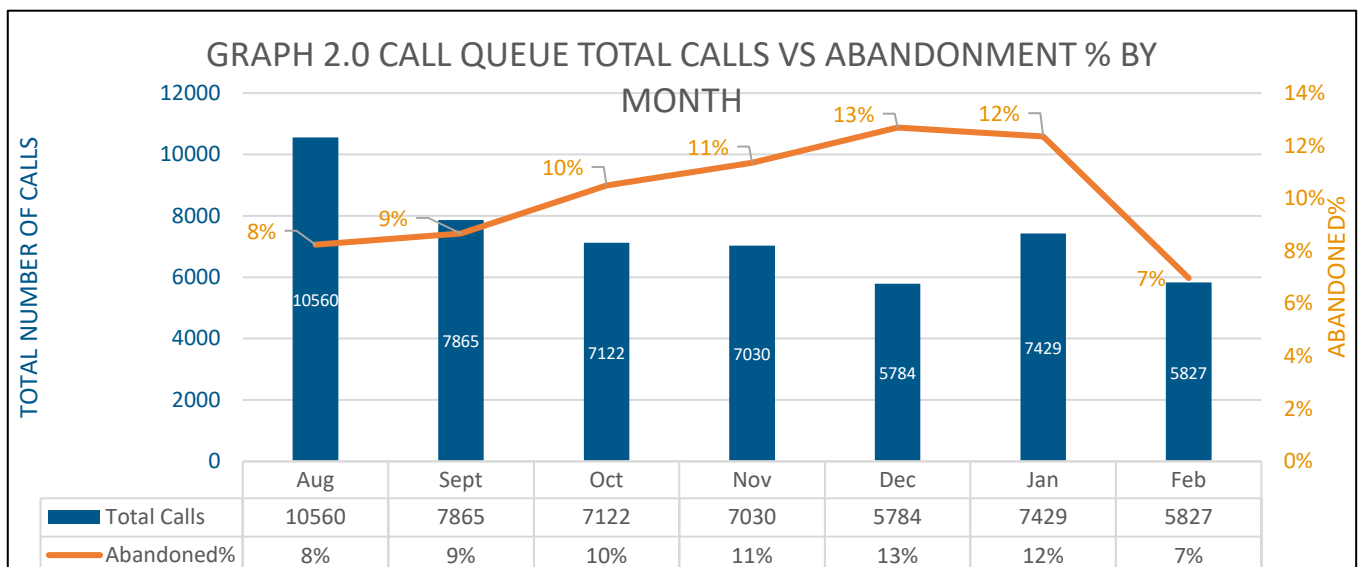
4.4. When callers are waiting in our contact centre queues, the experience they receive is that of what you would experience when calling many business call centres. At intermittent periods the customer will hear:

- Our wait messaging – this prompts customer to visit our website
- Their position in the queue – this gives them their position in the queue and updates as they move through the queue so they can make an informed decision about whether they wait or call back later
- Hold music – generic music supplied on the system that plays between the above to messages

5. Call Queues

5.1. Graph 2.0 provides an analysis of the total calls to our call queues, this shows that despite call volumes decreasing from August – December the overall abandonment rate continued to increase up until January resulting in an amber rating overall.

5.2. Focused improvements on the planning department call line specifically such as moving from a call queue to a ring group, has resulted in a significant drop of 24% in February's abandonment rate. This improvement activity can be seen in the overall call queue abandonment rate figures below bringing the rating in February back to 7% and a green rating.



5.3. When looking at our individual call queues by service area in February, the areas with the highest abandonment rates are Active NoW coordination centre and Tots to Teens. However, all call queue lines abandonment rates were less than 20% and falling within either the Amber or Green RAG status.

6. Continuous Improvement

5.4. From August to December 2022, we had seen a significant increase in the abandonment percentage in the planning department specifically. Rising from 14% in August to 34% in December. As a result, a deep-dive exercise was completed, and the following agreed recommendations were implemented:

- Planning's internal only call queues were converted from a call queue to a ring group. These were queues that were used internally by officers to forward their calls and had no direct external number or option on our main numbers to be accessed by customers. For the customer, this means that their call is being distributed directly to another available officer and whilst their call is being distributed, they hear ringing so they know that they are waiting their call to be answered. Previously, they were being diverted to a call queue which when no officer was available, was playing holding music which we believe may have been providing a confusing experience.
- Planning Compliance calls are now being taken by Planning Admin and therefore their call queue and external numbers have been redirected to the Planning Admin contact centre line. This was done due to the Planning Compliance team being relatively small and often out on site. For the customer this means that their query if possible, can be answered by Planning Admin, but if not a message is taken and passed through to the Compliance team to deal with as soon as possible.
- Staff members are now utilising voicemail. The reason for this change is that their calls are generally for them and the queries cannot be answered by a team member. They can then pick up their own voicemails and call the customer back as soon as they are available.

5.4.2. As a result of these changes, we have seen a significant reduction in abandonment percentage which has reduced from 34% in December, to 10% in February.

5.5. Since providing the call queue data to CLT in January, we have seen a reduction in abandonment rates overall and now have no service areas within the red RAG status for abandonment.

6. Customer Satisfaction

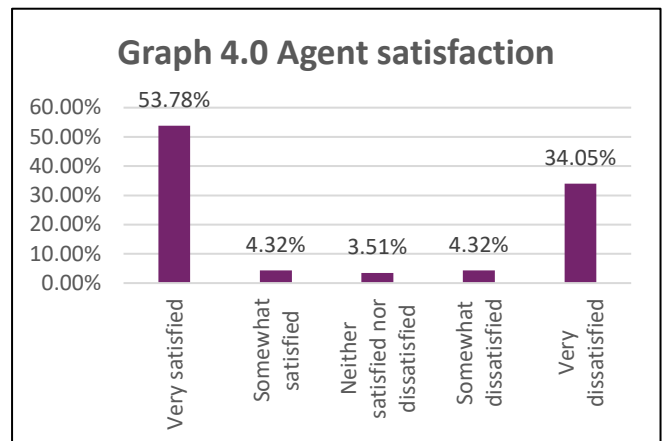
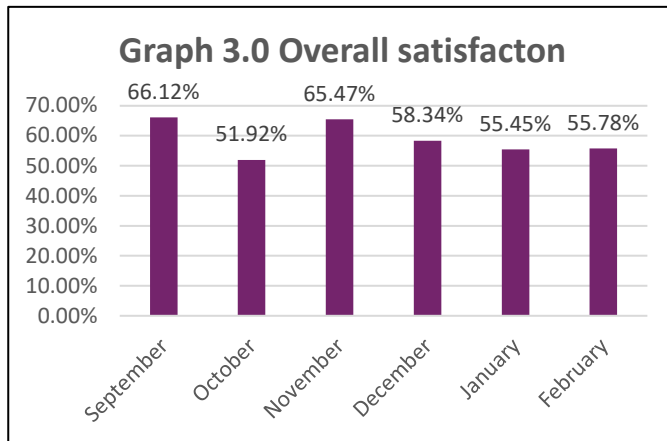
6.1. As part of our commitment to better understand customer need, we have introduced the following metrics:

6.1.1. Overall Customer Satisfaction rating

6.1.2. Online customer satisfaction and;

6.1.3. Telephone satisfaction (only on our contact centre lines) Graphs 3.0 to 7.0 highlight the performance to date.

Phone Survey Results

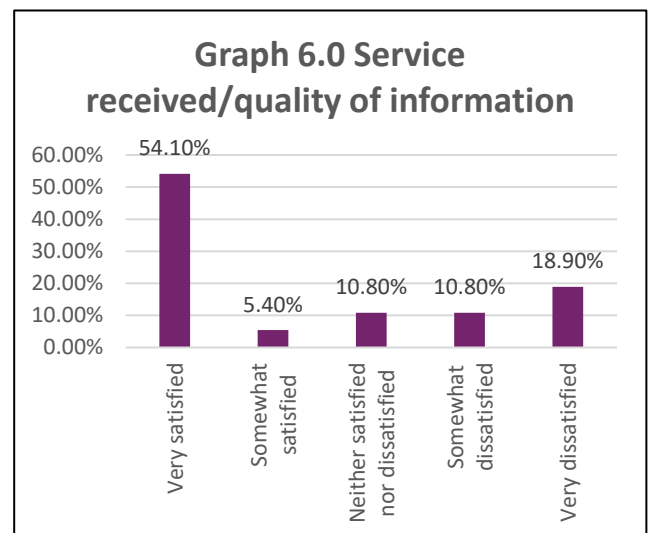
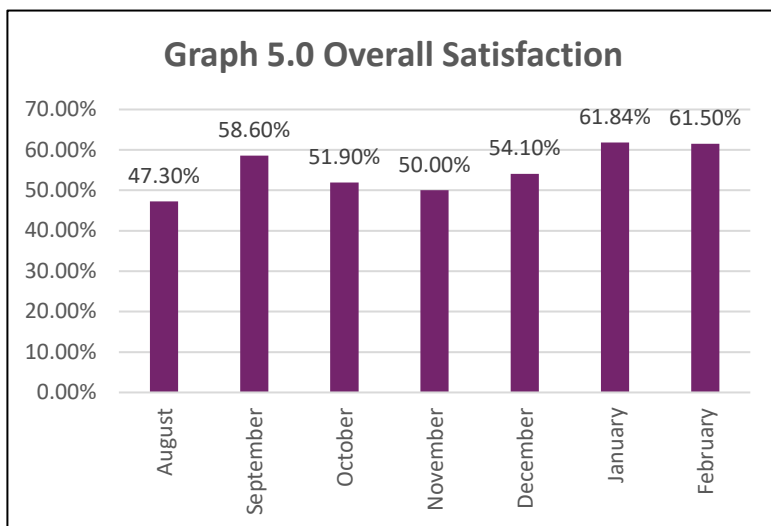


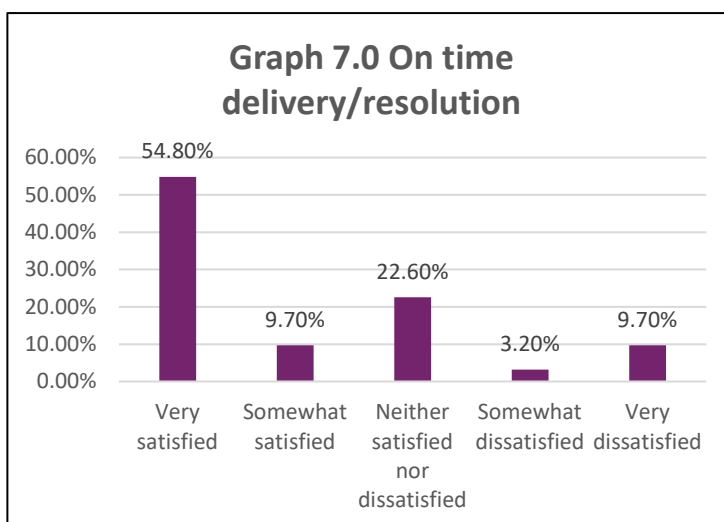
6.2. 1,223 customers completed the phone survey between September and February.

6.3. 579 customers gave us an overall satisfaction rating of either satisfied or very satisfied on the phone survey.

6.4. Aside from October, satisfaction ratings on our phone survey remain above the target of 55%.

Online Survey Results





6.5. 610 customers completed the online survey between August and February.

6.6. 327 customers gave us an overall satisfaction rating of either satisfied or very satisfied on the online survey

6.7. On our online survey, our satisfaction ratings have mostly been below the target of 55% but have risen above target in January and February.

Satisfied and Dissatisfied Customers

6.8. The service areas that received the most overall dissatisfied customers across both the online and phone survey are Waste and Recycling (138) and Council Tax (177).

6.9. The service areas that received the most overall satisfied customers across both the online and phone survey are Waste and Recycling (267), Council Tax (149), Housing (67), Benefits (102), CNC (52) and Reception (93).

7 Issues and risks

7.1 **Resource Implications** – N/A

7.2 **Legal Implications** – N/A

7.3 **Equality Implications** – N/A

7.4 **Environmental Impact** – N/A

7.5 **Crime and Disorder** – N/A

7.6 **Risks** – N/A

8 Conclusion

8.1. Overall performance on our contact centre lines has improved and most lines are operating at an improved consistent level.

- 8.2. The next stage of focus will be our First-Class Customer Service transformation programme which will commence in Q1 23/24 to support the Councils in baselining our current customer experience and outline what good customer experience could look like from a technology, people, process and cost perspective to build a programme of transformation for the benefit of our customers.
- 8.3. We will also be looking at how we can utilise our customer panel more to gain insight from our customers and their feedback regarding some of the changes and improvements to ensure we are making improvements which deliver a First-Class Customer Service.

9 Recommendations

- 9.1. Committee to take note of the current performance and update provided.
- 9.2. Customer Experience and Insight Lead to ensure improvements to performance continues throughout the year.

Background papers

No background papers.

Appendix 1

Key Performance Indicator List:

Abandonment Rate (%) - an indication of the number of calls that are 'unanswered'. An abandoned call is counted when the caller hangs up once they are within a queue. Calls that are abandoned within the options/messaging are not counted within this measure.

Average Handling Time - an indication of complexity of queries and team efficiency.

Volume of Calls Received – an indicator of demand and helps us understand peaks and troughs to allow us to staff accordingly.

Average Wait Time before Accept Time - the average time that a customer waits in a queue before the call is answered by an officer.

Longest Wait Time – the time of the individual longest wait before a call was answered by an officer. However, this is likely to be an outlier in the data set.

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