

Report to Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.4

Meeting Date: 31st May 2018
 Portfolio: Communities, Health and Wellbeing
 Key Decision:
 Within Policy and Budget Framework
 Public / Private Public

Title: CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE
 Report of: Acting Customer Service Manager
 Report Number: CE 08/18

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update the panel with ongoing work within Customer Services including, current performance, upcoming improvements and ongoing actions that fall under the Smarter Service Delivery Project.

Recommendations:

Could the panel make a note of:

- The Contact Centre to open at 8am (Calls Only)
- The restructure of Customer Service staff working hours to cover peak periods
- The re-introduction of key systems upon completion of the Ground Floor
- Celebrate 20,000 online user accounts with a prize draw

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** A broad review has been conducted into the performance of customer Services. Each element of the service has been heavily scrutinised with focus on peak demand, resource and performance management. Patterns have been identified by way of detailed historic reporting spanning the last three financial years and have led to the recommendations detailed in this report. The aim of this work is structure the department to enable growth by way of additional services being supported by our staff. This will provide consistent customer service across the organisation whilst freeing up valuable front-line resource.
- 1.2** Appendix A summarises peak demand times (for telephone contact) which has prompted the recommendation to open the Contact Centre at 8am Monday to Friday for calls only. Demand most commonly peaks between 9am-10am on each working day, by a significant margin. Feedback from advisor's attributes this demand to customers contacting us before work. It is expected that opening at 8am would spread this demand over a longer period, resulting in reduced waiting time, reduced call abandonment and a service more consistent with social demand. There is no evidence to suggest extending our closing time would be beneficial, although monitoring demand will continue and further recommendations will be put forward should demand change.
- 1.3** Appendix B is a high-level summary of our current Customer Service Advisor working patterns. The recommendation to restructure working hours is because of this report. We have reduced resource at our peak periods because of recent redundancies. Having predominantly part-time staff is an advantage as it enables us to heavily resource peak periods without being over-resourced during quieter periods. Total resource requirements (if any) can be more accurately monitored once these changes are made.
- 1.4** More detailed reporting is not possible when apportioning interaction and queuing time for visits. Before the flooding, we operated a qmatic system which could accurately monitor all aspects of query management. To continually improve it is important to regain this functionality when the ground floor is reinstated. At present reporting is manual, and whilst accurate enough to log interaction numbers and timescales, more detailed analysis is unavailable. Further manual reporting would not be visible.
- 1.5** This level of reporting is in response to the draft Customer Service Charter (Appendix C). The Charter outlines the service we offer from both a customer

service and service level perspective. We set out several aims to govern our contact with customers. This forms part of the corporate plan.

- 1.6** Smarter Service Delivery (SSD) is no longer deemed to be a project as agreed in the last meeting of the Transformation Board (12th April 18). The project has been a great success, introducing new technologies and consistently streamlining procedures. This is a positive step forward as Smarter Service Delivery is now viewed as a way of working, that can be applied to any future improvements. It will remain a permanent fixture on the TB agenda to keep focus on moving forward.
- 1.7** My Account users total 19987 (as of 13th May 2018) but are likely to have exceeded 20,000 by the Scrutiny Panel meeting date. This is a huge achievement as it is central to Smarter Service Delivery. We have seen a steady rise of web based requests, rising on average by 8% each calendar year. We were looking to celebrate this by announcing a prize draw with every registered user being automatically entered. To boost new users, we could offer a limited time to register an account to be included in the draw.
- 1.8** Salesforce development will provide crucial efficiencies for call handlers. An “email listening” module will be ready for testing in the coming weeks. This module eradicates the need to read emails in one application and manually transfer the information into Salesforce. Additionally, we will have greater control of automated responses which will help control the expectation of the customer whilst providing a more personal response. A business case has also been put forward to standardise how Customer Services communicate with all council departments with the use of a replicable query handling module. This is quicker for call handlers to use and provides deeper insight into the flow of information throughout the organisation.
- 1.9** The upcoming Universal Credit rollout in July will also present a significant opportunity for partnership working. Our Smarter Service Delivery project has received praise from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as it dovetails with the support we will provide claimants. We will be offering Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) and Assisted Digital Support (ADS) for any customers who are struggling with their finances or do not have access to online services. As customers are transferring from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit we can identify the support that is needed. Mechanisms are also in place to identify the most vulnerable in our society to be visited at home by the DWP. These additional services represent a sizable increase of income.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1** It is proposed that work continues identifying efficiencies and improved resource management following the outcome of reports detailed in Appendix A & B. Decisions will be based on these findings and in the interest of the residents and businesses of Carlisle.

3. RISKS

- 3.1** No risks have yet been identified.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1** The recommendations in this report are in their infancy. Reports and findings will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team with further consideration by the Transformation Board.

5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1** Recommendations in this report are based on hard evidence and have the aim of improving customer service. Furthermore, the department will be structured for growth and resilience. Customer Service staff continue to show their hard work which will be recognised further with improved call answering performance.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 6.1** The Customer Service charter and measures to meet the aims are part of the upcoming corporate plan.

Contact Officer: Matthew Ward

Ext: 7214

Appendices attached to report:

Appendix A - Peak Times Report 2017/18 and Analysis

Appendix B - Cover Per Hour Report (Anonymised)

Appendix C – Draft Customer Service Charter

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL -

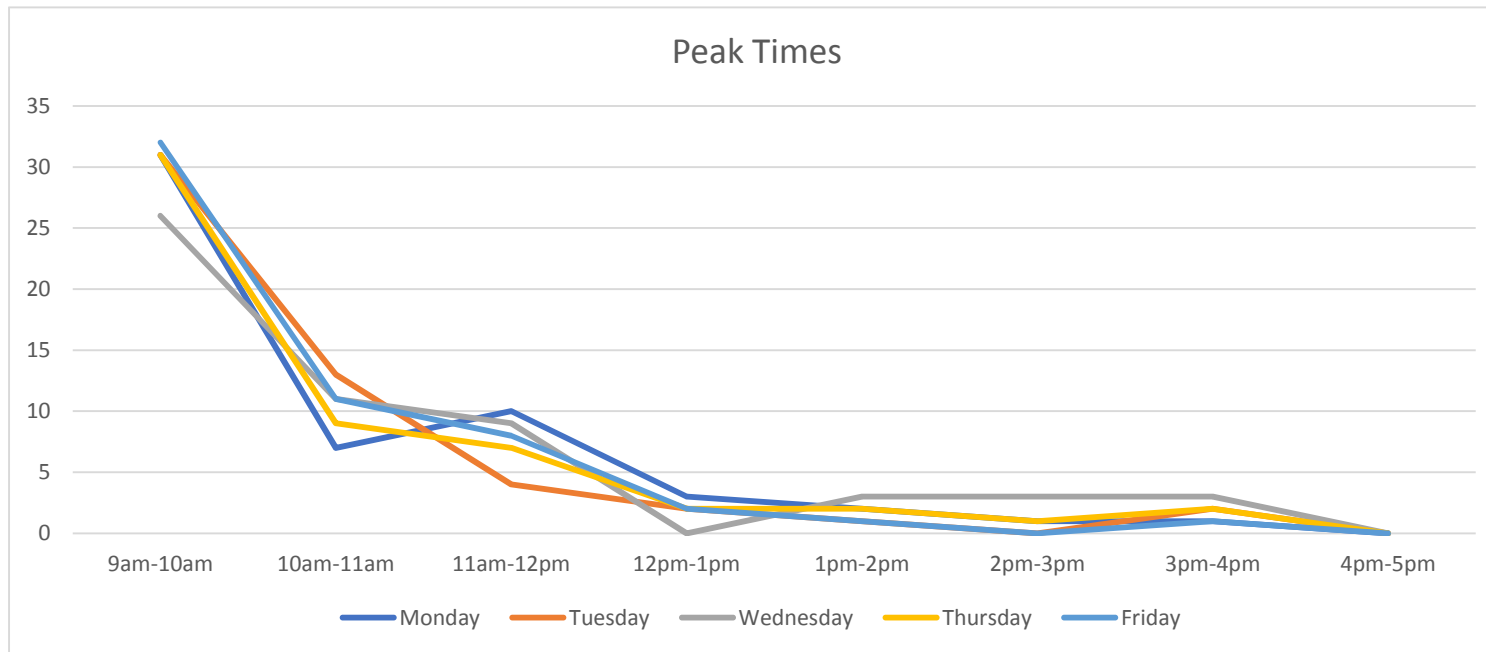
FINANCE –

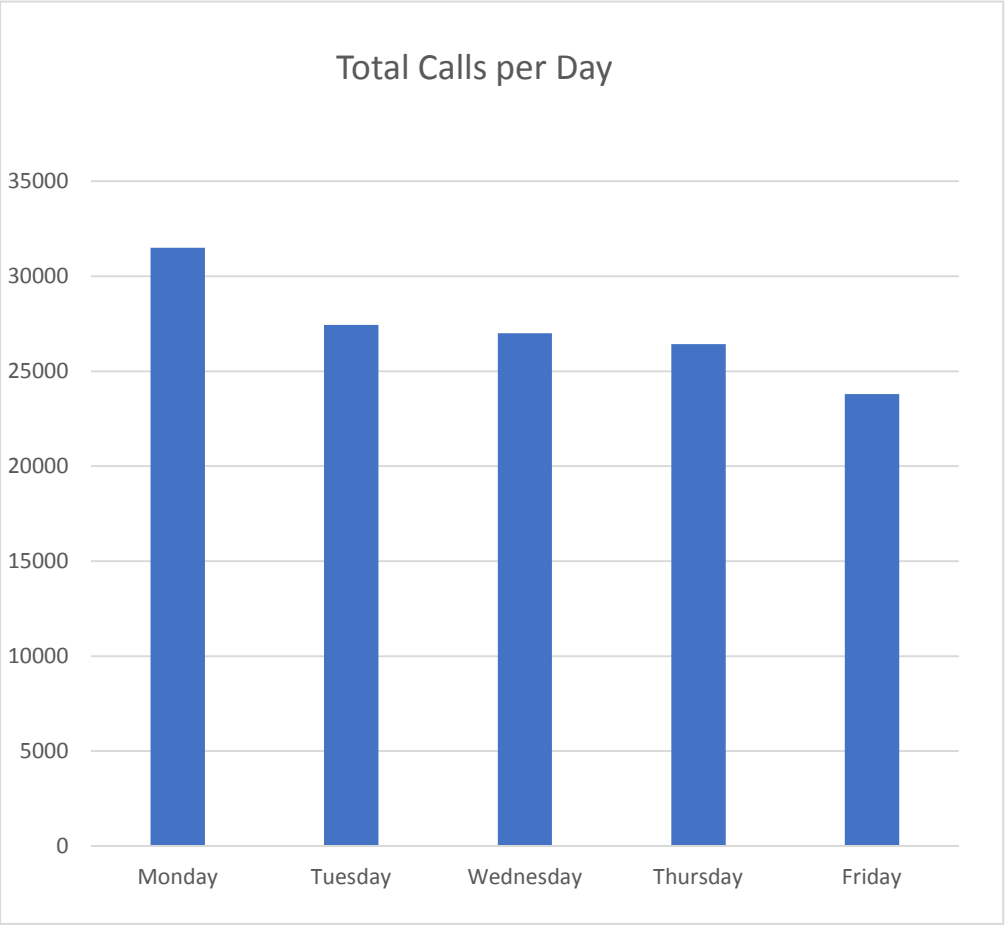
EQUALITY –

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –

2017/18 - Peak times and volume per day (Calls Only)

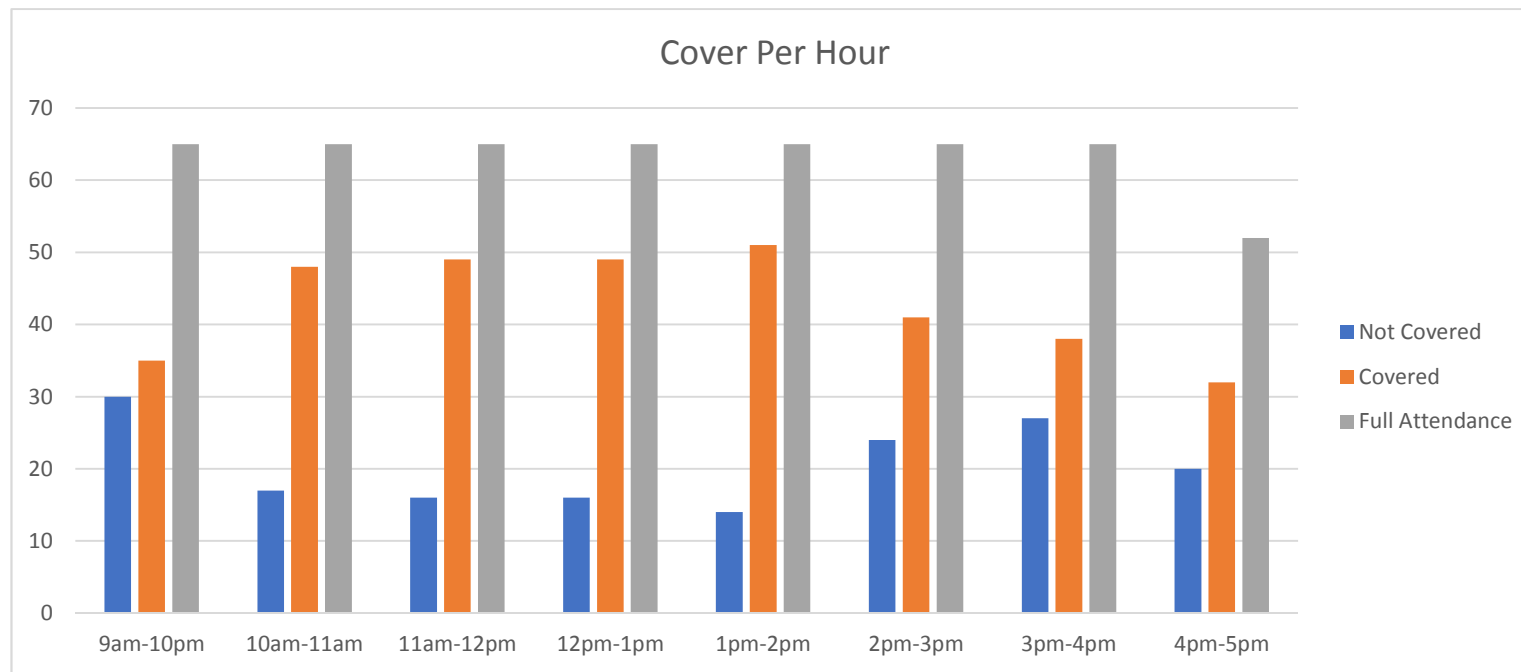
Day	9am-10am	10am-11am	11am-12pm	12pm-1pm	1pm-2pm	2pm-3pm	3pm-4pm	4pm-5pm	Calls Total
Monday	31	7	10	3	2	1	1	0	31508
Tuesday	31	13	4	2	1	0	2	0	27444
Wednesday	26	11	9	0	3	3	3	0	26993
Thursday	31	9	7	2	2	1	2	0	26425
Friday	32	11	8	2	1	0	1	0	23804





Cover Per Hour Analysis

	9am-10pm	10am-11am	11am-12pm	12pm-1pm	1pm-2pm	2pm-3pm	3pm-4pm	4pm-5pm
Not Covered	30	17	16	16	14	24	27	20
Covered	35	48	49	49	51	41	38	32
Full Attendance	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	52
%	54%	74%	75%	75%	78%	63%	58%	62%



We are proud to provide high standards of customer service to the residents and businesses of Carlisle. Our key principle in delivering services is to be **clear, committed and confident**. This customer charter outlines how our principles are at the heart of everything we do. Our promise is to continue to innovate so our customers can access council services anytime, anywhere.

When you call us, we will:

- Be polite courteous and helpful
- We will listen and show respect
- Be open and honest
- Show sensitivity and empathy
- Understand the importance of confidentiality
- Where possible, provide the right resolution, first time
- Use clear language, not jargon
- Keep our promises
- If we can't help, we will let you know who can

When you visit, us we will:

- All of the above!
- Greet you with a smile
- Provide side-by-side assistance
- Support you with self-service facilities
- Take the time to resolve complicated queries. We won't rush you

When you use our email and online services, we will:

- Keep our website up to date and easy to use
- Ensure our website works on all popular web browsers
- Make online forms user friendly and jargon free
- Keep you informed of progress
- Protect and manage your personal information within regulation
- Reply to emails using clear language in a timely fashion

When you message on social media, we will:

- Let you know we have read your message
- Respect your privacy by messaging directly
- Give friendly advice on the best way to resolve your query
- Escalate your query to the correct person, if required

If you have a complaint, we will:

- Listen and understand
- Apologise if we get something wrong
- Provide clear information on the complaints process
- Learn from upheld complaints and improve
- Let you know the outcome and the changes we have made

Our aims

- Answer 80% of telephone calls within 1 minute
- 90% of visitors will be seen within 10 minutes
- Resolve 75% of queries at first point of contact
- Respond to 100% of emails within 24 hours
- Reply to social media messages within 4 hours on working days
- 95% queries will be acknowledged within 24 hours
- 90% of complaints are resolved within 15 working days

So we can achieve our aims, we ask:

- Our customers are polite and courteous
- There are no displays of threatening or aggressive behaviour towards staff
- Understand we may not give the answer you want; we are still trying to help
- To allow us time to respond to complicated queries
- The information given to us is accurate and free from inflammatory comments