

ORGANISATION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL	DATE 13 March 2025	ITEM NO 5
SUBJECT Customer Services Performance	WARD (S) All	
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Resources	CABINET MEMBER Finance, Resources & Social Value	
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Scrutiny Report		

SECTION I

1. Recommendations to decision maker:

- 1.1 To consider the Customer Services Performance Report and make recommendations to the Executive, if necessary.
- 1.2 To agree that where appropriate, the report and any recommendations be submitted to the Chief Executive.
- 1.3 To note that where possible, the report and responses to the recommendations be presented at the next meeting of the Panel.

2. Links to Our Greenwich Missions

2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed missions as follows:

- - People's health supports them in living their best life – Our telecare service supports people to continue to live independently and receive support when they need it.
- Those in financial need can access the right support, advice and opportunities to improve their situation - residents are able to contact our service to get advice and support with their individual situation
- We design our services around the needs of our residents – the customer service strategy is designed around our residents and needs. Channel shift is one of our top priorities.

- Our Council works in the most efficient and effective ways possible – we are designing services so that customers are able to self serve, where customer need support it will be offered in the form of digital champions– highly skilled officers who are able to guide customers through online processes. at the same time, we will retain traditional channels to support customers with more complex queries or needs.
- Our Council is a great place to work, with a diverse workforce who have the right skills and are motivated and empowered to deliver - the customer service team is fully representative of the borough

3. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

3.1 This report was commissioned as part of the Organisation and Communities Scrutiny Panel's 2024-2025 work programme. The report seeks to provide updates on the Customer Services Performance

3.2 The commissioned brief for the report was as follows:

- An update on the Customer Services Performance (telephone call handling / website / social media)
- An update/progress report on the Customer Services Review Monitoring/Action plan.

SECTION 2

4. Introduction and Background

4.1 Context and performance update

In December 2023 we signed off a restructure that was the first step to modernising the service and adding additional channels for customers to use. Since then, it has been an extremely busy year for customer services. This report covers our business-as-usual activities and key measures, as well as several projects we have delivered during the year.

See Appendix A for the latest performance figures: unless otherwise stated, figures are for the period: 01/04/2024- 31/12/2024

Included are:

- **Telephony Performance**, including for services we don't manage
- **Email Handling Performance**
- **Fix My Street** allows customers to report specific environment related issues, in real time, via their mobile device.
- **The Woolwich Service Centre** – this is the face-to-face service provided by customer service. In addition to the services provided on the phones we carry out Tenancy Sign Ups, carry out tenancy terminations, resolve queries relating to fobs, handle parking permit enquiries, and deal with Housing Benefit and Council Tax enquiries.
- **The Eltham Service Centre** – this is the smaller face to face service in the south of the borough. The full range of customer service transactions are available.
- **Mobility** - this team administers blue badges and other concessions for disabled people such as taxi cards and Freedom passes.
- **Telecare** - the Telecare team support vulnerable residents in the borough by monitoring triggers from the Emergency Alarm and peripherals such as smoke alarms or door exit sensors.
- **Royal Greenwich Interpretation Service:** The interpretation service provides interpretation and translation service in 102 different languages. The list of available languages is growing as the needs of our diverse borough are changing. Additionally, we offer a face to face British Sign Language facility in the Woolwich Centre on a Friday morning. Sign video which is a video sign language interpretation tool is available to our residents via the website and in the Woolwich and Eltham Centres.

Our total contacts continues to increase; as a team we are on track to have had around 1m contacts with residents this financial year. In the contact centre alone we took nearly 430,000 calls, with an average wait time of just over 6 minutes for our core services.

Some of our performance metrics have worsened in telephony services versus last year. This is due to the contribution we have made as a team to our MTFs, which has led to us reducing our staffing in order to make cashable savings while continuing to handle more contacts. These savings have been achieved. This year, we will focus on efficiency in the contact centre through digital opportunities (see below) with the aim of bringing performance back in line with our expectations without increasing staffing.

Projects completed this year

4.2 In line with the Customer Service Strategy we have extended the opening hours of the corporate contact centre to 8am – 6pm, allowing us to serve more residents in a more convenient way for them.

4.3 We have started to use WhatsApp in the Contact Centre. Initially we restricted access to this service to people using Facebook but have recently started to advertise this to a wider audience. As well as giving residents more choice over service access, an extra benefit of this is that an agent can manage more than one transaction at a time. Among other uses, this will allow customers to report repairs via WhatsApp. To aid accurate diagnostics, customers are able to add photographs to their WhatsApp conversation, which will reduce failure demand for operatives when they attend a property.

4.4 We have procured and are implementing an upgrade to our Avaya system, which supports our telephony. A workforce management system was also procured as a part the telephony procurement process, as well as an automated quality monitoring module. This will quality monitor 100% of the calls that come through the Avaya system and provide comprehensive feedback to the management team. Any calls that raise concerns will alert a manager to take action and provide feedback.

4.5 We have achieved a Silver rating in our accreditation to the United Kingdom Contact Centre Forum (UKCCF) and will now start to work towards the gold standard.

4.6 We procured, installed and are using a new Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) for telecare. This will smooth the transition for the digital switchover and support the ATEC Service (due to go live 31/03/2025). The digital switchover meant that our current ARC was obsolete because it could not handle digital calls; the new system allows us to continue to migrate our customers onto a digital alarm but protects those customers who we have not yet switched over.

4.7 We have entered into a 3-year contract with Bromley Council to monitor their Telecare service. We were approached by Bromley Borough to monitor the calls to their ARC as they were looking for a new partner. In addition, we have entered into a short-term contract with Bexley borough to manage their telecare response service.

4.8 We are in the process of a consultation for Telecare to transition the team into the ATEC monitoring and response service. The telecare team are the team that will need to undergo a major transformation as a result of the ATEC service. We have rewritten the job descriptions to accurately reflect the requirements of the role which will include monitoring and response to alarm calls, undertake welfare calls, additionally they will monitor and respond, where necessary, to data from basic clinical equipment, including blood pressure and oxygen monitors. They will also be working much more closely with JET (our integrated Joint Emergency Team).

4.9 In summer 2024 we took over the responsibility of the Responsive repairs service. Whilst this is still quite new, we have been able to achieve some savings by transferring staff from Agency to FTC, with HRA savings circa £60k. Other improvements include creating a more transparent escalation process, the result of which is that we have reduced escalations by 50%. We intend to make this process a digital process and believe that we can achieve a further 25% reduction in escalations as a result of this.

4.10 We have procured a new system for the Interpretation and translation team. The system used by the Interpretation and translation team was not fit for purpose. A new solution was identified that is easier to use and offers excellent value for money.

4.11 Our Customer Service Transformation Team are working on a range of upgrades to existing systems including Symology, Whitespace and ECINS.

4.12 Our Customer Service Technical Support and Development Team have, among other improvement:

- Made changes to the process of Housing and Safer Communities complaints.
- Made changes to the Ombudsman complaints process
- Created a social media enquiries line
- Completed a Dynamics user license audit to support Casework Review
- Delivered a staff sign in application
- Delivered a TOIL logging app for customer service

Next year's priorities

4.13 The Customer Service Strategy needs to be refreshed, and we are planning to use the information gained over the last 3 years to identify new workstream based on our missions and improving the customer experience. We also plan to forge ahead with seeking out new digital opportunities for customers to improve the customer experience and increase unmediated transactions. This will allow us to better manage the demand in the contact centre, improving performance and allowing us the time to respond to clients who are not digitally enabled.

4.14 Implement additional modules of the Avaya system, taking full advantage of the upgrade.

4.15 Embed the Monitoring and Response team into the ATEC service.

4.16 Continue to prepare for the digital switchover: we are on track to complete this work ahead of the timeframe.

5. Consultation

N/A

6. Next Steps

6.1 The Chair will set out closing remarks and make recommendations to the relevant decision maker as required at the meeting and these will be published as an appendix. The Relevant decision maker will respond to the recommendations in a separate published appendix and both will be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee/Panel.

7. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	The purpose of this report is to provide updates on Customer Services Performance and on the Customer Services Review Monitoring/Action plan. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.	Davidaire Horsford, Interim Head of Legal Services, 26/02/2025
Finance and other resources	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the delivery of the digital strategy. As such there are no financial implications arising from this report.	Margaret Barrow, Accountancy Business Change Manager 24/02/25
Equalities	<p><i>The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no apparent equality impact on end users.</i></p> <p><i>The digital strategy contributes to Council's Equality and Equity Charter and the Council's Equality Objectives 2020-2024 by reducing the digital divide that our residents experience. Specifically, all our digital services are built in an accessible way; and our digital inclusion works increases access to the internet for some of our most excluded groups.</i></p>	Kit Collingwood AD, Digital and Customer Services 20/02/25
Climate change	This report makes no contribution to Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan	Kit Collingwood

	agreed by Cabinet on 18 November 2020	Assistant Director, Digital and Customer Services 20/02/25
Community Engagement	We frequently engage with our residents in our day to day duties. In addition, we invite residents to complete surveys to give feedback on performance.	Kit Collingwood Assistant Director, Digital and Customer Services 20/02/25

8. **Report Appendices**

8.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Performance across Customer Service
- Appendix B – Performance across other services

8.2 The following documents will be published after the meeting:-

- *Appendix (): Recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee*
- *Appendix (): Response to the recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee*

9. **Background Papers**

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Appendix A

Table 1: Contact Centre performance this year

Contact Centre	Total Calls Offered	Total Calls Abandoned	% Abandoned	%Handled	Average Wait to Answer	Maximum Wait to answer
01/04/2024 – 31/12/2024	429,202	89,104	21%	79%	6.18	01:30:08
Last Month (December 2024)	39,440	6,638	16.8%	83.2%	4:51	38:48

Table 2: Contact Centre performance last year

Contact Centre	Total Calls Offered	Total Calls Abandoned	% Abandoned	%Handled	Average Wait to Answer	Maximum Wait to answer
01/04/2023 – 31/12/2023						00:53:55
	403,474	43,045	10.7	89.3	02:06	
Last Month (December 2023)	35,834	2,671	7.5	92.5	01:33	00:43:30

Table 3. Out of Hours performance - This Year

Out of Hours	Total Calls	Total Abandoned	%. Abandoned	% Handled	Ave Wait to Answer	Maximum Wait to answer
Year to date (01/04/2024– 30/12/2024)	49,314	2020	4.1	95.9	00:21	00:32:14
Last Month (December 2024)	6172	279	4.5	95.5	00:28	18:00

Table 4 : Out of hours performance - Last year

Out of Hours	Total Calls	Total Abandoned	%. Abandoned	% Handled	Ave Wait To Answer	Maximum Wait to answer
Year to date	48,089	2,250	4.7	95.3	00:22	00:53:40
Last Month (December 2023)	5,925	347	5.9	94.1	00:32	00:53:40

Table 5: Responsive Repairs performance – This year 01/04/2024 – 31/12/2024

Responsive Repairs	Total Calls	Total Abandoned	%. Abandoned	% Handled	Ave Wait To Answer	Maximum Wait to answer
Year to date	50,503	6,257	12.4%	87.6%	04:31	00:57:51
Last Month (December 2024)	4,954	973	19.6%	80.4%	07:46	00:39:24

Table 6: Responsive Repairs Performance - Last year 01/04/2023 - 31/12/2023

Responsive Repairs	Total Calls	Total Abandoned	%. Abandoned	% Handled	Ave Wait To Answer	Maximum Wait to answer
Year to date	51,931	9,784	18.8%	81.2%	7:04	01:11:36
Last Month (December 2023)	5,152	1,102	21.4%	78.6%	8:25	00:36:02

Table 7: Average call handling time by type of call (skill) - This year (01/04/2024 - 30/11/2024)

	Total calls	Average wait to answer
Switchboard	157,472	03:03
Council Tax	79,371	09:28

Housing repairs	61,783	07:46
Waste	34,105	08:24
Registrars	22,953	08:30
Benefits	18,101	11:58
Parking	16,582	07:55
Mobility Duty	9,598	02:06
MASH (children's social service line)	8,777	02:17
Electoral	6,360	04:17
Schools Admissions	5,778	06:06
Pupil Benefits	3,672	05:04
Highways	2,403	07:49
Chief Executive Line	1,218	03:34
Parks and Open Spaces	1,026	06:08
ASB	3	21:11

Table 8: Average call handling time by type of call (skill) - Last year (01/04/2023 - 31/12/2023)

Average call handling time per skill	Total calls	Average wait to answer
Switchboard	147,677	01:11
Council Tax	69,800	03:01

Housing repairs	56,274	02:38
Waste	36,843	02:04
Registrars	20,616	02:21
Parking	15,677	02:14
Benefits	17,352	05:13
MASH (children's social service line)	8,962	01:03
Mobility	7933	01:57
Schools Admissions	7,915	02:01
Electoral	3,078	01:39
Pupil Benefits	3,005	01:53
Anti-social behaviour	2,504	02:28
Highways	2,878	01:48
Waste Enforce and Complaints	1,294	02:29
Park and Open Spaces	961	01:15
Chief Exec Line	538	00:13
Waste Graffiti	153	01:35
Customer Services	14	00:32

Table 9: Email Handling Performance from (01/04/2024 - date)

This covers general enquiries, waste, and repairs. This table covers the period from April 2024

Month	Emails completed	Ave Days to complete
Apr-24	2,485	3.03
May-24	2,785	7.92
Jun-24	2,773	9.76
Jul-24	3,250	7.08
Aug-24	2,964	9.63
Sep-24	3,166	6.64
Oct-24	3,305	7.12
Nov-24	2,894	6.26
Dec-24	2,329	8.66
Total (Apr - Dec 24)	25,951	7.34

Table 10 – Fix my street

	Total	Closed	Percentage Closed
Abandoned vehicles	950	60	6

Blocked Drain	152	142	93
Car Park Cleansing	34	4	12
Dead Animal	439	435	99
Dog Fouling	155	121	78
Fly Tipping Service	7219	7104	98
Graffiti	478	372	78
Litter Bin	615	116	19
Parks/landscapes	266	25	9
Pavements/Footpaths Repairs	552	203	37
Potholes	227	91	40
Road traffic signs	110	56	51
Roads/highways	402	161	40
Street lighting	207	111	54
Street Spillage	228	57	25
Trees	362	81	22
Weeding Request	184	158	86

Table 11 - The Woolwich Centre - (01/04/2024 - 30/12/2024)

Service	Number of Visitors	Average Wait
General Customer Service	23,714	04:55
Housing Inclusion	1,583	13:50

Table 12 - The Eltham Centre 01/04/2024 - 31/12/2024

Service	Number of Visitors	Average Wait
General Customer Service	3052	2:16

Table 13 - Telecare

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Emergency calls	5530	5440	4808	5495	5179	5254	5665	5801	5943
Installs and Repairs	110	95	94	87	79	73	74	68	61
Emergency Visits	209	234	247	261	262	239	256	333	290

Table 14 Mobility

	Blue Badge Apps (DFT)	No Of Enquiries	BB Issued	Freedom Passes Issued	Taxi Cards - Issued	Disabled Persons Parking Bays	Request Docs	Medical Assessment Appt/ Screen	Appts.	Payments Req
Apr-24	500	1811	273	5	5	3	371	146	19	572
May-24	468	1803	359	8	17	3	345	125	35	647
Jun-24	449	1585	332	12	5	4	277	94	26	555
Jul-24	474	1484	292	7	5	1	286	121	43	446
Aug-24	443	1468	282	7	9	6	261	115	37	510
Sep-24	484	1867	347	5	14	4	356	138	21	682
Oct-24	457	2076	405	5	8	5	446	156	37	761
Nov-24	455	1722	340	3	5	5	346	131	34	600
Dec-24	342	1176	268	1	8	1	191	83	15	398

Table 15 Royal Greenwich Interpretation Service - This year (Service Merged into Customer Service 01/01/2024)

Dates	Number of jobs completed
01/04/2024 - 31/12/2024	10786

Appendix B - Average call handling time by type of call (skill) - This year (01/04/2024 - 30/11/2024) - Services that do not go through the contact centre but use the contact centre telephony.

	Total calls	Average wait to answer	Maximum wait to answer
AOPS	10,217	3:35	01:05:06
Business Rates	3,324	1:29	00:51:51
Central Enforcement (Tenancy)	5,563	5:43	01:27:05
Community Participation (tenancy)	247	4:13	00:24:57
Corporate Debt Team	4,829	03:37	01:01:13
Council Tax Enforcement	742	01:38	00:54:03
Disability and Home improvement team	865	6:38	01:36:47
East Enforcement (Tenancy)	3,698	4:48	01:02:25
HACTRAC	1,210	1:28	00:52:15
Handy Person	3,186	09:04	03:12:39*
Allocations (Housing)	17,153	06:53	01:29:46
Housing Inclusion (Housing)	14,794	07:07	01:00:54

ICT Service Desk	10,922	00:34	00:28:08
Sheltered Housing (Tenancy)	2,626	5:48	01:01:59
South Enforcement (tenancy)	4271	5:20	01:08:15
Temporary Accommodation (Housing)	9,958	09:00	02:43:14
Tenancy Support	1,434	06:32	00:55:39
Universal Support Team (Welfare Rights)	1,331	0028	00:25:33
Welfare Rights Duty (Welfare Rights)	2,474	10:21	01:41:10