

To: POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: CUSTOMER SERVICE KEY HIGHLIGHTS
From: HEAD OF E-GOVERNMENT & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 23 January 2012	Ref: IMcK/PT	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on key customer service highlights being made through the delivery of the Customer Management Implementation Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 The customer management implementation plan provides a development program to achieve North Lanarkshire Council's vision of excellent customer service. The plan develops in line with ongoing improvements planned by individual services and also as additional customer improvement initiatives are identified through the:

- Customer Services Development Working Group;
- National Customer First Programme (e.g. Channel Shift, Public Information Notice);
- National initiatives (e.g. Blue Badges, Universal Credit, 0300 Numbers);
- Customer Management transformation workstream; and
- Any proposed Shared Services initiatives.

- 2.2 The plan is built around the key themes of the Customer Services strategy: connecting with our customers; empowered and effective staff; working with our partners; and enabling business improvement and governance is provided by the Customer Service Development Working Group.

3. Key highlights

- 3.1 **Local Citizen Account:** A local citizen account has been created for NLC that currently contains just over 164,000 customer records. It is being used to support customer enquiries in the customer contact centre and also the corporate complaints, comments and complements system across the council. For the first time NLC will be able to uniquely identify our customers across multiple back office systems providing us with the ability to communicate information such as name changes, death notifications and address changes to our back office systems in a consistent and cost effective way. To highlight NLC's success in this area, an event was held on the 27th October in the Council chambers, attended by 17 Scottish Councils, representatives from the Improvement Service and several vendors. In total there were 45 attendees, and represented an excellent opportunity for NLC to showcase the work being carried out

- 3.2 **Geographic Information System (GIS) Applications:** Significant work has taken place in the development and use of our GIS applications. This includes:
- **School Transport Qualification System:** Developed for Learning and Leisure Services, this system allows schools based staff and parents to assess whether or not an address qualifies for free school transport. Precise measurement of routes is delivered to schools by this application along with visual representation of buffer areas around all Primary and Secondary Schools. It is also used by schools at the registration process to inform parents about school transport entitlement and parents can use it to quickly identify school catchment areas;
 - **Grounds Maintenance.** All Geographic Information system users within Grounds Maintenance have now moved to the corporate GIS application in line with the GIS Strategy. This has directly led to cost reductions in the areas of data storage, user support and application maintenance; and
 - **Launch of Local View Fusion:** This now enhances the presentation of geographical information to our customers and is used to good effect to provide, for example, winter gritting route information to our customers on the council web site.
- 3.3 **Public Information Notices (PINs):** PINs is an effective way to meet customer demand and provide improved information to a wider audience enabling councils to provide local information regarding services such as road closures, planning or property developments, licensing and all other types of approved and proposed projects, in a clear and easy to use format. NLC staff have now had training to help them make the most efficient and effective use of PINs. The uploading of North Lanarkshire Council PINs notices by Services is now planned to begin in towards the end of January 2012.
- 3.4 **Disaster recovery and business continuity planning:** A secondary disaster recovery site for the Customer Contact Centre has been created to ensure continuity of this critical front line service. This facility has been created at a location out with both the telephony and power grids used at Motherwell to provide robust disaster recovery and business continuity options for this key service.
- 3.5 **Blue Badges:** The launch of the revised national Blue Badges scheme took place on the 1st January 2012. Customer Services now handles all Blue Badge applications through the First Stop Shops with central processing carried out by an administration team. This team is also responsible for telephone enquiries and for telephone based assessments. When detailed assessments are required these are carried out by Occupational Therapists from Social Work Services.
- 3.6 **Customer Services Professional Qualification:** Developed in partnership with several local authorities, this SQA accredited qualification represents shared services in practice. To date 92 NLC staff have registered for the qualification and over half have so far successfully completed it. The qualification was recently honoured with a COSLA excellence award in the 'securing a workforce for the future' category.

4. Key Statistics

- 4.1 Systems are being put in place to monitor the operational efficiency of our core customer access channels to provide comprehensive management information on customer contact and service requests. These are the Customer Contact Centre, the First Stop Shops, the Website and Social Media where for example we have 4,877 people following NLCpeople, our general, year round Twitter feed and 4,491 following NLCwinter for information on winter services.
- 4.2 Key statistics from these reporting tools are presented below for the current period 2011/12. Volume data from 2009/10 and 2010/11 are also provided for comparison purposes.

	Volume of Enquiries			% increase from 2009/10	Average Wait Time (Minutes) 2011/12	% Enquiry met within SLA 2011/12
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12			
First Stop Shops	141,426	217,700	241,335	+71%**	05:10	85%
Contact Centre	758,420	764,974	822,957	+8.5%	00:13	87%
Web	983,170	2,245,787	1,733,070	+76%	Information available 24/7/365	Information available 24/7/365
Totals	1,883,016	3,228,461	2,797,362	+49%		

Note1: The high volume figures for the web in 2010/11 are a reflection of the visitors to the website during the exceptionally bad winter storms that year.

** The increase in First Stop Shop footfall should be treated with caution due to a change in the method of measuring during this period

5. Channel Shift

5.1 NLC chairs the national channel shift programme that seeks to achieve a substantial increase in the volume of customer transactions being handled through cheaper communications channels such as on-line through the web and smart-phones. Our experience to date indicates that the demand for on-line service provision is growing. For example web requests for service from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011 were:

Service	Demand type	Volume
Housing	Housing repair requests	18,200
Cleansing – Special Uplifts	Request a special uplift	5,897
Roads repairs & street lighting faults	Report a road or footpath repair	2,777
All services	Complaints	1,300
Cleansing - bins	Missed bin	870
Pest control	Pest control report	571
Environmental services	Dog fouling bin request	555
Dog Warden	Request for dog chipping	209
Traffic	Guardrail or bollard damaged	147
Abandoned vehicles	Abandoned vehicle report	74
Grounds maintenance	Report fallen trees, lamp posts etc	52
Environmental Health	Fly posting report	6
Total		30,658

5.2 These figures will now be captured and trend information will be produced for future updates to indicate volumes of channel shift. We are working on a website strategy that will optimise the use of online services and direct residents to the most effective point of contact for them and the most efficient process for us. We are also planning to expand our use of social media like Twitter and Facebook.

6. Customer Contact Centre: Adverse Weather Response

6.1 The Contact Centre remained fully operational during the severe winter weather with no significant disruption to inbound or outbound customer services. Decisions on pre-queue messages were made and implemented regularly and successfully at short

notice; reflecting the current position of services at each key point and encouraging callers towards using online service requests. These services included:

- Emergency Housing and Property Repairs: significant volume of emergency repairs with many customers having property damage; and
- General Enquiries: significant increase in call volumes but offset by information provided on the Winter Services pages and the Twitter feed.

6.2 Overall there was a significant improvement in service provision from the previous winter periods in 2009 and 2010. This is a direct result of introducing a highly-effective resolutions process (handling problem jobs and calling all of these customers back to make sure that work was completed to their satisfaction), extended opening hours from normal office hours to 8am-6pm / Sat 9am-noon and the successful efforts to encourage the use of web / email transactions via pre queue and comfort messages.

7. Looking Forward

7.1 **Corporate Customer Care Standards:** A single set of corporate customer care standards has been created and circulated for consultation. These new standards will be delivered across all council services to create clarity for our customers and to streamline the performance reporting process

7.2 **Life Events:** This system will process life event notifications received from the Scottish Government (e.g. death notifications, change of address, change of name etc) so that council back office systems that hold customer information can be kept up to date and accurate in an efficient and effective way.

7.3 **Move to the use of 0300 numbers:** 0300 is the new recommended number for use by the public sector and Councils are being encouraged to adopt it. NLC has purchased a block of 0300 numbers and a contact numbering and service model proposal is currently being prepared.

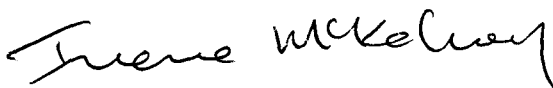
7.4 **Customer Relationship Management (Map Application):** Work on integrating Customer Relationship Management with the Corporate Address Gazetteer and the Corporate Geographic Information System is well underway. This allows staff to make use of the Map Application to assist with customer enquiries and help pinpoint exact street and house locations identifying where a specific service request is located. This facility will ensure that if multiple requests are received for service (e.g. filling a pot hole, recovery of an abandoned vehicle, graffiti removal) then this can be captured, but that only one request for work will ever be generated. It will also be possible to attach details (e.g. faulty street light) so that staff have specific information on their job sheet.

7.5 **Web and social media Strategies:** Work has already started on developing our use of the website to support shift to this efficient channel. This will integrate with our increasing use of social media to support and develop our Customer Services Strategy.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the committee:-

- Notes the progress made to date.



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