

To: POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: CUSTOMER SERVICES YEAR END UPDATE 2014/15
From: HEAD OF E-GOVERNMENT & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 04 MAY 2015	Ref: IMcK/PT	

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on:
- Customer service provision through the primary customer contact channels;
  - On-going supporting initiatives; and
  - The move towards digital service provision.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We make this a reality by making sure that we understand our customers and their needs; continually seeking to improve the way that we deliver services; encouraging our customers to contact us in ways that best suit them; making sure that our employees have the knowledge and skills they need to help our customers and that we have the capability to put things right if they go wrong.
- 2.2 An audit of Customer Services was presented in January 2015 and highlighted that the council had not yet put in place arrangements at a corporate level to effectively deliver key elements of the approved Customer Services Strategy. As a result of the audit, the remit of the strategic working group was reviewed, customer service liaison meetings were created to ensure full engagement from all services in the delivery of the customer services strategy, the customer services implementation plan was altered to more clearly reflect key priorities and performance reporting was reviewed with information on our customer care standards being routinely reported from April 2015.
- 2.3 The Customer Services team are now working with services towards implementing a planned programme of improvement work aligned with the Customer Services Strategy and governed by the Customer Service Development Working Group (CSDWG).
- 2.4 The main focus in 2014/15 will be to lay the foundations that will ensure our customers can make greater use of the web and other self service approaches.

## 3. Customer Contact Centre

- 3.1 In terms of customers accessing our services, the telephone continues to be the most popular customer channel.
- 3.2 Total incoming calls for the year were 553,074 with a customer call abandonment rate of 2.4%. In addition to incoming calls, the customer contact centre also made 167,858 outgoing calls to our customers. These included calls to support customers and to carry out customer surveys. The Contact Centre also processed 88,664 on line requests for service.

#### **4. First Stop Shops & Municipal Bank**

- 4.1 We have seen a decrease in demand at our First Stop Shops. This decrease has been predominantly due to a reduction in demand in relation to Under Occupancy, Housing and Private Benefits, Council Tax, Rents and more customers paying by direct debit. In addition the introduction of Paypoint for Scottish Welfare Fund payments has reduced the number of cash payouts to claimants at the bank.
- 4.2 During 2014/15 late opening on a Wednesday morning was introduced to enable consistent and effective staff training. This change has been hugely successful with demonstrable impacts being made on problem resolution and the effectiveness of service delivery. Customer feedback has also been positive in terms of improved service provision.
- 4.3 Total customer transactions at our first stop shops and municipal bank for the year were 960,311. Customers had an average wait time of 3 minutes 55 seconds.

#### **5. Blue Badges**

- 5.1 Badges fall within two categories, Automatic or Discretionary. The number of badges issued for Automatic and Discretionary categories together with the number of badges re-issued when lost by customers for 2014/15 was 6570.

#### **6. Scottish Welfare Fund**

- 6.1 Uptake of the Scottish Welfare Fund continues to grow at a steady rate with total decisions for Crisis Grants more than doubling in the last year from 7810 to 16,263. For Community Care Grants there has been an increase of over 20% from 4787 applications to 5,808.
- 6.2 A more detailed update on the first year's operation of the fund is the subject of a separate report to this committee.

#### **7. Website**

- 7.1 Use of the council website continues to grow year on year with 2,216,884 visits to the website and 7,309,480 individual pages viewed.
- 7.2 Website forms were upgraded to enhance usability on mobile and tablet devices.
- 7.3 The ten most popular pages were: School holiday and term dates; pay a bill; job vacancies; winter school daily update; contact the council; when is my bin emptied?; bins and recycling landing page; search planning applications; schools and learning landing page; planning applications landing page.

#### **8. Looking Local**

- 8.1 The Looking Local service is owned by Kirklees Council and is operated as a not-for-profit organisation for all of the public sector. It is a service that displays selected content from an organisations website across a range of devices and platforms that include mobile phones, tablets and digital television. It is currently used by over 130 public sector organisations to deliver information, services and real-time transactions.
- 8.2 Looking Local was introduced in 2013 and figures for this year (2014/15) indicate that 86,556 requests for service were made through the following channels:

Main Application (Internet)	Facebook	Mobile Device	NLC Local Application	Digital Television			
				Netgem	Sky	Telewest	Virgin
2	17	11,760	7,359	1,392	622	6	65,398

8.3 The most common services accessed were School holidays, Council Information, Universal Credit, News from twitter, Requesting a service, Reporting a fault, winter information and the National Entitlement Card (NEC) & Kidz Card.

## 9. Customer Trends across our key contact channels

9.1 Key statistics for the First stop shops, the Customer Contact Centre and for the Web are presented below for 2014/15. Volume data from 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 is also provided for trend and comparison purposes.

	Volume of Demand						Trend
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	
<b>First Stop Shops</b>	141,426	217,700	241,335	241,432	241,717	235,604	↓
<b>Cash receipting and Municipal Bank</b>	968,258	937,619	926,507	881,198	886,151	724,707	↓
<b>Customer Contact Centre</b>	758,420	764,974	822,957	831,048	807,945	720,932	↓
<b>Customer Contact Centre – Online requests</b>	n/a	n/a	20,658	27,310	65,591	88,664	↑
<b>Web</b>	983,170	2,245,787	1,733,070	2,016,719	2,078,054	2,216,884	↑
<b>Looking Local</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	104,887	86,556	↓
<b>Blue Badges</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,427	6,968	6,570	↓
<b>Scottish Welfare Fund</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12,597	22,068	↑

9.2 Demand overall has fallen slightly in 2014/15, demonstrating the success of our customer self service initiatives e.g. accessing information from the website, from looking local, moving to direct debit, payments through paypoint etc.

## 10. Ongoing Supporting Initiatives

10.1 **Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) System:** The implementation of the new corporate ACD is now fully complete and it is being used to drive the development of the Customer Contact Centre and other service areas across the council. The system delivers new features which will improve customer and staff experience by increasing the use of email and text messaging and introducing web chat. Services already supported by the ACD include Social Work Emergency Service, Local Homes, Mears,

Scottish Welfare Fund, Blue Badges and Anti-Social Behaviour. Other services are currently being identified.

**10.2 FSS Improvement programme:** Work is ongoing to improve the facilities offered and the capacities of our network of first stop shops. The key highlights are:

- **Motherwell:** The new Motherwell FSS located in the Dalziel Building, officially opened on the 28<sup>th</sup> May. The improved facility has been warmly welcomed by our customers.
- **Cumbernauld:** The new Cumbernauld FSS located in Fleming House, officially opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> November. Again customer feedback has been very positive.
- **Wishaw:** The Wishaw FSS is being relocated to a new 'Hub' facility being developed in collaboration with the NHS. It is scheduled to open in August 2015.
- **Airdrie:** The Airdrie FSS is also being located to a new 'Hub' facility in Coates House. This is being developed in conjunction with other council Services.

A number of new services have been included in the FSSs during 2014/15 including, Public Access Computing in Motherwell, allowing customers to access services on-line, taking payment for Blue Badges and the introduction of the first phase of Universal Credit.

### **10.3 National Services Scotland**

10.3.1. NLC have been working closely with the Information Statistics Division of NHS National Services Scotland. This work is focussed on improving our knowledge of our customers by examining which services our customers currently access and then looking at the customer information we currently hold to determine how the provision of these services could be carried out in a more efficient and effective way.

10.3.2. For example, for the Scottish Welfare Fund, we have identified households who could benefit from additional assistance and several are now receiving support from this fund.

10.3.3. The success of this multi-agency work has generated very significant interest in both Local Government and the wider public sector. A presentation was made to SOLACE in November and several case studies are being developed in conjunction with the NHS.

### **10.4 Enterprise Information Management**

10.5.1 Customer Services provide a range of information and systems available for corporate use. This includes:

- i) corporate Geographic Information store, which now holds over 500 data 'layers' including School catchment areas, Ward boundaries, council offices and winter gritting routes.
- ii) corporate address gazetteer which now holds details of 5,382 streets and 170,614 properties in the North Lanarkshire area.
- ii) the customer 'golden record' which now holds 155,044 records.
- iii) TRIM, the electronic document and records management system used by 646 users across 4 council services and CultureNL. It is currently managing 461,502 electronic documents.
- iv) Customer Services also completed the file plan, retention and security review within Chief Executive's Office.

## 11. Digital Service Provision

- 11.1 **Mygovscot (life event notifications):** The Mygovscot service is now providing life event information on our customers such as births, deaths and address changes. NLC were the first council to go live with this service on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014. We are still the only council currently able to carry out this processing and in 2014/15 processed 4955 life event notifications, providing updates to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and the Social Work System (SWIS).
- 11.2 **Mygovscot (myaccount):** The Scottish Government has introduced a national account (username and password) that allows customers to access on-line services at both a national and at a local level. Introducing a federated account, means that customers can use the same user name and password when dealing with different local authorities or other public sector organisation. This service went live in April 2014. As of the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015, over 500 North Lanarkshire residents have registered and created accounts. This is growing steadily at approx 10 accounts per week. We are currently working with Services across the Council to identify services that could be provided on-line and accessed via myaccount.
- 11.3 **Quality of customer and property data:** The National Registers of Scotland (NRS) are working with us to continually improve the quality of the customer and property data held in our back office systems. This work is being taken forward by the Information Assurance Working Group so that when customers access on-line services we can be confident of their identity. Blue Badge information was processed by the NRS in March to verify dates of death. In total 898 records were verified to ensure that for example we don't send letters to deceased individuals.
- 11.4 **Customer Portal:** Work has started to develop a customer portal for North Lanarkshire. This will be the place where our customers log on (using myaccount) to access on-line digital services (e.g. finding their Council Tax Balance, arranging a special uplift, etc).

## 12. Recommendations

- 12.1 It is recommended that the committee:-
- Notes the progress made to date



### **Head of E-Government & Service Development**

*Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact Irene McKelvey, on tel. 01698 302532 or Peter Tolland, Customer Services Manager on 01698 274385.*