

# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

**10.00am, Tuesday, 4 December 2018**

**Contact Centre Performance: July – September 2018**

<b>Item number</b>	8.4
<b>Report number</b>	
<b>Executive/routine</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Council Commitments</b>	

## Executive Summary

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The report details Contact Centre performance for the period July to September 2018 and outlines associated service improvement activities.

## Contact – Performance Update: July to September 2018

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee notes the:
  - 1.1.1 current performance trends within the Contact Centre; and
  - 1.1.2 ongoing service and performance improvement activities to ensure that Council services are easy to access and citizen queries and complaints are dealt with effectively.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee receives regular updates on Contact Centre performance, trends, and ongoing service improvement activities. This report covers a 3 month period from July 2018 to September 2018 and the data is based on the new call performance target of 60% of calls answered within 60 seconds, as agreed by Committee in August 2018. This change means a comparison with previous results (55% target) is not directly applicable, however, the previous data is included for completeness.

### 3. Main report

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#### Overview

- 3.1 The Contact Centre team aims to maximise the number of queries resolved at the first point of contact, aligned with clear escalation routes where further input is required from other Council services. The Contact Centre team currently supports phone calls (inbound and outbound), e-mails, social media channels and web chat.

#### Current Trends and Service Performance

- 3.2 Regular management information is produced to monitor performance and inform future improvement activities. The July to September 2018 period saw various Council projects that impacted on Contact Centre, including further recovery action to support Council Tax collection rates and the launch of Garden Waste registration. This resulted in increased Waste service calls which materially impacted the waste and environmental contact services, customer care and local office support. The Council Tax service also experienced an increase in contact levels, with a resulting impact on service lines and wait times generally. Where possible Contact Centre resource was reallocated to support key services.

3.3 Key performance data and trends for the Contact Centre are detailed in Appendix 1, with the major themes highlighted in the following section:

- Total Calls answered for July to September 2018 was 169,844, a 1% increase on same period as last year.
- Increased contact levels impacted on teams disproportionately: Council Tax experienced a 34% increase in calls, Waste had a 285% increase in calls and Scottish Welfare saw a 14% increase in call volumes and a 35% increase in applications. Demand for other channels e.g. emails has increased year on year, with an average 5% increase in this channel.
- 23 of our 37 (62%) lines achieved the 60% of calls answered within 60 seconds service level target in the current reporting period. A further 7 lines achieved a 50% or higher service level.
- 19 of our 37 lines were within the 10% call abandonment tolerance target with 16 lines achieving the 8% stretch tolerance target.
- 19 of our 37 lines reported an increase in average handling time (AHT), with the average rising to 346 seconds from the previous reported figure of 336 seconds. This reflects the ongoing programme of support and up-skilling to develop service knowledge and call handling skills, with a wider focus on first touch resolution. This activity also helps to reduce the number of required outbound and follow up calls.
- The quality of service provided by the Contact Centre is measured via an assessment of contact adviser performance against a series of set criteria covering both technical and soft skills. For the last 3 months the Contact Centre has scored 92%, against a target of 80%, demonstrating a consistency of performance and positive quality of service outcomes.

3.4 The Council's new telephony system enables citizen satisfaction levels to be monitored, with Team leaders receiving real time alerts on low scoring satisfaction surveys. This allows for immediate intervention and remedial actions with citizens and staff. This tool is being further developed to ensure robust and accurate management information and the target will be to consistently achieve the public sector industry customer satisfaction standard of 75%. We are currently achieving 70% performance, however, the volumes completing the survey are lower than expected and we are reviewing the questions and messaging around the importance of completing the survey to encourage take up.

3.5 Formal complaints relating to contact activities are tracked, with 139 complaints received over the 3-month period. Complaint levels remain comparatively low, equating to less than 1% of calls handled by the Contact Centre in the reporting period. The largest complaint theme related to service failure. The Contact Centre team continues to work closely with relevant Council services to ensure that accurate service commitments and expectations are given to citizens.

## **Ongoing Projects and Improvement Activities**

- 3.6 The latest data highlights that contact performance fluctuates when there is increased demand, often because of external factors. This is effectively demonstrated by the Garden Waste project, which resulted in the main waste line being presented with 7069 calls from July – September 2018 compared to 1834 calls for the same period in 2017, a 285% increase. The impact on intraday call performance was also significant and call volumes peaked at 430% when compared with a 'standard' contact day. This sustained volume spike impacted on performance across the entire Contact Centre, with resource reallocated to best meet demand. This is evidenced by telephone performance in the localities where a 48% performance level was achieved during the garden waste registration period before climbing to 58% in September. A number of lessons were learned from the initial garden waste registration activity and additional resource was secured to support the latest registration period.
- 3.7 The Scottish Welfare fund, Council Tax and Benefits team also experienced service pressures. This has been driven by increased contact as a result of Welfare Reform changes with a 14% increase in calls handled and a further 35% increase in applications. The Council Tax experienced a 34% increase in calls handled and this is related to ongoing activities to maximise Council Tax collection rates. To address these pressures additional resource has been recruited and advisors in this area continue to be multi skilled to ensure that the team is as flexible as possible to tackle emerging issues.
- 3.8 Performance in the Repairs Direct team has been impacted by a 5% increase in job requests and a 12% increase in follow up outbound calls. The effectiveness of the team has also been impacted by the loss of experienced staff who have secured higher graded roles within the Council. Temporary staff have also moved in to permanent roles in other Council services and with external organisations, whose contact centres often offer higher salaries. A permanent recruitment exercise is underway to create greater resource stability and leadership resource has been refreshed to drive performance. Demand levels will continue to be a challenge as we move into winter and the Contact Team is engaging with service colleagues to ensure priority activities are targeted and processes are efficient
- 3.9 Support for the Social Care professional adult lines remains a key focus. Training and support activities have contributed to a performance improvement over the 3-month period, with September's performance service achieving the 60% target. The service will continue to be monitored to ensure the correct balance between call handling and email performance.
- 3.10 The Contact Team continues to implement changes to improve the citizen experience. In addition to cross skilling, targeted coaching has been undertaken to increase agents call capacity, with 5-10% improvement being achieved in some teams. The use of technology also plays an important role in Contact Centre activities and following the recent introduction of web chat and an internal knowledge base, a new automated email system has gone live that supports and prioritises the allocation of transactions.

- 3.11 A new supplier has now been appointed to implement a comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) system. This will be a vital component in the Contact Centre delivering its targeted efficiencies of 15% in 2019/20. The project is being jointly progressed by Customer and Digital Services and the Council's ICT Partner, CGI.
- 3.12 Social media continues to grow and the Contact Centre Team has continued with a more citizen focused "one and done" approach on a 24/7 basis. The Contact Centre is also continuing to add online forms and appropriate self-serve functionality. This will ensure resource is maximised for those services that require agent or face to face interaction and support.

## **4. Measures of Success**

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- 4.1 Performance against target is regularly reviewed to ensure issues are addressed and service level improvements are achieved.
- 4.2 Key statistics are included in Directorate and Council dashboards. Targets are set using the approved resource profile and benchmarked against similar organisations. Performance measures primarily focus on call efficiency; first touch resolution, agent quality and customer satisfaction and experience.
- 4.3 Team Leaders monitor live performance information within the Contact Centre and use this to respond dynamically to demand. Daily, weekly, and monthly reports are produced and scrutinised by senior management.

## **5. Financial impact**

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- 5.1 The Contact Centre Team is projected to deliver a further 15% efficiency saving within 2019/20 and this will be achieved through several routes, including greater self-service, a rationalised cash collection operation and improved call handling supported by customer relationship management. Where appropriate and subject to a comprehensive integrated impact assessment, predominately online services will also be considered in areas, e.g. interaction with businesses.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance, and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The delivery of high performing contact services, both online and through telephony channels is a key objective for the Council.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. The Council continues to progress a primarily digital by design approach to ensure that all Citizens are supported, providing them with appropriate and accessible service options. This adopts the standard call centre and shared services methodology of

providing a range of channels, including: self-service options, call based options, face to face interaction at a customer hub or locality office.

- 7.2 As the Council's online offering develops and matures consideration will be given as how best to further encourage and improve uptake of both self-service and online transactional options, supported by automation where appropriate.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 There are no direct sustainability impacts as a result of this report.

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 The Customer team uses a broad range of feedback and citizen groups to support service development and improvement.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [Customer Performance Update January – June 2018](#) - Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, August 2018
- 10.2 [Customer Performance Update: July – December 2017](#) – Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, February 2018
- 10.3 [Contact Centre Performance Update: April to July 2017 - Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, October 2017](#)
- 10.4 [Minute of Council Meeting 24 August 2017](#) – Automated Service – Customer Journey, Motion by Councillor Johnston
- 10.5 Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 28 March 2017 – [Customer Contact Update](#)
- 10.6 Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 8 November 2016 – [General Switchboard and Website Enquiries](#)

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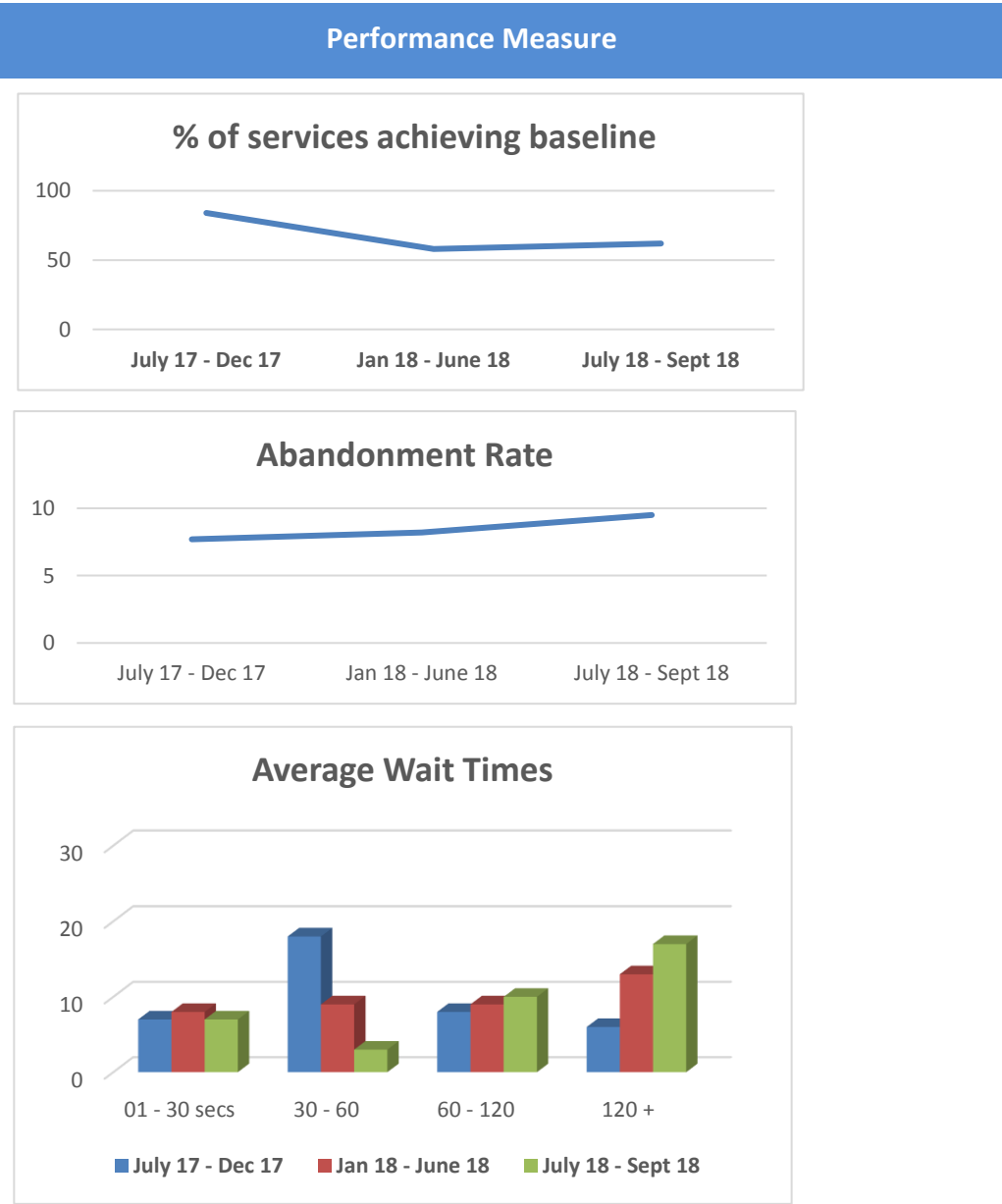
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## **11. Appendices**

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Appendix 1 – Customer Centre Performance Data

Contact Centre Performance Overview



Commentary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This report details 3 months data v 6 months’ data in last Committee report.</li><li>• This period has seen increased demand in Council Tax 34%, Waste 285%, and Scottish Welfare Fund 35%. The first 6 months of 2018 saw significant challenges, including adverse weather conditions and the telephony replacement</li><li>• 23/37 lines achieved service level (a further 7 lines achieved 50% or above service level). 25/37 lines with improved trend and plans in place to further improve</li><li>• NB July 17 to June 18 data reflects 55% service level target</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call abandonment rate increased to 9.4% over the 3-month period but remains under the 10% target. The Contact Centre is answering 91% of all calls received.</li><li>• 19 lines are achieving the 10% or below calls abandonment threshold target with 16 lines achieving the 8% stretch target. 15 lines show an improved trend.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Average wait times increased during this period and this is linked to significant call volume increases in critical services. 11 lines show an improving trend</li><li>• First touch resolution continues to be a focus to avoid repeat contact from customers (average call handling increased by 10 seconds compared with previous period)</li><li>• Online/self-service continues to be promoted to allow customers to self-serve where they can without the need to call.</li><li>• Continued focus on code handling to ensure we have maximum staff capacity available to take calls and new shift patterns being introduced to cover periods of higher demand e.g. 10-2 shift.</li></ul>

## Contact Centre - Performance Data

Contact Activity and Timescale	% Calls answered within 30 seconds SLA target of 55%		60% SLA		Abandonment target – not exceed 10%, with a stretch target of 8%					Average Wait Times			
	July 17 - Dec 17	Jan 18 - June 18	Jul 18 – Sept 18	Trend Jan/Jun Jul/Sep 18	July 17 - Dec 17	Jan 18 - June 18	Jul 18 – Sept 18	Total Calls Handled	Trend Jan/Jun - Jul/Sep 18	July 17 - Dec 17	Jan 18 - June 18	Jul 18 – Sept 18	Trend Jan/Jun - Jul/Sep 18
Anti Social Behaviour	75%	83%	94%	▲	11.7%	2.8%	2.1%	47	▼	00:35	00:23	0:15	▼
Central Emergency Serv	73%	70%	76%	▲	8.0%	7.3%	10.6%	5638	▲	00:37	00:52	1:16	▲
C & F Professional Child	73%	69%	87%	▲	6.3%	7.8%	3.0%	1500	▼	00:49	01:11	0:35	▼
C & F Public Child	71%	67%	88%	▲	6.5%	9.2%	4.8%	1900	▼	00:48	01:31	0:42	▼
Emergency Child	73%	77%	70%	▼	4.8%	3.5%	3.4%	194	▼	00:41	00:43	1:05	▲
Clarence	64%	49%	57%	▲	6.0%	9.4%	12.9%	2526	▲	00:56	01:53	2:03	▲
Council Tax	55%	39%	42%	▲	8.2%	11.8%	14.1%	23555	▲	02:03	03:30	4:49	▲
Benefits	66%	51%	63%	▲	3.3%	6.3%	4.8%	9332	▼	01:18	02:27	2:12	▼
NDR	53%	47%	52%	▲	7.2%	9.3%	10.9%	1310	▲	02:15	02:36	2:54	▲
Customer Care	76%	86%	93%	▲	4.1%	2.4%	1.5%	3155	▼	00:48	00:26	0:20	▼
Food Bank	65%	42%	66%	▲	8.7%	27.6%	14.1%	1198	▼	01:26	05:45	2:39	▼
Emergency Home Care	85%	88%	94%	▲	5.1%	4.2%	3.4%	7639	▼	00:14	00:14	0:13	▼
Emergency Home Care	73%	87%	95%	▲	3.3%	4.1%	2.1%	1191	▼	00:14	00:17	0:14	▼
Emergency Social Work	86%	88%	93%	▲	4.4%	3.5%	2.9%	4579	▼	00:17	00:19	0:22	▲
Interpretation	88%	96%	78%	▼	11.8%	5.0%	0.0%	3	▼	00:09	00:02	3:17	▲
ITS Daytime	87%	82%	93%	▲	4.5%	11.0%	4.1%	1115	▼	00:06	00:39	0:35	▼
1 Edinburgh	56%	43%	53%	▲	8.4%	11.8%	12.2%	5191	▲	01:14	02:10	2:21	▲
Repairs Direct	56%	39%	38%	▼	13.0%	18.6%	26.4%	19668	▲	01:56	03:24	5:15	▲
Repairs Planners	71%	72%	92%	▲	7.8%	5.3%	2.3%	8892	▼	00:36	00:39	0:18	▼
SCD Professional Adult	39%	59%	60%	▲	12.2%	8.2%	11.0%	582	▲	01:35	01:09	1:24	▲
SCD Public Adult	32%	54%	53%	▼	26.2%	14.6%	18.7%	9493	▲	03:35	02:25	3:07	▲
Welfare Fund Comm.	48%	45%	39%	▼	12.1%	11.7%	26.3%	2050	▲	03:07	03:13	7:06	▲
Welfare Fund Crisis	44%	42%	30%	▼	11.3%	7.1%	16.2%	6453	▲	04:52	06:21	9:24	▲
Repairs - Tradesman	64%	54%	51%	▼	7.6%	8.9%	14.7%	7088	▲	00:40	01:16	2:08	▲
Repairs - Quality Care	59%	47%	43%	▼	5.3%	5.4%	13.8%	667	▲	00:47	01:26	2:20	▲
Special Waste Uplifts	51%	38%	43%	▲	8.3%	13.4%	12.2%	3849	▼	02:50	02:55	3:57	▲
Waste	64%	40%	55%	▲	3.7%	8.7%	13.7%	7069	▲	01:10	02:18	3:42	▲
Environment	61%	38%	42%	▲	5.4%	10.9%	16.9%	2226	▲	01:13	02:36	3:58	▲
Missed Collections	64%	46%	57%	▲	4.8%	9.3%	10.2%	2131	▲	01:07	02:00	2:42	▲
FM Helpdesk	78%	89%	93%	▲	9.5%	3.2%	3.3%	4008	▲	00:23	00:12	0:14	▲
Building Standards	68%	60%	69%	▲	4.8%	5.6%	7.4%	1946	▲	00:52	01:03	1:21	▲
Planning	68%	61%	70%	▲	3.7%	5.7%	7.4%	1571	▲	00:52	01:02	1:21	▲
PBS Building Payments	67%	57%	75%	▲	6.3%	9.7%	7.7%	1292	▼	00:48	01:16	1:10	▼
CE Local Office	71%	71%			7.4%	8.0%				00:32	00:29		
EE Local Office	69%	70%			7.4%	6.8%				00:41	00:32		
NE Local Office	70%	74%			6.6%	3.5%				00:36	00:30		
SE Local Office	73%	73%			6.6%	4.6%				00:32	00:30		
SWE Local Office	73%	72%			8.5%	6.3%				00:25	00:33		
WE Local Office	70%	70%			9.4%	7.8%				00:33	00:30		
North East Locality			62%				9.1%	4786				1:20	
North West Locality			61%				9.2%	6143				1:23	
South East Locality			62%				10.4%	4985				1:19	
South West Locality			61%				8.6%	4872				1:22	

### Commentary

- Calls handled over the reporting period reporting July to Sept 18 is 169,844.
- Locality phone line merged therefore data reporting changes for period July 18 to Sept 18.