

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 9 September 2013, 6pm, Jeffery Room**  
**Performance Measures: CS13**

**Performance Measure CS13** – Percentage of all calls into the Contact Centre answered. The Committee queried resourcing for the Contact Centre and suggested that the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to provide details of demand to the Contact Centre and resources provided.

The percentage of calls answered for 12/13 was 84.9%. The total calls received were 358,288 with 304,214 answered. An additional 19,434 calls were handled during 12/13 compared to 11/12.

Volumes of calls over the last 8 months (to July 2013) have had the biggest impact on call handling service with only one month (May 13) showing a decrease (reduction of 654 calls compared to 11/12) The remainder of the months show an increase compared to 11/12 ranging from 330 in February to 6377 in July giving a total increase of **21,661** calls in the first 7 months of this year. This could be a result of Welfare reform.

Extensive training was undertaken by all staff during December 2012 to prepare for the initial change in welfare reform. This training continued during January and February 2013 as the impact of Welfare Reform and the training requirements became known. This had an impact on call answering rates as the extent of the training meant that staff had to come off the phones to receive the training.

Email contact continues to increase and currently requires a minimum of one FTE to keep to our agreed response time. This therefore impacts on the number of staff available to handle calls.

Customer access via the website continues to increase but without a corresponding drop in telephone calls indicating an increased demand.

Welfare reform, training and mailshots hitting around the same time caused a drop in service levels

Investigation into abandoned calls suggests that a customer can call upto 10 times in 1 day if not answered quickly (during busy periods), increasing calls and abandoned rate.

Busy periods (Council Tax only) are 2 out of every 4 week period. The mail distribution is spread over a 3 day period and limited to 2000 per day. This is too high a figure to cope with within our existing resources however it is necessary in order to progress with the recovery and collection timetable. The casual worker pool should support us in the future.

**Improvements in service made since January 2013**

Weekend opening during April/May to try to spread impact of welfare reform

Extended hours through annual billing period including evening opening  
Temporary staff employed during peak periods including bin change roll-out.  
Casual worker pool started to enable us to use resource as required (mailshots) etc.  
Annual Leave restrictions in place for estimated Ctax billing/reminder/summons dates)

**Further possible improvement actions:**

- Further investment in Channel shift to transfer customer enquiries towards the website and mobile application.
- Revenues and benefits appointments to no longer be available face to face and be telephone appointment based only (This would release 2 FTE to take calls or support customers to self-serve) (Only 24 appointments can be taken for Revenues and Benefits in a day through face to face appointments whereas 75 telephone call appointments could be taken in one day)

It would require 41 FTE to support call answering of over 90% average throughout the year based on 12 months data (August 12 to July13) There are currently 35 FTE