



Buckinghamshire County Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny

Committee: Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny

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Title: Development of the Contact Centre

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Introduction and summary:

This report has been compiled following a request for an update on the development of the Contact Centre and a response to specific queries from the Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny committee.

The report provides:

- A high level overview of the Contact Centre
- Benefits of the Contact Centre
- Detail on standards of Customer Care and how these will be monitored
- An overview of the complaints handling process

1. Background information

Buckinghamshire County Council has agreed to set up its new Contact Centre as a critical means of achieving its strategic aims of providing greater access to its services, alongside efficiency and cost savings, and as an enabler to being awarded a CPA rating of "Excellent" by 2008.

The Vision is "to provide a 'best-in-class', customer-focused operation that delivers easily-accessible, seamless service excellence and exceeds the expectations of its customers and stakeholders." The Contact Centre will become the first point of customer contact for all services, handling an estimated 1 million calls per annum, and its remit will broaden from General Enquiries, Complaints and Switchboard in Phase 1 (w/c 20th February 2006) to a much broader, deeper mix of services and functionality as it expands over time.

It will be located in the New County offices in Aylesbury, next to the Reference Library, with initial opening hours of 8.00am – 6.30pm (Mon-Fri) in Phase 1, extending to 8.00 pm in the evenings (Mon-Fri) and 9.00am – 4.00pm on Saturdays, once Library & Heritage services are fully introduced in Phase 3.

The Contact Centre will be developed and extended in the following proposed phases:-

- Phase 1 - General Enquiries, Complaints, Switchboard (W/C 20/2/06)
- Phase 2 - Highways on Call (April 2006*)
- Phase 3 - Libraries & Heritage and Adult Learning (May 2006*)
- Phase 4 - Older People (Summer 2006*)
- Phase 5 - Other services or functionality added (2007 onwards)

*Subject to final ratification

The success of the Contact Centre will be measured through 15 Key Performance Indicators and a range of other operational metrics. Performance will also be assessed against 4 Priority outcomes, which directly map into the Council's Customer Service Strategy.

2. Contact Centre Benefits:

The objective of Customer First and therefore the Contact Centre, is for all customers to experience a joined-up, seamless, efficient service, which provides easy access to all of the Council's services. The customer will be placed at the centre of all our processes, with an individual record being created for each of our customers' interactions with Council services. This record will be managed via the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Please refer appendix 1 for a diagram on the Customer Journey.

The benefits of the Contact Centre are summarised below:

Benefits for the Customer

- More convenient access
- Choice of access
- Responsiveness
- Right first time
- Multiple transactions

Benefits for the Council

- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased openness and accountability
- Improved corporate/multi-agency partnership and working
- Improved efficiency/savings for reinvestment
- Proactive contribution to achievement of e-Government targets

Benefits for Service Areas

- Removal of simple yet time-consuming tasks
- More time for complex, value-add activity
- Fewer interruptions, more time to think and plan
- Increased productivity and job satisfaction
- Reduced backlogs
- Central logging of Complaints providing opportunity to improve
- Consistent standard of customer service across disparate teams
- Valuable performance metrics to improve Quality of Service
- Identification of inconsistent practices
- Inter-departmental teamwork and joined-up government
- Satisfied customers

Benefits for Employees

- Empowerment
- Job opportunities
- Skills development
- Virtual teamwork and networking
- Increased job satisfaction

3. Customer Standards:

The Contact Centre will be accessible and welcoming and will provide a high quality service. Our customers can expect us to meet the standards as set out in our Customer Charter below:-

- ❑ For just the cost of a local call, we will be accessible to you from;
 - -8.00am – 6.30pm, Mon-Fri only (February-May 2006)
 - -8.00 – 8.00 (Monday – Friday) for all Council services, and from 9.00 – 4.00 on Saturdays for library services (from May 2006).
- ❑ We will answer 80% of calls within 20 seconds, and all calls as promptly as possible
- ❑ Our staff will be courteous and helpful, and trained in customer care
- ❑ We will try to resolve 60% of your queries immediately, each time you contact us
- ❑ We will respond to all e-mails within 1 working day
- ❑ You will be listened to, and feel confident that your needs will be understood and met
- ❑ You will feel valued and that we know you

The Library and Heritage Service already offers the majority of standards above. However, customer contact made through the current information service cannot be tracked and we are unable to assure ourselves that a Customer query has been responded to within the Service Area it has been referred to.

To ensure Customer service is not reduced a formal approach of Due Diligence has been agreed with the relevant Heads of Service This approach will ensure that a comprehensive and exhaustive checklist will be worked through with the Service Area that includes the mapping of 'as-is' (current) processes, and the identification of established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to measure and manage the standards of performance of the Service Area.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Service Area and the Contact Centre will reflect the established KPIs and during the implementation phase these will be monitored at frequent intervals to ensure performance standards are met, allowing action to be taken quickly and effectively should any performance issues be highlighted.

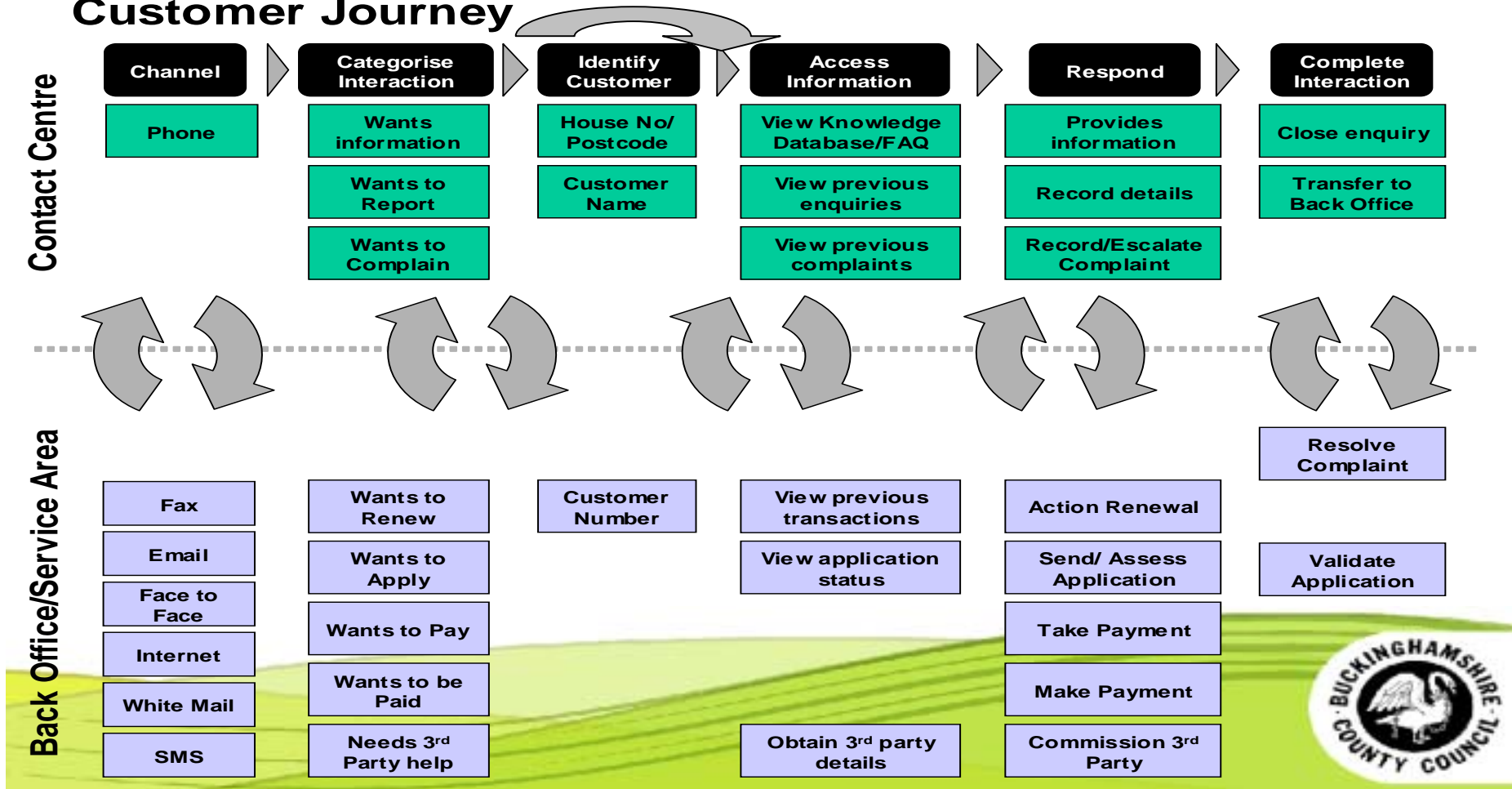
Appendix 2 details the proposed KPIs for the Contact Centre.

4. Complaints procedure:

The detail of the complaints process is currently being agreed with Service Areas. However, a high level overview of the generic process for monitoring complaints is:

- All complaints received either by letter, completed form, email, web form or telephone will be recorded on the CRM system.
- This system will manage all the activities involved in tracking and monitoring the complaint through to its resolution.
- Complaints will be investigated and analysed by the relevant Service Area.
- Each Service Area has a Complaints Co-coordinator who owns and manages the process through to closure, only passing on responsibility where the complaint is escalated.

Customer Journey



Appendix 2

Proposed KPIs for Contact Centre

KPI AREA	DESCRIPTION	INDUSTRY BENCHMARK	TARGET 2006/07
Agent Utilisation	Time spent per agent per hour handling calls (speaking to customers)	80%	75%
Service Level	Percentage of calls answered by an agent within x seconds	80% in 15 seconds	80% in 25 seconds
Abandon Rate	% of customers who hang up after the call has been placed in an Agent queue, but before an Agent has answered	< 3%	>10%
Average Call Handling Time	ACHT -Time spent on each call (includes talk, wrap and hold)	Depends on Service	480 seconds
Hold	Time customer is on hold awaiting transfer to back office (for 'switchboard-type' and complex calls)	< 10 seconds	< 20 seconds
Wrap Time	Time taken after each call is completed to complete any after-call work and be available to receive next call (note: FAQs not on the system would impact this)	< 30 seconds	< 40 seconds
First Contact Resolution	Percentage of calls resolved and closed by Agent at initial point of contact (i.e. calls not transferred to Service Areas) excluding switchboard-type calls	Varies by Service Area	25% Overall *
E-Mail response	% of e-mail enquiries replied to within one working day (excluding 100% auto-acknowledgement)	Within one working day	Within one working day
Conformance	Conformance to shift schedule	100%	100%
Adherence	Adherence during shift to log on/off time, breaks etc	95%	95%
Call Quality	Overall quality of calls monitored (note: a quality monitoring, scoring and coaching process would need to be implemented)	TBC based on Quality Process	TBC based on Quality Process
Sickness	% of working days lost due to long-term and short-term sickness)	<5%	<5%
Staff Attrition	Staff leaving the Contact Centre (note: some positive attrition is factored in)	< 20% pa	<20%
Customer Satisfaction	Measure of customer satisfaction on how the call was handled; knowledge, efficiency, friendliness of staff etc	Dependant upon criteria	TBC
Staff Satisfaction	Internal staff satisfaction survey	TBC based on survey	TBC based on survey