

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

### **COUNCILLOR L WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR OUTREACH**

For the period November to December 2023

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

##### Customer Services

Like September and October, customer contacts for November reached over 7,000 customer enquiries coming into the Customer Services team. These customer enquiries come into the team via a variety of access channels. Below is a breakdown of the averages via channel for 2023.

Telephony – 59%  
Face to face – 12.4%  
Web Chats – 1.3%  
Online Contact Us From – 3.5%  
Email – 23.8%

In November over 200 customers completed our survey which resulted in the team continuing to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction. They achieved the following performance.

Helpfulness of the CSA – 93.42% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.  
Advice provided – 92.11% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.  
Ability to contact the Council – 91.23% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.  
Overall experience – 92.11% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.

We can link all completed surveys to our contact centre, and therefore analyse the customer experience of any enquiry against the feedback received. A key area of this process is reviewing the negative feedback and identifying areas for improvement. Whilst there has been some useful negative feedback, we have found that in general, most negative feedback stems from our customers unhappy with a decision, rather than receiving poor service.

We continue to work with our developers in making improvements to our contact centre. Recent improvements have delivered an improved customer voicemail facility, which has streamlined the process for both customer and the team, resulting in a better customer experience. Future developments will include the use of SMS to provide customers with access to information and services, and the delivery of an improved customer appointment system.

There has been an agreed change in process with People Services, regarding the issuing of food and energy bank vouchers. Whereas previously Customer Services would issue these to customers upon request, the new process sees Customer Services complete a referral form capturing the customers circumstances before escalating this to the Financial Inclusion team. The new process aims to use deliver a more holistic approach of the support provided to residents, alleviate concerns of an increased demand against available funds, and help address the root causes of the financial hardship.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

As Christmas and the New Year are fast approaching, we are expecting our letters to start going out from Environmental Services to non-direct debit garden bin customers requesting payment for 2023/24 year's subscription. Historically we have seen this result in higher levels of customer contact especially over the telephone.

Work continues in training our chatbot 'Nelly', so it can help our residents answer their enquiries whilst we are closed over the Christmas holidays.

Our new receptionist has now completed her initial induction training and meeting team members from many different departments. Ellie will now be providing a warm welcome to everyone visiting the council.