

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 February 2024

**COUNCILLOR LIZ WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR
COMMUNITY LEISURE AND OUTREACH**

For the period January to February 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Customer Services

As expected and like previous years, December saw a reduction in customer contact and then January a big increase as our offices reopen after the Christmas break.

Overall CS contacts have also increased by 25% in the last year reflecting the continued need for support by our residents and businesses during this Cost-of-Living Crisis. The top 8 activities for our customer contacts are all revenue linked activities and therefore ensuring an efficient customer experience has additional importance to the Council as well as residents and businesses.

Garden Bin non-direct debit renewal payments have been requested by our colleagues in Environmental Services, so we have been assisting lots of customers who prefer to pay via other means to continue to use this service.

In January the Customer Services team responded to over 7,700 enquiries.

Telephony – 66%
Face to face – 10%
Web Chats – 1%
Online Contact Us From – 5%
Email – 18%

Although telephony continues to be our most frequent way to contact the Customer Service team, online contact is significantly increasing, a 69% increase over the last year. Encouraging greater use of these services and ensuring systems are in place to support customer transition to online activity continues to be a priority for the Customer Service Team.

	01/01/2022– 31/12/2022	01/01/2023– 31/12/2023	% Increase
Calls answered	65,054	75,948	16.7%
Customers visiting the office	9,111	11,026	21.0%
Emails/Online contacts received	13,075	22,138	69.3%
Total	87,240	109,112	25.0%

With a seconded member of Customer Services returning to the team, January saw our FTE count at its highest in sometime (16.9FTE). This reflected in our performance, with our average wait time going down to 2 minutes 41 seconds for the month, and a resolution rate of 71%, within the Customer Services Advisor Team.

This also reflected in achieving our highest levels of customer satisfaction performance:

Helpfulness of the CSA – 93.81% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.

Advice provided – 92.57% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.

Ability to contact the Council – 90.71% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.

Overall experience – 91.64% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

As we near the end of February we will see our colleagues in Benefits issue benefit notifications letters to all their claimants and Revenues will send new Council tax and Business Rates bills to every household and business.

In addition Garden Bin direct debit renewal letters and emails will also be issued to all subscribers to this service.

This will see a large increase in contact volumes across all access channels but in particular via telephone.

We will be looking to engage with these departments to ensure that information sent is clear to our residents and signposts to online functionality, to minimise the need for customers to contact the Council. This is an important step to ensure a good customer experience beyond the Customer Services team. We also hope to engage with the Communications team to support this and promote online opportunities and benefits for contact and resolution, where this is suitable for our customers.

Our Customer Services Advisors will be ready and waiting for these calls but with so much contact going out together longer wait times are expected.

3 Meetings attended

Customer Service Team Meeting
Portfolio Holder Meeting