

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**19 February 2025**

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

For the period December 2024 to February 2025

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

Throughout December and January, we have continued to support our residents by handling incoming enquiries and providing clear, timely responses to their questions.

We are pleased to report that call wait times have been steadily improving, reflecting our ongoing efforts to enhance efficiency and deliver a high-quality service. Despite the usual seasonal challenges, the Customer Services team has remained dedicated and adaptable, ensuring residents receive the assistance they need.

Customer contact volumes for this period were as follows:

- Over 4,000 contacts in December, a shorter month due to the Christmas closure.
- Over 6,000 contacts in January, as demand increased following the holiday period.

Our customer satisfaction survey received a 16.6% response rate in December and 15.8% in January. Of those who completed the survey:

- 85.10% (December) and 87.20% (January) were satisfied with their ability to contact the Council.
- 96.20% (December) and 94.20% (January) were satisfied with the helpfulness of the advisor.
- 93.00% (December) and 91.87% (January) were satisfied with their overall experience.

We are also utilizing detailed reporting on our online form usage, which, combined with contact centre data, provides valuable insights into how and why our services are accessed. This information will continue to shape the development and promotion of our services, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of residents.

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

Customer Services is preparing for a busy and productive period as we support the Council in key end-of-year processes, including new council tax and business rate bills, benefit notification letters, and trade waste invoices. Our goal is to ensure residents and businesses receive timely support and accurate information.

In the coming weeks, a major focus will be the renewal of Garden Bin subscriptions, with approximately 27,000 residents being contacted. For the first time, this will include direct debit customers alongside those using other payment methods. Previously, non-direct debit customers received renewal bills between November and January, but Environmental Services is now aligning all payment schedules to simplify the process and ensure consistency. We anticipate an increase in enquiries from those affected by this change and are fully prepared to assist.

Looking ahead, we are enhancing our C3 contact centre with a new Workflow system and a PCI-compliant payment platform. While still in early development, testing is set to begin soon. These improvements will streamline processes, reduce handling times, and enhance security for residents making payments.

With a strong start to the year, we remain committed to delivering a responsive, high-quality service while embracing innovations that improve both the resident experience and our operational efficiency.