

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 July 2025

**COUNCILLOR L WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR
COMMUNITY OUTREACH (CUSTOMER SERVICES)**

For the period April to July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

The Customer Services team has had an exceptionally active start to the new financial year. While this level of demand was anticipated, it has led to longer wait times than we would ideally aim for.

Customer contact volumes into Customer Services for the months of April to June were as follows:

- 11,387 calls answered
- 2,071 face-to-face customers assisted
- 1,381 emails received
- 2,471 online customer contact forms raised
- 45 web chats handled

Total 17,355 customer contacts – down 13.84% during the same period last year.

Online form usage for the months of April to June was 58,698 transactions – up 33.33% on the same period last year.

Each April, NNDC departments launch their own priority initiatives, which naturally result in a higher volume of customer enquiries. Although these efforts are not always coordinated across departments as we would hope for, they generate valuable customer engagement and demonstrate the continued interest in our services, even as they place added pressure on our phone lines.

The top 5 reasons for customer contact were:

- Council Tax – change of address
- Council Tax – explain my bill
- Garden Waste – renew the service
- Council Tax – second home premium
- Car Parking – permit renewal

From April to June, satisfaction with the ability to contact the council was 77.07%, compared to 88.30% in the previous three months. This dip is an understandable reflection of the increased year-end demand. However, customer feedback remains strong in other key areas. Helpfulness of the advisor is rated at 91.63%, satisfaction with the advice provided stands at 89.43%, and the resolution rate at the first point of contact was 82.02% over this period. These results highlight the continued commitment of our Customer Services team to delivering high-quality support during a particularly busy period and underscore the benefits of the “one front door” approach in providing streamlined, effective service to our residents.

We’ve also seen two of our team members take on exciting new roles within NNDC, continuing their careers in other departments. We are pleased to share that recruitment for their replacements has been successful, and we look forward to welcoming our new colleagues in August and September.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

As reported three months ago, a new online contact form for Revenues Services was launched to improve efficiency, reduce manual processing, and promote customer self-service. In the first 3 months we have seen over 500 customers contact Revenue Services via the new form. Work is still ongoing in updating all outbound Revenues correspondence and the website pages to support this new customer contact functionality.

Building on the success of that initiative, further development work is now underway to introduce similar contact forms for other key service areas, including Housing Benefits, Housing Options, Environmental Health, and Planning.

These new forms follow the same principles capturing all essential information at the first point of contact to streamline handling, reduce the need for follow-up, and support quicker, more effective responses. This ongoing digital development is part of a wider effort to enhance the customer experience while helping services manage demand more efficiently.

In the last report, we highlighted plans to build on our strong start to the year through continued development of the C3 Contact Centre. Testing of the new workflow system is currently in progress, with a thorough evaluation taking place to ensure it is user-friendly, fit for purpose, and well received once rolled out. This careful testing aims to maximise efficiency and deliver clear benefits to both staff and residents.

Meanwhile, development of the PCI-compliant payment platform is ongoing, focusing on transitioning systems to support secure and seamless payment

processing.

Together, these advancements will help reduce handling times, enhance security for residents making payments, and improve the overall customer experience, marking important steps toward modernising our contact centre operations.