

Decision Maker: EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 5 January 2022

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: CUSTOMER SERVICES CONTRACT MONITORING REPORT

Contact Officer: Duncan Bridgewater, Assistant Director – Customer Services
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Chief Officer: Director of Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs

Ward: (All Wards);

1. REASON FOR REPORT

This report provides information on the performance of the Customer Service Contract provided by Liberata for the period 1st June 2021 to 30th November 2021.

A letter from Amanda Inwood-Field, Contract Director for Liberata, provides her update on each individual element and is attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is requested to note and comment on the information contained within the report and the letter provided by Liberata detailed in Appendix 1.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: An Equality Impact Assessment indicates that ongoing support for vulnerable adults and children will be provided by Customer Service by phone and face to face for those unable to access digital services. For those unable to visit or phone us, the service supports the enhancement of self-service options.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Customer Services Contract
 4. Total current budget for this head: £909k 2021/2022
 5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):1
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: None
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries: 3,200 visitors, 535,000 phone calls, 25,000 e-mails and 10 million web visits annually.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Customer Services contract covers four key areas: Corporate Contact Centre, Reception Services, Web Team (Bromley Knowledge) and Blue Badge/Freedom Pass processing. The Corporate Contact Centre deals with telephone enquiries regarding environmental services, electoral, registrars, parking, blue badges, disabled freedom passes as well as the switchboard and a general enquiry line.
- 3.2 Reception deals with face to face enquiries from main reception and north block, for most areas of the council with the exception of registrars and children services, who manage their own reception points.
- 3.3 The Web Team (Bromley Knowledge) maintain the corporate website (www.bromley.gov.uk) in terms of its technical functionality, performance and accuracy of the content as provided by service experts. Administration of Blue Badge and Discretionary Disabled Freedom Passes applications and renewals is also carried out within the contract.
- 3.4 Overall the contractor has performed well throughout this monitoring period, with some evidence of under-performance outlined in the report. Volumes of calls fluctuated as a result of the normal seasonal changes. Since the pandemic began there has been a consistent demand in customer contact via the website as customers were advised to use online services instead of traditional contact channels. Many web transactional services remain high over the reporting period with overall traffic to the website remaining at around double its normal rate compared to pre-covid volumes.
- 3.5 Reception remains an appointment only service, except for emergencies and vulnerable customers. Opening times are limited to allow for cleaning and to control volumes. Demand has been steady over the reporting period. Customers have reported they prefer the appointment based service, as it avoids crowding.
- 3.6 The Key Performance Indicators for this contract are listed in the table below and referenced in appendix 2; they measure the headline activities within the contract in order that our customers get a quick response and access to our services efficiently and effectively. The contractor has provided benchmark comparison data across some of their other key contracts in appendix 3.

| | Measure | Definition | Target |
|----------|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Call Management | Number of calls answered by the agents within the specified timescales compared to total number of calls received | 50% Calls answered within 1 minute |
| 2 | Call Management | Number of days that the service dropped below 40% | Daily service level does not drop below 40% of call answered within 1 minute |
| 3 | Email Management | Number of emails responded to within 5 working days compared to total number of emails received | 100% responded to within 5 working day |

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|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| 4 | Face to Face Management | Number of customers entering the reception areas must be seen within 5 minutes of their arrival compared to total number of customers, remainder within 15 minutes | 80% of customers seen within 5 minutes of arrival |
| 5 | Switchboard Management | % of calls bailed to operator or requesting operator | 50% Calls answered within 1 minute |
| 6 | Customer Satisfaction | % of randomly selected customers, across different channels are either satisfied or very satisfied | 90% |

3.7 **Customer Services – Contact Centre:** This area performed well and generally within service level. The monthly service level target answering 50% of calls within 60 seconds was met for all months in the reporting period. There were 3 occurrences of the daily minimum level of 40% of calls being answered within 60 seconds not being met. The minimum daily level was not met for 1 day in June due to staff sickness and 2 days in August was due to staff sickness and an influx of electoral queries.

| Contact Centre Target – 50% within 60 secs | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Answered | 11,346 | 11,654 | 10,689 | 10,473 | 7773 | 7206 |
| % of calls ans. in 60 secs | 61.0% | 52.1% | 50.60% | 66.50% | 81.90% | 85.10% |
| Average wait time (secs) | 00:01:23 | 00:01:57 | 00:02:20 | 00:01:30 | 00:00:36 | 00:00:32 |
| Number of day's service fell below 40%. | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

3.8 **Switchboard:** Performance and volumes for this area were as expected and within service level.

| Switchboard Target – 50% within 60 secs | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Answered | 7080 | 7640 | 6326 | 5849 | 5448 | 6043 |
| % of calls ans. in 60 secs | 95% | 88% | 86% | 91% | 98% | 97% |
| Average wait time (secs) | 00:00:13 | 00:00:24 | 00:00:27 | 00:00:18 | 00:00:08 | 00:00:08 |
| Number of day's service fell below 40%. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

3.9 **Reception:** Reception remains an appointment only service, with limited opening times to allow for additional cleaning. Emergencies and vulnerable customers are seen without an appointment. Demand has been consistent throughout the reporting period.

| Reception | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of customers seen | 142 | 138 | 122 | 100 | 108 | 112 |
| 80% within 5 minutes | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| 100% within 15 minutes | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

3.10 **E-mail:** E-mail handling targets were met for the reporting period.

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|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Emails Target – 80% within 1 day and 100% within 5 days | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
| Number of emails received | 2534 | 2924 | 2063 | 2215 | 1630 | 1574 |
| % emails processed within 1 day | 97% | 87% | 89% | 89% | 98% | 98% |
| % emails processed within 5 days | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

3.11 **Out of Hours Emergency Call Centre:** Performance was within service level for 3 of the 6 months. The out of hours service was affected by resource issues and increased call volumes associated to weather conditions during this reporting period which impacted on the monthly service levels being achieved. An action plan was provided by the Out of Hours team to increase the performance going forward and the service recovered in November with closer monitoring of this ongoing.

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|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Out of Hours (Appello) Target – 80% within 30 secs | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
| Answered | 1542 | 1590 | 1419 | 1309 | 1229 | 1098 |
| % of calls ans. in 30 secs | 78.99% | 77.66% | 83.57% | 87.00% | 78.60% | 80.91% |
| Average wait time (secs) | 00:00:29 | 00:00:27 | 00:00:19 | 00:00:13 | 00:00:23 | 00:00:26 |

3.12 **Web – Bromley Knowledge:** The web team achieved 100% against all targets during this reporting period.

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Web site – Target 100% | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
| Critical updates within 1 working hour | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Urgent updates within 1 working day | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Important updates within 2 working days | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Regular updates within 5 working days | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

The website upgrade project is progressing well. The contractor now has access to the new software environment and web content has already begun to be transferred across, this is after it has been through the internal review process to ensure it is fully up to date and compliant with the required standards.

The contractor is working hard to ensure this process proceeds as seamlessly as possible, whilst ensuring content on the main live site remains accurate. The contractor will continue to ensure business critical updates are applied, which will ensure our customers continue to have access to the latest service information. Any content on subsites, such as Modern Gov and Planning Portal is unaffected by this project. Customers should not experience any degradation of service during the project to transfer to the new systems.

Services have been asked to hold back any non-essential updates to main site content, wherever possible, so these can be incorporated in the internal content review process, which will enable these to be implemented quickly in the new site.

Testing of the new site, content and transactional elements within them, will be undertaken throughout this transitional period, ahead of the go live, which is planned in May.

- 3.13 **Blue Badge and Discretionary Freedom Pass:** This area performed well and within service level. Applications should be processed within 6-8 weeks of receipt of all requested information. The KPI and contractor performance is measured against the time taken for the activities required of the contractor. Time taken for any face to face assessments or further information requirements are excluded from this calculation.

Liberata’s transformation programme in respect of this area is on track. For Freedom Pass applications, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) now plays a key role in automatically indexing the new online application directly into the Data Management System. This reduces the processing of applications by an average of 2 days and improves the overall customer experience.

For Blue Badge applications, Liberata is currently in discussion with the Blue Badge software provider to acquire an “Application Programming Interface” (API) which will enable RPA to be used within this assessment process. Once this has been implemented early next year this will also reduce processing times of Blue Badge applications by an average of 2 days.

| Blue Badges – target 80% within 4 weeks | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Volume | 441 | 386 | 439 | 459 | 463 | 469 |
| % processed within 4 weeks | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| Freedom Pass – Target 100% within 4 weeks | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Volume | 38 | 36 | 34 | 55 | 18 | 30 |
| % processed within 4 weeks | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

- 3.14 **MyBromley Account:** The table below outlines the volume usage for the services currently available to registered users, and volume of customers registering in this monitoring period. MyBromley Account continues to grow and as of the end of November 2021 the number of registrations had risen to 99,129. The number of accounts continues to increase despite the successful adoption of the inactive account procedure. During September 2021 e-mails and reminders were sent to account holders who were recorded as inactive for more than 48 months, this resulted in approximately 2,000 deletions. Around 10,000 accounts were contacted holders in October 2021 who have not used their account in the last 36 months, this generated large volumes of password resets and enquiries. Once resolved, we shall delete all those accounts that remain unused over 36 months.

| MyBromley registrations | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| Volume | 1933 | 1670 | 1783 | 1934 | 1731 | 1365 |
| Cumulative Volume | 95,318 | 96,988 | 98,771 | 100,705 | 98,045 | 99,129 |

- 3.15 **Customer Satisfaction:** The number of customers surveyed, and responses are outlined below, satisfaction is above target for this period.

| Customer Satisfaction Target – 90% Customer Satisfaction | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of surveys sent | 14,120 | 12,203 | 9986 | 11,608 | 9662 | 10,084 |
| Number of responses | 81 | 40 | 25 | 36 | 17 | 26 |
| % Customer Satisfaction | 96% | 95% | 96% | 94% | 94% | 98% |

- 3.16 **Compliments and Complaints:** During this period, eleven customers made contact to thank the staff regarding the service that was provided by the Customer Service Centre advisors. The contractor also received six complaints during this reporting period which were associated to Blue Badges and the expected delivery timescales.

| Compliments & Complaints | Jun 21 | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Complaints | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Compliments | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 |

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment indicates that ongoing support for vulnerable adults and children will be provided by Customer Service by phone and face to face for those unable to access digital services. For those unable to visit or phone us, the service supports the enhancement of self-service options.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is currently projected the contract expenditure in 2021/22 will be to budget at £909k.
6.2 For information, the actual spend for the contract in 2020/21 was £900k.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council's Constitution provides the terms of reference for the Executive, Resources and Contracts Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee as it relates to the Executive and the Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management Portfolio, including receiving reports and making recommendations on performance monitoring of services falling within the remit of this portfolio.
8.2 Contract Procedure Rule 23.3 provides that a Council agreed Gateway Review process must be applied to all Contracts deemed to be High Risk, High Value or High Profile. The process must be applied at key stages of major procurements.

8.3 Contract Procedure Rule 23.2 provides that for all Contracts with a value higher than £500,000, or which are High Risk, an annual report must be submitted to the Portfolio Holder the responsible Officers having submitted for consideration a formal Gateway Review, covering, as appropriate, the matters identified in the Council's standard Gateway Review Template for consideration as part of Contract Monitoring/Management requirements.

9. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

None

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|---|--|
| Non-Applicable Sections: | 5, 7, 9 |
| Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer) | Appendix 1 – Letter from Liberata Appendix 2 – Key Performance Indicators Appendix 3 – Benchmarking Data |