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

Date: Monday 3 July 2023

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 and Customer Services and Public Affairs

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for decision/report and options

This report provides information on the performance of the Customer Service Contract provided by Liberata for the period 1st November 2022 to 30th April 2023.

A letter from Bola Odunsi Regional Director (London & The Southeast) for Liberata, provides his 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 Services 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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Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority:

(5) To manage our resources well, providing value for money, and efficient and effective services for Bromley's residents.

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Customer Services
 4. Total current budget for this head: £1m
 5. Source of funding: General Fund Budget 22/23
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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: Procurements comments are included in section 9 of this report.
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Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: None
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Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: The contractor's initiatives are detailed in section 11 of this report.
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Impact on the Local Economy

1. Summary of Local Economy Implications: Reception service is a town centre location therefore supports the local economy.
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Impact on Health and Wellbeing

1. Summary of Health and Wellbeing Implications: Reception service supports promotion of Health & Wellbeing initiatives by printed publicity and electronic display boards.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users or customers (*current and projected*): 2,000 visitors, 400,000 phone calls, 20,000 e-mails and 9 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.
- 3.2 Reception deals with face to face enquiries from main reception, for most areas of the Council with the exception of Registrars and Children Services, who manage their own reception points. In November 2022, the North Block reception reopened for Housing and Leaving Care Team customers. This was previously closed since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Customers are seen by appointment only with exception for emergencies and those that are vulnerable where individual service procedures are in place. Liberata are responsible for managing the reception in North Block.
- 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, as well as working on the recent software upgrade. 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 occurrences 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 asked 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 increased compared to pre-covid volumes. Contractor performance is reviewed at monthly meetings.
- 3.5 Call Monitoring is completed every month. The contractor provides a sample of call recordings and feedback is given to the contractor at monthly review meetings. Spot checking is also done on a random sample of Blue Badge applications and Bromley Knowledge job requests to ensure they are completed within their key performance indicators.
- 3.6 Reception is an appointment only service, except for emergencies and vulnerable customers. Demand has been stable over the reporting period.

- 3.7 The top Key Performance Indicators for this contract are listed in the table below; 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.

	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 days
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%

- 3.8 **Customer Services – Contact Centre:** This area performed well in terms of the monthly service level agreement. The monthly service level target answering 50% of calls within 60 seconds was met for all of the months in the reporting period. The contact centre fell below the minimum daily service level of 40% on 2 occasions during the reporting period. Sickness in the team causing reduced resource impacted the Corporate Contact Centre during January which meant that there were 2 days during the month where service level was under 40% for the day.

Contact Centre Target – 50% within 60 secs	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Answered	7650	6560	9404	6962	8053	7227
% of calls ans. in 60 secs	77.62%	72.96%	62.09%	81.83%	78.94%	75.67%
Average wait time (mm:ss)	00:46	00:58	01:30	00:37	00:40	00:45
Number of day's service fell below 40%	0	0	2	0	0	0

A VoiceBot is being developed to encourage residents to utilise the range of online services available and answer basic enquiries. The contractor will maintain support to our non-digital

and vulnerable residents through the existing channels via the contact centre and face to face reception. During this reporting period, the contractor deployed this for the Registrars Service. This software is now managing some customer enquiries and providing signposting information. A summary is in the table below of calls handled by the VoiceBot.

Calls dealt with by VoiceBot (January - April 2023)	2942
Number of calls completed by VoiceBot i.e not touched voice channel	1085
Percentage of calls completed by VoiceBot i.e not touched voice channel	36.87
SMS Messages Sent	174

The contractor is now looking to develop further VoiceBots for the other services within the contract.

3.9 Switchboard: Performance was within service level. The majority of calls received through the switchboard are handled via automated technology and the table below shows the volumes requiring manual transfer.

Switchboard Target – 50% within 60 secs	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Answered	4692	3937	5149	4819	5740	4448
% of calls ans. in 60 secs	93%	89%	88%	97%	92%	91%
Average wait time (mm:ss)	00:15	00:22	00:21	00:05	00:14	00:17

3.10 Reception: Reception is an appointment only service. Emergencies and vulnerable customers are seen without an appointment.

Reception	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Number of customers seen						
Main Reception	200	122	201	183	244	175
80% within 5 minutes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
100% within 15 minutes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The contractor is also responsible for managing the reception in North Block, where Housing and the Leaving Care Team hold appointments.

North Block Reception	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Number of customers seen	71	61	59	100	262	148

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

Emails	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
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Target – 80% within 1 day and 100% within 5 days						
Number of emails received	1195	2225	2883	2139	2694	2337
% emails processed within 1 day	99%	94%	98%	97%	95%	99%
% emails processed within 5 days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- 3.12 **Out of Hours Emergency Call Centre:** Following reported underperformance in the last report, an update and details of a performance improvement plan was submitted in March to the committee. Since then performance is within service level agreement for the latter 3 months of this period. As outlined in the update, underperformance was due to high staff attrition and sickness levels. The performance improvement plan outlined actions to increase staff resource on the contract, review the management of the team and manage down sickness within the team. Service levels improved as a result of this plan and the service is now delivering the service at the required level.

Out of Hours (Appello) Target – 80% within 30 secs	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Answered	1060	758	848	835	1069	1037
% of calls ans. in 30 secs	71.20%	71.03%	70.87%	80.28%	87.97%	89.11%
Average wait time (mm:ss)	03:13	04:05	02:00	01:15	00:38	00:44

- 3.13 **Web – Bromley Knowledge:** The web team achieved 100% against all targets for updating web content as requested by services during this reporting period. The web team continue to run a rolling programme of content refresh, and will engage services when their pages are due for review.

Web site – Target 100%	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
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%

Since the software and design upgrade, the average number of visits to our website has risen to 740,000 a month (Dec 22-May 23). For context, pre-covid monthly visitor volumes were 360,000.

The team have continued to implement improvements to the site search and changes have been made to the way that the website connects with the Google search engine. This has resulted in significant improvements in the time that it takes for Google to reference new content into its search. Extensive work has also been done to improve key words in the content and page metadata to further improve and enhance search results. Additionally, the web team have started to use a tool that enables them to promote certain pages in the internal search results, which again has improved the quality of the site search results.

Work has also progressed well to scope out future development options for the Council to consider, which will further enhance customer experience and digital services.

This work includes:

- Reviewing single sign on opportunities for Council subsites. With the aim to unify and streamline the various secure online authentication systems to reduce the need for separate registration and log on processes for each subsite.
- Consider options for the further enhancement of services and functionality available through the MyBromley Account. This is likely to include form auto-filling, save and return to incomplete online forms and enabling customers to log on to check progress updates on service requests they have submitted.
- Consider options for personalisation of certain website pages to improve customer experience. Intended to make self-service access of information easier and quicker, reduce user journeys and give the ability to display focussed alerts and reminders within the webpages themselves.
- Consider the development for customers to sign up to categorised news, information and alerts from the Council, directly into their devices or email inboxes. The pro-active broadcasting of updates could reduce the reliance on call centre services or customers needing to visit the website for updates on subjects that are of interest to them.

3.14 **Blue Badge and Discretionary Freedom Pass:**

This area performed well and within service level.

The Council aims to process applications 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 not included in this calculation.

Blue Badges – target 80% within 4 weeks	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Volume	525	298	503	452	470	435
% processed within 4 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Freedom Pass – Target 100% within 4 weeks	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Volume	67	97	311	138	179	116
% processed within 4 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- 3.15 **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 April 2023 the number of registrations had risen to 125,715.

MyBromley registrations	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Volume	1428	1067	1304	1098	3357	1700
Cumulative Volume	117,565	118,594	119,848	120,904	124,120	125,715

- 3.16 **Customer Satisfaction:** The number of customers surveyed, and responses are outlined below, satisfaction is above target for this service. To increase survey response, the contractor is looking at options to utilise the VoiceBot technology outlined in 3.8.

Customer Satisfaction	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
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Target – 90% Customer Satisfaction						
Number of surveys sent	8299	8313	12464	9809	12979	9691
Number of responses	30	22	45	8	79	54
% Customer Satisfaction	96%	95%	96%	100%	100%	97%

- 3.17 **Compliments and Complaints:** During this period, eight customers made contact to thank the staff and the compliments were associated to the service by the Contact Centre team and reception team, the team were thanked for their assistance and for going out of their way to assist the customer with their enquiries. The contractor also received eight complaints for this period. Complaints that were received for this reporting period were associated to the Blue Badge and Freedom Pass service, residents were unhappy with the delay in receiving their badge which was associated to delays with the Occupational Therapists and the need for an assessment and the service provided via the Contact Centre team.

Compliments & Complaints	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Complaints	1	2	1	2	1	1
Compliments	0	1	1	1	3	2

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

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. TRANSFORMATION/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report, this report provides a performance of the Customer Services Contract and requests members to take note of the key KPIs.
- 6.2 For information the Customer Services contract budget for 2022-23 stands at £1,002k and the actual spend at year is £951k, which is a £51k underspend against the budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This Committee is requested to note and comment on the information contained within this report as to the performance of the Customer Service Contract provided by Liberata for the period 1st November 2022 to 30th April 2023 and also the letter provided by Liberata detailed in Appendix 1 as attached.
- 8.2 The Council's Constitution, at Part 4 – Rules of Procedure, 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. Under these terms of reference, this Committee services falling within the remit of this portfolio.

- 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

- 9.1 In line with 23.2 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, an annual report must be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for all contracts with a value higher than £500k.
- 9.2 This report primarily concerns the performance of the Customer Service Contract provided by Liberata. Any procurement arising will be subject to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 9.3 The Corporate Procurement Team will be consulted on the specifics of any procurement arising.

10. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. CARBON REDUCTION/SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

Liberata exclusively uses Ark data centres which are committed to the European Green Deal, achieving the ambitious greenhouse gas reductions of the climate law, and leveraging technology and digitalisation to achieve the goal of making Europe climate neutral by 2050. For the last 6 years, all Ark facilities have been powered by 100% renewable energy. To improve sustainability further Ark has developed innovative direct air evaporative cooling capability that dramatically lowers energy consumption and cost, capable of providing compressor free cooling for 100% of every year.

The My Bromley account software supports 49,815 subscribers to e-billing, reducing paper production and postal service reliance. Officers continue to work with Liberata on projects to increase back-office automation and further reduce paper volumes.

Liberata also supports staff to volunteer for local organisations, such as Age Concern befriending scheme.

12. IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Reception service is a town centre location therefore supports the local economy.

13. IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Reception service supports promotion of Health & Wellbeing initiatives by printed publicity and electronic display boards.

14. CUSTOMER IMPACT

Customers Services potentially impacts all residents and visitors in the borough.

15. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

None

Non-Applicable Headings:	5, 7, 10, 15
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Appendix 1 – Letter from Liberata (12 th May 2023)