

Item No:	Classification: Open	Date: 3 rd February 2014	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:		Customer Services Performance Update	
Ward(s) or Group affected:		All	
From:		Head of Customer Experience	

Recommendations

1. The committee is asked to note the following –
 - Service progress since customer services functions were brought in-house on 1st June 2013.
 - The performance of the new in-house services since 1st June 2013.
 - Plans for achieving service improvements and efficiencies in 2014 and beyond.

Background

2. Customer services contract providers Vangent, were the subject of a change of ownership in the summer of 2012. Vangent was taken over by a subsidiary of General Dynamics, GDIT. This change provided the council with an opportunity to reconsider the way in which it delivers its principle customer services functions, in particular the Customer Services Centre and the three face to face services known as “one stop shops”.
3. The council chose to end the customer services contracts and take the services in-house. The contracts ceased on 31st May 2013, some two years early, and the council has been delivering these customer services functions since 1st June 2013.
4. The council now has direct responsibility for the delivery of telephone services at its new contact centre at Queens Road 3 and for face to face services at the Peckham One Stop Shop and the *My Southwark*, Service Points at the Blue and at 376 Walworth Road.
5. In changing its service delivery model for customer services, the council was anxious to ensure that the in-house service wasn’t simply a “lift and shift” of the contractors operations. The services have therefore been developed based on the principles of the Customer Access Strategy.
 - Taking responsibility for customer services
 - Getting it right first time
 - Digital by Default
 - Treating everyone with respect

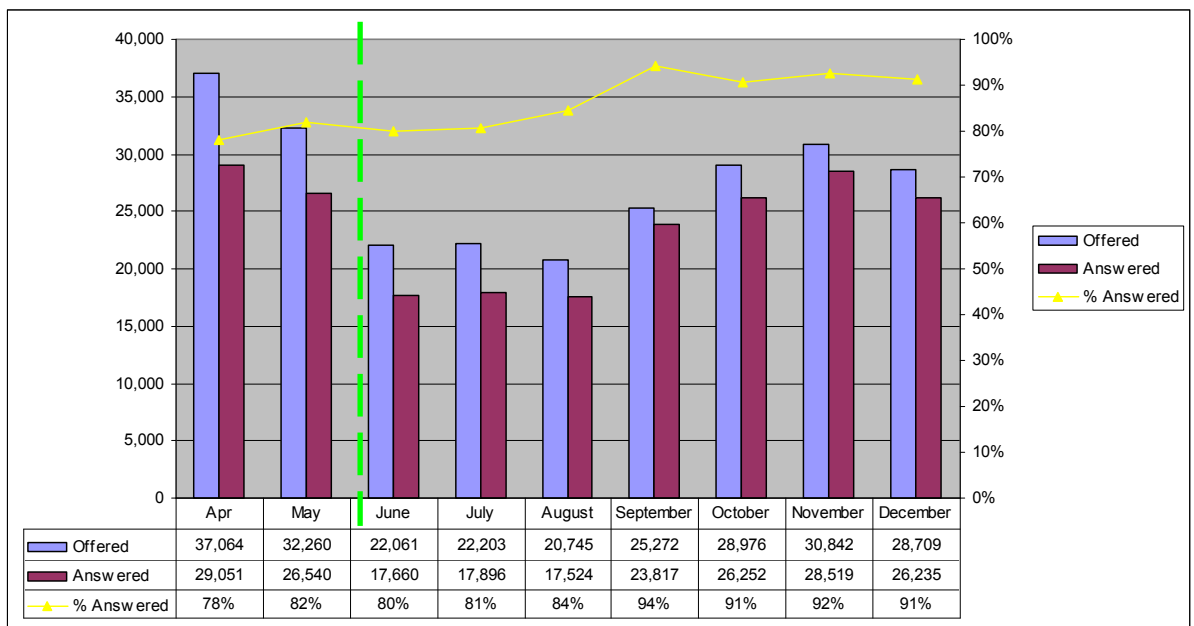
Customer Services Performance

6. The council has now been delivering customer services in-house for seven full months, June to December. The transition of services was a large and complex task involving the procurement of new IT systems, TUPE transfer of some 200 contractor staff and the creation of a new telephone contact centre. Since going live, business unit managers have been tasked with making continuous improvement to both the quantitative and qualitative service measures, month on month.
7. In addition to improved service performance, the in-house service was required to make a cost saving of £3m compared with the cost of the contract. Despite the new service commencing on June 2013, three months into the financial year, the savings target was applied to 2013/14. The service is on target to meet its new budget target by the end of March this year.

Contact Centre Performance

8. The contact centre is charged with answering 90% of all calls offered. **Table 1** shows performance against this target. Following the end of the customer services contracts, it was important to be transparent in reporting service performance. The service therefore measures the abandoned rate as all calls offered, less those answered. The previous contractors (in common with many contact centres) deduct "short abandoned" calls; those calls that abandon within the target answer time. As can be seen, the target answer rate has been achieved every month since September.

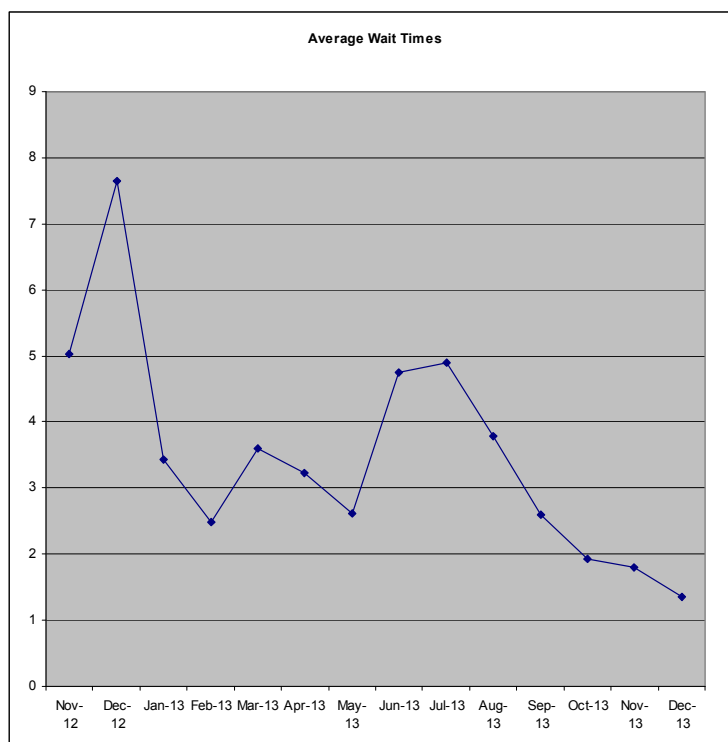
Table 1.



9. **Table 2** shows the average speed to answer telephone calls. The service aims to achieve an average wait of a minute or less. With the exception of the first two months of operation, the average call waiting has improved each month. The last month shown, December, was the best month with an average wait of 1 minute 20 seconds. The work of the contact centre is very cyclical and therefore forecasting demand and matching resources to that demand, can be tricky. It is pleasing that despite this, improvements have been achieved. The table also shows the contractor's performance in the last quarter of 2012. The new service is performing significantly better in each of the corresponding months in 2013. January is typically the busiest month of the year and it is anticipated that there will be a blip in the current improving trend, before getting back on track in February.

Table 2. Average Call Waiting (ACW)

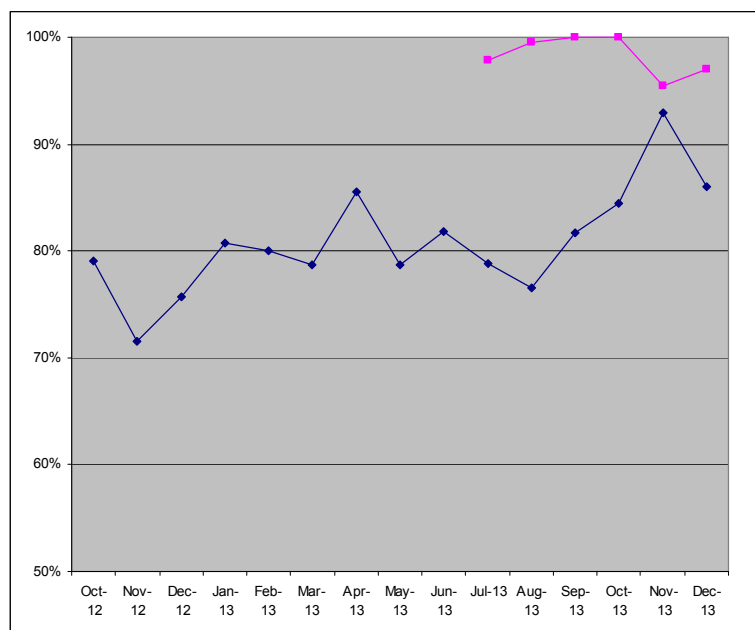
Month	ACW
Oct-12	05:56
Nov-12	05:15
Dec-12	07:39
Jan-13	03:26
Feb-13	02:29
Mar-13	03:36
Apr-13	03:23
Ma-13	02:37
Jun-13	04:45
Jul-13	04:54
Aug-13	03:47
Sep-13	02:36
Oct-13	01:56
Nov-13	01:50
Dec-13	01:21



10. The new service is committed to improving customer satisfaction across all contact channels. Satisfaction is measured in a number of different ways. Some callers participate in this monitoring by completing an automated telephone survey immediately following their call, some respond to an email and others respond to a survey undertaken in an outbound call. In October last year the service adopted the Govmetric customer satisfaction monitoring tool, commonly used in local authorities and recognisable by its smiley face icons. This facility will be rolled out across all customer experience customer facing functions to improve the quantity and reliability of customer satisfaction scores. 2,545 customers responded to customer satisfaction monitoring in December 2013. **Table 3** shows the satisfaction scores for both the repairs elements of the service and for all other services.

Table 3. Contact Centre Customer Satisfaction Scores

Month	Repairs Satisfaction	Other Services Satisfaction
Oct-12	79%	
Nov-12	72%	
Dec-12	76%	
Jan-13	81%	
Feb-13	80%	
Mar-13	79%	
Apr-13	85%	
May-13	79%	
Jun-13	82%	
Jul-13	79%	98%
Aug-13	77%	100%
Sep-13	82%	100%
Oct-13	85%	100%
Nov-13	93%	95%
Dec-13	86%	97%



11. The service is still developing its measures for a “right first time” score. It is acknowledged that some callers are contacting the council a number of times before getting their service request dealt with. Improving the proportion of contacts dealt with right first time, will help improve satisfaction scores and lead to efficiencies as the number of repeat contacts falls. A measure of satisfaction is in the number of complaints received, particularly in the area of housing repairs, a service which dominates the calls to the contact centre. **Tables 4 and 5** show a comparison of complaints received for the repairs and maintenance and engineering and compliance (heating and hot water) services. In both areas, there has been a significant reduction in the number of complaints received since the adoption of the right first time approach.

Table 4. Complaints Data Repairs and Maintenance complaints

Stage one		Stage two	
April – Dec 2012	April – Dec 2013	April – Dec 2012	April – Dec 2013
223	156	36	12
252	120	35	13
201	115	20	16
206	107	14	21
190	94	11	6
156	132	7	12
188	170	10	15
218	178	8	3
118	150	10	12
1752	1222 30% ↓	151	110 27% ↓

Table 5. Complaints Data - Engineering and Compliance complaints

Stage one		Stage two	
April – Dec 2012	April – Dec 2013	April – Dec 2012	April – Dec 2013
53	72	13	3
57	33	14	2
50	33	10	2
60	26	2	1
66	33	3	0
47	28	3	1
61	56	0	2
104	67	3	2
100	48	5	4
598	396 34% ↓	53	17 68% ↓

Service Point Performance

12. Like the contact centre, the Service Points (formerly One Stop Shops) are tasked with both quantitative and qualitative targets. The main target is to see all customers within 15 minutes of arrival. The service is also targeted to achieve a “right first time” score of over 90%. The majority of customers visiting the Service Points are attending to resolve a housing and/or council tax benefit matter; very often providing evidence in support of their claim. Satisfying these customers needs in a single visit can be a challenge, so improving the links between the service and Revenues & Benefits colleagues is a priority for the service. **Tables 6** shows the performance of the Service Points since June 2013 when the service has been delivered directly by the council.

Table 6. *My Southwark* Service Points Performance

June 2013

Performance	
Total Customers Seen	12,174
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	91%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact	76.60%
Customer Satisfaction	
Total Customers seen 21st/28th June	3,015
Total Customers Surveyed	244
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	94.6%

July 2013

Performance	
Total Customers Seen	13,569
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	78.4%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact * Survey result only*	71%
Customer Satisfaction	
Total Customers seen	13,569
Total Customers Surveyed	927
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	94%

August 2013

Performance	
Total Customers Seen	12,062
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	75.%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact * Survey result only*	63.2%
Customer Satisfaction	
Total Customers seen	12,062
Total Customers Surveyed	982
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	91%

September 2013

Performance	
Total Customers Seen	12,998
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	87%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact * Survey result only*	78.4%
Customer Satisfaction	
Total Customers seen	12,998
Total Customers Surveyed	1,161
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	92%

October 2013

Performance	
Total Customers Seen	14,934
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	90%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact * Survey result only*	88%
Customer Satisfaction (Govmetric)	
Total Customers seen	14,934
Total Customers Surveyed	1,538
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	85% *

* Customer satisfaction reporting via Govmetric commenced in October

November 2013






Performance	
Total Customers Seen	12,106
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	90%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact * Survey result only*	94%
Customer Satisfaction (Govmetric)	
Total Customers seen	12,106
Total Customers Surveyed	1,533
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	83%

December 2013

Performance	
Total Customers Seen	10,803
90% customers seen within 15 minutes	90%
90% queries resolved at first point of contact * Survey result only*	92%
Customer Satisfaction (Govmetric)	
Total Customers seen	10,803
Total Customers Surveyed	1,011
90% overall satisfaction with Service Point	88%

13. The Service Points adopted the Govmetric satisfaction monitoring system in October 2013. **Table 7** shows the smiley faces that customers are asked to select to express their satisfaction or otherwise. In the service points, customers are invited to use a touch screen facility on their way out of the service (similar to an i pad on a stand) to express their satisfaction. This has resulted in a greater number of customers participating with the satisfaction monitoring and therefore the reliability of the scores.

Table 7. Southwark Face To Face Govmetric Data - October to December 2013

F2F				Overall Rating	
Number of respondents	3154	318	611		
Percentage of respondents	77%	8%	15%	Good	

Making Best Use of the new Customer Services Assets

14. The council has invested in the development of a new in-house customer service function and it is important that the benefits of the service and its various assets are fully realised. They are there to be exploited by the whole of the organisation and even, partner organisations. The assets available for use by the council include:

- A modern 120 seat Contact Centre at QR3
- An established customer portal, *My Southwark*, with over 55,000 customers
- 3 *My Southwark*, Service Points
- A brand new CRM system, Microsoft Dynamics – the council’s default customer facing system
- A brand new telephone system (AVAYA), with functionality that will help deliver better telephone services
- A service improvement team, to assist with the management of service improvement projects
- Bulk texting facilities – to facilitate better communication with customers

The Future for Customer Services in Southwark

15. The board tasked with overseeing the end of the customer services contracts and the creation of the in-house facilities and functions, has been retained. It has been renamed the Customer Access Programme (CAP) board and aims to improve customer services across the council and maximise the benefits of the new in-house customer services organisation and its assets.

16. Supporting the CAP board is a working group, once again, a refocusing of the existing group that supported the contract transition process. The group is made up of officers representing different disciplines in the council; finance; IT;

HR; operations management etc. The group has a number of packages of work it is progressing. These include culture change, increasing the number of on-line services, CRM development and making best use of the contact centre.

17. The Customer Access strategy has the ambition of making council services “digital by default”. Customers are used to accessing goods and services electronically; on-line shopping is common place as is on-line banking, booking cinema tickets electronically on the phone etc. Customers expect to be able to deal with the council in a manner and at a time that suits them. The CAP board is prioritising the electronic delivery of council services in order to achieve service improvements and at the same time achieve efficiencies.
18. The council launched its personalised on-line customer account known as *My Southwark* in May 2012. The primary purpose of the *My Southwark* account is to provide customers with a single location from where all their interactions with the council can be easily managed. This is accessible from a single customer sign in rather than having to provide different user names, passwords, pin numbers etc for different services.
19. There are now over 55,000 *My Southwark* account holders, with around 300 new registrations each week; it is clear that many of our residents want to interact with the council online. It is also clear that there is an appetite for electronic service delivery and access to information that the council cannot afford to ignore. However we have a long way to go to satisfy their needs and deliver all the council’s high volume service functions on line.
20. In 2014 the programme aims to make significant progress in delivering popular, high volume services electronically, including the ability to view rent accounts and service charges on-line, and report and monitor a repair. Common environmental services, like requesting a bulky collection, will also be made available on-line.
21. The CAP programme and customer services functions will seek to raise its profile within the organisation and promote joint working and the exploitation of the customer services assets to benefit of services. It will also continue to be open and honest about performance and service development and keep up its engagement with stakeholders.