

Southwark Customer Services

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

July 12 2022

Dominic Cain- Director of Exchequer

Agenda

1. Customer Services overview/update
2. Housing Repairs Summary
3. Repairs Performance Data
4. Repairs Improvement Plan
5. Feasibility Study
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Customer Services in Brief

The service is currently made up of three main work streams, and is responsible for dealing with initial customer contact, via its telephony platform, on behalf of back office business areas. Typically, officers will attempt a triage with a view to resolving customer queries or connecting them to specialist teams, depending on the complexity of each case.

- Housing and Environment – Day team – Monday to Friday 0900-1700
- Housing and Environment (emergencies) OOH team Monday to Friday 1700-0900, weekends and bank holidays.
- SMART Customer Service Team and Telecare Support and Response Team - 24 hours, 365 days a year.
- The size of the workforce is circa 120-130 fte

The contact centre has successfully traversed a challenging period occasioned in part by the Covid pandemic, attrition and other operational challenges. There has however been an upturn in recent months; with a more positive outlook emerging incrementally.

Housing Repairs

As a result of successive episodes of Lockdown, Southwark officers and contractors were prevented ingress into household for the execution of repairs. This led to an unprecedented surge in the level of demand after lockdown rules were relaxed. The corporate contact centre and technical back office teams were equally impacted .

Longer queues resulted in longer average waiting times, with many customers reporting multiple accumulated faults. This necessitated the diversion of all spare and additional capacity to the repairs work stream by the corporate contact centre.

In the months that followed, the due to due diligence by managers, additional resources and spare capacity from other work streams the trajectory of KPI achievement and answer rate has been on the incline progressively since December 2021. Average waiting times have also improved and this trend has continued in 2021/22.

Repairs Performance Data

Contact Centre Repairs	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22
# Entered	21,257	20,929	20,662	21,142	19,368	20,402	27,124	29,511	25,552	26,241	20,740	16,641	20,649	18,478
# Accepted	19,818	19,196	19,147	17,987	15,908	15,114	19,033	21,792	20,876	20,948	18,323	15,510	18,376	17,586
Abandoned Calls	1,439	1,733	1,515	3,153	3,460	5,288	8,121	7,835	4,679	5,320	2,424	1,131	2,272	892
Repeat Callers	12,018	11,326	10,981	9,683	8,120	7,561	9,870	10,928	11,394	11,095	8,798	7,441	7,047	8,928
SLA%	69%	59%	58%	51%	31%	29%	35%	21%	38%	32%	45%	57%	68%	85%
Answer Rate %	93%	92%	93%	85%	82%	74%	70%	74%	82%	80%	88%	93%	89%	95%
Average Wait Time	00:02:26	00:03:14	00:03:15	00:06:03	00:09:01	00:12:45	00:14:46	00:15:57	00:10:21	00:11:18	00:06:07	00:03:08	00:05:12	00:02:07



Repairs Improvement Plan

At the cabinet meeting held on 07 April 2020, the Housing Scrutiny Commission invited cabinet to give consideration to the the drafting of a repairs service improvement plan “that aims to transform the repairs service over three years into a modern service, with residents at its heart”. The advancement of this initiative was interrupted by the advent of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Actively, senior officers and technical leads across the council have considered the future strategy for improving this high-profile service, and all agree that it requires renewed focus and action, predicated on sound operational principles, based on evidence, which has led to the commissioning of a Feasibility Study to carry of discovery and other explorative activities into what the future principles and operational model should be.

Feasibility Study

A discovery exercise, via well-articulated research has been approved (3-month, commissioning and delivery timescale). It will address the following,.

- Rationale for seeking a separate customer contact solution for Southwark residents other than the corporate contact centre
 - Measurable benefits and success measures for improving customer experience, accruing from the creation of a dedicated repairs contact centre
 - The financial, operational and other collateral impacts that may arise out of such a transition and how they are to be addressed and/or mitigated, within reason.
 - The impact on the customer experience and transactional journeys of operating two separate contact centres by the council.
 - Long-term financial benefits to the council.
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The Horizon

- Customer Services is currently undergoing a service wide reorganisational drive and service review, which will look at all aspects of management and seek to consolidate compatible functions, as well as maximize resources.
 - The restructure will inject vital tactical and strategic capability into operational planning, which will address some of the medium-term plans of the service will address other aspects of repairs improvement, such as reinforced training for officers, to enable them traverse between other work streams and repairs during challenging times such as this.
 - Additionally, the restructure will embark on the path of gradual transition from its current “call centre” outlook towards a modern and Omni-channel model, which will triage demand more intuitively and ensure that customer needs are understood pre-emptively by via profiling and analysis of customer insight, with a view to providing inclusive and almost bespoke solutions proactively, within reason.
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Recent Achievement

On the 13th of April 2022, Southwark Customer Services completed a series of operational, technical, strategic and tactical assessments which led to the renewal of its customer excellence accreditation. This was against the backdrop of various operational challenges posed by Covid and other constraints. This required commitment and heightened resilience from the management team and frontline officers.



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