

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD – 8TH NOVEMBER 2017

### Report of the Head of Landlord Services

#### ITEM 4 CONTACT CENTRE (LANDLORD SERVICES FUNCTION)

##### Purpose of Report

To consider the work undertaken by the Council's telephone Contact Centre to assist the Landlord Services function.

##### Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the content of this report.

##### Background

The telephone Contact Centre handles over 150,000 inbound calls per annum for a range of services across all Directorates of the Council, utilising a team of multi-service 'generalist' Advisors, supported by service-specific detailed Lagan workflow scripting, with the aim of resolving the significant majority of general enquiries at the first point of contact while ensuring that customers receive a prompt and courteous service.

As well as handling calls for Landlord Services (Tenancy, Rents, Repairs, ASB), the Contact Centre also delivers services for Housing Needs, Environmental Services, Garden Waste, Planning, Elections, Licensing, Street Management, Open Spaces, Leisure Bookings, Insurance, and the external Switchboard function.

##### Delivery of Landlord Services functions

This report relates specifically to the work undertaken by the Council's telephone Contact Centre to assist the Landlord Services function. (Landlord Services queries are also handled by the face-to-face Customer Service Centre Advisors in the Main Reception area at Southfields, but this is outside the scope of this report).

Most Landlord Services calls are received via the dedicated Landlord Services phone number (01509 634666), with a range of routing options to facilitate the smooth delivery of calls to Advisors with the correct skills and knowledge base to be able to handle the call effectively and efficiently, as set out below:

- Option 1 for payments;
- 2 for gas central heating repairs (Sure group);
- 3 for general repairs;
- 4 for rent enquiries;
- 5 for tenancy / landlord enquiries;
- 6 for ASB;
- hold for any other Tenancy enquiry

Calls can also be presented via the Council's published Switchboard number (01509 263151 – callers selecting Option 3 for Housing; then Option 1 for Housing repairs or rental tenancy enquiry) or routed by an Advisor (i.e. caller dialled another services' dedicated line, or did not select an option when dialling Switchboard, and the enquiry is outside of the answering Advisor's skill-set so the call is transferred to the relevant queue).

Lagan is the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and uses detailed workflow scripting to support the Advisors (and the hosted Services) in resolving customer enquiries. There are over 400 Lagan workflows for Landlord Services alone, covering the significant majority of frequently asked scenarios, with some workflows having a number of further scripts within them to accommodate the different directions a given enquiry may take.

The Advisors also use Landlord Services' QL system (housing management IT) for raising repairs requests, supported by a detailed (and regularly updated) training manual and their own knowledge bank acquired through experience.

#### Volumetrics and service delivery

Call volumetrics to 01509 634666 are captured by the phone system at source, and where a routing option is selected it is then possible to drill down further to a sub-set based on the option selected. (If no option is selected then such calls will only appear in the overall Landlord Services queue figures).

Appendix A sets out details of the overall calls received, answered, average call queueing times and average call handling times for the 5 months to 31 August 2017 (latest month-end prior to deployment of new phone system) and for the 12 months for 2016-17 and 2015-16 for comparison purposes.

#### Customer Satisfaction

GovMetric is the Council's corporate vehicle for measuring customer satisfaction across the three main access channels of telephone, face-to-face, and web contact. Over 16,500 pieces of customer feedback were captured in 2016-17, over 10,000 of which related to feedback left by callers to the Contact Centre at the end of their call.

This is captured at a service-specific level, with over 5,000 Landlord Services' customers in 2016-17 giving feedback on the telephone service received. Questions asked include satisfaction with time taken for the call to be answered; how the Advisor dealt with the enquiry; how easy it has been to resolve the enquiry; and did we get it right first time. In 2016-17, 87% rated the service as Good, 10% Average and only 3% as Poor. The first 6 months of 2017-18 have given broadly similar outcomes, with 86% rating the service as Good, 11% Average and 3% Poor.

## Upgrade of telephony system and future developments

On 11 September 2017, the Council moved from using an old analogue phone system to a new, PSN-compliant, cloud-based system which included the introduction of a new, web-driven Contact Centre call-handling solution.

As well as giving the Council more resilience and future flexibility, this new phone system has facilitated a number of direct changes to the Contact Centre which will offer tangible benefits and service improvements for customers. Examples of immediate changes include:

- Auto-answer (i.e. call 'push') - Waiting calls are automatically presented to the first available Advisor with the necessary skill settings to handle that call, rather than Advisors manually selecting a waiting call as in the past. Calls will therefore be answered quicker and this should also lead to reduced waiting times for other callers.
- Team Leader 'real time' display - Team Leaders now have a real-time desktop display to give them an at-a-glance view of numbers and types of calls waiting and their duration, enabling them to pro-actively reassign Advisors to address call peaks in the 'live' environment.
- Advisor 'real-time' display - Advisors similarly have a real-time desktop display to give them an at-a-glance view of the number of calls they have taken that day, the number and types of calls waiting relating to their Team, and the status of other Team members (on a call; in wrap-up; on a break), so they can be more pro-active in managing their breaks etc appropriately so as not to inadvertently leave colleagues under pressure when calls are waiting.
- New reporting suite - The new suite has a greater array of telephone 'counters' that can be reported on, enabling greater granularity and use of captured data for reporting, call forecasting and workflow management. (NB: The reporting 'counters' are industry standard, but do not marry exactly with the content or format of what was historically reported from the previous phone system).
- Introduction of a new dedicated Emergency Contact number, 0333 200 88 11 - This is primarily intended for customer use 'out-of-hours', with options for Emergency Repairs, Emergency Gas Repairs, Emergency Housing, Lifeline, and Payments, but if called during office hours the options will route callers to the 'in-hours' equivalent. Because this number is separate from the Charnwood network it offers extra resilience and customer reassurance in case of any interruption of our 'normal' phone service. (The 0333 number is a local rate number, so callers will only be charged the normal local call rate by their phone provider).

Future opportunities to be investigated include:

- Introduction of call recording (using PCI DSS compliant technology), both for training purposes and also for complaint resolution (can work both ways!).
- Webchat options to support customers self-serving on the website.
- Homeworking project to be developed, including examining opportunities for greater flexibility (both for the service, and for Advisors working patterns), and the ability to respond quickly to changing call volumes or specific incidents.
- Possible review of greetings, announcements and 'hold' music.

#### Contact Centre visit

There is an opportunity for Board Members to visit the Contact Centre at 4.00pm on 8 November 2017, immediately before the Board meeting, to receive a brief overview of the workings of the Contact Centre. While on this occasion it will not be possible to sit with Advisors to listen in to actual calls, all visitors will still be required to sign a short Data Protection disclaimer prior to entering the Contact Centre, due to the confidential nature of discussions that may be being held by the Advisors and overheard during the visit.

Officer to contact:                   Adrian Le Cras  
Customer Service Delivery Manager  
01509 634610  
[adrian.le-cras@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.le-cras@charnwood.gov.uk)

## Appendix A – Volumetrics

### Landlord Services (634666 – all calls received)

	<b>5 months to 31/8/17</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>Number of calls offered</b>	22,181	50,839	57,069
<b>Number of calls answered (excluding disconnects)</b>	17,717	42,265	45,515
<b>% calls answered</b>	80%	83%	80%
<b>Average time to answer *</b>	1 min 59 secs	1 min 40 secs	1 min 55 secs
<b>Average call handled time (including wrap-up)</b>	6 mins 13 secs	6 mins 26 secs	6 mins 18 secs

\* Time from when final routing option selected and call enters relevant queue, or if no selection made then time from when caller enters the general 'any other enquiry' queue.

(Any calls where no option selected will only appear in the overall Landlord Services figures above).

### Volumetrics by Service option selected

#### Repairs (Option 3)

	<b>5 months to 31/8/17</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>Number of calls offered</b>	3,886	9,980	11,531
<b>Number of calls answered</b>	3,603	9,285	10,443
<b>% calls answered</b>	93%	93%	90%
<b>Average time to answer</b>	1 min 52 secs	1 min 27 secs	1 min 10 secs
<b>Average call handled time (including wrap-up)</b>	7 mins 18 secs	7 mins 28 secs	6 mins 51 secs

### Rents (Option 4)

	<b>5 months to 31/8/17</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>Number of calls offered</b>	3,282	7,851	8,947
<b>Number of calls answered</b>	3,005	7,246	7,997
<b>% calls answered</b>	92%	92%	90%
<b>Average time to answer</b>	1 min 51 secs	1 min 32 secs	1 min 59 secs
<b>Average call handled time (including wrap-up)</b>	5 mins 42 secs	6 mins 04 secs	6 mins 36 secs

### Tenancy enquiries (Option 5)

	<b>5 months to 31/8/17</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>Number of calls offered</b>	1,008	2,421	2,386
<b>Number of calls answered</b>	972	2,172	2,153
<b>% calls answered</b>	89%	90%	90%
<b>Average time to answer</b>	1 min 48 secs	1 min 30 secs	1 min 21 secs
<b>Average call handled time (including wrap-up)</b>	6 mins 17 secs	7 mins 25 secs	6 mins 37 secs

### Antisocial Behaviour (Option 6)

	<b>5 months to 31/8/17</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>Number of calls offered</b>	1,080	2,334	2,620
<b>Number of calls answered</b>	976	2,097	2,343
<b>% calls answered</b>	90%	90%	89%
<b>Average time to answer</b>	1 min 42 secs	1 min 33 secs	1 min 51 secs
<b>Average call handled time (including wrap-up)</b>	7 mins 22 secs	7 mins 59 secs	7 mins 18 secs