

EK Services Q1 Performance Report for TDC 2016/17

Corporate Performance Review Working Party	23 August 2016
Report Author	Dominic Whelan, Director of Shared Services
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Derek Crow-Brown, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Reasons for Key	N/A
Previously Considered by	N/A
Ward:	N/A

Executive Summary:

This report will provide a summary of key performance indicators for the services delivered by EK Services for Thanet District Council, which include ICT, Customer Delivery (Income (Revenues), Payments (Benefits) and Customer Services) and it will also report on the services delivered by EKHR.

The report will cover service performance over the period April to June 2016 inclusive.

Recommendation(s):

Comments are invited from Members of the working party; Members are to note the report.

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 EK Services (EKS) and EK Human Resources (EKHR) have responsibility for certain delegated 'shared service' functions. These functions include the following services:

- ICT Services;
- Face to Face & Contact Centre Customer Services;
- Revenues (Council Tax and Business Rates);
- Benefits (administration of the Housing Benefit Scheme); and
- Human Resources.

1.2 EKS and EKHR monitor and report on performance monthly and meet with TDC lead client officer (Tim Willis) to discuss service performance and specific issues. Performance is measured against agreed Indicators that are contained within Service Level Agreements (SLA); these agreements are subject to annual review and agreement between each of the three partner councils and EK Services.

2.0 Performance

There are no major concerns to flag up as we reach end of Q1. A few points to note are:

- 2.1 A number of ICT and Customer Service response times are trending slightly lower (worse) than the same time last year, these include ICT incidents and Service Desk calls resolved within target response time and the amount of abandoned calls in the Contact Centre but they are still within the overall target and reflect the expected impact of resource constraints as we seek to deliver £1m of savings in year. We continue to explore ways to maintain and indeed improve service whilst delivering cost reduction.
- 2.2 Collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates are very slightly below the level we were at last year. Council Tax collection at end of Q1 16/17 is 29.35% versus 29.53% in Q1 2015/16. Business Rates collection at end of Q1 16/17 is 32.28% compared with 32.63% at same period last year. However, the Income teams are not concerned over this at present as they believe this is down to the removal of Single Person Discounts in Council Tax, following a National Fraud Initiative review and the removal of retail relief for some businesses which had an impact for this quarter but which is expected to be cleared in next quarter. One should not set too much store by these 'in year' statistics as the collection rates data is complex and subject to a range of influencing factors that can change the profile of collection throughout the year. The quarterly collection rates are used as a check and balance to identify any serious concerns, for which there are none at present from my own perspective.
- 2.3 HR call handling response times are slightly below the levels of last year, although still above target. Calls answered within 15 seconds for the quarter is 84% compared to 86% at same period last year (target 80%) and email responses within 3 days for the quarter achieved 86% compared with 96% at Q1 last year. However, this was due to two specific performance issues in a particular month that impacted the overall quarter. Call answering in April was impacted by a resource issue as various changes in pay resulted in increased calls whilst staff were also prioritised to deal with pension reconciliations at first year end of the new payroll system. This, coupled with some specific resourcing gaps following staff churn and whilst awaiting recruitment led to some specific pressures in the HR advisory service this quarter.

3.0 Key Initiatives/Outcomes

Progress on Digital and work to deliver in year improvements within the EKS high volume transactional areas such as Revenues & Benefits is going well. The aim is to create a better end to end process from a customer engaging with the Council (such as Benefits claim transaction, as an example) and then allowing that transaction to be processed swiftly through to the relevant person who can add 'human value' in the decision making and then finally dropping the transaction into the relevant back office system, cutting out manual processes and paperwork where possible along the way. The aim is also to deliver improved customer experience by keeping the person updated on the transaction in an automated manner and making their life 'easier' by having easier log on and authentication only where needed. This also links closely with the need to review how we deliver customer services to the citizen and the drive towards more online and self-serve where possible, smarter use of telephone contact and less face to face, all of which will be subject to a wider discussion and debate with Council Officers and Councillors in due course.

4.0 Concerns/Risks

- 4.1 As flagged at the end of year performance report, the key risk is the increasing likelihood of service delivery standards and performance dropping as I hold vacancies and reduce capacity in order to deliver against the challenging savings targets set for this year. Moving forward, as further savings are required, whilst Digitisation has a major role to play, it also means that service levels and organisational change will be required to deliver such savings, which will require council decision making at officer and elected member levels in due course.
- 4.2 There have been an increasing number of incidents in the Margate Gateway involving members of the public being verbally abusive and in some cases threatening to physically injure staff including, in one case, throwing a computer screen across a desk. In most cases, it appears to be linked to citizens reacting to Housing Options services decisions. Police have been called on a number of occasions but are usually too late to assist and thus far there have been no injuries. However the customer service staff are starting to get concerned and we have been working with TDC officers to develop a set of guidelines for staff to manage such incidents.

Contact Officer:	Dominic Whelan, Director of Shared Services, (01227) 862 073
Reporting to:	Madeline Homer, Chief Executive

Annex List

Annex 1	EK Services Q1 Performance for TDC
---------	------------------------------------