

EK Services Q2 Performance Report for TDC

Corporate Performance Review Working Party	22 November 2016
Report Author	Dominic Whelan, Director of Shared Services
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Derek Crow-Brown
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 July to September 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 each quarter or as required. 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

Overall performance is holding up, although there is one significant issue being addressed in the Payments area, which is RED. Points to note are:

- 2.1 Payments. I am concerned about the performance of the team involved in processing payment of housing benefit and council tax support as the accuracy levels remain below target for the third month, although they are improving. I and my management team have been monitoring this since the performance started to dip in July. Prior to that the team were above target throughout the preceding months but from July onward they have not hit the target with July being a particularly poor month with 91.18% accuracy against the 96% target. The manager leading this service has been undertaking performance reviews with the staff involved in TDC processing. The performance has improved from its low point in July but clearly is still not good enough. Our current average accuracy rate for year to date is 95.89% and we believe this will continue to rise, as it has done in recent weeks, as the measures being undertaken to improve team performance kick in.
- 2.2 ICT & Customer Service Performance. With the exception of Customer Service Face to Face average waiting times, which have increased very slightly (from 4mins 4 secs to 4 mins 58 secs) other targets within ICT and Customer Services have shown slight improvement from Q1. Face to Face wait times are still within target and we are out performing against national benchmarking for this area. This in its own right is good but creates challenges as this expensive method of service, which is an average cost of £4.25 per face to face contact (£10.20 on Saturdays and late night Thursdays) versus £2.20 for telephone contact or £0.10p for online, needs to reduce. Whilst we continue to provide such high standards it impacts on us achieving digital goals.
- 2.3 Collection Rates. Council Tax collection has now started to trend above the level expected for this period, which is an improvement from last quarter. Business Rates remain very slightly below the expected target for this point of the year (57.64% compared with a target of 57.67% which equates to approximately £10.5k) but the Income teams are not concerned over this. As I stated at last 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.
- 2.4 HR. Call handling response times are all on track and have shown very slight improvement from last quarter below the levels of last year, although still above target. However, there are some concerns over the performance of Health & Safety Advisory services and this led to a service error in RIDDOR reporting. Whilst this was an isolated case and steps have been taken to prevent re-occurrence, the provision of H&S advisory services is being reviewed by all partners at present.

3.0 Key Initiatives/Outcomes

- 3.1 Work to review the EKS operating model has now started in earnest, this aims to develop a structure that meets the needs of the next 4-5 years to ensure that we remain viable and relevant in the way in which we provide services as well as seeking to achieve further savings (and with an eye on wider East Kent work).
- 3.2 The project to 'onboard' East Kent Housing onto the HR Payroll is going well with an aim to have this live during the next quarter.

3.3 Progress on Digital¹ continues to focus on Customer Insight and Channel Shift initiatives to adapt our existing processes and systems to enable greater customer self-serve. This also involves a number of citizen engagement activities to speak with customers to assess their appetite and views on digital transactions and to provide us with evidence and information to help our planning.

4.0 Concerns/Risks

4.1 The key risk highlighted at 1st Qtr, regarding service delivery performance being further impacted as we strive to achieve significant in year savings, has reduced, as we have greater confidence in our Budget Forecast of Outturn for 16/17. However, the risk to service standards and performance for 17/18 and beyond remains a key risk and we are looking carefully at a range of options to adapt our service delivery methods to meet these challenges.

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Annex List

Annex 1	EK Services Q2 Performance for TDC
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¹ The aim is to create a better end to end process from a customer engaging with the Council 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.