

EK Services Q3 Performance Report for TDC

Corporate Performance
Review Working Party

16 February 2017

Report Author

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Portfolio Holder

Cllr Derek Crow-Brown, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance

Status

For Information

Classification:

Unrestricted

Key Decision

No

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 October to December 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

Summary

Overall performance is holding up, the major issue of concern at the last report was the underperformance in the accuracy levels in Benefits and I am pleased to inform that this has been addressed and Members will note that the performance has improved (see detail below). There is a new and separate area of concern this quarter in relation to the 'Average time taken to process Benefits' which is below target for this quarter resulting in the single RED. This is due to specific action being taken to address old historical claims that have been held up in the system.

Points to note are as follows:

2.1 Payments

2.1.1 As stated in the summary, I am pleased to report that the positive action taken to address the previous reported underperformance in the team responsible for processing payment of housing benefit and council tax support has delivered the results expected and the accuracy levels have now improved above target again.

2.1.2 This quarter the Payments team have been making a concerted effort to reduce both the amount of outstanding work, and the age of that outstanding work. The vast majority of Benefits new claims and new change of circumstances are cleared within the target time but inevitably there are some that are more complex or require clarification or need the submission of further evidence from the public, all of which adds time to the process. This builds up a backlog of outstanding claims that the team have been focussing on. This has resulted in the quarter performance dropping slightly below target for the three month period (10.28 days average against a target of 9 days). However, we remain confident that this work will prove beneficial and the outturn will still be within target.

2.2 ICT & Customer Service Performance. All ICT and Customer Service targets have improved slightly upon the previous quarter and remain on track for end of year target attainment. As stated in the previous report, the Customer Service function is under review, to take account of Digital initiatives and consequent reduction in resources. The current Performance Indicators require review to ensure that they are appropriate for the future model and take account of wider partnership alignment where applicable.

2.3 Collection Rates. The Income team have continued to work hard to administer the collection of Business Rates and Council Tax and pursuit of debts from corporate customers, residents and businesses. Q3 outturn details are as follows:

2.3.1 Council Tax (CT). This quarter has seen CT collection levels remaining close to, but slightly below the levels at the same Q3 period last year. Council Tax collection is currently at 83.28% for current period compared with 83.80% last year. However this is due to an increased number of citizens choosing to spread payments over 12mths rather than 10mths thus reducing the collection in year. We expect the last quarter to move this back towards target.

2.3.2 Business Rates (NDR). The NDR collection for Q3 (84.47%) is slightly below the same period last year (85.32%) but this is primarily due to the collection figures last year including GP surgery rates which, following an appeal resulted in a significant repayment. This effectively meant the outturn last

year was subject to a £400k refund to GP Surgery's which has impacted the 2016/17 collection. Also, in a similar manner to CT collection, more businesses have opted to spread payments over 12mths rather than 10mths (including many of the large retailers) which will affect the Q3 figures. Lastly, Members will wish to note that despite the percentage being lower than the same period last year (for reasons outlined), the overall amount of collection is higher as the amount of business rates being applied is higher than 2015/16 by circa £1m.

2.4 HR. Call handling response times are all on track with no specific performance issues linked to targets.

3.0 Key Initiatives/Outcomes

3.1 Work to review the EKS operating model remains ongoing. A number of early initiatives that fall within this work are in progress or have been completed. These include the commencement of a Consultation on EKHR senior management structure that is likely to see a reduction in senior HR posts and the completion of a Customer Service Management review that has resulted in a reduction in senior managers and the creation of new Team Leader posts.

3.2 East Kent Housing are now live on our HR Payroll service.

3.3 EKHR remains in support of TDC for Health & Safety Advisory service although plans are underway for this to be brought back 'in house' to TDC and this function will cease to be provided by EKHR in future, with a corresponding reduction in the TDC service fees.

3.4 Progress on Digital continues apace and as reported at Q2, a briefing was given to TDC Members to provide information on our approach to Customer Service Digital and our Customer Insight and Channel Shift initiatives to adapt our existing processes and systems to enable greater customer self-serve. We have now also conducted our first 'digital outreach' activity with Age UK to help provide training to older members of the public.

4.0 Concerns/Risks

4.1 The key risk is the ability to maintain service standards and performance for 17/18 and beyond as we seek to deliver a further significant level of savings. We are looking carefully at a range of options to adapt our service delivery methods to meet these challenges. Many of the savings options for 17/18 will have a resource impact; some of this will be managed by the use of digital technology and greater online transactions with the public and businesses but it is likely that some service standards will require adjustment.

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Annex List

Annex 1	EK Services Q3 Performance for TDC
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