

Report for TDC - EK Services Performance Q4 2016/17

Corporate Performance Review Working Party	27 June 2017
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
Ward:	Thanet Wide

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 final quarter of 16/17 covering the period January 2017 to March 2017 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

2.1 Summary

- 2.1.1 I am pleased to say that we are finishing the year in really good shape with the performance for this quarter showing improvement from last quarter. In the current financial climate with pressure on council income, I am particularly pleased to see that we have over achieved our targets on collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates and also maintained our high level of accuracy for benefits accuracy. This latter area was flagged as a concern in the 2nd Qtr due to some specific issues with individual performance so I can report that this has been overcome and we pulled up our overall accuracy levels to attain the target expected, thus protecting the important error bonus that councils receive from DWP.
- 2.1.2 Progress on Digital initiatives has progressed this quarter with ongoing focus on council tax e-billing and work to channel shift customers where appropriate to online or telephones. The results have been excellent and as we reach end of year we have managed to get 33000 citizens signed up to e-billing from a start point of 7000 (this across the whole of our three council areas) and our face to face customer contact has continued to drop. This supports the work to change our model to have less face to face operations (falling back to the main sites at Margate, Dover and Canterbury) and using smarter and better telephone and online service blended with a visiting service for the few individuals that may be infirm or unable to use the phone or internet.
- 2.1.3 I am particularly pleased to report that our digital initiatives and approach to the changing demand from citizens and businesses has been recognised with our shortlisting as finalists in the Municipal Journal Awards for 'Behaviour Change'.

Points to note are as follows:

2.2 Payments

- 2.2.1 This quarter the Payments team have been focussed on clearing the back log of outstanding work, and the age of that outstanding work. As reported last quarter, 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 quarter we have now cleared that work and brought the performance within target for the year achieving an average processing time of just over 7 days (6.81 days last year). We will struggle to maintain this level as financial pressure starts to impact upon resources, but it is worth noting that this is a very high performance already compared against many other Authorities nationally and compared against DWP targets for payment of Universal Credit.
- 2.2.2 The ongoing attainment of our accuracy levels is important as this is directly linked to the payment by central government of an 'error bonus' to each Council for maintaining low levels of error.

2.3 ICT & Customer Service Performance

- 2.3.1 All ICT and Customer Service targets have achieved their targets for the quarter and end of year. They have broadly held steady with last year's outturn levels which is pleasing as there have been a range of additional pressures and new work that has been managed above previous levels, so achieving a similar performance to last year is a very good achievement.

2.3.2 Our digital initiatives have remained a key focus for this quarter with further customer insight work completed; ongoing work to prepare for changes to face to face delivery and supporting work to prepare for the implementation of a new digital benefits solution to complement our existing back office system that will improve the customer experience whilst setting conditions for cost saving.

2.4 Collection Rates

2.4.1 The Income team have pushed really hard to ensure our administration of Business Rates and Council Tax and pursuit of debts from corporate customers, residents and businesses achieved high performance. Q4 outturn details are as follows:

2.4.2 Council Tax (CT). This quarter has seen CT collection levels achieving the end of year target, to the same level as last year in terms of percentage collection achieved at 96.5% attainment against a target of 96%. However, the actual amount collected has increased from £61.41m last year to £64.94m this year.

2.4.3 Business Rates (NDR). The NDR collection for this last quarter has resulted in us achieving our target for end of year with 99.07% of the base collected in year against a target of 98.05%. This is a lower percentage than last year (99.53% in 16/17) but as in the case for Council Tax we saw an increase in the actual amount collected moving up from £33.67m last year to £34.39m this year.

2.5 HR

2.5.1 Call handling response times all met their targets PIs with no specific performance issues linked to targets. However, we are in the process of introducing totally new performance measures for HR as the ones used currently are not fit for purpose. We are working with the lead officers from each council to develop new targets that are more meaningful and that add value to the monitoring of the service.

2.5.2 HR handled some considerable caseload throughout the year supporting 443 cases of employee relations activity for TDC employees and management. This included placing 67 adverts for staff, resulting in 41 new starters. There were 151 referrals to Occupational Health; 40 absence cases managed and 47 disciplinary cases supported.

3.0 **Key Initiatives/Outcomes**

3.1 The decision to bring H&S services back in house within each of the three EKS partner authorities has been agreed and EKHR is now in process of implementing this change which is due to be effective from 01 Aug 17.

4.0 **Concerns/Risks**

4.1 The key risk remains as stated at last quarter, that 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.

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

Annex List

Annex 1	EK Services Q4 Performance for TDC
---------	------------------------------------