

EK Services Q3 Performance Report for TDC

Corporate Performance
Review Working Party

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Report Author

Dominic Whelan, Director of Shared Services

Portfolio Holder

Cllr Derek Crow-Brown

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 2017 inclusive.

Recommendation(s):

Comments are invited from Members of the working party and Members are requested 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

Performance in the majority of areas continues to remain high; ICT and HR performance is above target on all indicators. Also, the important performance in Income Collections also remains high and on track. December Business Rates collection was slightly impacted by two large payments (from Tesco and NHS) being

received in early January rather than December which was not therefore included in the statistics for this Q3 report. If they had been receipted at planned time, the expected target for Q3 would have been achieved.

Customer Services contact remains a challenge and below target. This has been discussed at length. I am pleased to see that some of the measures taken to assist (new apprentices, redeployment of staff) are starting to have an effect and the performance has improved since Q2 (1min 34 secs this quarter compared to 1min 53 secs last quarter). However, the fact remains that the budget pressure in 2017, resulting in a £800k saving target for EKS has had a large impact on overall staffing. There are still some additional factors that have added to the pressure on resources, including extra work from Universal Credit assistance and some ongoing extra call volumes from Council Tax Reduction Scheme queries which are not steady state activity.

The run of under performance in the average time taken to process all new claims and change events has, regrettably, continued but it is now starting to correct. The Q3 outturn (9.76 days) is now a marked improvement from Q2 (11.42 days) and December itself was much closer to target. We continue to focus resource on this area to recover the position.

The Q3 performance for Accuracy in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support was above target but due to the specific dip in Q2 (linked to individual staffing issues that have now been addressed), the year to date remains slightly below target. However, we hope that the improvement in Q3 will continue in the last quarter and this will recover the overall position at year end.

Key Initiatives/Outcomes:

The work to reach agreement on contract Terms with Civica leading to a decision by the East Kent Services Committee in January, is progressing well. As at the end of Q3, we remain on track to deliver the expected outcomes laid out in the original Business Case.

The new Digital Benefits solution which was due to be deployed in November was delayed and is now being implemented in January. This provides a much easier, faster and more accurate method for customers to make claims, update change of circumstances and will not only improve customer experience but also reduce contact via telephones or face to face.

The closure of the remaining Customer Service (face to face) locations that EKS operate across the three Districts is now nearly complete with one remaining location (Deal Library) now only open 1 day a week and this is due to close in March 2018. This will then complete the re-alignment of staff which will, in turn, help the resource availability in the contact centres.

Concerns/Risks:

It remains likely that, despite the additional measures being put in place to help mitigate the pressure in Customer Services, that we are unlikely to achieve the 50 secs call waiting time target at the end of this year. The target last year was 90 secs and whilst we have reduced staff in line with budget availability, the contact has not reduced as much as we expected and is also exasperated further due to an increase in more complex calls.

If we fail to agree Terms and Contract with Civica to provide Customer Services and Revenues/Benefits then a major restructure of EKS is likely, unless Councils find

significant funding to invest. Any restructure would result in significant staff reduction that would have severe impact on services.

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

Annex List

Annex 1	EK Services Q3 Performance for TDC
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