

Subject:
Revenues, Benefits and Customer
Contact Performance Update

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date:

Report of: Head of Customer Services & E Government

Portfolio

Holder: Quality Services for Customers

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update members on the performance of Capita in the delivery of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Contact

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Quality Services to Customers (Customers, Improvement)
- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy, Housing)
- Well Managed Council (Improvement, Community Network)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

Capita have been responsible for the delivery of the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Contact Service for almost 12 months. The Service Assurance Team (SAT) was set up to manage the service contract. The SAT has developed an excellent working relationship, which is extremely open and honest, with Andy Ormerod and Lesley Howson from Capita so that most issues / problems can be simply resolved without the need to escalate, from both a strategic and operational perspective.

The SAT has developed a set of processes and procedures to manage the delivery of service, the relationship with the supplier, management of the risks associated with the performance of the contract and any future changes in the business requirements. The SAT works within a Governance structure and report every 2 months to and Operational Board, and every 6 months to the strategic board.

Appendix 1 provides details of service delivery performance against key specified targets and service levels. This covers the period April 2006 to March 2007, and April 2007 to August 2007 inclusive.

4.2 Benefits Performance

Performance achievement for 2006/07 year end shows that 5 of 11 revised targets were met and exceeded. Present performance for processing of new claims and change in circumstances has improved greatly, but reducing the processing times has had a knock on effect of reducing accuracy levels. A balance must be found between speed and accuracy. Accuracy levels have already been the subject of reports to Operational Board and are monitored by the SAT continuously. It is anticipated that by identifying individuals' training needs and ensuring that they receive the training required, Capita can deliver improved accuracy levels.

Performance in the area of overpayments has improved on the 06/07 out turn. Capita has improved procedures and tightened up on recovery action hence the improvement in all three overpayment BVPI's. As an Authority we should be aiming to recover, in any set period, at least as much as is created in that period (BVPI 79b(i)) so not adding to the total outstanding debt. It cannot be anticipated how many overpayments will be generated in the last six months of the financial year and it is the total amount of outstanding overpayments which recovered overpayments are measured against. Based on performance against BVPI 79b(ii) so far, and if overpayments created stays at the current level, it is anticipated that this target will be reached.

Last year's performance against BVPI 79b (iii), whilst exceeding the initial target of not more than 10%, was below the revised target of <30%. The revised target was agreed as Capita was undertaking a data cleansing exercise of all old, unrecoverable debt. Performance against this BVPI for 07/08 is better than the target of <8%, so whilst it must be borne in mind that this is a cumulative target, it is anticipated that this target will be achieved.

4.3 Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates Performance

The performance indicators for collection of Council Tax and NNDR are annual targets. In each case the reported figure represents the percentage of tax which is collected within the financial year that it falls due. The 2006/07 targets for both these BVPI's have been met. It is also expected that both targets for the current year will be met by the end of March 2008.

Ongoing Progress towards the year end target is monitored by comparing progress with previous year's collection rate figures. Currently, collection rate for Council Tax is exceeding the targeted rate. The NNDR collection rate is currently lower than the target set. However an anomaly has been identified in the target setting process which has resulted in monthly NNDR targets having been set at too high a level. This was due to a high number of awards of backdated rate relief in 2006/07. These awards accounted for an unusually high collection rate at this point in the last financial year which in turn distorted the current years targeting.

It must be noted that the NNDR collection rate currently stands at 53.34% based upon figures to the end of August 2007. Since NNDR is payable in monthly instalments from April onwards, less than half of the yearly charge had fallen due to be paid at this time. Having collected more than half of the charge during the first five months of the year provides significant optimism that the year end target will be achieved.

4.4 Customer Service Performance

Performance against % calls answered within 20 seconds, whilst still slightly below target, has improved to 86.8% (target 90%) and abandoned calls at 2.5% are now significantly better than target (<5%). This figure represents one of the highest service levels in the whole of Lancashire.

From a call quality perspective In June the SAT began to monitor a small random selection of calls to the Call Centre and this has continued on a monthly basis. The results of this monitoring will be fed back to the Operational Board once a large enough sample of calls has been analysed, to determine what, if any, aspects of call handling could be improved through specific training interventions.

Current performance of the One Stop Shop against the measure of average waiting time is consistent with the outturn for 2006/07 at 4.1 minutes. However, in the absence of a CRM system, it is still not possible to assess performance against the target of 90% of customers being seen within 10 minutes. Work to develop a usable CRM system continues in conjunction with Lancashire County Council and Northgate. In the meantime the SAT will be examining the robustness of manual data on customer visits gathered by meet & greet staff.

The performance of the RBC switchboard has deteriorated slightly from the outturn performance in 2006/07. % calls answered within 20 seconds has fallen by 3.4 points to 89.4% (target 90%) and abandoned calls, whilst still better than target (<5%), have fallen by 0.2 points to 2.1%.

4.5 Overview of ongoing Projects

Document Management System

In February 2007 Capita introduced EDMS (document imaging system) which has brought about great improvements in service performance not only in the area of BVPI's but also enabling customer facing staff to view all documents so helping to achieve 1st point of contact resolution. The application is used by all of the Revenue and Benefits staff. Anite was implemented and fully operational within 8 weeks.

The introduction of EDRMS has brought about great improvements in service performance not only in the area of BVPI's but also enabling customer facing staff to view all documents so helping to achieve 1st point of contact resolution. The system is fully operational across the Contact Centre, One Stop Shop and Blackburn back office and also Rossendale employees have access to the system.

BACS payments

Progress against this project has been slower than the SAT or Capita anticipated. The main reason for this has been that the format in which the BACS file was produced was not acceptable to Civica the RBC's Finance application. This issue has now been resolved and we are able to move the project on.

Landlords' bank details have been obtained and once the testing has been completed, hopefully by the end of September 2007, all landlords who have provided their bank details will be moved over to BACS payments. Capita will shortly start writing to our customers to obtain their bank account details in preparation for their move to payment by BACS, once the landlord exercise has been completed.

Satisfaction Survey

Capita are tasked with undertaking an Annual Satisfaction Survey on all aspects of the services provided. Liaison has taken place between the SAT and Managers at Capita with regard to the surveys / questions etc. Customers who have recently visited the One Stop Shop, telephoned the Call centre or written to either the Council Tax or Benefit sections will shortly be surveyed and the findings will be reported back to the next Strategic Governance Board.

2nd Bailiff

A procurement exercise has been carried out and a second bailiff has been selected, the contract is in the process of being drawn up and will be passed to our preferred second bailiff for signature.

Emergency Out of Hours Contact Centre

A new emergency out of hours contact centre has been scoped developed and was implemented on the 24/9/2007. The new contact centre is designed to deal with out of hour's emergency calls such as flooding, dangerous buildings etc. The new contact centre is full conversant with all the legislation around the Civil Contingency Act 2004 category 1 responder.

In the event of an emergency Rossendale will be able to use their existing staff who take calls on the Revenue and Benefits side to assist during any emergency situation, this provides a great deal of flexibility at no cost to Rossendale. The new contact centre has full disaster recovery site with another contact centre which is only 3 miles away. The new contact centre is also using intelligent numbers which forms part of our overall telephony strategy going forward.

4.6 Overview of future Projects

Local Housing Allowance

The Government are introducing a change to the way customers who claim Housing Benefit, from April 2008, will be paid. Customers who move or claim for the first time, after this date, will fall under the new rules. The Service Assurance Team are lead on this project and have developed project and communications plans and have started to action many of the activities identified, to ensure that everything is in place for April 2008. The SAT will work with Capita back office to ensure a smooth transition.

Right First Time

Work has already commenced on a number of Projects under the "Right First Time Scheme". CRM – The first services to be launched under the CRM will be Revenues and Benefits with the One Stop Shop being the first site to be implemented, followed by back office sites at Blackburn and Coventry. The Rossendale project team will be working closely with Capita on the development of this project.

Customer Profiling

A project designed to understand the different types of customers that we have and various types of channels that they operate in, will enable Rossendale to target service delivery to specific customer needs. This project is due to start in October 2007.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 5.1 Improved performance will have a direct impact on Capita's ability to earn a performance reward. As part of the 2006/07 budget the Council established a performance contract reserve.

6. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES

6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 There are no specific Human Resource implications arising from this report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The report has highlighted the major improvements in the areas of Revenues, Benefits and general customer contact over the last 12 months. In addition a number of projects have been successfully completed and highlighted other projects which are planned for the next 12 months.

The success of the contract has been reflected in the improvement in nearly all of the BVPI's along with the increased levels of customer satisfaction being generated in both the Call Centre and also the One Stop Shop. Work is also beginning to the start on the implementation of the "Right First Time Programme".

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That members note the contents of the report and the improvement in performance of these services and endorse the Service Assurance Team in their work in striving for continuous improvement.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 N/A

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required No

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached No

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APPENDIX 1

Benefits and Fraud Performance and Targets

BVPI	Target 06/07	Out turn	Target 07/08	Actual to date	1 st Quarter Performance	Quartile performance
79a – new claims processing	35 days	37.6 days	29 days	26.79 days	29.6 days	Top – 26.4 Middle – 32 Bottom -39.1
78b – time taken to process Changes in Circumstances	17 days	19.3 days	16 days	16.16 days	17.7 days	Top – 9.1 Middle – 13.5 Bottom – 18.8
79a - Accuracy	99%	97.40%	99.50%	97.60%	97.60%	Top – 99% Middle – 98.20% Bottom – 96.20%
79b(i) - % of overpayments recovered v created	65%	76.50%	75%	88.76%	89.99%	Top – 79.39% Middle – 70.01% Bottom – 58.98%
79b(ii) - % of overpayments recovered v outstanding and created	50%	38.73%	57%	27.73% This BVPI is cumulative	20.65% This BVPI is cumulative	Top – 39.69% Middle – 32.75% Bottom – 27.35%
79b(iii) - % of overpayments written off	<10% (<30%**)	25.49%	< 8%	1.66% This BVPI is cumulative	1.22% This BVPI is cumulative	No info available
76a – number of claimants visited, per 1,000 caseload	204	259.95	Not applicable from April 2007	N/A	N/A	N/A

76b - number of fraud investigators employed, per 1,000 caseload	0.27	0.23	0.33	0.27	.27	No info available
76c - number of fraud investigations closed, per 1,000 caseload	28	33.85	30	15.81 This BVPI is cumulative	8.75	No info available
76d – number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload	6.9	7.45	7	2.42 This BVPI is cumulative	.81	No info available

**A further target of below 30% was agreed as Capita were undertaking a data cleansing exercise of all old, unrecoverable debt.

Customer Service Performance and Targets

Coventry Call Centre		Target 06/07	06/07 Out turn (Nov to Mar 07)	Target 07/08	Actual to date
% calls answered within 20 seconds		90%	66.7%	90%	86.8%
Abandoned calls		<5%	8.1%	< 5%	2.5%
Longest time to answer		<180 seconds	1420 seconds	< 180 seconds	1528 seconds
Call volumes – total for period		06/07 Out turn (Nov to Mar 07) 20449 calls		Actual to date (April to August) 17958 calls	
Call Volumes – average per month		4090 calls		3592 calls	
One Stop Shop					
Waiting times		90% within 15 minutes.	4.2 mins Average waiting time	90% within 10 minutes.	4.1 mins average waiting time
RBC Switchboard					
% calls answered within 20 seconds.		90%	92.8%	90%	89.4%
Abandoned calls		<5%	1.9%	<5%	2.1%
Call Volumes – total for period		06/07 Out turn 35358 calls		Actual to date (April to August) 32707 calls	
Call Volumes - average per month		7072 calls		6541 calls	

As these are all local targets there is no quartile information to measure these against.

Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates

Council tax	Target 06/07	06/07 Out turn	Target 07/08	Actual to date	1 st Quarter Performance	Quartile performance
BVPI 9 – Council tax collection rate	96.4%	96.84%	97.5%	48.07%	29.36% (Target for the quarter 28.74%) This BVPI is cumulative	Top – 98.53% Middle – 98.11% Bottom – 97.40%
BVPI 10 – Non Domestic Rates collection rate	98.3%	98.80%	98.8%	53.34%	30.64% (target for the quarter 31.70) This BVPI is cumulative	Top – 99.30% Middle – 99.00% Bottom – 98.40%