

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

REDUCING REPEAT CUSTOMER CONTACT THROUGH TACKLING FAILURE DEMAND

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Resolution at the 'First Point of Contact' is the panacea of customer service in that it delivers fulfilment to the customers with minimal impact on the organisation because it is a 'one and done' approach. The level of contact which an organisation receives because of the failure to do something, or get something right, for the customer (such as confusing letters, overly complicated processes, missed appointments or deadlines, staff errors, contractor delays) is regarded as 'failure demand'.
- 1.2 At the beginning of the municipal year, the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) and the Executive Member for Communities highlighted the need to reduce unnecessary repeat customer contact as one of the directorates' Service Review priorities for the next three years. Failure demand is seen as a fundamental contributor to repeat customer contact with the Council. Although it is impossible to state categorically, estimates put the level of failure demand within the organisation at approximately 15-20% of all contact to the corporate contact centre, which has a significant impact on resource levels.
- 1.3 It was recognised that the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board could assist in providing a strategic focus on the aspects of service delivery (Strategy, Policy, Structure, Process and/or Information) which generate failure demand within the organisation rather than this being viewed narrowly as a customer service issue. In particular, the Scrutiny Board could assist in facilitating the targeted work already being undertaken as part of the internal Service Review with those service areas that create the highest volume of customer contacts with the Contact Centre (i.e Housing Leeds, Council Tax and Housing Benefits). Such work aims to establish why customers are getting in touch; what particular service failures they are reporting; identifying areas of failure/blockage; and identifying what actions are required to tackle failure demand within those service areas.
- 1.4 In agreeing to undertake this inquiry, the Scrutiny Board also recognised the merit in assessing the extent to which customer services can implement solutions that help identify customers who repeatedly contact the council due to service failure with the aim of mitigating the impact on their health and wellbeing.

- 1.5 Whilst acknowledging that this inquiry will be focusing on reducing repeat customer contact through tackling failure demand, the Scrutiny Board will also be mindful to acknowledge where any wider customer access solutions are identified to help alleviate resource pressures on the Customer Contact Centre, which may also warrant further Scrutiny involvement in the future.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
- The current understanding of the general determinants of service failure and the key factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact (focusing on policy, people, process and information).
 - The extent to which customer services can implement solutions that help identify customers who repeatedly contact the council due to service failure with the aim of mitigating the impact on their health and wellbeing.
 - The existing expectations shared between the Corporate Contact Centre and the Housing Leeds service areas.
 - The current understanding of the determinants of service failure linked to Housing Leeds service areas and particularly the factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact.
 - The existing expectations shared between the Corporate Contact Centre in relation to Council Tax and Housing Benefit service areas.
 - The current understanding of the determinants of service failure linked to the Council Tax and Housing Benefit service areas and particularly the factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact.

3.0 Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success

- 3.1 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious and others may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 3.2 The main objective of this inquiry is to assist the Citizens and Communities directorate in providing a strategic focus on the aspects of service delivery (Strategy, Policy, Structure, Process and/or Information) which generate failure demand within the organisation.
- 3.3 The key outcomes sought from the inquiry are:
- To better understand the determinants of failure demand within the organisation.

- To propose key actions that can be taken to tackle the determinants of failure demand;
- To make the case for an organisational response to tackling failure demand which extends beyond it being seen as a purely customer services issue;
- To reduce the level of contact into the contact centre due to failure demand.

4.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

5.0 Timetable for the inquiry

5.1 The Inquiry will take place over a number of sessions. These sessions will also involve working group meetings with stakeholders, which will provide flexibility for the Board to gather and consider evidence.

5.2 The length of the Inquiry is subject to change. However it is anticipated that a final report will be produced by March 2017.

6.0 Submission of evidence

6.1 Session one – 7th November 2016

To consider evidence in relation to the following:

- The general determinants of service failure and the key factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact (focusing on policy, people, process and information).
- The extent to which customer services can implement solutions that help identify customers who repeatedly contact the council due to service failure with the aim of mitigating the impact on their health and wellbeing.

6.2 Session two – December 2016 - working group meeting (date tbc)

To consider evidence in relation to the following:

- The existing expectations shared between the Corporate Contact Centre and the Housing Leeds service areas.
- An analysis of the determinants of service failure linked to Housing Leeds service areas and particularly the factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact.

6.3 Session three – January 2017 - working group meeting (date tbc)

To consider evidence in relation to the following:

- The existing expectations shared between the Corporate Contact Centre and the Council Tax and Housing Benefit service areas.
- An analysis of the determinants of service failure linked to the Council Tax and Housing Benefit service areas and particularly the factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact.

6.4 Session four – February 2017 - working group meeting (date tbc)

To consider the findings and potential recommendations arising from this inquiry.

6.5 Session five – 13th March 2017

To agree the Board's inquiry report.

7.0 Witnesses

7.1 The following have been identified as possible contributors to the inquiry, however others may be identified during the course of the inquiry:

- Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Executive Member for Communities
- Chief Officer Customer Access
- Head of Customer Contact
- Citizens@Leeds Development Team Lead
- Representation from Customer Service Officers
- Representation from Housing Leeds
- Representation from Council Tax and Welfare and Benefits

8.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

8.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve it's ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

8.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.

- 8.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

9.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements

- 9.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 9.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.