

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 16

meeting date: 23 MARCH 2010  
title: SHARED SERVICE CONTACT CENTRE  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
principal author: PETER HOTHERSALL

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Committee on the progress made with the 12 months Project Plan for the Contact Centre that was submitted in June 2009

2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES

2.1 Implementation of the Contact Centre initiative has improved the way the Council is able to serve the public. As such it is key to the achievement of the Council's core values of striving to achieve service excellence and ensuring that services are accessible to all. It also contributes to our underlying aim to be a well-managed Council.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Shared Services Contact Centre (SSCC) and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software contract has been in place since Nov 2004 and will expire in Nov 2011. This contract is a collaboration between LCC, Pendle, Rossendale, Burnley, Chorley and Ribble Valley Councils.

3.2 A proposed 12 month plan for the Contact Centre was approved by Committee in June 2009.

4 PROGRESS OVER THE LAST 9 MONTHS

4.1 I am pleased to report that casual staff have no longer been employed, instead Level 'B' reception staff have supplemented the call handling during busy periods or for holiday/sickness situations. In a reciprocal arrangement Contact Centre staff are now being used to cover Level 'B' reception during holidays/sickness.

4.2 We have made changes to the CRM scripts to enhance our use of the system. As reported previously, the interface costs to the back office computer systems are large and not feasible in our present economic climate. Alternative but slightly more labour intensive, no cost solutions have been put in place.

4.3 Discussions have continued with service managers who have/will have dealings with the Contact Centre. This has furthered our understanding of their requirements and how the Contact Centre can help them. Working practice changes are now happening that enables the Contact Centre to answer more calls at the first point of contact. These changes have helped the Contact Centre deal directly with the following:

- Street scene calls, which include 3 stream waste, assisted collections, fly tipping, missed refuse, paper collection, special collection, and commercial sacks.
- Prices for Land Charges requests
- Council Tax banding enquires
- Advise on how to apply for a bus pass
- Location, opening hours and type of refuse accepted by the nearest waste centre

- Initial flooding grant call information
  - Energy Efficiency and Central Heating grant information
  - Grant for Performing Arts application information
  - Taking bookings from April to October for the Free Markets
  - Local Councillor details
  - Initial pre application information for planning applications
- 4.4 If the calls are LCC related (e.g. highways, street lighting) the operatives can now input the problem request directly into the LCC system for the resident.
- 4.6 In addition, the Contact Centre has provided support to many departments within the Council e.g. assisting with National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address cleansing, enveloping for the Revenues and Benefits Department.
- 4.5 The Contact Centre assists the Environmental Health section's NI182 satisfaction survey by telephone cold calling
- 4.6 The Contact Centre has been given responsibility for
- Emails to the webmaster emanating from the 'contact' area of the web site
  - The website's A to Z and Parish Council pages
- 4.7 We have been able to improve reporting from the CRM system, but it is still inadequate, figures for December to February are shown at Annex 1. We have no intention of purchasing add-on software for reporting during the current contract.
- 4.8 The voice recordings from the CRM system have been used on several occasions for resolution of official complaints and investigations into aggressive customer behaviour.
- 4.9 We are actively investigating alternative software/hardware solutions to replace the existing systems at the end of contract. Initial findings show that we should be able to purchase a software/hardware solution that would require minimal revenue implications. Capital expenditure for this software/hardware replacement would be incurred in the 2011/12 financial year and has been included in the five year capital programme.

## 6 RISK ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 *Resources:*

- (a) Financial – The SSCC project is a 7 year financial commitment (currently £53.5k per annum) to the Partnership until November 2011. The early payments were made using externally provided (I.E.G) grant funding. The last payment is due in Feb 2011.
- (b) Staff – The staffing complement remains at 2.5 FTE Customer Service Advisors plus a working Supervisor. Casual staff are available but not envisaged to be needed

### *Technical, Environmental and Legal:*

None

### *Equality and Diversity:*

A consistent approach to our customer contact via telephone, email and the website will ensure that we deal with all members of the public in an equal manner

*Political:*

None

*Reputation:*

Continued use of the Contact Centre will provide an enhanced quality of service to our customers.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The Contact Centre has continued to expand the services it provides. This has clearly released capacity for back office staff to concentrate on other work.

8 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

8.1 Note the continuing progress that is being made in ensuring the Contact Centre is the 'first point of contact' for all sections of the Authority.

PETER HOTHERSALL  
ICT MANAGER

PF16-10/PH/AC  
12 March 2010

## Calls to the Contact Centre

### *Analysis of calls resolved at first point of contact*

	December 2009	January 2010	February 2010
Assisted Collections (solved)	6	10	1
Bank Holidays refuse collection dates (solved)	387	0	0
Bus Pass (solved)	6	17	22
Garden Waste Collection (solved)	3	119	1
Missed Refuse	77	145	125
Missed Refuse (solved)	1,336	2,353	349
Paper (sacks and date queries)	41	104	155
Special Collections	311	339	425
Special Collections (solved)	10	16	37
Waste Disposal Sites (solved)	8	10	124
3 Stream Waste – bin usage queries	61	70	52
Street Scene	84	167	153
Fly Tipping	2	8	4
Grants	7	38	44
Ribble Valley Homes	179	73	70
LCC Self Serve – highways/street lighting	23	29	38
LCC Social Services, Trading Standards	407	102	112
Miscellaneous (United Utilities, Library number, directions)	75	87	*746
Cold Calling	126	146	248
Planning enquiries – pre application forms	0	25	99
Compost bins	0	0	3
<b>Total calls resolved at first point of contact</b>	<b>3,149</b>	<b>3,858</b>	<b>2,808</b>

\*includes chasing special collections

### *Summary of all calls*

	December 2009	January 2010*	February 2010
Total number of calls to the Council	4,755	6,265	4,935
Number of calls answered	4,620	6,124	4,871
% of calls answered	97	98	99
Number of calls transferred	1,471	2,266	2,063
% of calls transferred	32	37	42
% resolved at first point of contact	68	63	58

\* Level B Reception assisting with overflow calls during this month