

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Business and Commercial Services Board held on 19 February 2019

Present

Councillor Keast (Chairman)

Councillors Branson, Cresswell, Sceal and Scott

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Carpenter, Rennie and Weeks.

2 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items as:-

- (i) it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (ii) in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The report to be considered was exempt under Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial affairs or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

4 Challenge Session - Customer Services

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Customer Services, which outlined the service and governance structures, along with the relevant performance indicators, details of formal complaints received and observations on performance generally.

The Board learnt that good relationships existed between the Council and the shared service centre in Coventry. The importance of including the call centre staff in Council communications was highlighted, as this fostered a close working culture.

Since June 2018 the service centre had exceeded the target of answering 80% of calls within 40 seconds, with an average of 86.88% answered within this time. 57.70% of Council Tax and Benefits calls had been answered within 60 seconds against the target of 80%, however there had been improvements over the past six months with November and December 2018 realising 79.66% and 77.92% respectively.

Council Tax queries were often more complex, which was reflected in the average length of call of 6.25 minutes. This included 'wrap up time' for the customer service officer to perform any actions resulting from the call before answering the next. The call abandonment rate of 8.95% did not necessarily mean that the customer had hung up, as channel shifting may have meant that some customers had followed a voice prompt to enter an automated payment system, for example. The Board was advised that this part of the customer service centre had an average staff retention of 18 months, which was not uncommon in the industry.

Nine formal complaints had been made during April-December 2018, which officers felt reflected a good performance considering the thousands of calls, emails and face to face contacts during this period.

The Head of Customer Services agreed to follow up on the following actions:

- Obtain details for April and July 2018 to ascertain why the call volume had been so high during these months;
- Obtain data regarding the longest call times, such as why the calls had been so long and at what time of day that calls had been made;
- Investigate whether the 1m 50sec preamble at the beginning of each call could be shortened;
- Investigate the reasons behind abandoned calls to identify any trends;
- Cllr Cresswell to forward a specific incidence of a Councillor not being kept informed after raising a concern to allow the matter to be investigated.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 5.58 pm

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Chairman