



Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

Report of Councillor Philip Knowles
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Customer Service Update - Quarter 2 (2025/26)

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for Quarter 2 during 2025/26.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the report and invited to ask questions regarding its content;
2. Note the Customer Experience Strategy action plan and invited to ask questions regarding its content.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting communities
Effective council

Which wards are impacted?

All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are currently no direct budget implications associated with this report.
- 1.2 Any actions associated with the Customer Experience Strategy will be met from existing budgets or, where required, additional budgets will be requested.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 There are no significant legal or governance implication arising from this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to Connecting Communities and being an Effective Council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Customer Service Team and high contact service areas strives to deliver these priorities.
- 2.2 A customer service update quarter one (2025/26) report was presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. The report focused on the customer interactions during this quarter.
- 2.3 The Customer Experience Strategy was presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. The report focused on the introduction of the new Strategy and associated action plan.
- 2.4 The Customer Service Team handle customer interactions in various ways for 17 high contact service areas, as well as general public enquiries. This report provides an update regarding customer interactions for these service areas for Quarter 2 (2025/26).

Customer Interaction

- 2.5. **Appendix 1** shows the number of customer interactions so far during 2025/26, and comparison to Q2 2024/25. These interactions include all methods of contact.
- 2.6. In comparison to Q1 2025/26, all contact has increased slightly (1,415) with website contact increasing significantly by 155,621.
- 2.7. In comparison to Q2 2024/25, all contact has increased slightly (2,097) with website contact increasing significantly by 300,071.
- 2.8. The increase in website contact is as a result of increased use of online forms, online portals (such as Benefits and Council Tax) – with the portal seeing over 90,000 transactions since it was launched. In addition, the waste round review resulted in an increase in contact for waste services pages, particularly during September 2025.
- 2.9. The Customer Service Team and individual service areas continue to promote the portal. For Council Tax, this is the most efficient way to contact the team, with customers receiving updated Council Tax bills within 24 to 48 hours from point of contact.
- 2.10. It is important for the Council to provide a variety of methods of contact for its customers. It is appreciated one contact method may not be suitable for all. Therefore, the method for customer contact provided by South Kesteven will continue to include all methods as shown in appendix 1.

Call answering – 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025

- 2.11. During Q2 2025/26, 94% of calls were answered, with just 6% of calls being 'abandoned' to other service channels. This is an improvement from Q2 2024/25, where these figures were 81% and 19% respectively.
- 2.12. Call handling statistics continue to be produced and issued by the Performance and Change Improvement Lead on a monthly basis to the Council's Corporate Management Team and service areas. The information includes number of calls offered, answered, abandoned and average speed of answer.
- 2.13. Performance clinics with service areas are continuing on a monthly basis which enable both the Customer Service Team and service area to analyse call handling performance and for the service area to advise of changes in service activity and any upcoming activities which may impact on the number or nature of customer interactions.

Ability to contact the Council

- 2.14. Customer feedback via the Council's corporate feedback process is monitored with headline information being reported to Governance and Audit Committee. The feedback specifically in relation to this report is where the customer has indicated an issue regarding the "ability to contact the Council".
- 2.15. During Quarter 2 2025/26 there was a total of 345 feedbacks received, of which, only one had a 'root cause' identified as 'ability to contact the Council'.

Website – feedback and improvements

- 2.16. Each page on the Council's website has a 'was this page useful?' function. A customer can choose 'yes' or 'no' by clicking on the relevant 'happy or sad face' icon at the bottom of the page. In doing this, the customer is given the option to provide and submit their comments, along with their name and email address.
- 2.17. A report is produced each month by the Performance and Customer Improvement Lead. For the purpose of this report, the information provided is from April 2025 to September 2025.
- 2.18. During this period, there have been a total of 452 individual 'was this page useful' interactions and this is broken down as follows:

Was this page useful				
	Yes	No	Total	% Yes
Total interactions	119	333	452	29%

- 2.19. Customers are also able to provide comments regarding their feedback and can leave their contact details which enables officers to provide a response as to the actions taken. Of the 333 respondents which advised the page was not useful, 276 provided comments.
- 2.20. All comments are reviewed and actions taken where required. Of the 276 comments received, 33 (12%) resulted in actions being taken. The common areas for feedback and reasons for changes not being taken are:
 - Customer did not provide enough details for action to be taken
 - Information requested is already on the website
 - Customer had a service enquiry, not a comment on the page

2.21. Officers have analysed the feedback and actions taken since 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025 – these are detailed in **appendix 2**.

Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 – Action Plan

2.22. The Strategy was introduced and ensures all services and staff provide an effective and positive customer experience who are aware of and understand their responsibilities in fulfilling the Customer Charter, Service Standards, Priorities and Vision to a high level.

2.23. An action plan has been developed which will support the Strategy and its priorities – this is detailed in **appendix 3**. Those areas updated since the last committee are shown with comments and have been rated red (overdue), amber (due and updated) and green (complete).

2.24. The plan focusses on Year 1 (October 2025 to 31 March 2026) – which covers the 'Explore' activities. The activities for 2026/27 and beyond will move from Explore to Implement, with a new action plan being devised for this period. These activities will be appropriately linked to relevant Service Plans, staff appraisals and will detail financial implications of proposed actions.

2.25. The Customer Service Management Team will be responsible for the strategic direction of the action plan, collaborating with the Customer Experience Steering Group who will have oversight of the Strategy to enable effective co-ordination of delivery of the actions.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. These are included throughout the report and members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1. The recommendations are made to ensure Members are aware of, and are able to provide feedback regarding the level of Customer Service being provided and the progress being made towards the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy and its action plan.

5. Appendices

5.1 There are three appendices included in this report:

- Appendix 1: Customer Interactions
- Appendix 2: Website Feedback
- Appendix 3: Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 action plan