

North Somerset Council

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REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 9 OCTOBER 2018

SUBJECT OF REPORT: COUNCIL CONNECT UPDATE

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING:
SIMONE DAVEY, CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER**

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the panel consider and review the information offered regarding Council Connect.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

To provide an update on Council Connect following a presentation at a previous meeting.

2. POLICY

n/a

3. DETAILS

BACKGROUND

Council Connect has now been migrated to a new telephony platform. The reason for the move of platform was twofold: (1) to provide a more robust platform as there had been some outages with the previous one (2) to ensure that the NSC platform matches the Westminster Council platform. Westminster Council's contact centre is based in the Town Hall and are managed by Agilisys, by Robert Liddell. The aim is to investigate how the two contact centres can cross-skill and support each other, by providing additional resilience in the teams, to potentially increase capacity and decrease the number of calls which are not answered.

For many months, the contact centre has felt the significant impact of the issues with the waste contract, with average call volumes of around 560 per day, hitting a maximum of over 700. During this period, we made a decision not attempted to make any further changes to the system and to wait until the impact on the contact centre lessens.

CALL WAIT TIME FUNCTIONALITY

During the transfer to the new platform the call wait time functionality was removed. The new telephony platform offers enhanced call routing/prioritisation functionality and call wait time is not a default setting.

We understand that there is a preference amongst members for call wait time to be implemented. However, there is a consideration to be made as the new platform now allows us to add weighting to calls. For example, calls concerning Building Control have been prioritised as they bring in an income for the council. This means that the average wait time is complex to calculate as priority calls may come in whilst someone is waiting, which would impact the average wait time.

An alternative may be to implement functionality which tells someone that they are number x in the queue, but again, their place may change to their detriment if a priority call comes in.

We are investigating all issues above to determine what the best course of action is.

CALL BACK FUNCTIONALITY

Call back/voice mail functionality is now available on the new platform. We are working through the implications of turning it on. There is complexity around the line limiter and what we are aiming to achieve.

The line limiter allows for 10 calls to come through to Council Connect at any one time. Once the line limiter reaches its maximum, it advises the customer that all lines are busy. If we implement the call back option, this will only affect customers who are already in the queue. However, this “may” impact on the number of calls which can get through as callers opt for the call back rather than wait, which may reduce those being told all lines are busy. The flip side to this is that staff who are taking inbound calls will need to be re-directed to carry out out-bound calls, so this would impact on staff availability to handle in-bound calls.-

After much consideration we feel that we should trial it and measure the positive and negative impacts to determine whether this is an appropriate long term solution.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

To improve the experience, we also need to work harder on channel shift for those who wish to use online as a preference. We have recently started a campaign in the contact centre to incentivise agents to promote self-service and help customers get online. This goes hand in hand with improvements to the website and self-service so that processes are easy and don't require a call for assistance.

4. CONSULTATION

N/a

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

None

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

N/a

8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

N/a

9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/a

AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/a