

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Sustainability &amp; Innovation</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> July 2007</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>RBT – Performance Update</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>RBT</b>

**5. Summary**

The report presents the progress and performance of RBT for the period May 2007.

**6. Recommendations**

That the information in the report be noted

## 7. Proposals and Details

### Highlights

Highlights for the period have included:

- Welfare Rights celebrates 18 years of service
- All Contact Centre SLAs met for the third consecutive month
- IVR developments continue within the Contact Centre
- Online mileage & expense claims now available through Your**Self**

### 7.1. Service by Service Overview

#### 7.1.1. Customer Services / Public Access

- The Public Access programme is now included as a priority workstream within the contract re-negotiation.

As this re-negotiation takes place work continues in the following areas:

- E-Services for anonymous users
- Contact Centre and CRM Technology Project
- CRM Integration Projects

In relation to service performance it is pleasing to report that the Contact Centre SLA's were achieved for the third consecutive month. Achievement on the percentage of calls answered within 15 seconds and the percentage of calls not abandoned is primarily a result of an increase in staffing levels and a decrease in call volumes, the service continues to employ agency staff and use Customer Service Centre staff to fill vacancies which require RMBC backfill. The open advert remains on the intranet with no new interest from prospective candidates.

In advance of next month's report it is worth noting that as of 4th June 2007 two workstations with access to Contact Central will be deployed in a self-contained area within the Civic Customer Services Centre. This allows 2 members of staff from the CSC to support the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre Service from this location.

Intermittent problems with Contact Central continue to be an issue; however the decoupling of Contact Central from Siebel in order to improve system performance is now due to take place in mid June 2007.

The expansion of the Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) across Contact Centre services continues with the following developments for May 2007:

- With effect from Monday 21st May 2007 three IVR options have been implemented into the Streetpride Service. Customers will also listen to several environmental advertisements which are played whilst they are waiting for their call to be answered.
- With effect from Tuesday 29th May 2007 an additional IVR option has been implemented into the Revenues and Benefits Service. This additional selection gives the customer the option to be transferred to the automated payment line and avoids them having to wait for a call operator to become available.

The Registrars Service continues to encounter major problems with the RON system and the GRO are working hard to find a solution. However we are one of a small number of Register Offices continuing to use the RON system after the problems that occurred after the national 'go-live'. The GRO continue to work with its partners to solve the problems and enable the re-introduction of the system across the whole country. It is noted that we have a full manual contingency plan in place which has been put into operation on two occasions when the system failed (a General Register Office issue) and it worked successfully.

The Nationality Checking at Swinton continues to be a popular service with 56 applications processed during May. The service which is run on a cost recovery basis as stipulated by the Home Office commenced on the 02.04.07 (when the service started at Swinton CSC) and up to and including the 22.06.07 a total of 140 applications have been checked. In terms of gross income fees to the value of £4385,00 have been received with deductions for postage of £310.71. In terms of net income the value is £4,074.29

Finally, on 22 May 2007 the Welfare Rights Service held an 18th year celebration at the Town Hall attended by the Mayor, Council Leader, RBT Chief Executive and 45 guests. Staff from the service also appeared on Radio Sheffield and Rother FM. Additionally Giles Charter, a Welfare Rights Officer, appeared on Radio Sheffield as part of an ongoing "claim it" programme on 21 May 2007.

### **7.1.2. HR and Payroll**

Within the HR Service, to further improve the recruitment process for the client, training is ongoing to change the way in which recruitment is managed within the Service Centre. In future Recruitment co-ordinators will be responsible for individual campaigns and will see them through from advertisement stage to contract issue giving customers one point of contact for the whole campaign.

Within the Payroll Service it is worth reporting that a number of year end tasks and submissions have been completed ahead of schedule. This includes the following:

- The Teacher's Pension TR17 return was forwarded to KPMG Auditors on 17 May 2007. (Deadline for submission was 30 June 2007)
- P60s were issued to all employees on 11 May 2007 (Deadline for issue was 31 May 2007).
- Mileage Return and P11Ds were issued 11 May 2007 (Deadline for issue was 6 July 2007)
- SYPA Fund Credit Report was delivered on 14 May 2007 (Deadline for submission was 31 May 2007).

Year end work yet to be completed includes the Teachers Pension Annual Service Return (Deadline 31 August 2007). Work on this item continues; additional development is required by our software supplier Northgate before we can complete this submission.

With regards to SLA performance it is pleasing to report that all contractual measures were achieved in May. The payroll accuracy SLA (HR03) was achieved with only 137 errors reported out of 28,719 payslips, a performance of 99.52% against the contractual target of 99.50%. The client is due to undertake a further review/audit to validate the levels of accuracy.

In relation to SLA performance Performance on SLA HR17 (percentage of enquiries resolved by front-line HR advisors over the telephone where the enquiry is not capable of being resolved through employee self-service including the intranet) is reported at 76.17% against the agreed temporary threshold target of 70%. Because of the high volumes of calls received, callers are continuing to have difficulty getting through to the 4141/4242 helplines. However, the introduction of Call Queuing now proposed to be in place for the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007 will give the Customer Services Team the intelligence by way of statistics to make further improvements by aligning the resource available to peaks and trends. However it is worth emphasising the availability of alternative methods of contacting the service, such as the intranet and email, which are available to managers.

Development of the self-serve portal, **YourSelf**, continues with the launch of online mileage and expense claims. From 1 June 2007, employees with intranet access will no longer be required to complete manual mileage and expense claim books. Instead, employees will be able to log on to **YourSelf** to submit claims. This will make the process of claiming quicker and easier.

### 7.1.3. ICT

Within ICT staff behind the scenes continue to maintain the ICT infrastructure and technology which deserves some recognition in terms of the continued reliability of our networks/communication and support. It is an area which in

this day and age we take for granted however has become an essential item of our day to day working life.

The service is currently redeveloping it's own intranet pages to simply access for employees and build a logical interface to aid the retrieval of information, the filling in of forms and self service. The development is to be split into two main phases;

- Launch of the new style pages with a provision for employees to report incidents via a self service facility.
- Redevelopment of all current word templates into online 'web forms' that will feed directly into Assyst.

It is intended that a demonstration of the draft pages and functionality will be shared with the ICT client in the next 2/3 weeks.

In relation to the performance against the SLA's this service continues to maintain its 100% achievement with the majority of the new SLA targets now being fully measured and all targets continuing to be achieved. The availability measures are now measured across over 600 devices spread through the offices in the borough on a 24/7 basis. Work is still ongoing within the agreed timescales to monitor/baseline the remaining SLA's.

#### **7.1.4. Procurement**

The Procurement Card pilot in EDS is now complete and has been deemed as a success. The cards were live in May with a manual reconciliation process in place.

The remaining Procurement Card supplier in scope for transformation is the master vendor agreement for agency staff. Process design starts early June, with a workshop for RMBC Finance to agree the CIS implications now set for mid-June. A post implementation review is now scheduled in for week commencing 2nd July.

With regards to performance around the SLAs it is pleasing to report that all measures are confirmed as above target for May. A new target or PR01 has now been agreed with the Client, set at 88.72%.

BVPI8 performance (payment of invoices within 30 days) is reported as 95% for May.

#### **7.1.5. Revenues & Benefits**

Developments in e-benefits continue with 'Self serve', the benefits high level eligibility calculator, going 'live' on the RMBC website from 5th June 2007 for

both customers and staff to use. Digital signature software has now been installed at Swinton CSC with staff training scheduled for 20th June 2007 and following this, e-Benefits will be in use throughout Swinton CSC.

A demonstration was given to a range of 2010 staff who are now keen to implement e-benefits across the ALMO and have supplied a list of staff requiring training. This will be progressed when the Revenues and Benefits and Public Access Service Development Teams have been merged and the new Service and Development Manager has been appointed.

A site visit was hosted for Islington LBC to view the e-benefits system and a further visit is scheduled to be hosted for Bute and Argyle in June 2007.

Performance across all SLAs is progressing on target with the exception of Council Tax collection. Collection levels have slightly reduced in comparison with the same time last year. At the end of May 19.79% had been collected compared with 20.0% as at the end of May 2006.

Work continues within the service towards achieving the aims of the Council Tax Collection action plan with 11 out of 22 actions fully implemented and work is progressing on the further 11. Some of the highlights are as follows;

- 12,428 reminders have been issued this year compared to 11,494 at the same time last year; this is an increase of nearly 10%.
- 2866 tax payers have already been summonsed for non payment of council tax this year compared with 2404 at the same time last year; this is an increase of nearly 20%.
- The majority of special arrangements must now be paid in full within the financial year and customers are warned that they will progress directly to the next recovery stage if they do not stick to the terms of their arrangement.
- An article has been submitted for the July edition of Rotherham Matters publicising Rotherham's stringent recovery approach to non payment of council tax.
- The number of direct debit payers has risen to 58,903 which using the Audit Commission calculation recommendations means that 64.21% of taxpayers now pay by this method

However, as reported last month, this year's collection levels are slightly reduced as a consequence of the reduced number of customers prepaying council tax at the beginning of the financial year, instead these payments will be recouped throughout the course of the financial year. Taking May 2007 in isolation, 9.4% of the total net liability was collected which is exactly the same as May 2006 i.e. 9.4% collected.

In relation to Council tax Collection progress and based upon the month by month comparison with last year, if we were to exclude anything which has been paid prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 and it is assumed that the citizens whom paid their council tax in full at the beginning of April are paying on time we are

slightly ahead of last financial year. To exclude these payments then the amount collected to the end of May for 2007 was 18.96% in comparison with 18.93% in the same time frame last year.

We are also increasing our debt recovery activity and are issuing more reminders and summonses - Reminders issued in April/May 2006 accounted to 11,494, however in April/May 2007 reminders issued by the service was 13,040, an increase of 13%. Magistrates Court Summonses in April/May 2006/07 issued were 2,404, and in comparison April/May 2007 we issued 2,866, an increase of 19%.

Even more significant is the number of Liability Orders we have obtained at Magistrates Court, comparing the same periods for this and last year the volumes are 1,536 and 844 respectively, which is an increase this year of 82%. Liability Orders give us the power to take stronger recovery action such as attachments to earnings/benefits but also some of the areas covered in the council tax action plan involving the greater use of bailiffs and insolvency proceedings.

The above statistics signifies the increased volumes arising from speeding up recovery and reducing the time before debt recovery action is triggered, and it is hoped that this will result in an upward trend for council tax collection.

The CPA 2007 self assessment is progressing on target. All performance measures have now been assessed with an overall rating of 4\* being achieved. Self assessment against the performance enablers is ongoing, however, all enablers achieved in 2006 are forecast to be achieved in 2007 with a further 3 enablers being achieved that were previously scored as 'no'.

Finally it is reported that a submission has been made to the annual IRRV Performance Awards in the category of 'Best Use of Technology' and IRRV will commence shortlisting at the end of June 2007.

## **7.2. Progress against Corporate Initiatives**

### **7.2.1. Equalities & Diversity**

Mandatory roll-out of the Marshall's e-learning package has gone well. 450 of 605 employees have completed the course. Reporting has begun to ensure those that have not completed it, do so before 15th June.

The Equalities Steering group is on target to complete the Level 4 portfolio in time for July's deadline. A renewed Equality impact Assessment schedule is to be drawn up.

### **7.2.2. Investors in People**

RBT Interviews have commenced with the Profiling of 4 indicators. High level RBT managers are being interviewed in June. A management skills audit is in the planning stages.

### **7.2.3. Consultation/Complaints**

#### **Consultation**

The RBT employee opinion survey is still on-going, and scheduled to draw to a close at the end of June 07. Once this has been completed the feedback will provide a useful insight into employee satisfaction and will be associated with the previous feedback that was obtained through the RBT Consultation Steering group.

On the 4th June the electronic and hardcopy customer satisfaction surveys went live for the ICT Print Survey. This will run for a period of 4 weeks following which the feedback will be analysed and evaluated to make sure that it is providing meaningful feedback about the service the Print studio provide. In addition to this the Client is due to pilot the Rotherham Connect customer satisfaction survey in June at the Civic Customer Service Centre, in order to evaluate that the questions are easily understood, and will provide feedback on how customers perceive the service.

#### **Complaints**

The corporate system went live on the 4th June without any major issues. The first incident logged at the central point, which is administered by RBT, related to waste collection and upon registry was automatically routed to EDS. Further work is scheduled on the system in order to launch a new module to allow for the automatic creation of complaint correspondence - thereby saving officer time and allowing them to focus on the complaint investigation.

The RBT 2006 - 07 complaint statistics highlighted that we only held equality monitoring information for 9% of stage 1 complainants. This is too small a sample to be able to inform service provision and to help address this RBT will implement the corporate policy of sending a questionnaire to customers who have complained via channels other than the complaint form - for example by telephone or letter. This should allow RBT to establish a complainant profile, and also help identify if this is representative of the wider community.

## **8. Finance**

The contract with RBT includes a service-credit arrangement, the effect of which is that whenever any SLA target is not achieved, a calculation based on the amount by which the target was missed and a number of other factors, results in a decrease in the amount of service charge payable. In other words, there is a financial penalty for RBT as a direct consequence of its



underperformance. A total of £23K has been deducted from the service charge to date, and further amounts disputed by RBT are under discussion.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

If RBT is unable to achieve the SLA targets in the contract, in particular where these are also BVPIs or other statutory PIs, alongside the importance of some of the services delivered by RBT (Revenues and Benefits, Procurement Service), this may impact on the council's CPA rating. There may also be a negative effect on the council's reputation and the perception of the RBT joint venture. Where there is underperformance, particularly where this is persistent or related to statutory PIs, the client team will work with RBT to develop action plans to redress the situation.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The RBT contract exists to modernise council services to enable the delivery of the council's priorities. RBT's performance will impact on the CPA score and a number of service and corporate inspections. RBT has responsibility for delivering services including a number of BVPIs and LPI's

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

None

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