

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Friday 27th January 2023



Subject: Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

Report of: Councillor Sir Albert Bore
Chair Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the last report of 9th December on the actions of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.
- 1.2 The programme has delivered a number of customer benefits in year one including the creation of an easy-read Customer Service Strategy, a co-created Customer Charter, introduced a Citizen Panel, the refresh and cleansing of approximately 800 web pages to date; and end to end discovery of 4 high volume, high priority service areas for the Council providing a set of recommended opportunities for services to improve the customer experience and increase customer satisfaction.

2. Recommendations

Co-ordinating O&S Committee:

- 2.1. Notes that the Task & Finish Group has completed its review of the recommendations submitted to service leads for Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Highways.
- 2.2. Agrees that the Task & Finish Group should take further action to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented.

- 2.3. Supports the further work of the Task & Finish Group to scrutinise how senior managers are responding to feedback from the Customer Standards Workshops to embed the Customer Service Strategy.

3. Update on Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

- 3.1. Appendix A provides the outcomes of all Task & Finish Group meetings with the service area sponsor/leads for improving the customer experience and details the recommended opportunities for improvement.
- 3.2. Feedback was previously submitted to the committee (9 December 2022) on Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs and Waste Management.

3.3. Highway Repairs

- 3.3.1. Task & Finish Group held on 12th December 2022 with the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth, Head of Highways PFI Procurement, Highways & Infrastructure, and Programme Manager, and Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Product Owner and Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, a status update provided and clarified with further comments and recommendations from OSC taken onboard by the service representatives.
- 3.3.2. It was accepted that current systems are not integrated as well as they should be and need to be joined up and the quality of responses vastly improved. However it was generally acknowledged that the procurement of the new system, currently in flight, has the potential to address many of the pain points identified and provide a common approach and consistency across services such as Housing Repairs, for example.
- 3.3.3. The procurement of the new technical solution also has the potential to address a number of the recommendations, such as consolidation of complaints - enabling the identification of duplicate complaints generated from multiple sources; and automation of the reporting process – providing customers to easily report issues on the go.
- 3.3.4. OSC noted it was positive that customer engagement takes place within the service but more needs to be done. The services assured the group the requirement was detailed in the new PFI contract for contractors to work in alignment and ensure focus groups are reflective and representative. This will be further strengthened by the work around public participation and citizen engagement by Strategic Equality Partnership and the new strategy developed as a result.
- 3.3.5. The correct use of process and systems established for Member enquiries/complaints was discussed and although the use of forms was muted due to the time it takes to complete them, in fact 85% of queries come through the corporate complaints route with exception of critical cases which go direct to the relevant service. However the majority are Member enquiries rather than complaints and it was agreed clarification of an improved process to better deal

with member requests needs to be explored which will also relieve the impact on the complaints team.

- 3.3.6. The above 3.3.5 is exacerbated by two teams in Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints. As a Digital and Customer Service activity, OSC commented this required one team to own it and then DCS to close task 3.3.6 down.
- 3.3.7. There was a consensus for a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise activities within the service, including the ability for Members to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge. Preventative action (fencing, bollards, etc) may be an option and there is funding available to support this type of activity, but resources are limited. Use of a Transportation capital budget, for rare instances Members identify as a priority, requires further exploration.
- 3.3.8. OSC acknowledged the rejection of Clean Air Zone (CAZ) recommendation as this currently sits with two different directorates (Highways for non-payment of PCNs and CAZ team for communications and messaging about the CAZ charge and how to pay) further work needs to be undertaken to resolve this.

4. Any Finance Implications

- 4.1. The original Enhanced Business Case sought and approved total funding of £1.7m for Year 1 in December 2021. The Customer Service resource profile forecasts budget spend at the identified £ 1.7m costs allocated to the programme in final qtr. of 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 4.2. The savings that are currently set out in the MTFP increase by £600k in 2023/2024, phase 2 will help to deliver these and also identify future potential savings of over the next 2 years.
- 4.3. There are no procurement implications or financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

5. Any Legal Implications

- 5.1. The Council is under a duty under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- 5.2. The City Council will carry out this work under the General Powers of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

6. Any Equalities Implications

- 6.1. Overall, implementation of the Customer Service Strategy and therefore the activities of the Task and Finish Group may impact a number of the nine protected

characteristics (specifically Age, Disability and Race) with the channel shift to self-serve; however the vision of the Strategy is clear and will endeavour to ensure a high quality, consistent and efficient approach to the customer journey across all channels by ensuring our customers access the right information at the right time and content is accurate and up to date regardless of the channel.

7. Appendices

7.1. A: Status overview of the Customer Service Programme recommendations

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES
RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

| Code | Insight | Recommendation detail | Initial rating | Delivery Accountability |
|------|--|---|----------------|---|
| A | Citizens find the process of laying their loved one to rest complicated and confusing, at an already difficult time. There is a lack of clarity over what choices a family has, who does what and when. Relatives call sites as they don't trust the accuracy of the information on the website, but note our website page view analysis does demonstrate that citizens are visiting the BCC web site pages for the bereavement service guidance and information on the service offerings. | Create clear guidance taking relatives through each step in the process and their options, detailing who is involved and who is responsible for what, approximate timelines and costs (including BCC service fees and what is/not included), documentation requirements, what to expect and what to do if these expectations are not met. Consider including recommended suppliers. This guidance should start from the point of death and include registering a death. It should include the process if relatives are not using a funeral director. Conduct an audit of the current guidance available online and understand how we can tailor/expand this. This guidance should be available both online and in paper format. Distribute to partners to reach customers as soon as they need that information. Ensure it is available in a range of formats and languages. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : clear online guidance developed and published: what to do after someone dies, offline guidance is awaiting sign off and coroners review. Amendments to offline guide were made to reflect the online guide; further bereavement changes required to make clear that only next of kin/one nominated lead family member to try and reduce the volume of duplicate enquiries. Coroners web content to be reviewed inline with existing guide/forum for Bereavement Officers. Registers medical examiner system (informing bereaved when form issued and a medical examiner will be involved) resulting in a further change to the documentation being required - target date Mar/Apr tbc which will impact all services. Hold back until April - validate to prior to print.</i> | Medium | Programme |
| B | Wildlife can have a negative impact on grave sites, which can be distressing for the family. | Communicate with relatives that this can be an issue and recommend particular plants and flowers that wildlife will not disturb (e.g. deer and rabbit resistant herbaceous plants) <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Wildlife is an on-going issue that is being managed by the service - adding information to interpretation boards and signage with QR codes; community meeting in Yardley Chapel to involve local Cllrs to educate public, Badger ecologist to attend in the next couple of weeks. Online content around types of wildlife and impact on the sites - Content Manager to pick up requirements with Activities Manager and capture positive aspects of the wildlife (e.g. Bham SpringWatch Trailcams / webcams).</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing with support from programme |
| C | Some grave sites are not well maintained over time. | Communicate with relatives their responsibility of maintaining a grave, including the rules/requirements around plastic flowers. Recommend ways of establishing a low maintenance grave and the grave maintenance service offering. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : work inflight to articulate clear guidelines for people, eg; plastic fading flowers, look at signage in the graveyards etc. Activities Manager reviewed signage at all sites to prioritise replacements and noticeboard - website needs to be aligned, Content Manager to work with Activities Manager - potential link to memorial safety (resource intensive as too many graves unattended); not actively promoting grave maintenance service due to resource capacity - previously hasn't generated substantial income.</i> | Low | Service: work started/ongoing with support from programme |
| D | Documentation is often paper based and time consuming to manage for bereavement staff and partners. There is often duplication of forms, missing information and the need to scan in documents or manually input details. | Eliminate as much of the physical paperwork as possible by ensuring the new bereavement system has capability to upload, share and view documentation for all partners, as well as input data via forms directly and make use of digital signatures. Ensure this is possible for all types of funerals. Offer support to those partners that need it to adopt new system. Note: Can only build online forms for non-statutory docs, all statutory docs need to remain on paper with the new system having ability to upload a scanned version / attachment to support digital record. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : we need to chase the timeline for this (scanning) and circulate the timeline. Soft market testing underway and follow with an analysis of options for new system; RPA - service “put on the list” of potential developments that could offer a saving but not yet prioritised. Eliminated a lot of paperwork printing previously required unless a physical copy required but manual entry still being done. Digitisation of Bereavement forms inflight (not necessarily a wet signature but a true copy of signature that complies with the e-signature requirements - need to be validated) Links to Register Office digitisation - Private Beta and then Public Beta inflight before wider roll out for full replacement of Registration Online (RON) and NHS Digital (EMCD element - no physical medical certificates required no scanning/printing) which is out of scope for programme.</i> | High | Programme |
| E | Burials are complex and have many variations, so bookings need to be taken via phone currently. This is time consuming for bereavement staff and funeral directors, and limits when bookings can be made. | Review the process for booking burials (including statutory and non-statutory requirements) to understand how we could simplify the service. Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to take bookings for burials online. There is an opportunity to learn from Solihull Council about their system that allows for this. <i>Status Update 24-No v: Process for booking burials, looking at putting this all online. Research with Solihull MBC to review their system for burials (parameters that control bookings), links to BACAS replacement and potential RPA options and ensure scope to include faith/religious burials can be accommodated. Requires support from the programme for soft market testing and maybe some support for implementation.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing with support from programme |
| F | In some cultures back filling graves (i.e. by hand) after the burial is a tradition and a sign of respect. Often a back fill is a lengthy process, and requires a staff member to stay on site at the grave whilst this is being done. Currently relatives can only choose to back fill themselves or have a manual fill using a digger, and are not always aware that they can change their minds part way through. | Offer a partial back fill/ partial manual fill option for relatives, so they can honour their loved ones in this way, but relieve the burden of time spent by the staff overseeing the process. Consider different charging options to accommodate these traditions. Ensure relatives are aware of what their choice entails before the funeral (e.g. the average time it takes for 2 people to fill an adult grave). <i>Status Update 24-Nov : the service is trying to find a scheme that works, however there is also an impact on staffing and time required etc. Agreed in principle as already offer this as a service but resourcing it will be an issue until recruitment completed; will need to be reviewed once resources in place. Impact on scheduling of other funerals if partial backfill is required and the machines are requested (H&S and timing issues). Where resources are available this service will be available upon request.</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |

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| G | Some funerals run over time, which has a knock on impact for later bookings and for staff. | Communicate to citizens the overrun charge and ensure they are aware of where responsibility for this penalty lies (i.e. funeral directors) <i>Status Update 24-Nov: service need to be better on the comms but down to funeral directors to manage these situations. All Funeral Directors are advised when an additional charge for the overrunning of the funeral is being applied, which has been in place for many years.</i> | Medium | Rejected |
| H | Some burials are well attended by mourners. This can mean that graves already in use in the vicinity are stood on by mourners. This is viewed as disrespectful by some. | Clearly demarcate where graves are, create narrow paths between rows of graves to help show where citizens should stand. Ask ministers to request that mourners are mindful of where they are standing at the start of graveside ceremonies. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: Need a system that keeps funeral directors updated, does the current functionality have scope to be improved? assistance from the programme required. Graves that are being opened are demarcated by boarding and matting around the grave. Traditional type graves, with kerb sets, are demarcated when a memorial is placed. Grave owners are permitted to lay slabs between the graves if they wish. It is not feasible to demarcate a lawn type section without a significant increase in grounds maintenance costs due to the obstacles created by pathways preventing the ride on mowers from cutting the lawns. Already inflight with ministers, however paths not possible in older cemeteries but have already been incorporated in newly designed cemeteries.</i> | Low | Service: work started/ongoing |
| I | The current system is unable to notify funeral directors of updates and changes to their bookings. | Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to keep funeral directors updated without having to make manual checks on the system. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: as rows - E, H, J & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system. FDs will have access to own bookings</i> | High | Informed new solution spec |
| J | The current system has no high-level view of all bookings a particular funeral director has with BCC. Currently in order to get this view, the funeral director needs to click through to 'cancel' all bookings. | Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to provide funeral directors with a view of all current bookings with the council. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system. FDs will have access to own bookings</i> | High | Informed new solution spec |
| K | The process for delivering a burial or cremation differs across BCC's bereavement sites. This creates additional confusion for funeral directors and staff that may work across multiple sites. | Consider which sites are most streamlined and effective. Consider how to standardise the process across all sites based on best practice. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: there are differences across sites, standardised model but different areas doing different things, we should have common processes. The service has merged teams and are adopting a more standardised and streamlined approach. There will always be differences as not every site offers that same services as another. O&S concerned about this being rejected.</i> | Low | Rejected |
| L | Some funeral directors give incorrect information to citizens about BCC's availability to conduct funerals. | Host an online view of ceremony availability across all sites so citizens are able to book the slot that works best for them. Ensure this view reflects when sites are expected to be temporarily closed down due to short staffing, due to annual leave for example. Ideally this would be additional functionality as part of the new bereavement system. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system for online and digitisation, better guidance.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| M | The process of reassigning ownership of a grave is complicated, lengthy, and requires a lot of time from staff to support customers through this process. Often customers lose copies of deeds. | Review the current process of reassigning grave ownership. Consider how to better inform citizens about the process and what is needed at each stage - this could be written guidance, or something more interactive like a video. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: Process has been streamlined and information will be developed to provide more details relating to the process on the BCC website as part of the work currently being carried out by the web content team and Bereavement Services.</i> | Low | Informed new solution spec |
| N | There is some disconnection between the various bodies that need to be made aware of a death, both within BCC and across the system. This results in citizens having to tell multiple agencies that someone has died and repeat information to different parts of the same organisation. | Explore how we can better join up and share information internally between Bereavement and Registrars. Consider the 'Tell us once' scheme and how we can bolster existing information, advice and guidance. Establish an open dialogue between other partners across the system (e.g. coroner, funeral directors etc) to explore opportunities to become more joined up. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: corporate 'Tell us once' function, the service is also in the process of appointing a HOS for both Bereavement and Registrars which will join the process up better. Some information may not be available to share due to legislative restrictions so need to review the use of TUO.</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |
| O | The process of applying for a permit for a headstone is lengthy and time consuming for bereavement staff, stone masons and relatives. | Review the current process and timelines of putting a headstone on a grave and how requests are currently prioritised. Provide access to the new bereavement system for stone masons and use that portal for all documentation. Provide guidance on the process and timelines to relatives. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: Process and timelines have improved since new recruits have started within the service. Further improvements will include considering an automated checking process and improved information on website as part of the work being carried out with the web content team and Bereavement Services. Customers need to know what to deal with, what to do and when - support users through the process with simple guidance.</i> | High | Service: work ongoing with support from programme |
| P | Stone masons are often posted invoices from BCC for each individual permit, which creates a lot of manual paperwork for both parties. | Explore the possibility of sending invoices to stone masons via BCC's current finance system or using the new finance system for this. Investigate if an integration can be added between the current / new finance system and the new Bereavement system to output the invoice. <i>Status Update 24-Nov: stone mason invoices, ensuring the Oracle system is working for the service, specification required for Oracle. There is no integration for this at present, the service will require IT support. However, invoices to monumental masons are being raised manually via the Oracle finance system - not a simple task to resolve. O&S - should not be rejected.</i> | Medium | Rejected |

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| Q | Some sites are confusing to get around, for example finding appropriate parking and the right location for ceremonies. Some locations have names that are similar to other local sites, meaning citizens go to the wrong site. All of this adds to the stress on the day of a funeral. | Consider how to make sites easier to navigate around, including signage and site maps. Consider how we could name sites in a way that removes confusion for visitors. Consider including all site information on the BCC service web site pages and new system. Could it be included as part of the booking confirmation for funeral directors that they could send on to relatives, or could relatives view this information on the system. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed that website is useful but signage should be better, so reviewing all signage across sites and also including better information for users on the website as part of the review that is currently taking place by the web content team and Bereavement Services. Dependency of the new bereavement system for some website changes - some information already available, but may require payment for customers and research has indicated that this is not liked.</i> | Low | Informed new solution spec |
| R | The service generally operates during core hours (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm). Sutton New Hall does operate seven days a week. In some cases, partners need to contact Bereavement services outside of these hours, but are unable to (e.g. Muslim burials over the weekend in other areas of the city). | Where there is appropriate lighting, services could be conducted into the early evening in the winter. Consider if there is demand to establish an out of hours process to enable Muslim burials to proceed at pace across the whole of Birmingham, for example could we offer an out of hours service for Muslim burials that cannot wait at a premium charge? <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Sutton New Rd open until 7pm, service is investigating if there is demand for the others to be open late. Looking to visit Bradford. The service already provides a very successful out of hours emergency burial service at Sutton New Hall Cemetery. Floodlighting has also been introduced to enable later burials up to 6pm through the darker winter months, which has been welcomed by the communities that utilise the later burial times. When Kings Norton Cemetery extension is developed this will increase the options and a similar approach may be adopted at that site too. The telephone service operates every day except Christmas day to accept short notice bookings both during the week and at weekends.</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |
| S | The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the local staffing issue. Some of the staff working in the service long term are agency staff, which carries a higher cost than permanent staff. | Consider how we could bring some of the long-term agency staff into the service as permanent members of staff, reducing costs and the negative impact of short notice periods on the service. Consider how to make the service (and wider council) attractive as a career path. Update and improve guidance documentation for new staff, ensure staff have online access to remain connected to their colleagues across sites. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : staffing is currently challenging and looking to backfill vacancies, currently 8 vacancies. Three office staff and three cemetery operatives have been, or are in the process of being, recruited. Shortlisting for more cemetery operatives interviews is currently taking place and there has been an increased interest in the posts. If the required amount of new starters are not identified then the post will be readvertised for a third time. There are another four vacancies that have occurred since the November update.</i> | Medium | Service: work already ongoing |
| T | There are a number of phone numbers and email addresses that the service must manage | Move to one main service contact number and mailbox. There is an opportunity in the Customer Services Programme for this service to use the corporate contact centre to help log, triage, track and report all enquires received, in one place. This would help to reduce the volume of enquiries the Bereavement service receive via the triage process, leveraging best practice technologies for voice, IVR, routing of calls & omni handling of non-voice contacts like email, chat, social media all managed via a single process & technology. This would support the single phone number/email strategy. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed - work started/ongoing - need to understand the service from data collection, and if remain or fully transition the service to the Contact Centre. Activity inflight inc. Automation; digitisation of forms followed by RPA in the subsequent 6/8 months; and analysis of one email inbox and use of Omni channel.</i> | High | Programme |
| U | No key performance indicators available | Identify key service operational and financial KPIs so that the service can get an overview of how the service is performing on a regular basis. Consider using power BI to report from BACAS data to create visual, dynamic dashboards. The dashboards can also be used to setup service KPIs. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed - as row T above, work already completed. Service is now operating using one telephone number and one e-mail address. Still using Outlook and not omni-mail, so some work remains outstanding for the IT to be developed by the team to support the service.</i> | High | Programme |
| V | Citizens make general enquires about the condition of cemeteries and ask for help in completing deed replacements and transfers. Some of these calls can take a long time and can result in repeated calls from the same citizens. | Look at ways to promote the creation of Cemetery Friends groups to help provide general information and news relating to local cemeteries. Work with existing Friends groups to spread awareness including the benefits of having a Friends group can make by raising funds or applying for government funding to improve the condition of cemeteries. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed - work already ongoing - Bereavement Services Activities Manager working with numerous volunteer groups to organise activities across cemeteries. Since working with the service in July, a number of attempts have been made to gain interest in developing a Friends group at Handsworth Cemetery, but the interest has been low to date, so will keep trying. There is more interest in the ad-hoc volunteer task groups for litter picks etc.</i> | Low | Service: work already inflight |
| W | User feedback is not available – this was suspended during the pandemic to enable the service to prioritise core services (funerals and memorials). | Restart capturing customer feedback in both online and offline formats. There is an opportunity to work with the Customer Service Programme to repurpose the corporate solution for customer satisfaction to log, monitor, review and report. Signposting to service feedback, could also be added to the existing service web pages and form part of a service request in the new Bereavement system. This will ensure we have a consistent measure of satisfaction and will allow us to benchmark/measure at intervals of the end-to-end journey. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed - help required from the programme on what the service can do - need to scope activity and identify points at which customer gives feedback end2end and build in satisfaction form based on corporate model. Questionnaire under review, customer complaints through corporate system being monitored. Customer contact form available on website to enable service users to make request for assistance directly to the service as an alternative to phoning.</i> | High | Programme |
| X | The complaints data shows the most common root cause problems to be: 'Not the quality or standard expected 'Failure to deliver a service 'Disagree with policy or procedure' | Regularly review the complaints data to identify repeat complaints and common trends. Work with the complaints leads to see how they can be avoided through service improvement plans. <i>Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed - work started/ongoing. The service area has no access to complaint data. From experience of responding to individual complaints, the majority seem to relate to infrastructure and presentation of sites, predominately due to a lack of investment and resources. Programme supporting the service with obtaining raw data and providing a summary report to inform the service's action plan.</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |

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| Y | <p>The complaints data shows the response target for stage 1 citizen complaints was 73% in 2019, 69% in 2020 and 41% in 2021. This shows a gradual decline in responses provided to citizens within 14 working days and could be attributed to the level of demand experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. It could also be down to the complaint leads prioritising waste management complaints.</p> | <p>Monitor the dates between complaints being submitted and the bereavement team receiving notification by the complaint leads to ensure there are no internal delays. This will ensure the team have enough time to investigate complaints and provide a response within the set number of working days. Request regular reports from the complaint leads to check for the team is improving their stage 1 response times.</p> <p><i>Status Update 24-Nov: Agreed - work started/ongoing using root cause analysis to improve, complaint volumes very low. All complaints are to be sent to Bereavement.Services@birmingham.gov.uk and not to individual officers to remove the risk of them not being picked up when the person is away from the office.</i></p> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |
| Z | <p>Additional income generation opportunities</p> | <p>Review fees of core services to understand where the service makes the most revenue, to understand how the service can maximise income</p> <p><i>Status Update 24-Nov: Agreed - work already ongoing to review income generation opportunities. There is a review of fees, charges and usage conducted with Finance when reviewing fees and charges each year - completed November 2022.</i></p> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |
| | | <p>Review possible package options to encourage relatives to buy additional services, e.g. maintenance or borders for graves</p> <p><i>Status Update 24-Nov: subject to site rules. An increase in resources will be needed through the current recruitment processes ahead of any new packages being considered. A grave maintenance scheme was introduced many years ago but has not been popular and is very resource intensive. This scheme was suspended during the pandemic and has not been reintroduced due to lack of resources.</i></p> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| | | <p>Offer longer lease lengths or renewal options for grave leases to generate additional income</p> <p><i>Status Update 24-Nov: as row-Z above. The option to extend a lease from 75 years up to 99 years has been available for a number of years but there has been very limited demand for this. The wording on the fees and charges document is: Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB). NB. An extended lease of 99 years is available upon request - POA</i></p> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |

HOUSING REPAIRS
RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

| Code | Insight | Recommendation | Initial Rating | Delivery Accountability |
|------|---|--|----------------|---|
| 19 | Customers find it difficult to explain what the issue is online. They are unsure if their issue qualifies as an emergency or not, so often they find it easier to ring up and speak to someone. Staff find that some customers believe everything is urgent, meaning there is a gap in expectations and a lack of common understanding. | <p>Review the BRUM account reporting process and content to understand how we might clearly communicate the different levels of severity of repairs. Make it easier for customers to tell us what the issue is, improve triaging and reduce the need to ring. Test these changes with users and iterate based on feedback. BCC might should explore implementing a simple decision tree, diagnostic tool for customers to use.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov: new functionality available enabling customers to report, diagnose and track a repair, end2end view of the repair request and timelines. Target go-live Mar23 for online capability and automation. Link to Rows 20 & 22</i></p> | Medium | Programme |
| 20 | Customers believe that BCC aren't proactively maintaining housing stock due to a lack of funding, which causes things to become worse over time, resulting in more expensive repairs. Sometimes the wrong people are sent to do the repairs work. Customers experience varying standards of quality of repair, some of which is poor. This results in the need for repeated contact about the same issue. | <p>Improved triaging will help ensuring the right tradesperson is sent to a job. Service level agreements detail the agreed standards of quality and timeframes expected. These are known, documented and publicly available in an accessible format. Customers are served information about the SLA and expectations appropriately, through the service, and don't have to hunt through the website for them. BCC and its partners consistently meet agreed standards. BCC are already exploring how they could make use of smart technology to track and maintain its infrastructure and assets e.g. in housing and highways. This will enable the council to proactively address issues as they arise, often before they become a major problem that is expensive to fix.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov: Housing stock maintenance will reduce demand by modernising Housing stock and Housing Revenue Review also in progress. Increase of capital spend by £ 50m by Apr23 (inc. retrofit, reprocurement will faciliate adoption of new KPI 'right first time' to ensure cases are reviewed accordingly; currently at 40% decency level of housing stock which is not acceptable and service is increasing the level of stock surveys completed, as a result. Link to Rows 19 & 22</i></p> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 21 | Some tenants don't look after their properties to an appropriate standard, resulting in the need for additional repair work, putting added pressure on the department. | <p>Review existing tenancy agreements and communication materials detailing expectations of both BCC and the tenant, as well as the escalation process if a either party is found not to be meeting the agreement. Ensure clear documentation is readily available on line in a range of accessible formats and languages.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov: Tenancy conditions require lengthy process and is currently under review with consultants Campbell & Tickell as part of the Housing TOM - review outcome target: Dec22, implementation kick-off Jan23 - recommendation in scope so will be picked up and output communicated to tenants. Tenancy conditions are robust however visibility of diagnostic trees and customer journey could be better, e.g. tenancies currently end on a Friday and begin on a Monday (other LAs adopt a more flexible approach) setting customer expectations would be key to improving customer satisfaction. Voids end2end review also in progress. Strongly supported by O&S as current process results in lost tenancy days/revenue loss and this opportunity presents potential financial gain for BCC.</i></p> | High | Service/Programme: work started/ongoing |

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| 22 | For some customers it is a lengthy process scheduling in an appointment via the contact centre. Some customers wish to be able to self serve and book/manage their own appointments. | BCC is already developing an online booking system showing available appointments that customers can self book in Housing. Use the user stories developed as part of this work to ensure this system is user need led and fit for purpose. <i>Status Update 29-Nov: In scope for Housing Online - communication module is an element within the configuration capability of the portal enabling self-service and customer appointment scheduling. Link to Rows 19 & 20</i> | High | Inform new solution spec |
| 23 | Customers are asked for feedback twice, by both BCC and contractor partners. BCC's request typically comes via SMS and a contractor's request comes via PDAs (personal digital assistants). Feedback is crucial for both BCC and contractors to understand how they can improve service delivery. Contractors want to work more closely with the council, to increase shared understanding of ways of working and processes, for example Northgate systems only track repair activity to measure workload, and cannot track conversations. Some customers receive a request for feedback from BCC for a repair that hasn't yet been carried out. | More joined up/partnerhsip working between the council and contractors, so customers don't feel the organisational boundaries. Make use of a single point of feedback that can be shared with our repair partners. Ensure contractors do not ask customers for feedback whilst still in their home. <i>Status Update 29-Nov: Housing Satisfaction Measures end2end process asking for feedback based on the service being delivered (enquiry type); New regulations require specific questions to be asked of tenants via a survey and an associated action plan put in place for resolution. Wider tenant satisfaction measures - Apr23 and target publication Jun/Jul23. *(Joint delivery by Service and Programme) Feedback via contractors - Steve Wilson leading on service improvement work for City Housing programme and has shared the recommendations and our customer charter principles to aid the partnership relationship.</i> | Medium | Service/Programme: work started/ongoing |
| 24 | Sometimes customers are not informed if a contractor will not be attending as planned, meaning they may stay at home all day waiting for someone to come who never arrives. Conversely, sometimes contractors arrive without an appointment being booked in, and the customer is not aware of the visit. | Keeping customers informed about changes to their case, particularly when it directly affects them is fundamental. The appointment notification system will help with this if it has the functionality to provide live updates - for example notifying a tenant that a contractor is running late and they will now arrive at 4pm instead of 2pm. <i>Status Update 29-Nov: 'As-is' functionality customers receive and SMS text appointment confirmation from contractors and an 24-hr reminder from the contractor. Functionality to track engineer to the doorstep and notify customers of any delays is not yet implemented. This needs to be 2-way functionality for customer and contractor and although may already have the capability; implementation approach will be key. To be noted: Demonstrates the benefits of the programme, as this user need was not part of the original procurement detail but as a result of the user research conducted by the Customer Service Programme, this functional requirement will now be incorporated in the new tender process. Strongly supported by O&S - if we get this right, it will revolutinise the service; timeline for activity required. Link to Row 25</i> | Medium | Inform new solution spec |
| 25 | Customers sometimes miss repair appointments, which is costly to the service. | The service are currently in the process of trying to implement an automated reminder system that will remind the customer 48 hours and 2 hours before the scheduled appointment. Ensure this process is fit for purpose through user testing. Track the impact on rates of missed appointments. <i>Status Update 29-Nov: due to 'cost per property' model, costs would remain the same (i.e. no reduction in contractor costs) but increased contractor efficiency would improve the customer experience and satisfaction. Service exploring the use of the communications module within the Northgate solution to support 'getting this right first time' and improving the customer journey (review of volume of missed appointments will be key). Link to Row 24</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing |

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| 26 | Customers are able to place multiple requests for a repair, which can result in duplication within BCC. In one case 22 jobs were booked for the same property, on different dates. Reference numbers are provided over the phone, but customers don't necessarily take a record of these. Customers are given a separate reference number for each issue in a house. | <p>Explore how BCC can manage cases without using reference numbers, for example assigning a case to a household or customer - this could reduce the possibility for duplication and would improve the customer experience of the service.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov: scope of user need, tenants with multiple repairs to be assigned a property-based rather than job-based unique reference number enabling a customer and contractor view of multiple/outstanding jobs under one reference.</i></p> <p><i>Housing Management review as part of potential failure demand and repeat jobs; need to properly analyse the Northgate data on all outstanding jobs and top 50 reporters. If stock decency can be increased then the volume of repairs will reduce.</i></p> <p><i>O&S: long term repairs data may highlight fundamental issues and enable a more proactive approach using the insights to requirements and a long term view for planned maintenance.</i></p> | High | Service with support from programme |
| 27 | Contractor colleagues are unable to manage information on the housing repairs system. For example, to update details such as phone numbers, or to include a warning about a tenant they must contact BCC directly to get this changed. | <p>More effective working closely with partners, sharing data and systems, to improve efficiencies and the experience customers have of the service.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov : Data sharing dependency and how we capture contractor data and feed this back into the single customer record; potential use of the comms module to push our reminders across City Housing. Link to Tenant Satisfaction Measures</i></p> <p><i>O&S: Proactive approach required to address this recommendation and plug the tenant data gaps.</i></p> | High | Service with support from programme |
| 28 | Customers are sometimes promised that a manager will be in touch to discuss their case, but this never happens. For some customers, conversations feel scripted and unnatural. | <p>Customer centricity training for the contact centre will help to ensure staff have the training and skills to effectively manage cases and support customers, delivering a high quality of customer experience.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov : Customer Standards Workshops to embed principles of our customer charter 'putting customers first all the time, every time'.</i></p> <p><i>O&S: require an update on the issues coming out of the workshops as part of the next phase of Task and Finish Group work .</i></p> | Medium | Programme |
| 29 | Data shows that there were over 70,000 calls related to housing applications | <p>The website states there's high demand for housing within Birmingham but doesn't give any example or average waiting times based on typical applications. This would help set customers expectations in believing they will get accommodation relatively quickly. It also doesn't let the customer know how many applications are currently on the council housing waiting list. Providing this information may be useful to customers or creating a quick assessment questionnaire asking basic information to provide an estimate of the time it may take to get accommodation would be useful.</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov : administration of the process if the issue due to capacity/vacancies, was reduced to 4,000 applications; new allocations policy and new functionality development within the system will assist but need to get backlog figures reduced (average 6-week waiting period) - service to provide figures and report back.</i></p> <p><i>Automation being led by Jamie Harrison - greater visibility will negate the 70,000 calls received for application updates; as well as managing expectations on timelines.</i></p> <p><i>Choice-based lettings requires a content review - is the guidance meaningful for the customer and aligns to the customer journey, the 'as is' not providing the information customers require at the time they need. Proactive engagement with tenants to downsize is in progress.</i></p> <p><i>Regular update notes to Cllrs on current status - Average Waiting Calculator available</i></p> <p><i>https://www.birminghamchoice.co.uk/ but how this is communicated needs addressing e.g. cascade link on the Members' page.</i></p> <p><i>O&S: historical levels are far too high; escalation to Housing O&S for visibility</i></p> | High | Programme |
| 30 | Data shows over 20,000 calls were made by customers checking their rent/council tax balance | <p>Ensure customers are made aware how they can view their balance online via the BRUM account</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov : Online rent account account, payments calculator, payment history and notifications all live in the Brum Account. Need shift to self serve to irradiate calls for simpler enquiries.</i></p> <p><i>Service provide 12-week support at the beginning of the tenancy journey, communicating the expectations of tenants.</i></p> | Medium | Programme |
| | | <p>Some contractors have a FLAG initiaive in place as well as sending out leaflets to tenants on how to deal with damp for example, they are happy to share this information with the council</p> <p><i>Status Update 29-Nov : Contractor comms/leaflets can add value to tenant guidance and could be distributed via .gov.uk, tenant comms and newsletters. City Housing DMT to define approach and response</i></p> | Medium | Service |

WASTE MANAGEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

| Code | Insight | Recommendation | Initial Rating | Delivery Accountability |
|------|---|---|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 31 | Slab in the cab is currently used at the driver's/team leader's discretion <i>n.b. Note correction - it is a planned/structured pilot to ensure any issues are fully addressed before going live, taking into account lessons learned from earlier less successful roll-outs.</i> | With the early success of the current soft pilot of slab in the cab, the service should-ensure more drivers to adopt this system to ensure consistency in quality and reporting across the service. <i>Status update 05-Dec: A new Transformation Director has been employed to drive this forward and ensure all technology (Kit -Krew In-cab Technology) is in place and fully operational by end of Dec22, which includes a robust staff training programme which is fully supported by all Trade Unions. The Business Support Team have worked closely with Assistant Service Managers and crews to ensure all round data is up to date and accurately reflects day-to-day collection routes; and the kit will also flag Assisted Collections to avoid them being missed. All crews will be mandated to use the in-cab technology to report anomalies such as broken bins, contamination or bins that have not been presented which will feed back real time to the Managers of the service who will be monitoring daily collections; and taking proactive action to address any missed collections in the event of vehicle breakdowns, road blocks, etc. The technology will free up manager time to better support the crews; and the real time data visibility will be available for the Contact Centre to better equip Agents to respond factually and accurately to customer enquiries, which in turn should reduce customer complaints.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 32 | At some depots, the rate of missed bins can be high. Customers do not always get their missed bins resolved in a timely manner, with some getting their bin emptied at the next scheduled collection. This means that in some areas public trust can be low in the service. | Make use of slab in the cab across the service to reduce the rate of missed bins across the service, reducing complaints and additional work for back office staff. Review the current policy in place for collecting missed bins within 48 hours to ensure it is achievable for the service and change this target if not, to better manage customer expectations. <i>Status update 05-Dec: Currently the process of crews reporting missed collections happens at the end of each shift, the new in-cab technology will enable real time reporting of bins that have been missed for a variety of reasons such as road blocks, parked cars, bin not presented. This data will be captured and held in a single system so the Contact Centre will have visibility of missed bins so in the event of a customer contact, accurate data can be relayed. As well as this, managers will proactively follow up any multi-service issues causing regular repeat missed collections such as parking enforcements, illegal skips on highways, etc. that may prevent collection. Also because managers will be able to see crew performance in real time if a vehicle breaks down and can not complete a round, the work can be allocated to other crews who may have capacity on the same day to pick this up, however this will require proper engagement and agreed processes with Trade Unions for managers to follow. As part of the customer programme activity, in the Brum Account, citizens are able to report a missed bin at another property by entering the property address in the location field of the form. Whole road reporting was removed as the service found this was being inappropriately used as it was thought it would expedite a missed bin collection. Accuracy of reporting missed collections should be improved as a result. O&S - The ability for concerned residents to report HMO missed bins needs to explored, as currently this can only be reported if the property location of the missed bin is known.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 33 | The waste service is currently using the 'task and finish' approach, which means crews often go home earlier than their official finish time. This means managers are unable to reallocate dropped work, so that it can be done on the same day. | Use slab in the cab to reallocate dropped work before crews return to the depot. <i>Status update 05-Dec: see row 32</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 34 | Team leaders want to have a consistent and reliable team. However, they are not always informed of who will be in their team ahead of time, creating confusion and frustration. In addition, team leaders are not always told if their truck is going to be out of action due to an MOT or repairs ahead of time. | Consider how to improve the line of communication between team leaders and management. Ensure there is a feedback loop in place for waste crews to feedback on their issues day to day <i>Status update 05-Dec: Large recruitment process underway to fill all permanent vacancies. However the service will retain 23% of agency cover for sickness, annual leave, etc. to enable permanency of each round to improve consistency of collections. In the event of planned vehicle maintenance alternative vehicles should be sourced in advance and if not possible the work reallocated between other crews with capacity.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 35 | The way complaints are dealt with is inconsistent across the service. The waste service still receive iCasework, rather than these complaints going directly to the complaints team. | Review the complaints process and ensure alignment across all teams, agreeing who should deal with complaints. Consider having an overflow route, should volume become too high. <i>Status Update 05-Dec: The new Complaints process was launched April 2021 and City Operations which includes Waste Services now have a dedicated complaints handling team which is embedded and sits alongside the operational teams at each depot. This improves the trunaround time for complaints and although this is a high volume area the SLA of 90% is now consistently achieved. The in-cab technology will further enhance complaints responses and will enable the team to provide more personalised responses. If volumes reduce, efficiencies in administrative activities will be made.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |

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| 36 | Customers don't always following guidance around disposing of their waste correctly as well as the kerbside policy. This leads to missed bin collections and therefore additional customer traffic to BCC and sometimes complaints. BCC don't often communicate why a bin hasn't been collected, which leads to confusion and frustration with customers. | Review current guidance for how the public should correctly recycle and what should not be put into refuse bins. Ensure all guidance and policies are easy to read and accessible in a range of languages and formats. Establish a live update system that is connected to slab in the cab, so customers know when and why their bins have not been collected. <i>Status Update 05-Dec: Review current guidance for how the public should correctly recycle and what should be put into refuse bins working with 'Keep Britain Tidy' to try and define and find a way of telling residents they've done something wrong. Options being explored are: Tag & Flag new guidance - you've received a tag; tag and flag to resident what they did wrong; what they can and can not put into bins; tagged bins will automatically re-routed to residual waste - don't want to move into a removal of bin situation but we do want to review the communications and consider video clips of residents putting the right rubbish in the right bin instead of leaflets. Education and bin stickers to clearly show what can be placed in bins. HMO team are reassessing the Landlord responsibilities and ensure there is enough literature and information contained and landlords are suitably educated on their duties and responsibility to inform tenants of requirements - reinforcement at a regular basis. The current bin specification, which is 25-pages long needs to be reviewed, improved and simplified.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing with support from the programme |
| 37 | Sometimes crews need to take a broken bin away. There is nothing for them to provide to the customer telling them what has happened and when the new bin will arrive. | Develop some simple comms in a range of languages and formats for crews to have in the trucks, to post through a customer's front door in this instance. <i>Status Update 05-Dec In-cab technology allows driver to report broken bin and locations in real time to organise a repair or replacement bin. The service are reviewing the current bin procurement approach, and are exploring an Amazon -type procurement approach to enable the despatch of bins directly to residents homes as opposed to bulk order and storing of bins in depots. This will enable a much more proactive and faster response time to replacement bin requests.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing with support from the programme |
| 38 | Sometimes rubbish is accidentally dropped during rounds. The public can at times become aggressive and there are road rage incidents towards the crews. | Review the training crews get to better equip them to deal with difficult members of the public and to ensure they clear up any rubbish that is dropped during the process of collecting bins. <i>Status update 05-Dec: It is mandatory for all crews to pick up any dropped refuse or spillage that fall from the bins at the point of collection when being lifted into the truck. Any reports of non-compliance will be monitored and performance managed by depot managers. The street cleaning rounds now follow the black bag collection crews. Any residual waste that has been fly-tipped or black bags that have been opened by pests can now be reported by crews with a pinned location using the In-cab technology; requests will be automatically assigned to the appropriate service to resolve to avoid multiple reports of the same issue and customer complaints.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 39 | Staff highlighted that due to traffic issues on their rounds they miss around 15 streets a day resulting in many missed bins. | Consider how to leverage slab in the cab to reallocate dropped work as efficiently as possible and how this information is relayed back to the customer both digitally and non-digitally. <i>Status update 05-Dec: The in-cab technology will be able to record if there is vehicle or access issues or the crew is stuck in traffic; using the technology so that we can communicate to residents and Members access issues have resulted in collection not being able to take place. Being made aware in real time will allow depot managers to reschedule asap</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 40 | Not all streets are included on the digital form when reporting a missed bin collection, making this a painful process for some customers. | Review the current maps in use. Consider moving to a live version of maps in the missed bin/recycling form to ensure that all roads are current. Enable a customer feedback loop when maps are not up to date. <i>Status update 05-Dec: Dependency on LLPG data between the mapping solution and the line of business application which needs to in sync in order for the report to be submitted and actioned by the service. Taking this approach could lead to an increase in failure rate and we will need to understand how much of an issue this is considering we are using local and national LLPG data.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 41 | Customers have expressed that paying for garden waste is not value for money especially when this type of waste is missed or not collected. | Note: We understand legislation around garden waste has recently changed and local authorities may no longer be able to charge for garden waste. <i>Status update 05-Dec: We are looking to introduce reoccurring payments (direct debits) for residents to pay for their garden waste collections, this will mean that they will be automatically subscribed to the service each year without the need to renew annually which is resource intensive. When we move to automatic subsription this will enable the service to effectively plan the routes for the year ahead as opposed to being reactive every month and making manual adjustments which increases the potential for dropped work. We are aware that there are pending changes to the Environment Act which may impact on the type of service offered to residents however no decisions have yet been made/communicated.</i> <i>O&S - recommends a move to an automatic renewal system; once residents sign up we tend to retain them (very few cancel)</i> | Low | Programme but pending legislation |
| 42 | For some customers waste collections have been missed multiple weeks in a row with no explanation or update about when their waste will be taken away. | Consider reviewing the current mechanism for informing a customer their collection will not be done on a single occasion or for multiple occasions. <i>Status update 05-Dec: See Row 32 - Covered by KIT implementation - pulls all the repeats together to be provided with a hotspot of issues.</i> | High | Service: work started/ongoing |
| 43 | Customers are unsure how to use bins correctly. For example the pod should host cardboard, but is often too small for the cardboard customers need to recycle. Some people swap their recycling round so the cardboard goes into the main bin. In addition, customers aren't always clear what to do to manage a missed bin (especially if it's a bag) without creating additional issues such as rodent infestation. | Review current guidance and comms in place informing customers how their bins can be used, including what to do whilst waiting for missed bins to be collected. <i>Status update 05-Dec: See Row 36 - Keep Britain Tidy and HMO engagement</i> | Medium | Service: work started/ongoing with support from the programme |

HIGHWAY REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

| Code | Insight | Recommendation | Initial Rating | Delivery Accountability |
|------|--|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 44 | The response to complaints from contractors isn't always to an acceptable quality. | <p>Explore how the service might establish a shared quality standard for responses to complaints, and how we can hold ourselves and our partners to that standard. Consider making adhoc checks of complaint responses to ensure quality standard is acceptable.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Customer Responses in general from the BCC Customer Services are not of sufficient quality in the view of the responsible service area (i.e. Highways). Whilst much of this issue can be resolved through improved wording in responses (particular automated responses), some quality improvements will require process and/or systems changes in conjunction with BHL/Kier as a our highways services provider. Outbound response from CXM shared with service, pair writing to commence. Identify any system changes front office/back office. Iterative content development i.e. released as signed off.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: At the moment systems don't talk to each other as well as they should do; systems need to be joined up and quality of responses needs improvement - needs to be clear on the request and timescale of outcome and aligned to contractor responses; part cultural piece with Keir - subscribed updates on the progress of repairs raised; new technology that can be embraced and a common approach/consistency between services e.g. Housing repairs. The PFI contract will be lever for alignment with contractors</i></p> | Medium | Programme |
| 45 | Councillors are not always using the form that has been created for them to submit their requests, instead using the highways or general complaints inboxes (resulting in delays in responding due to additional processing time and time spent on manually copying content from councillor's emails into iCasework) | <p>Reinforce messaging to councillors that they must use the correct process, and when they don't respond by asking them and making it very easy for them to do so - e.g. include link to the form and instructions on what to do</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: To deliver the recommendation Highway Service needs see a clearly defined set of outcomes and an agreed delivery plan from D&CS to address this issue. Comms & engagement piece to reinforce the process of Member enquiries. Review of current content, information, advice and guidance required.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: Members are generally starting to use the systems in place but they won't use the forms as they don't have the time - use of the complaints teams is the corporate approach. 85% come through the complaints team exceptions for urgent/critical items that will go direct to services. Most Highways are enquiries and not complaints which takes time from the complaints team. New system/process - clarify the route to enable better processing of requests that are not complaints - narrative needs to better reflect the expectations of Members (members need to work out which complaints team to send their queries to); some requests need multiple services to be co-ordinated to resolve as a priority.</i></p> | High | Programme |
| 46 | In Highways there are two business support teams broadly doing similar work. They are working in silos and rely in 'middle people' to work effectively | <p>If our understanding of this situation is right, review the roles, responsibilities and function of these two teams and consolidate into one, redirecting freed up resource elsewhere in the service should it be found that there is duplication of effort.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: In Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) there are two teams doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints . They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively. Review of the current business support structure, policies and working practices in Digital and Customer Services on behalf of the Highway service required.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: Need one team to own it and close the task down</i></p> | High | TBC should be DCS not programme |
| 47 | The service reported finding it difficult to prioritise activity because sometimes everything is considered 'urgent'. | <p>Consider how the service might establish more effective prioritisation processes. Test these with staff to ensure they will be effective and allow staff to focus on things that are a genuine priority.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Short Discovery piece to inform current process, pain points and opportunities from the end to end dropped Kerb service.</p> <p>Business requirement need to be provided by Highways to identify the needs for the new licencing scheme</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: From a process perspective there is a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise work. Members need to be able to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge - it is a more difficult process to invoke highways enforcement (catching people in the act, capacity to resource), Section 184 Highways Act - letters are currently issued to the address. Preventative action (fencing, bollards, etc) may be an option and there is funding available to support this type of activity but resources are limited. Use of a transportation capital budget for rare instances where Members identify as a priority - requires further exploration</i></p> | Medium | Service with Programme support |

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| 48 | The Clean Air Zone website is confusing, and it is unclear if zones are in the CAZ or not. CAZ charges are not clearly explained on the website. There is no pre-notification or warning of a CAZ fine. Fines come as a surprise to many customers, which can be confusing and distressing. | <p>Review the webpages and quality of communication about the CAZ. Use a content designer to ensure all written communication is clear and accessible. Test the new content with customers to ensure there is no ambiguity. Ensure zones and times are clearly indicated online so charges do not come as a surprise to customers. Should the development of a BRUM account app happen in the future, the service could consider making use of push notifications to alert customers that they have entered a CAZ and give them, for example 10 minutes to exit the zone should they have entered if unintentionally.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: This needs to be worked through with the CAZ team. Highways and Infrastructure are only responsible for penalty charge notices if drivers do not want to pay the 'fine'. The CAZ charge and communications and messaging about payment of the charge is dealt with by the CAZ team. However staffing of customer frontline in Parking needs to be investigated.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: Tell Us Once - single view of customer, if a citizen tells 'The Council' something they believe their data will be updated for every dept. Front end visibility and communication of CAZ Enforcement of CAZ has a dependency of the frontend</i></p> <p><i>O&S - we acknowledge there are two teams in two different directorates and this needs to be resolved.</i></p> | Low | Rejected as CAZ does not sit with Highways |
| 49 | Complaints can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service. | <p>Consider how we can consolidate complaint routes and have one place that they are managed from to ensure there is only one version of the truth for the whole service.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Service Requests can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service. Customer Services to identify multiple service request routes and a plan for consolidation of these with the Highway Service.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: This will be possible with the new technological solutions becoming available</i></p> | High | Business Support not programme |
| 50 | Customers want to be able to easily report issues on the go. Currently the reporting solution is clunky, customers find the map difficult to use and it doesn't work at all on some devices. | <p>Review the current reporting solution. Consider moving to a live version of Google maps to ensure that all road information is current. Consider using alternative solutions like what3words and coordinates for customers to report locations. Enable a customer feedback loop when location information is not up to date.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Understand user needs, review the current Brightly/Jadu technology and how we can use this to improve the user experience from a reporting perspective. Joint discovery with Data programme - Alpha (testing/prototyping) and Beta (live/implementation) may be delivered by Data Management programme.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: This will be possible with the new technological solutions becoming available to automate the process</i></p> | High | Inflight with service - programme to support customer elements |
| 51 | When the service area seeks to engage with service users, they typically use the same group of customers to represent the people of Birmingham. | <p>In line with customer engagement and user research best practice, seek to expand the existing group of customers, refreshing this either on a rolling basis or every six months. This will enable new voices to contribute to shaping the service, which is very important if the engagement is to be meaningful. Ensure that the group represents the diversity of Birmingham, particularly amongst young people and people of colour.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Leverage the use of the customer panel, gap maybe around Business customers. Best practice engagement process would sit with D&CS programme to share with Highways, The development/Ownership of the engagement plan will sit with the Highways leveraging on best practice.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: Positive that customer engagement happens in the service but need to expand this; detailed in PFI for contractors to work in alignment and ensure focus groups are reflective and representative. Strategic Equality Partnership also looking up public participation and citizen engagement and a new strategy developed as a result</i></p> | Medium | Programme |
| 52 | Customers found there is sometimes a lack of communication on why something has happened or why a decision has been made. This keeps customers in the dark about things they care about and isn't open or transparent. | <p>Openly share what decisions we have made and why. In line with the digital strategy theme 'Evidence based decision making', ensure we use data and evidence for our decisions and publish these to ensure customers are aware.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Review the "As Is" process and solution supporting this with a discovery (user research) phase; through user engagement identify pain points and opportunities to close the gap in sharing information online/offline with customers. Some outputs may be linked to PFI, integration with Brum Account to enable information flow to enable greater customer interaction - dependency on contractors to implement.</p> <p><i>Updae 12-Dec: We miss opportunities to communicate the wider plan and the priorities and tailoring quality responses to customers - closer / joined up thinking about future view of strategies.</i></p> | Medium | Solution review inflight by Service, programme to support once finalised |

53

Customers report that the quality of repairs is not always to a good standard.

Ensure the SLA between us and partners is clear and known. Consider including information online about the expected quality of repairs, what qualifies for a repair and what repairs we will/will not make, e.g. why we only fill in a large pothole when there are other smaller potholes within the immediate area. This will help to better manage customer's expectations and will be information the contact centre and the service can refer customers to.

Refined 04-Nov: Understand the current performance standards are for the service, how these are raised and reported on. Do customers know these standards, how does this feed into the contractual agreements with Contractors and managed. Do we need to make this data visible and transparent. what is the mechanism of reporting defect quality issues? Opportunity to offer a commercial service offering through our suppliers/contractors to offer an enhanced service.

Update 12-Dec : Being taken forward as a performance measure discussion with the service provider and ensure repairs are conducted by contractors in a timely way; quality of responses reviewed to ensure they are meaningful and in plain language - how the data is managed and fed back to contractors and customers; providing visibility of the standard of performance. Member example to be provided as to where the system hasn't worked - stewards are not engineers they are customer service/engagement experts - test the process.

Medium

Inflight by Service,
Programme to
advise