Report of:	Deputy Leader
To:	**Corporate Resources & Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date:	**7th September 2016**

Progress Report on Implementation: Contacting the Council – Improving Satisfaction

Review Information

Date approved at City Council:	02 February 2016
Member who led the original review:	Cllr Waseem Zaffar
Lead Officer for the review:	Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services
Date progress last tracked:	NA

1. In approving this Review the City Council asked me, as the appropriate Cabinet Member, to report on progress towards these recommendations to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Details of progress with the remaining recommendations are shown in Appendix 2.

3. Members are therefore asked to consider progress against the recommendations and give their view as to how progress is categorized for each.

Appendices

1	**Scrutiny Office guidance on the tracking process**
2	**Recommendations you are tracking today**
3	**Recommendations tracked previously and concluded**

For more information about this report, please contact

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Appendix ❶: The Tracking Process

In making its assessment, the Committee may wish to consider:
- What progress/ key actions have been made against each recommendation?
- Are these actions pertinent to the measures required in the recommendation?
- Have the actions been undertaken within the time scale allocated?
- Are there any matters in the recommendation where progress is outstanding?
- Is the Committee satisfied that sufficient progress has been made and that the recommendation has been achieved?

Category	Criteria
1: Achieved	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.
2: Not Achieved (Obstacle)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved, but all possible action has been taken. Outstanding actions are prevented by obstacles beyond the control of the Council (such as passage of enabling legislation).
3: Not Achieved	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved, but there has been significant progress made towards full achievement. **An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved must be advised.**
4: In Progress	It is not appropriate to monitor achievement of the recommendation at this time because the timescale specified has not yet expired.
5: Achieved (outcomes to be monitored)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified. However, the outcome has not yet materialised, or "work on the ground" has yet to be seen.
	Reporting on the recommendation as part of the tracking process ceases. However, a report back on the outcome or continuing implementation will be reported back to the Committee as determined by the members in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

Appendix ❷ : Progress with Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R01	a) That targets for customer satisfaction are reviewed and ambitious but achievable measures are set to facilitate continuous improvement. b) That the forward plan for achieving the target is brought to an early meeting of the Corporate Resources O&S Committee. c) Trend analysis of all customer satisfaction data is reported to the Corporate Resources O&S Committee bi-annually.	Deputy Leader	September 2016	

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

Customer satisfaction targets were reviewed as part of Divisional target setting for 2016/17. The target of 67.1% for year end is considered to be a challenging target, when benchmarked with the ICS (Institute of Customer Service) and in an environment of reduced budgets. The benchmark of citizen satisfaction results against the Institute of Customer Service annual Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) survey that shows satisfaction with local councils at 61.1% (as at January 2016) an increase from 60.9% as at January 2015.

Customer Services also measure performance for Advisor Willingness to Help, which is shared with staff, to recognise the importance that we place on delivering a professional service to citizens.

Satisfaction in both those areas has increased with since August 2015, with an increase of 6% from 54% to 60% for satisfaction with the contact centre and an increase of 4% from 63% to 67% for agent willingness to help. This has been achieved against a backdrop of savings which include £4.8m savings achieved in 2015-16 and further savings of £882k achieved in 2016-17. Satisfaction with end to end service delivery has decreased by 2% since August 2015, from 55% to 53%.

Trend analysis of customer satisfaction data is provided in Appendix 4.

We have a number of measures for customer satisfaction including satisfaction with End-to-End service delivery as well as the initial contact through the Contact Centre. While these surveys are issued separately there is a strong link between satisfaction levels across the Contact Centre and End-to-End service delivery. Dissatisfaction in one area impacts on the other, from the citizen's point of view the service is received from the council and the score is attributed to the council.   It is clear from reviewing comments made by citizens in feedback and then listening to the original telephone call the citizen had with us, that dissatisfaction with the end service will impact upon the citizen's perception of how the call was handled and vice versa.

The end of year target increase in satisfaction levels will be difficult to achieve and require a step change in how we deliver services to customers; including the need to influence service delivery across the council from a customer's perspective.

A review of processes and procedures in partnership with Service Areas is underway to deliver a number of key improvements. For example, the Benefits LEAN Review identified a number of areas for improvement which have been incorporated in the Benefits Service Improvement Plan. We are also working with Waste Management and Housing to identify areas for inclusion in their improvement plans and supporting their implementation.

Individual improvement plans have been developed with larger service areas, such as Revenues, Benefits, Rents, Waste Management and Housing Repairs (examples available to members on request).

For service delivery in the contact centre we have in place a number of supporting measures to support achieving the increase in customer satisfaction scores.   These measures include enhanced Customer Service training for all new recruits, and ongoing refresher training for existing Advisors, including:
* Importance of vocal tone through pitch, pace, volume and clarity of speech
* The difference between listening and hearing

- Barriers to active listening and ways of overcoming them
- Recognise and explain the importance of call structure and links to quality measures
- Training staff in questioning techniques
- Define ways of minimising customer anger by reacting rather than responding
- Show an awareness of the need for care when dealing with bereaved customers

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R02	That consideration is given to conducting telephone interviews with a sample of those using the Contact Centre. This could focus on one service area (e.g. waste and environmental services). The Deputy Leader is asked to report back to the Committee on costs and feasibility of conducting such surveys.	Deputy Leader	June 2016	

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

An outbound customer satisfaction pilot commenced in July 2016 for Revenues, Benefits, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Rents.

At present this pilot is taking place utilising existing Contact Centre Advisors, who were selected on the basis of their quality scores or being one of our Golden Call achievers. There is currently no additional financial cost for carrying out this outbound exercise, as we are utilising existing staff and the impact on citizens and service levels can be managed by ensuring outbound calling takes place at periods of lower inbound call volumes.

Feedback reported for the first month was as follows:

- 26% of respondents had tried to use the website before calling us

- Of those that didn't try the website before calling us 46% said that they didn't have a computer, 21% said it was because they preferred to speak to a person and a further 12% didn't like going online. This is a positive result in the fact that the outbound survey appears to be reaching our target audience of those that we would have been unable to reach via an email survey or SMS.

- 46% of respondents had called us more than once about their query

- 40% of citizens rated at a 7 or above that we were easy to get through to – during June and July we have experienced issues with dealing with the number of calls received for example high volumes to Housing Repairs because of the flooding, so we expect to see these results improve during August.

- 77% of respondents rated our Advisor willingness to help at a score of 7 or above

- 29% of citizens had ongoing issues with the Council that they were seeking to resolve. Our outbound Advisors were able to escalate these to Resolution Champions.

- Overall experience of dealing with the Council was that 71% of citizens rated BCC at a 7 out of 10 or above

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R03	That consideration is given to the role of Resolution Champions (or other role within the Contact Centre) to make more of local links, to build local knowledge and to allow councillors to build relationships with them This must be done without disturbing the	Deputy Leader	September 2016	

	quality of the work that is being done by resolutions champions.			

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

Consideration has been given to the role of the Resolution Champion which has resulted in a number of changes including a pilot set up in May 2016 between the Contact Centre and Waste Management to trial a new way of working which helps to maximise local knowledge and links. Waste Management was chosen due to the volume of enquiries received; from April 2016 a different pilot was in place with Housing, another high volume area. The Waste Management pilot meant a Contact Centre Resolution Champion was based at the Perry Barr Depot. The majority of incidents reported to the Contact Centre can be resolved at first point of contact with no requirement to escalate to a Resolution Champion. However, having direct access to Operatives supports the resolution of repeat issues as it has increased the Resolution Champion's understanding of local problems and being based at the depot has given him access to operatives to help speed up resolution. This close working relationship enables both areas to have an improved understanding of their respective processes and procedures.

Customer Services has retained management responsibility for the Resolution Champion who is involved in this pilot. This is important as we need to ensure that the call handling aspects are in line with the standards set by the corporate Contact Centre. Regular contact visits, performance 1:1s, briefings/training take place to maintain the link into the Contact Centre.

In another example, since the new Housing Repairs contractors have gone live in April 2016 we now have contractor staff based within the Contact Centre working alongside our Resolution Champions. This has also led to further improvements in the resolution of citizen escalations and as each of the contractors is represented this helps to bring local knowledge into the contact centre. The other high volume areas are Revenues and Benefits and Rents, all of which are central services and supported through the link between the Resolution Champions and the service. The Rent service transferred to the Contact Centre in February 2016 and there are plans to implement a Resolution Champion role for that service before the end of the year.

The pilots are under review with an analysis of the impact of each to ensure it enhances rather than disturbs quality of the service delivered by Resolution Champions.

Resolution Champions specialise in the area in which they work with 12 FTE Resolution Champions across a number of teams. Initial indications for the Waste Management pilot are that this will be extended to at least one other depot that receives a high volume of repeat contact and the current arrangements with Housing Repairs will continue so that there is a strong link between the contact centre and contractor resource for allocation of repair jobs, allowing issues to be brought to the attention of contact centre staff and Resolution Champions in a timely manner.

In order to allow councillors build relationships with resolution champions they are now liaison point for Councillors enquiries. Earlier in the year we re-launched the dedicated Councillor Enquiry mailbox and telephone line (BCCCouncillorsEnquiry@birmingham.gov.uk). The Resolution Champions deal with the enquiries received from councillors and liaise with the Service Area to ensure a speedy response is provided. It should be noted that not many Councillors utilise this service but feedback from those that do has been positive.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R04	That members are offered the opportunity to visit • The Contact Centre; • Fleet and waste depots; • Other service areas to gain an insight into the work and to meet staff. Our suggestion is that a series of these sessions takes place in June/July so that it can form part of new members' induction.	Deputy Leader	September 2016	

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')
An invitation to visit the Contact Centre was extended to all Councillors following the last Overview and Scrutiny visit. Georgina Foxwell, Head of Business Change and Service Improvement also attended the induction day for Members in June 2016 and gave an overview of the contact centre. As part of this presentation an invite to visit the Contact Centre was also extended. In conjunction with member support dates are currently being finalised for new members to visit the contact centre. Since the last scrutiny visit, the Deputy Leader has visited the contact centre; a visit was made by Cllr Alden and Brew who were updated on progress on the website. The Chief Executive has also recently visited the Contact Centre and dates have been arranged for other CLT members to attend.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R05	With regards to the Birmingham Promise: • That the Birmingham Promise reflect existing contractual requirements: if these are met, then the Birmingham Promise is met. However, explanations should be given to those citizens who do not receive the service as specified; • That the Birmingham Promise uses working days as the measurement in the first year, to reflect contractual arrangements; • That the Birmingham Promise is simplified and put on a single page document, which is displayed in council buildings across the city. • That the Birmingham Promise is subject to external assessment – for example by the Plain English Campaign – to ensure that it is clear and easy to understand. In particular, the language used to describe the expectations of citizens should be reviewed. References to using "the correct channels" could be made; • That the Birmingham Promise is reviewed annually to ensure it remains achievable in the light of future budget cuts, and to ensure that improvements	Deputy Leader	September 2016	

	are made wherever possible;			
	• That the Birmingham Promise has a named officer and Cabinet Member against each promise;			
	• Monitoring should continue to take place quarterly so that corrective action can be taken when needed; however publication of the results need only be annually or bi-annually			

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

The Birmingham Promise was changed to reflect any contractual requirements prior to April 2016

• The Birmingham Promise has been changed to use working days as the measurement

• The Birmingham Promise was approved at cabinet in April as part of the council's 2016/17 business plan. Appendix 5 includes the simplified document which will be published on the performance area of the new website.

• The Birmingham Promise was subjected to the scrutiny of a professional copywriter to ensure it is in plain English

• The Birmingham Promise has been reviewed for the 2016-17 year and will be review annually going forward

•There has been a named Officer identified and each Promise has been agreed with the appropriate Cabinet Member, when performance against the promise is displayed at the end of quarter 2, it will include the officer and cabinet member details.

• The Birmingham promises are reported each month to CLT performance board and every quarter to Cabinet. Arrangements are being made to externally publish performance against the Birmingham Promise on the website for quarter 2 performance by end of October 2016, and bi-annually thereafter.

The revised Promise for 2016-17 is contained in Appendix 5.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R06	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee no later than October 2016. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Deputy Leader	October 2016	1 – Achieved (Fully)

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

This report is the first progress report for this inquiry.

Appendix 3: New Website and Online Transactions

Background

The new Birmingham City Council website went live on 24 August 2016. This is the first step in a number of activities to improve online information and services for Birmingham citizens and businesses.

Responsiveness to demands for ease of access in other sectors has increased citizen's expectations of local government services available through online service delivery. In order to meet this expectation the new website is the first step in developing an improved digital offer.

The new website is mobile responsive enabling Birmingham to respond to technological advances especially the increase in the use of smartphones and mobile devices. The first phase is the revised content will allow customers to use their mobile devices to obtain a variety of information about council services at the time and place of their choosing.

The move to the alternative CMS (content management system that supports the website) technology enables the council to future proof its functionality requirements. This will provide the foundations of a modern website which renders well on mobile devices and supports the development of a digital offer, that improves customer confidence in Birmingham's digital access channels and increases take up and use of the website.

The website is designed to meet the differing needs of our citizens and is focused on the citizen, not internal service boundaries. During development of the site, we have sought feedback from citizens, stakeholders and those with interest and expertise in websites locally so that we met the user needs as effectively as possible.

The current scope to the migration of services to the new CMS in phase 1 was as follows:

- Birmingham.gov.uk
- HR – Peoples Solutions (information only not transactions)
- HR – Schools (information only not transactions)

The next phase of the work will focus on improving the online forms that allow customers to transact online.

Design

The design of the new site has involved a broad range of stakeholders and we have consulted widely to ensure we deliver a website that meets the needs of citizens and businesses in Birmingham. The stages of design have been as follows:

Design Brief – this was the suppliers (Jadu) interpretation of our requirements for the new site. It set out the key principles for the new website and what the council was looking to achieve in three key design goals:

- DESIGN GOAL 1 - *"we want to make transactional services and information more visible to users and easier to use because we want to encourage people to use the website as a platform to find information and transact online so that we reduce phone calls and other higher cost to serve channels."*

  We have achieved the first phase of this goal through ensuring that the user journeys have been constructed around how people use the website rather than around council service structures. Through feedback obtained from the citizens' access panel, public feedback sessions in the library and other events across the city we have ensured the focus has been on the requirements of external website users.

- DESIGN GOAL 2 - *"we want to provide more relevant, up-to-date, quality content in plain English because it will be the user's experience easy, engaging and intuitive so that we enhance the council's reputation and provide a credible and reliable experience."*

  We have re-written every page of content – and removed quite a lot too – to ensure that what customers see is the key facts, uncluttered by irrelevant text. We have ensured that what is written is in jargon free plain English ensuring it is more accessible to a wide variety of users.

- DESIGN GOAL 3 – *"we want to help users of the website to understand the range of services available to them - including those not provided by the council because our partners and other service providers will increasingly provide alternatives to Council services so that they are empowered to do more things for themselves."*

  A key principle of the content strategy that we have adopted is to use the most relevant and up to date content available to us. Sometimes this means signposting customers to other sites, but ensures the customer will always get accurate and up to date information.

Activities undertaken in the development of the website

Eye Tracking – once the design started to take shape we tested it with citizens to make sure the design met their needs. This involved the use of technology that tracks peoples' eye movements and helps us understand what colours, fonts and styles are most appealing to users. We used this information to refine the site design. We followed this up towards the end of the project with a further eye tracking session at the Library of Birmingham where we were able to test the full site,

including user journeys, with customers. This has been very valuable and allowed us to further refine user journeys.

Information architecture event – in May we held an event at Kings Heath Community Centre where we invited people to come, look at and comment on the design but also to help us to define the most logical place within the site for each piece of content to reside from a citizen's perspective. While some of this was fairly intuitive, engaging customers was extremely valuable for some content that did not logically fit into one place or another.

Accessibility event – the new site conforms to the AA standard of accessibility. But to make sure disabled users were happy with the site we held an event to which over 90 people were invited. Feedback from those who attended was largely positive and provided us with some further enhancements that could be made in future phases

Member and chief officer consultation – events were held in April to allow Members from all parties and Chief Officers to give their view on the designs.

Skills transfer

A key learning point from the implementation is the importance of having the right skills to write for the web and to develop effective customer journeys. The web team have worked very hard with Jadu to ensure they have fully developed the skills to write effectively for the web. In order to ensure the quality of the content remains high with a focus on the citizen/business new governance procedures have been implemented. These mean that the web team have full control over the presentation of content supported by the services areas that ensure that information is up to date and factually accurate.

Next Steps Transactional Services and Microsites
Following on from the development of the new website the next stage is to review the current e-forms solution which allows citizens to use the online account to report issues or request a service.
This is a significant project that will be delivered iteratively.

Interim steps that will make incremental improvements to the user journey, these include replacing non-integrated forms with new forms from the CMS and making the existing forms in the online account mobile-responsive by the end of this year.

During 2017 new forms will be developed for those services in the online account, the changes to the forms will be supported by end to end reviews that improve the efficiency of citizen access arrangements by reducing failure demand and ensuring that the user experience on the website is intuitive and easily completed only requiring information needed to complete the transaction.

There is also a desire to deliver a new Universal business Service – a single point of contact and on-line services for businesses to cover their transactions with the council; this will be made available in later phases.

A number of activities have already taken place to support this ambition including soft market testing to understand what is currently available. Requirements gathering have been completed with services across the council and Service Birmingham to identify what services will be available via the online solution.

We have been collaborating with a number of local authorities, including those in the West Midlands Alliance to understand what online solutions they have in place for customer service delivery and what can be shared or learnt from their experiences.

The market has evolved over the last few years and with the simpler platforms there have been a number of innovative changes which the Council can capitalise on to provide leading edge web forms that are now simpler and easier to develop. There have also been developments in the market place where suppliers are now working with authorities to enable them to share the forms they have built with other authorities, thus reducing costs and increasing collaboration across councils.
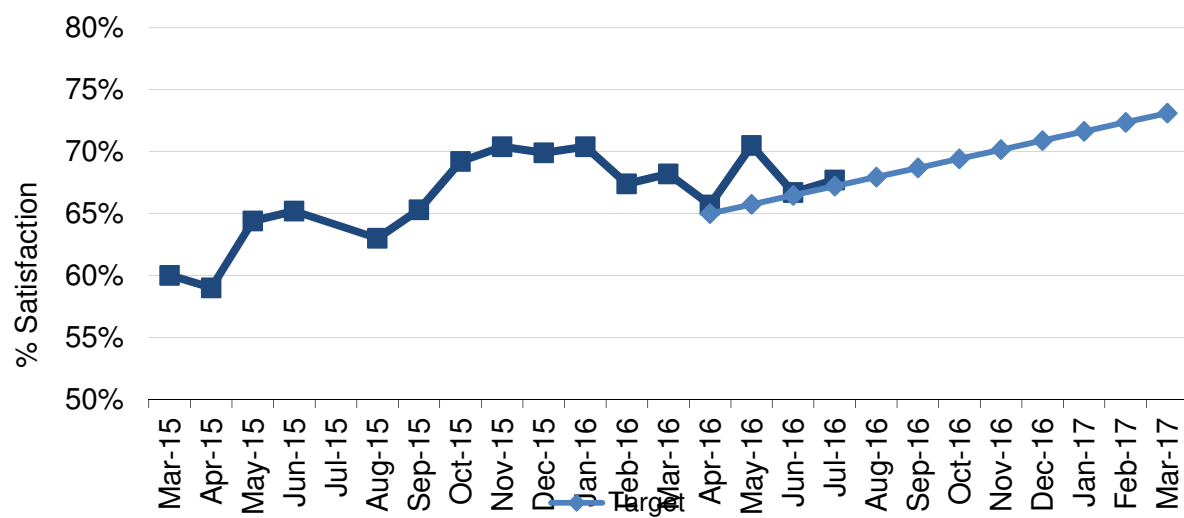
Plan and Next Steps

- Business/Technical requirements finalised – September 2016

- Site visits to neighbouring local authorities – August & September 2016

- Business Case & Approvals – September 2016

APPENDIX 4 – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TRENDS

Customer Satisfaction with Contact Centre

Customer Satisfaction – Contact Centre
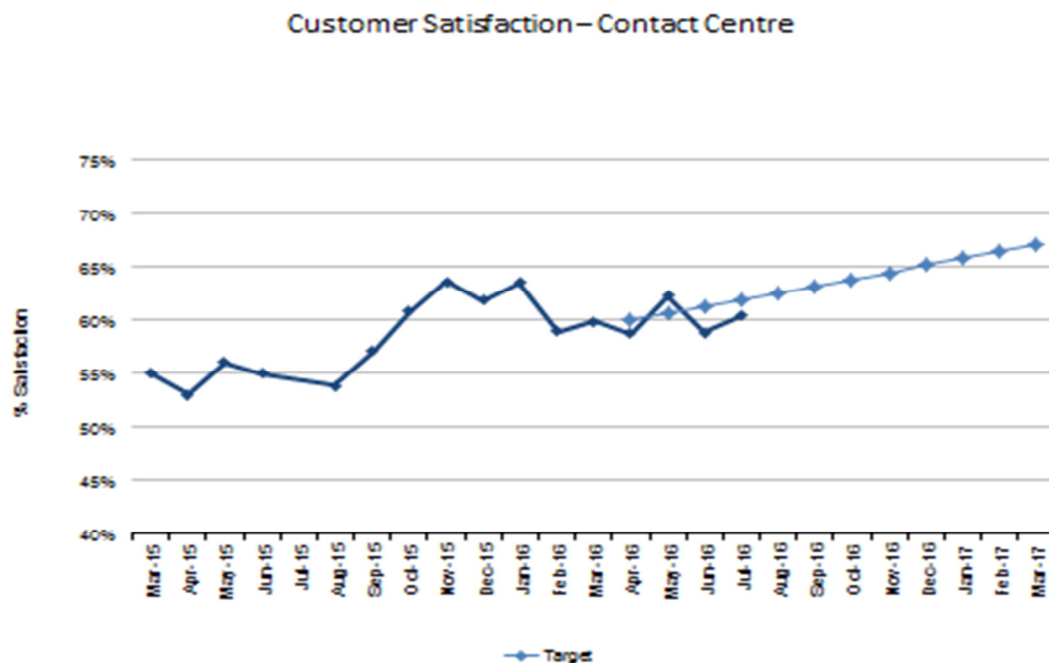
Advisor Willingness To Help

Customer Satisfaction – End-to-End

	Month	Contact Centre		End-to-End	
		CSAT overall	Number of survey responses	**CSAT overall**	Number of survey responses
18	May-15	**56%**	1,426	**57%**	314
19	Jun-15	**55%**	1,514	**54%**	61
20	Jul-15	**55%**	1,515	**55%**	188
21	Aug-15	**54%**	827	**55%**	71
22	Sep-15	**57%**	1,307	**46%**	246
23	Oct-15	**61%**	1,193	**52%**	238
24	Nov-15	**64%**	1,134	**58%**	297
25	Dec-15	**62%**	1,212	**48%**	288
26	Jan-16	**64%**	1,192	**50%**	298
27	Feb-16	**59%**	1,289	**51%**	476
28	Mar-16	**60%**	1,309	**52%**	474
29	Apr-16	**59%**	1,126	**49%**	370
30	May-16	**62%**	1,052	**50%**	326
31	Jun-16	**59%**	1,323	**52%**	353
32	Jul-16	**58%**	681	**52%**	261

Appendix 5 – Birmingham Promise

Birmingham Promise Measures 2016/17

- If you make a complaint, we will: - acknowledge it and provide you with a reference number; - investigate the complaint thoroughly; - send you a full response or an update within 15 working days

- When you make a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support, we will make a decision on your claim within 10 days of receiving it.

- If you report a dangerous pothole or other dangerous defect we will make it safe within one hour*

- If you report a dangerous pothole or other dangerous defect we will make temporary repairs within 24 hours*

- If you report a dangerous pothole or other dangerous defect we will fully repair the street within 28 days*

- We will repair red traffic light signal fault within 2 hours*

- We will repair unlit street lights, within 1 month*

- We will respond to council housing emergency repairs within 2 hours*

- We will resolve council housing routine repairs within 30 days*

- If you report any tree that is considered dangerous by our qualified Tree Officer, we will ensure the tree is attended to and the area made safe within 2 hours.

- Hold appeals for reception or year 7 school places within 40 school days
- Offer a place at the nearest school with availability within 10 school days if you have not received an offer
- Have an independent appeal panel consider in-year appeals within 30 school days of receiving you're an appeal application

- Process applications for Blue Badges, within 40 working days of receiving all required documents.

Those marked with an asterix are contractual KPI's