

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Performance and Contract Management Committee</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">15 February 2016</h3>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Members' Enquiries Service: Progress Report</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Bill Murphy, Barnet Partnership Customer Services Director
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A: Initial Improvement Plan Appendix B: New Actions Arising From Workshops Appendix C: Members' Enquiries Service Performance Data Appendix D: Example of My Account Tracking Screen
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## Summary

CSG Customer Services provide and manage a Members' Enquiries service. As a result of Members receiving an inconsistent service, a review of the service was requested by Members of this Committee to ensure that the service standards were understood and to identify areas for improvement.

This report is the third report to this Committee on the subject of Members' Enquiries, and shows that the majority of improvement actions have now been completed and performance has significantly improved. It also includes details of improvements introduced to the Members' Enquiries process by Customer Services that will be incorporated into the "business as usual" operation.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. The Committee notes progress against the action plan.**
- 2. The Committee notes the service improvement to date and agree that the ongoing quarterly monitoring reports will provide regular updates on how the member enquiry service is performing.**

### **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

- 1.1 This report was requested by Members in order to provide an update on the actions outlined in the previous reports.
- 1.2 Members perform a vital role for their wards, listening to residents' varied concerns and prioritising the problems in their ward that most urgently need resolution. The Members' Enquiries service is important because it provides a central controlled mechanism for ensuring every case raised by members is managed to a consistent set of standards, which includes a special level of monitoring and chasing that is not in place for standard enquiries and requests.
- 1.3 Customer Services has implemented a number of improvements, and the results can be seen in Appendix C. This illustrates an improvement in closure and response rates since March 2015 as follows
  - % Responded to in 5 days has improved from 89% to 99%
  - % Closed in 5 days has improved from 61% to 80%
- 1.4 In addition, Customer Services has been actively encouraging officers in delivery units to close enquiries that were not closed within 5 days. Tables 1, 2 and 3 (below) shows that Members' Enquiries open for more than 10 days have substantially reduced, from 12 on 22 September 2015, to 4 when the most recent snapshot was taken on 14 January.

**Table 1**

<b>Position 14/01/2016</b>	<b>Less than 10 days old</b>	<b>10 to 19 days old</b>	<b>20 to 29 days old</b>	<b>30 to 39 days old</b>	<b>40+ days old</b>	<b>Total &gt; 10 Days</b>
Assurance Group	1	0	0	0	0	0
Commissioning Group	1	2	0	0	1	3
CSG	20	0	0	0	0	0
Education & Skills	1	0	0	0	0	0
RE	38	1	0	0	0	1
Street Scene	12	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 2**

<b>Position at 22/10/15</b>	Less than 10 days old	10 to 19 days old	20 to 29 days old	30 to 39 days old	40+ days old	Total > 10 Days
Adults & Communities	3	0	0	0	0	0
Commissioning Group	13	1	0	0	0	1
CSG	7	0	0	0	0	0
Education & Skills	5	0	0	0	0	0
Family Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
RE	44	5	1	0	0	6
Street Scene	26	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

**Table 3**

<b>Position at 22/09/15</b>	Less than 10 days old	10 to 19 days old	20 to 29 days old	30 to 39 days old	40+ days old	Total > 10 Days
Adults & Communities	3	0	0	0	0	0
Commissioning Group	8	0	0	1	2	3
CSG	6	2	0	0	4	6
Education & Skills	1	0	0	0	0	0
Family Services	2	0	0	0	0	0
RE	39	0	0	0	2	2
Street Scene	13	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

The service will continue to focus on closing enquiries on time and actively ‘chasing up’ and escalating any enquiries that are taking time to close.

Table 4 below shows the volume and percentage of members enquiries closed within five days by delivery unit over the last 3 quarters, with the latest Q3 data showing a significant improvement in the rate of enquiries closure within five days.

**Table 4**

	% closed in 5 days in Q3 October		% closed in 5 days in Q2 July -		% closed in 5 days in Q1	
	Vol	%	Vol	%	Vol	%
Adults & Communities	13	69.2%	28	92.9%	17	70.6%
Assurance	5	60.0%	-	-	-	-
Commissioning Group	143	73.4%	73	72.6%	24	83.3%
CSG	93	82.8%	133	74.4%	190	76.3%
Education & Skills	26	84.6%	35	85.7%	39	61.5%
Family Services	14	85.7%	15	60.0%	14	78.6%
RE	542	70.3%	614	66.1%	514	58.0%
Street Scene	223	86.1%	260	88.8%	201	68.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,059</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>73.7%</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>64.8%</b>

It should be noted that non-priority requests to highways, such as non priority pavement repairs, will not be closed within 5 days and may take up to 30 days to be fully delivered.

The performance table Appendix C shows that there has been a steady improvement month by month, with the highest performance to date achieved in December.

### **Actions Already Taken or In Progress**

- 1.5 Appendix A outlines the actions that have been taken and current status of each action.
- 1.6 Appendix B shows the additional actions we have undertaken as a direct result of member feedback from the two workshops that took place in October 2015.

### **Summary of Key Actions and Activity Since Last Report**

- 1.7 The following is a summary of the key actions that have been completed since the last report:
  - The first of the new round of Ward meetings have been scheduled during January and February.
  - A communication was issued to Members in December with all the requested information about how the members enquiries process works and the standards applied.
  - A process for escalating enquiries that have not been resolved satisfactorily was communicated to members on 20 November 2015. 7 escalations have been received up to 14 January 2015.
  - During November and December two events were held at Hendon Town Hall for Members' to view how My Account can make it easier to report multiple environmental issues and track their progress in one place. An example of the My Account tracking screen can be seen in Appendix D.
  - The following process changes have been implemented to improve the management of members' emails:
    - Improved process to ensure emails are sent to the correct officer
    - Better escalation to senior officers if a response is late or unsatisfactory
    - Improved classification of cases so that they are sent to the correct recipient and reported on effectively
    - Diarise and track due dates for delayed or closed cases so that follow up actions are delivered and communicated
    - Improved management of emails with multiple stakeholders so that all relevant members are updated about a case
    - Better progress chasing of cases where a member emails an officer directly
    - Where cases involve multiple Delivery Units ensuring that a single case reference number is used when communicating with the member.
  - We are now monitoring misdirected enquiries and will be able to report on these from February 2016.
  - Induction – Following the feedback from the workshop on the induction process for the Councillors, we have provided feedback to the Assurance Director who is revising the induction materials. The updated process for Members' Enquiries has been added to the material.

- Progression of Works – The Chief Executive is currently holding weekly meetings where overdue cases are debated. In the main, they relate to planned works with budgetary implications.

1.8 These improvements are now incorporated into the normal day-to-date operations of the Coventry service centre to such ensure that the improvements are maintained.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To continue to improve the Members' Enquiries Service to ensure it meets customer needs and expectations to support the residents of Barnet.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

3.1 Not applicable.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 Many of the improvements described have already been implemented. The action plans in Appendices A and B provide more details of due dates.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 Customer Services is a corporate priority for Barnet as described in the Corporate Plan.

5.1.2 The Corporate Plan explains that Customer services will be intuitive and flexible, with increased user satisfaction:

- By 2020, the majority of customer interaction with the council will be via the web and other self-service channels which will be quicker and more flexible.
- Customers will experience a consistently high quality personalised service, focussed on achieving fast and effective resolution of queries and requests.
- Customer services will be intuitive, recognising the interests of users and sign-posting them to other services they might require.
- Resolution of issues raised at the first point of contact with the council will occur over 80% of the time and satisfaction with the services people receive will consistently exceed 90%.

5.1.3 The Performance Indicator for responding to Member Enquiries is 95% within five days, where responding includes advising of any delay. Customer Services is responsible for replying to delivery units' outstanding enquiries where delay is advised.

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 The action plan utilises existing resources within Customer Services, there are no

additional resource implications, and no requirement for additional IT investment. There are a few minor configuration changes to the email and Lagan CRM (customer relationship management) system resulting from the action plan the costs of these will be managed within existing resources.

### **5.3 Social Value**

- 5.3.1 Continued improvements to the Members' Enquiries process will ensure Members receive quicker and more accurate responses to enquiries which are raised in response to concerns from residents, or are raised for the benefit of residents.
- 5.3.2 The Committee is advised that the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

### **5.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.4.1 [Council's Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A](#) details the functions of the Performance and Contract Management Committee which include (amongst other responsibilities):
- Overall responsibility for quarterly budget monitoring, including monitoring trading position and financial strategy of Council Delivery Units.
  - Monitoring of Performance against targets by Delivery Units and Support Groups including Customer Support Group; Re; the Barnet Group Ltd (including Barnet Homes and Your Choice Barnet); HB Public Law; NSL; Adults and Communities; Family Services; Education and Skills; Street Scene; Public Health; Commissioning Group; and Assurance.
  - To receive and scrutinise contract variations and change requests in respect of external Delivery Units.
  - To make recommendations to Policy and Resources and Theme Committees on relevant policy and commissioning implications arising from the scrutiny of performance of Delivery Units and External Providers.

### **5.5 Risk Management**

- 5.5.1 The process review and the improvements being undertaken will reduce the risk of Members' Enquiries not being resolved in a timely manner.
- 5.5.2 There have been no new risks identified as result of the implementation of the improvements from the action plan.

### **5.6 Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty

which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

5.6.2 The improvements described in this report support Members in their advocacy for all Barnet residents. Improved processes ensure that all residents have their cases managed effectively and that any protected characteristics are taken into account appropriately.

## 5.7 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.7.1 The improvements in this report do not require consultation with the public.

## 5.8 **Insight**

5.8.1 An effective Members' Enquiries process supports the council in understanding the concerns of residents and applying this to service improvement decisions.

## 6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following link can be used to access the report submitted to the committee on 1 September 2015:

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=693&MId=8401&Ver=4>

The following link can be used to access the report submitted to the committee on 17 November 2015:

[Agenda for Performance and Contract Management Committee on Tuesday 17th November, 2015, 7.00 pm](#)

## Appendix A

### **INITIAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Plan updated as at 15 January 2016

<b>ACTION</b>		<b>Owner</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Improved escalation process to be agreed and implemented, and agreed with Delivery Units	CSG Operations Manager	12/06/2015	Complete
2	Generate an ME escalation mailbox (Barnet.gov.uk) for Members to use to escalate enquiries which have not been dealt with, which is to be monitored regularly and at least daily.	CSG Head of Business Assurance	12/06/2015	Complete
3	Identify the escalation points for each delivery unit service area with the lead officer and regularly check the accuracy of this list in Service Improvement Meetings on an annual basis for review.	CSG Customer Experience Manager	19/06/2015	Complete
4	Review the documented Members Enquiries process to reflect process improvements made, produce revised process document & training materials. Issue to the Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes with a proposal for dealing with categorisation issue and define deadline.	CSG Head of Business Assurance	30/11/2015	In progress
5	Review the Members' Enquiries process with appropriate Delivery Units / service areas. The process differs by service area and would be more efficient if all Members' Enquiries were managed with a common system.	CSG Operations Manager	14/08/2015	Complete & Ongoing
6	Ensure completed process improvements are communicated to Members.	CSG Operations Manager	31/08/2015	Complete
<b>TRAINING</b>				
7	Deliver scenario based training workshop based on actual real life examples and results of training needs analysis to colleagues that manage Members Enquiries. This is part of our regular training regime for staff dealing with Members Enquiries.	CSG Operations Manager	26/06/2015	Complete
<b>PEOPLE</b>				
8	Review resource allocated and existing skill set within Members' Enquiries team. Target Operating Model in place. Job advert issued and development plan discussed. Recruit and train new case officers.	CSG Operations Manager	31/08/2015	Complete
9	Organise a visit to the Coventry contact centre for Members to see the Members' Enquiry process and the quality procedures in place.	CSG Operations Manager	30/08/2015	Complete

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION				
10	Review the opportunities to deliver proactive reporting regarding delivery of Member enquiries by DU. This will be communicated via CSWG.	CSG Customer Experience Manager/Operations Manager	30/09/2015	Complete
11	Provide case data for the weekly customer bulletin.	CSG Customer Experience Manager	31/07/2015	Complete
12	Conduct additional investigation into Members Enquiries which are reported to have been incorrectly categorised, and give attention to correct categorisation of service requests & FOI with feedback on improvements being made to the operational team. <i>This Action ties into process document review.</i>	CSG Operations Manager	30/08/2015	Complete
QUALITY MANAGEMENT				
13	Continued implementation of improved quality management regime into the contact centre which includes all communication channels and services.	CSG Head of Business Assurance	30/10/2015	Ongoing
14	Continued monitoring of emails by the Business Assurance team, feedback and coaching to be delivered by the Team Manager, and root cause analysis to be included in Service Improvement Plans. Monitoring includes assessing misdirected enquiries and enquiries which have been incorrectly categorised.	CSG Head of Business Assurance	On-going	Ongoing
15	Investigate the use of systems to provide further analysis of Members' enquiries to enhance root cause analysis. Assign a CDT member to ME improvements	CSG Head of Business Assurance	31/10/2015	Ongoing
16	Identify opportunities to improve management information regarding the length of time taken to close cases.	CSG Management Information Manager	31/10/2015	Complete
ACTIONS ADDED SINCE LAST COMMITTEE REPORT				
17	ME case only to be re-opened or reclassified with appropriate approval – incorporate into the process	CSG Operations Manager / Contract Manager	14/09/2015	Ongoing
18	Take examples of categories and workshop them with Streetscene and Re to arrive at the robust solution (feedback and process improvement), feedback to Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes	CSG Operations Manager	15/11/2015	Ongoing
19	Create Customer Service working group with members	CSG Operations Director	31/10/2015	Complete
20	Diarise the due dates of enquiries that have been 'delay advised' and closed and follow up with Delivery Unit to ensure update is sent to the Member	CSG Contract Manager	31/10/2015	Complete (spreadsheet created)

21	New task to be added to LAGAN to allow tracking number of chasers. Reporting to include days to close. (process happening, have raw data – need a report)	CSG CDT / Operations Manager	31/10/2015	Process change dependent as current lagan functionality does not support this.
22	<p>Agree and document new processes with Delivery Units in particular the following</p> <p>Where a closed case requires an update to the Member implement a solution that flags the due date to the ME Team to follow up with the Delivery Unit. In the interim this will be managed via a spreadsheet process</p> <p>Work with Delivery Units to provide examples of enquiries that have not had the required follow up to satisfy Members expectations</p> <p>Work with Delivery Units to target responding on 4<sup>th</sup> day at the latest to ensure cases do not exceed the expected service level</p>	CSG Operations Manager	30/11/2015	Ongoing
23	Clarify with Bill Murphy and Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes the definition of a service request - include into workshop discussion with members	CSG Operations Manager	09/10/2015	Complete

## Appendix B

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM WORKSHOPS

Plan Formulated on 26 October 2015 and updated as at 15 January 2016

ACTION		Owner	Due Date	Status
1	Investigate how best to support members in resolving key complex issues affecting their wards, where the Members' Enquiries process is not the best vehicle	Strategic Commissioning Board	31/11/15	Complete
2	Ensure Members receive a communication that clarifies how to use the Members' Enquiries process and in particular how to escalate any issues	Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes  CSG Operations Manager  Barnet Partnership – Customer Services Director	30/11/15	Complete
3	Review process for keeping Members updated on progression of works	Barnet Partnership – Customer Services Director	31/12/15	Complete
4	Follow up Members feedback regarding induction process	Assurance Director	31/12/15	Complete
5	Ask the person responding to the member's enquiry to ensure all that those originally copied in by the Member are also copied into the response, unless the member requests otherwise or there is a confidentiality issue.	CSG Operations Manager	06/11/15	Complete
6	Identify how well the primary customer channels such as My Account can support members when they raise service requests (such as request to repair a road or clear fly tipping) on behalf of residents, so that key stakeholders can be kept informed and these items do not need to be duplicated through the members enquiries process – further drop in surgeries are planned	Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes	30/11/15	Complete
7	Ensure Members Enquiries team are adhering to the expectations of Members to progress chase enquiries that they are copied into	CSG Operations Manager	31/10/15	Complete
8	Where an Enquiry has generated multiple reference numbers due to more than one Delivery Unit being involved, emails back to Members should be clear on the originating issue/reference number, and should include the email trail for ease of reference. MC and BW to work through the scenarios (meeting on Monday to agree the next steps)	CSG Operations Manager	31/10/15	Complete

9	Work with Delivery Units to ensure responses to Service Requests and Members' Enquiries include notification of whether a budget issue is likely to arise in relation to the Request. Collate a sample of Re answers for analysis, particularly around the responses around programmed works. Collate them at the end of the month and feedback to Re Weekly meetings with CE/escalations	CSG Operations Manager  Barnet Partnership – Customer Services Director	30/11/15	Complete
10	Look to track and report on sending an enquiry to the correct Officer and the time for the Officer to notify Customer Services if the enquiry is routed incorrectly. Work with Officers to ensure they triage all enquiries as soon as possible to prevent unnecessary delay in the event of being routed incorrectly. Write to all lead officers to advise of the process for triage and sending back (NP WC 23/11). Volume of emails sent to right place and how long it took to get them back. From 1 January to track and report in CS report	CSG Operations Manager  Barnet Partnership – Customer Services Director	31/12/15	Ongoing
11	Review the content of emails and standard templates being sent to Members regarding the status of the enquiry to make sure that the update is more specific and less generic (template driven) and implement improvements.	CSG Operations Manager / Head of Business Assurance	30/11/15	Closed - monitoring
12	Update process document to account for all the changes implemented recently	CSG Operations Manager / Head of Business Assurance	30/12/15	Ongoing

## Appendix C

### **Members' Enquiries Service Performance Data**

The following table shows the total volume of enquiries submitted and the closure and response rates. This illustrates an improvement in both measures since March 2015 as follows

- % Responded to in 5 days has improved from 88.5% to 98.7%
- % Closed in 5 days has improved from 60.5% to 80.4%

Month	Items due	Closed in 5 days	% Closed in 5 days	Not closed in 5 days	% Not closed in 5 days	Delay advised	% Delay advised	Responded to in 5 days	% Responded to in 5 days
January	298	220	73.8%	78	26.2%	64	21.5%	284	95.3%
February	324	239	73.8%	85	26.2%	69	21.3%	308	95.1%
March	365	221	60.5%	144	39.5%	102	27.9%	323	88.5%
April	374	231	61.8%	143	38.2%	129	34.5%	360	96.3%
May	288	210	72.9%	78	27.1%	69	24.0%	279	96.9%
June	340	207	60.9%	133	39.1%	113	33.2%	320	94.1%
July	449	334	74.4%	115	25.6%	90	20.0%	424	94.4%
August	305	227	74.4%	78	25.6%	64	21.0%	291	95.4%
September	404	293	72.5%	111	27.5%	89	22.0%	382	94.6%
October	412	305	74.0%	107	26.0%	91	22.1%	396	96.7%
November	377	279	74.0%	98	26.0%	83	22.0%	362	96.6%
December	270	217	80.4%	53	19.6%	49	18.1%	266	98.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4206</b>	<b>2983</b>	<b>70.9%</b>	<b>1223</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>1012</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>3995</b>	<b>95.0%</b>

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## Appendix D

### Example of My Account Tracking Screen

The screenshot shows a user interface for tracking local issues. On the left, a sidebar lists categories: Local area (selected), Council Tax, Benefits, Bins & waste collection, Parking and Travel, and Libraries. The main area displays a table of reported issues with columns: Description, Reported, Location Near, Street Name, and Status.

Description	Reported	Location Near	Street Name	Status
Pothole in road	08/12/2015	Large pothole - middle of the road	TOTTERIDGE LANE	open
Domestic Waste and Recycling-Missed Collection	10/11/2015		BUILDING 4 NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH	closed
Domestic Waste and Recycling-Missed Collection	10/11/2015		BUILDING 4 NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH	closed
Offensive graffiti	10/11/2015	graffiti TEST	SPENCER ROAD FOOTPATH FROM MOUNT PLEASANT TO BELMONT AVENUE	closed
Offensive graffiti	10/11/2015	Test Report a problem - Graffiti	BUILDING 4 NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH	closed
Domestic Waste and Recycling-Missed Collection	10/11/2015		BUILDING 4 NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH	closed
Domestic Waste and Recycling-Missed Collection	02/12/2015		BUILDING 4 NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH	closed