

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member




REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L15 22/23

| Decision | | | | |
|----------|---|------------|-----------|--|
| 1 | Title of decision: Changes to Contact Centre Services | | | |
| 2 | Decision maker: Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of the Council | | | |
| 3 | Report author and contact details: Anna Constantinou – Service Manager, Business Support - Anna.constantinou@plymouth.gov.uk | | | |
| 4 | Decision to be taken: To review the Contact Centre service offer and staffing resources to only meet the needs of priority/statutory Council services or customers who will be digitally excluded, support those wishing to make payments and promoting online services for all other services, as detailed below. | | | |
| 5 | Reasons for decision: To support the Council to deliver a planned and sustainable budget and enhance performance for priority lines whilst also supporting the City's most vulnerable and digitally excluded. The recommendation service offer will continue to support customers needing to access statutory services and customers that are digitally excluded or wishing to make a payment. Customers are also able to access some support through their local library. | | | |
| 6 | Alternative options considered and rejected: Option 1 – Cease all Contact Centre service offer. Not recommended due to impact on the access and provision of statutory services, supporting vulnerable/digitally excluded customers and income to the Council. Option 2 – Continue offering current service provision. Not recommended due as this will not offer any savings to support the Council's ability to deliver a planned and sustainable budget. | | | |
| 7 | Financial implications and risks: This decision will create £50k in savings in year through the reduction in staff resource from posts currently vacant. There are no financial risks. | | | |
| 8 | Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice) | Yes | No | Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which: in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total |
| | | | x | |

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|-------------------------|--|---|-------------|--|
| | | | x | in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million |
| | | | X | is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority. |
| | If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions | 21 September 2022 | | |
| 9 | Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget: | This supports the Corporate Plan by offering Fair access to our services for those who cannot support themselves, focusing resources and prioritising the city's most vulnerable. It reflects our need to provide value for money and support the Council's desire to ensure that we are making the most of the benefits of digital and technology for our staff, residents and visitors. | | |
| 10 | Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact) | Promoting digital first will continue to reduce unnecessary journeys around Plymouth to gain access to services or information available via our website. | | |
| Urgent decisions | | | | |
| 11 | Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? | Yes | | (If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice) |
| | | No | x | (If no, go to section 13a) |
| 12a | Reason for urgency: | | | |
| 12b | Scrutiny Chair Signature: | | Date | |
| | Scrutiny Committee name: | | | |
| | Print Name: | | | |
| Consultation | | | | |
| 13a | Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? | Yes | x | |
| | | No | | (If no go to section 14) |
| 13b | Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision? | Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport - Councillor Pat Patel | | |

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| I3c | Date Cabinet member consulted | 02/09/2022 | | |
| I4 | Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer |
| | | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I5 | Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted? | Name | Andy Ralphs | |
| | | Job title | Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services Customer and Corporate Services | |
| | | Date consulted | 25 August 2022 | |
| Sign-off | | | | |
| I6 | Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted: | Democratic Support (mandatory) | DS63 22/23 | |
| | | Finance (mandatory) | DJN22.23.229 | |
| | | Legal (mandatory) | MS/39367 | |
| | | Human Resources (if applicable) | | |
| | | Corporate property (if applicable) | | |
| | | Procurement (if applicable) | | |
| Appendices | | | | |
| I7 | Ref. | Title of appendix | | |
| | A | Equalities Impact Assessment | | |
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| Confidential/exempt information | | | | |
| I8a | Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in I8b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain) |
| | | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

| | | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18b | Confidential/exempt briefing report title: | | | | | | | |
| Background Papers | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | <p>Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below.</p> <p>Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</p> | | | | | | | |
| Title of background paper(s) | | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | |
| Cabinet Member Signature | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | <p>I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.</p> | | | | | | | |
| Signature |  | Date of decision | 27/10/2022 | | | | | |
| Print Name | Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of Plymouth City Council | | | | | | | |

Recommendation Detail:

The Contact Centre currently offers first point of contact telephone and email enquiries for:

| Service | Priority status |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Adult Social Care | Priority – statutory service |
| Building Control | Non-priority |
| Children’s Social Care | Priority - statutory service |
| Client Financial Services | Priority - income |
| Community Connections | Non-priority and priority – statutory service |
| Corporate Property | Non-priority |
| Electoral Services | Priority - statutory service |
| General main PCC enquiry line | Non-priority and priority |
| Highways | Non-priority |
| Parking & Public Transport | Non-priority |
| Public Protection | Non-priority |
| Registration | Priority - statutory service |
| Waste & Streets | Non-priority |

Between 1st January and 31st July 2022 there were 114,712 calls to the Contact Centre of which 53,109 (46%) were for non-priority services and 61,603 (54%) priority line callers.

Proposal

To focus staff resources on supporting the following priority lines and create new lines to support customers who are digitally excluded or wish to make a payment.

| Service | Priority status |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Adult Social Care | Priority – statutory service |
| Children’s Social Care | Priority - statutory service |
| Community Connections | Priority – statutory homeless services |
| Electoral Services | Priority - statutory service |
| Registration | Priority - statutory service |
| Customer Digital Assistance (new) | Non-priority and priority |
| Payments (new) | Non-priority and priority for those customers not able to make payments though digital offers |

Services to be removed and support via self-serve functions:

| Service | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Building Control | Digital offer - payments through new line |
| Parking & Public Transport | Digital offer - payments through new line |
| Public Protection | Digital offer - payments through new line |
| Client Financial Services | Payments can be made through new line |
| Community Connections | Digital Offer - other than homelessness queries |
| Corporate Property | Digital Offer |
| Highways | Digital Offer |
| Waste & Streets | Digital offer - payments through new line |

This recommendation will:

- ensure that staff are focusing on supporting customers needing to access statutory services and those that are digitally excluded
- protects the Council's income through providing a payment line for those not able to do so through digital offers
- customers are also able to access some support through their local library
- the Council's desire to ensure that we are making the most of the benefits of digital and technology for our staff, residents and visitors
- support the Council to deliver a planned and sustainable budget
- through closing non-priority lines and transferring more focus onto priority lines will improve priority line performance

| Risks | |
|---|---|
| Description | Mitigation |
| Customers who are not digitally excluded using the new Customer Digital Assistance line | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging to be clear to callers the purpose of the offer and average waiting times and reminder of self-serve options • Monitor impact to contact centre with the digitally excluded support line, monitor volume of calls, and with strong support from contact centre to confirm their enquiry must be dealt with online to see demand to this phone queue reduce over time |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure agreed firm criteria for what customers will be entitled to obtain support via phone, and ensure team have a clear process to follow |
| Lack of awareness of digital offers for non-priority service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with services area to ensure that their digital offer is accessible • Ensure self-serve is promoted via our social media channels, web pages and email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring customers can self-serve easily and have the information they need available to them online and that web page ownership takes place with frequent checks and updates to information available ○ Focus on customers who are not so active with digital means of communication but could use in the future with support such as letters or signing up with family and friend support. |
| Negative Digital Customer experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor complaints received, manage these customers with sensitivity and support to engage digitally, and monitor complaints reducing over a period |
| Meeting any increase in demand for informal IT support and general front door Council queries through libraries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently libraries can assist with the level of requests however this will need to be monitored as increase in traffic volumes will impact both abilities to meet customers expectation and impact the delivery on library functions. • There is also a risk that Libraries could be asked to respond to general council queries or complaints. |
| Impact on customers wishing to access non-priority services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor complaints received and provided feedback through service area interface meetings through lesson learned approach |