

## Digitilisation of the Contact Centre

<b>Committee name</b>	Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Louise Forster / Dan Kennedy
<b>Papers with report</b>	NIL
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

Hillingdon's ambition for residents is to be a digital-enabled, modern, well-run Council. In May 2022, a review commenced of contacts and services being received into the contact centre across telephone and email channels. Following the review, and in support of the Council strategy, Hillingdon began implementing AWS (Amazon Web Service) voice automation at the front end of our direct dial golden numbers. This technology is supporting the use and rollout of the MyAccount portal for residents, which allows residents to register an enquiry, receive a response, and further information all in one place, accessible via the Council website. This is an easy to use, convenient way to contact the Council.

This report presents a high-level overview for the Select Committee with an evaluation of the financial impact, benefits and strategic advantages gained from utilising AWS services. The analysis considers both quantitative and qualitative factors to determine the overall impact of AWS on the residents contacting the Council by telephone, with a view to increase accessibility to services, improve operational efficiencies, reduce costs, and focus on the role of supporting our residents unable to use digital services.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee:**

**Notes the update set out in this report, to improve the resident experience and efficiency in meeting needs, using new digital technologies.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Hillingdon went live with AWS with the Housing repairs line in November 2022; Housing Tenancy and Environment (majority) and Waste followed in December 2022. In January 2023, the Access Team within the Contact Centre took the lead responsibility for the discovery, build and development of the AWS system for the remaining services. Previously support had been provided externally for this.

To date this team has implemented AWS for the HFC (Hillingdon First Card) scheme, Hillingdon Adult Social Care, Blue Badge / Freedom Pass / Telecare, Registrars and Electoral Services.

---

Classification: Public

Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee – 18 July 2023

Planning, Planning Enforcement, Building Control and School admissions went live on 7 and 8 June and the remainder of Environmental services on 30 June 2023. With all services accessed via the Contact Centre now accessible via AWS, a review of all call scripts and outputs is being undertaken and a plan is being implemented for continuous improvement.

Below is a table showing the volumes of telephone calls being received into the AWS system and how many are served through the automated system through the provision of either the information available on the Council's website or by providing a link to the appropriate form or reporting site, with the associated forms submitted being available through a resident MyAccount. The table also shows how many callers queued to speak to an agent.

2022 - 2023	Calls incoming	Calls to agent	% Queued for an agent	Handled by AWS	% Handled by AWS
November	12,849	4,772	37%	8,077	63%
December	24,818	10,655	43%	14,163	57%
January	30,108	15,560	52%	14,548	48%
February	24,705	13,406	54%	11,299	46%
March	30,630	16,780	55%	13,850	45%
April	29,524	15,999	54%	13,525	46%
May	33544	18867	56%	14677	44%
June	38217	21743	57%	16474	43%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>224125</b>	<b>117282</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>106613</b>	<b>48%</b>

It should be noted that the first two months of implementation showed that there were a higher percentage of residents redialling the direct dial lines, as they got used to the change to the reporting process.

Officers anticipate that, the longer the system is in place and telephone contact is limited to those that need help and support or for those circumstances that are deemed appropriate for an agent to intervene, the higher the expected percentage of people being connected to an agent.

The Council has been focused on developing channels that provide more flexibility to residents to access services when they want them. Over the last year there has been significant work to integrate the MyAccount, online forms, telephone, web chat and email contacts within the end-to-end process by using AWS as an enabler by providing users with a link to either the appropriate form or information. This has led to a growth in self-service for transactional services. By the end of the first week of June 2023 Hillingdon has 132,826 self-service residents registered. These same users have reported / applied using self-service 195,898 times or 76% times through their MyAccount since it went live in June 2021.

Monthly monitoring for April, May and June of 2023/2024, across the telephone and email is showing that the Contact Centre saw a monthly reduction of 32%, 27% and 24% respectively.

This reduction has enabled the contact centre to reduce its establishment by 15.63 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) at the commencement of this budget year, a full year saving of £607,400.

## **RESIDENT BENEFIT**

Residents benefit from greater accessibility (24/7) to services and a direct contact with the services allocated to their submission via their MyAccount. Also from identified and improved operational efficiencies on the end-to-end process, providing a transactional view and status updates, removing the need for residents needing to go to the expense and time to call the Council, and a decreasing call wait time for residents needing to speak to a Contact Centre agent. The Contact centre can reduce costs and focus on the role of supporting those residents unable to use digital services.

It should be noted that there are still some outstanding end-to-end processes that need to be completed in Housing Repairs, Adult Social Care and Waste with dry bags and Street Cleansing; these are on the ICT work programme. Once completed a resident will have full transparency to view the status of the request and will have direct access to the caseworker / officer.

These end-to-end processes will also positively reduce the activities the contact centre teams need to be involved in. Officers would look to reduce resource with a phased approach when each of these processes are fully implemented, reducing costs further.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None directly from the recommendations set out in this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil.

## **APPENDICES**

Nil.