



Managing Streetpride customer contacts in Derby Direct

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This paper summarises the role of Derby Direct in helping to manage customer contacts for a range of Council services including the Streetpride service and highlights the role self service technology within Derby Direct has had in improving customer service and reducing costs.
- 1.2 This paper also details the actions Derby Direct took to minimise the impact on customer contact as a result of the anticipated increase in customer contact from the Rounds Rebalancing project.
- 1.3 This paper describes the significant performance Derby Direct has delivered in managing the increased volume of customer contacts as a result of the Round Rebalancing project.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the year on year improvement in performance by Derby Direct in managing customer contact for Council services including the Streetpride services.
- 2.2 To note the performance of Derby Direct in managing customer contacts as part of the Rounds Rebalancing project.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The implementation of the vision for Customer Management has contributed to a significant and sustained improvement in the performance of Derby Direct.
- 3.2 The actions Derby Direct took in collaboration with the Streetpride service has helped to absorb a 153% increase in customer contacts minimising the impact on waiting times.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Derby Direct helps to manage customer contact for 25 Council services across a range of contact channels including, internet, email, telephone and in person at 1 Albion Street as well as other Council and non-Council locations.
- 4.2 In the 12 months from 1 October 2010 Derby Direct has managed 314,561 contacts for these services – 96.4% of all customer contacts. A monthly analysis of Derby Directs' performance in managing customer contacts for that period can be found in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 The Streetpride service is a service Derby Direct has helped to deliver since 2008 and the table below shows the year on year performance improvement made by Derby Direct in managing customer contacts for that service.

Period		Contacts Offered	Contacts Managed	% Managed	Average Waiting Time
01/04/2008	31/03/2009	96,470	62,869	65.2%	00:03:10
01/04/2009	31/03/2010	63,939	55,356	86.6%	00:01:33
01/04/2010	31/03/2011	69,152	68,563	99.1%	00:00:15

There has been a significant increase in the percentage of contacts managed and a similar significant reduction in the average waiting time for those customers wanting to speak to an advisor.

- 4.4 The step change in performance came in August 2009 when an automated telephone system was implemented to support the Streetpride service. With this system customers were able to 'do things for themselves' and as a result the volume of contacts Customer Service Advisers have had to manage has fallen.

These 'self service' options were:

- the less complex transactions such as reporting a missed bin were left as a structured message reducing the time for a Customer Service Advisor to process the request
- customers were given up to date information about the availability and cost of services reducing the need to speak to an Advisor
- calls were automatically redirected to other Council services and external organisations such as Balfour Beatty for street lighting enquiries
- customers were offered a call back facility if their call was in a queue

Since the implementation of the automated telephone system 35% of all customer contact to the Streetpride service has been made using an automated option.

Every time a customer is prepared to make a service request in the form of a structured message this gives the Customer Service Advisor more of their time to manage more complex calls of calls from more vulnerable customers.

- 4.5 The promotion of the Streetpride email address has resulted in a significant increase in the number of customers choosing this channel to contact the service. 8,758 emails have been received for the Streetpride service since 1 May 2010 an increase of 18% over the previous four months.

Customers can contact the Streetpride service by email at anytime and the changes we implemented as a result of the Rounds Rebalancing project means we now respond to 95% of emails within one working day. Following a review of this process with the Streetpride service there is an opportunity to further streamline and improve this process by ensuring we remove the double handling of emails.

- 4.6 With 108,000 collections per week a small increase in the number of missed bins results in a significant increase in the number of customer contacts.

This was anticipated in the planning of the project and the following actions were implemented to manage the anticipated increase:

- the information messages on 0333 200 6981 were changed to:
 - promote the use of the 'bin day tool' on the Council's web site so that customers could find information about their collection times
 - reduce the number of 'perceived' missed collections by advising customers collections would continue until 4:30pm and to wait until after that time to report a missed bin

30% of customers ended their call after hearing this information

- to manage the later reporting of missed bins working practices were changed so that emails and service requests were processed between 7:30am and 8:30am each morning and from 5:00pm to 6:00pm each evening as well as on Saturday mornings throughout June
- to manage the increase in calls directly following the implementation of the changes to collections on 6 June capacity in Derby Direct was increased by:
 - allocating additional temporary resources
 - training staff that usually manage calls for other services on the Streetpride service
 - offering existing part time staff longer hours
- staff from the back office Streetpride service were moved into Derby Direct to help manage peak volumes
- by reviewing performance with the Streetpride service daily and making changes were needed

- 4.7 The volume of customer contacts to the Streetpride service between 1 May 2011 and 31 August 2011 rose by 153%, an additional 12,491 contacts. This represents 1.9% of all weekly collections compared to an average of 1.0% for the previous 12 months.

- 4.8 The combination of the self serve options on the telephone system, the promotion of the Streetpride email and the changes in working practices meant that whilst contacts increased by 153% Derby Direct increased the number of contacts they managed by 150% and kept average waiting times on the telephone to under 50 seconds.

The chart in Appendix 3 shows how Derby Direct was able to keep pace with the increase in the volume of customer contacts to the Streetpride service.

The use of self service technology is a widely accepted practice by an increasing number of organisations and Customer Management will increase the self service options as we strive to deliver the best possible service within available budgets.

However we appreciate that an automated telephone service can be frustrating for some customers who are already upset with a missed collection.

- 4.9 The vision for Customer Management is that Derby Direct will act on the customer's behalf to help ensure their request is resolved. When there have been problems with the non collection of bins Derby Direct have continued to work with the Streetpride service to resolve these issues whilst keeping the customer informed.

- 4.10 The implementation of the Lagan Customer Relationship Management system – CRM – will further improve how customer contacts are managed. The Lagan CRM system will be implemented in October and will:

- provide one system to record and manage customer contacts
- give one view of a customer
- use business rules to set performance targets for different types of requests
- automatically escalate to senior managers outstanding requests

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The option to use temporary staff to manage the anticipated increase in the volume of calls was considered too costly and was not a sufficiently flexible approach to managing peak demand.
- 5.2 Accepting a lower performance target for the number of contacts managed and a significant increase in call waiting times was not considered a viable option.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Kath Gruber Director of Customer Management Tim Clegg Director of Streetpride
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Name Bernard Fenton 01332 643758 e-mail Bernard.Fenton@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 - Monthly contact management performance Appendix 3 - Managing Streetpride contacts

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The cost of the actions taken to manage the increase in customer contact was limited to £3,500 covering the cost of temporary staff and additional hours for existing staff. This cost was met by the existing Customer Management budget.

Legal

- 2.1 None

Personnel

- 3.1 None

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None

Asset Management

- 7.1 None

Risk Management

- 8.1 None

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 Delivering the One Derby one council principles of simplified and standardised customer management processes. Delivering the self service ambitions of the One Derby one council programme and the Customer Management strategy.



