

# South Hams Overview and Scrutiny Committee



<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>												
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 16th March, 2023</b>												
<b>Time:</b>	<b>2.00 pm</b>												
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Council Chamber - Follaton House</b>												
<b>Full Members:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman</b> Cllr Thomas</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vice Chairman</b> Cllr Smerdon</p> <p><i>Members:</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Cllr Austen</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Cllr Rose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Birch</td> <td>Cllr Rowe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Chown</td> <td>Cllr Spencer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Jackson</td> <td>Cllr Sweett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Jones</td> <td>Cllr Taylor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr McKay</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cllr Austen	Cllr Rose	Cllr Birch	Cllr Rowe	Cllr Chown	Cllr Spencer	Cllr Jackson	Cllr Sweett	Cllr Jones	Cllr Taylor	Cllr McKay	
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Cllr McKay													
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.												
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk												

<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2. Minutes</b> to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee held on 12 January 2023;	<b>1 - 8</b>
<b>3. Urgent Business</b> brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman;	
<b>4. Division of Agenda</b> to consider whether the discussion of any item of business is likely to lead to the disclosure of exempt information;	
<b>5. Declarations of Interest</b>  In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests and Non-Registerable Interests including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting;	
<b>6. Public Forum</b> A period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public;	<b>9 - 10</b>
<b>7. Better Lives for All Thematic Update: Communities</b>	<b>11 - 20</b>
<b>8. Six-monthly Update - Broadband</b>	<b>21 - 24</b>
<b>9. Customer Access Strategy &amp; Contact Centre Update</b>	<b>25 - 34</b>
<b>10. Task and Finish Group Updates</b> a) Consultation and Engagement Strategy – verbal update	
<b>11. O&amp;S Annual Work Programme - Latest Version</b>	<b>35 - 36</b>

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,  
Held in the Council Chamber, Follaton House, Totnes, on  
THURSDAY, 12 January 2023**

<b>Panel Members in attendance:</b>			
* Denotes attendance		∅ Denotes apology for absence	
*	Cllr L Austen	*	Cllr R Rowe
*	Cllr J P Birch	*	Cllr P C Smerdon (Vice Chairman)
*	Cllr M Chown	*	Cllr B Spencer
∅	Cllr S Jackson	*	Cllr J Sweett
*	Cllr L Jones	*	Cllr D Thomas (Chairman)
*	Cllr J McKay	*	Cllr B Taylor
*	Cllr J Rose		

<b>Other Members also in attendance either in person or via Teams:</b>
Cllrs V Abbott; K Baldry; H Bastone; J Brazil; J Hawkins; T Holway; N Hopwood; K Pringle and J Pearce

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Minute Ref No below refers</b>	<b>Officers in attendance and participating</b>
All		Director of Strategy & Governance; Democratic Services Manager; Assistant Director - Strategy & Organisational Development (via Teams); Head of Organisational Development (via Teams); Head of Housing (via Teams); Customer Service Improvement Manager (via Teams); Specialist - Climate Change Head of Environmental Health & Licensing (via Teams) Environmental Health Officer; South Devon & Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership Representative; Devon & Cornwall Police Representative

**O&S.35/22 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following correction being made to Minute ref O&S.32/22 discussion point (c):

*'In particular, it was agreed that the Information Board in the Car Park at Follaton House which provided the Council's recycling rates was accurate and should be removed in view of the information contained in the presented agenda report' should be amended to read:*

*'In particular, it was agreed that the Information Board in the Car Park at Follaton House which provided the Council's recycling rates was **inaccurate** and should be removed in view of the information contained in the presented agenda report.'*

**O&S.36/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but there were none made.

**O&S.37/22 PUBLIC FORUM**

In accordance with the Public Forum Procedure Rules, the Chairman informed that no questions had been received for consideration.

**O&S.38/22 SOUTH DEVON AND DARTMOOR COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee was presented with a report that provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership (CSP). During the presentation, attention was drawn to the introduction of new legislation, the 'Serious Violence Duty', which would result in more responsibilities for the Partnership, although it was confirmed that much preparation work had already been undertaken.

In summarising the focus of the Partnership's work over the previous twelve months, the following work was brought to Members' attention:

- Engagement with Secondary Schools regarding violence against women and girls and harmful sexual behaviour;
- Work to highlight Exploitation – preventing radicalisation, modern slavery, people trafficking and harmful drugs/County Lines;
- Work to highlight changing youth culture and young people's mental health, including the growing problem of vaping amongst young people;
- Work with Children's Care Homes within the District;
- Anti-Social Behaviour issues, particularly concerning increased instances of anti-social behaviour on Dartmoor;
- The Turning Corners Programme delivering Outreach work; and
- The expansion of the 'Let's Talk' Programme, running a number of very well supported and successful sessions for parents.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

(a) A number of Police specific issues were raised that included:

- the importance of police stations operating a front desk resource;
- the emphasis being placed by the recently appointed Chief Constable on neighbourhood policing being welcomed;
- concerns being expressed over the lack of frontline policing levels within the South Hams;
- the lack of police reports at town and parish council meetings being disappointing;
- the priority intention for Police Community Support Officers to be recruited in Dartmouth and Kingsbridge was welcomed;

- the ability for all Members (and local town and parish councillors) to attend the Councillor Advocate Scheme meetings. Despite attendance unfortunately being very low, those Members who attended made reference to how useful these meetings were and it was agreed that a reminder should be sent to all Members and Town and Parish Council Clerks about these meetings taking place.
- (b) It was acknowledged that the Council had certain statutory responsibilities in respect of both anti-social behaviour and the prevention of crime. As a result, Members were encouraged, for matters related to anti-social behaviour and crime prevention, to contact the Council in addition to the Police;
- (c) Having been made aware of the recently adopted Council Motion, Partnership representatives confirmed their support in the drive for vapes to be subjected to the same restrictions as cigarette products;
- (d) The representatives informed that the increased concerns relating to the internet usage of young people was recognised and, as a consequence, the 'Let's Talk' program was being adapted to include a session on this matter.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That, in addition to the points raised in the detailed minute above, the following issues have been identified by the Committee for onward consideration by the Partnership:
  - The increased realisation of all Members and the general public of the statutory role played by the Partnership and the role of Members in reporting instances of anti-social and crime prevention; and
  - The need to promote attendance of Members and Town and Parish Councillors at Councillor Advocate Scheme meetings; and
2. That the Committee formally thank the Partnership for its sterling work over the last 12 months.

### **O&S.39/22 BETTER LIVES FOR ALL – CLIMATE CHANGE THEMATIC UPDATE**

The lead Executive Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity introduced the report and invited Members' questions on the contents of the Climate Change Thematic Update.

In the ensuing debate, particular reference was made to:

- Action AM1.1 (Converting our Environmental Management Vehicles to Electric). It was noted that the Council had been unable to recruit to the short-term post related to fleet planning. However, an alternate resource was now in place and work on the fleet transition was therefore underway. Members acknowledged that there was a current national shortage of Electric Vehicles and an increase in unit costs which, in combination with ensuring the project was progressed with best value for money, could result in the transition of the fleet not being completed by 2024;
- Action AM1.3 (Explore Renewable Energy Opportunities Across the District). Officers advised that this action had not yet commenced as it would need to be undertaken in conjunction with partners, primarily the Devon Climate Emergency Group. As a result, it was suggested that the Plan be updated accordingly, highlighting that the Council would not be able to progress this action until the relevant partners were in a position to proceed;
- Action AM1.4 (Deliver Funding for Community Projects). Questions of clarity were raised on this action specifically regarding the budget position for funding Community Climate Change and Biodiversity Projects and the timeframe in which the funds were expected to be allocated. It was confirmed that, with tightening budgets and as the funds were limited, it was essential that the best and most suitable projects were funded and that any projects coming forward were carefully considered and that, despite the urgency of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency, it was not prudent to fund projects without first undertaking appropriate research and/or feasibility studies. It was further confirmed that part of the remaining budget had already been earmarked for projects such as Fleet Transition or for further feasibility work on new or the next stage of ongoing projects. Nonetheless, some Members still remained concerned about the apparent lack of pace in spending the allocated funding.

In response to a question regarding funds available for Community Composting schemes, it was confirmed that the Waste team had now taken on responsibility for this initiative and, as a result, all enquiries and bids for financial support should be directed to the team;

- Action AM1.5 (Adopting an Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy). In response to a local Ward Member question, it was confirmed that the identified car park in Totnes was the next one for which the installation of EV Charging Points would be completed;
- Action AM1.6 (A 10% increase in Biodiversity on Council land). In discussion, Members stated their support for the activity that had been undertaken to date on this Action.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the progress in delivery of the Better Lives for All Climate Change thematic delivery plan be noted.

**O&S.40/22 SIX-MONTH OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The lead Executive Member for Service Delivery provided the Committee with a report which gave a high-level overview of performance across the Council.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) There was Committee support expressed for the new format of the report, although it was recognised that further Key Performance Indicators were still to be added to the evolving template;
- (b) Disappointment was expressed that the figures contained within the report related to Quarter 2 (ending 30 September 2022) and not those for Quarter 3, which would have provided a more current review of the Council's performance.

In taking this point a step further, an additional Recommendation was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that:

*'the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 is drafted to ensure that the timing of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings is reflective of the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Cycle.'*

- (c) It was noted that the number of Planning Enforcement Cases that were live at the end of the reporting Quarter had exceeded the prescribed target, but this had been due to increased demand and the formation of a new team, which was still being embedded at that time;
- (d) A Member sought information on the Council process for answering Freedom Of Information (FOI) requests and further requested information on the number of complaints received by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) pertaining to FOI requests. The Member further requested that this information be added to the Performance Report template as a standing item. In reply, the lead Executive Member advised that she would arrange for the Monitoring Officer to supply information regarding the number and outcome of complaints received by the ICO outside of the meeting and that consideration would be given as to whether or not this information should form a substantive part of future Performance reports;
- (e) Some concerns were raised over the poor performance against the target for answering calls relating to Revenue and Benefit queries.

In reply, officers confirmed that measures were already being undertaken to improve performance and that members of the public had a range of ways to contact the team other than by telephone which might prove more effective for them;

- (f) There was a lengthy debate regarding the performance of the Council's Planning service and concern that the Performance Indicators did not reflect the actual position as certain information was not included in the dataset, including the size of caseload per Planning Officer and the impact this had had on the performance of the Service. There was acknowledgement that overall performance was improving but that there were still areas of concern.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the new suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), present performance and proposals for improvement where detailed, be noted,
2. That it be noted that the further KPIs, presently under development, would be provided at the next six-monthly update; and
3. That the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 be drafted to ensure that the timing of Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings be reflective of the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Cycle

## **O&S.41/22 TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES**

### **(a) EV Strategy Task and Finish Group: Concluding Report**

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report and thanked Members and Officers for their work in supporting the Review.

In discussion, a Member queried whether or not consideration had been given to the installation of charging points along the A38 corridor within the Council's boundaries. In reply, it was confirmed that, as the responsible authority, this would be a matter for Highways England.

It was then:

### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMEND** the content of the draft EV Strategy (as set out at Appendix A of the published minutes) to the Executive and that officers be requested to undertake a public consultation exercise on the Strategy in line with the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.



**(b) Consultation & Engagement Strategy Task and Finish Group**

The Chairman advised that there had been a misunderstanding concerning the Terms of Reference (ToRs) at the initial meeting of the Consultation & Engagement Strategy Task and Finish Group.

The Committee proceeded to express its agreement that the ToRs that were presented to the first Group meeting were reflective of the wishes of the Committee when approving the establishment of the Group at its previous meeting (Minute O&S.34/22(a) refers) and should therefore be used to underpin this Review.

**O&S.42/22 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

A Member of the Committee requested that further to the item considered earlier in the agenda; the Six-Month Operational Performance Review (Minute O&S.40/22 above refers), a report on the Council's procedures for responding to FOI requests and information on any subsequent complaints to the ICO be brought to the Committee in the Spring.

In view of the proximity of this date to the District Elections taking place on 4 May 2023, it was agreed that this would be tabled as an item to be considered for scheduling on the Work Programme for the next Council term.

(Meeting started at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.15 pm)

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Chairman

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## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

There is a period of 15 minutes at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during which members of the public can ask questions about items on the agenda.

Any member of the public who wants to ask a question should ensure that the question:

- a) is no more than 50 words in length;
- b) is not be broken down into multiple parts;
- c) relates to an item included on the agenda; and
- d) is suitable to be considered. A question will not be suitable if, for example, it is derogatory to the Council or any third party; relates to a confidential matter; it is about a specific planning matter; or it is substantially the same as a question asked in the past six months.

Questions should be sent to Democratic Services ([Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk)) by 1.00pm on the Monday before the meeting (the deadline will be brought forward by a working day if affected by a bank holiday). This will allow a detailed response to be given at the meeting. If advance notice of the question cannot be given the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to allow questions on matters that are felt to be urgent;

For any further advice on questions to the O&S Committee, or to request a copy of the full Public Questions Procedure Rules, please contact Democratic Services ([Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk))

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Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **16 March 2023**

Title: **Better Lives for All Thematic Update: Communities**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Jonathan Hawkins**  
Executive Lead – Communities

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **N**

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: **Ian Luscombe** Role: **Head of Environmental Health and Communities Lead**

Contact: [Ian.Luscombe@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Luscombe@swdevon.gov.uk)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress in delivering against the Better Lives for All 'Communities' Thematic Delivery Plan.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council adopted its Better Lives for All Strategy in September 2021, alongside detailed Thematic Delivery Plans for each priority area.
- 1.2 This report provides the thematic update on the Communities strand of the Better Lives for All Strategy.

**2. Thematic Update Report**

- 2.1 The Performance Management Framework included with the Better Lives for All strategy commits that Overview and Scrutiny will receive a thematic update at each meeting in order to consider the progress against the agreed Thematic Delivery Plans.
- 2.2 The Communities Thematic Update report is set out as Appendix A to this report.

### 3. Next Steps

3.1 Progress against the Thematic Delivery Plan will continue to be regularly monitored by the Leader, through monthly meetings with the lead officer.

Highlights will also be provided in the quarterly Integrated Performance Management Report considered by the Executive.

3.2 Following consideration by Overview and Scrutiny, the progress report will be published on the Councils strategy reporting pages <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/better-lives-for-all> as a public record of progress.

### 4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		Providing performance updates in respect of our strategic priorities contributes to Principle F of the CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework. This principle is about managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		This report does provide updates in respect of financial information but does not make any recommendations or lead to any financial implications not considered by other committees.
Risk		The thematic update report considers the key risks for the Council in delivering each action within the Better Lives for All delivery plan.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Communities
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		No direct implications

Safeguarding		No direct implications
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No direct implications
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No direct implications
Other implications		

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Thematic Update Report Communities

**Background Papers:**

None

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## **Enhancing Community Wellbeing**

**Thematic Progress Update**

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

# Lead Member Introduction

Having adopted our new Better Lives for All strategy in September 2021 which included a number of actions setting out how we will work with our communities. This update reflects the progress of those actions that we have identified to support our communities over the past 12 months.



**Cllr Jonathan Hawkins**  
**Lead Member for strengthening community wellbeing**

Activities on Track	Activities slightly off track but plan in place	Activities at risk of not completing as agreed	Activities not yet due to start
<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Over the coming pages, we set out more in-depth updated for each action.

*Cllr Jonathan Hawkins*

Cllr Jonathan Hawkins

Executive Member for Community Wellbeing



**CW1.1 - Work with partners to pilot new approaches to tackling rural poverty in an area identified as in the most deprived area of South Hams**

**Key Highlights**

The Pilot Project had been somewhat overtaken by the cost-of-living response that has focussed the Councils resources on providing measures to deal with households effected by the cost of living across all South Hams.

The data we have gathered so far suggests that young people are particularly affected by poverty in the area, for example this creates barriers to good health and education.

We are now engaging with young people in the community to understand the practical issues that rural poverty presents to them and how we can work with partner organisations to overcome those barriers, using existing community assets.

The success of our work may be difficult to measure in the short term but in accordance with the purpose of a pilot project will guide and inform the Councils approach to wider community engagement.

**Key Risks / Issues**

Dealing with rural poverty by identifying and reducing health inequalities requires a long term approach supporting existing community assets and working with partners to identify need and provide resources to fill that need.

**Looking ahead to the next 6 months**

- We will continue to engage with the community itself, with a focus on young people, to understand better the effects of rural poverty and what barriers that presents to young people. We can then work with partners to support the existing community infrastructure to deal more effectively with the identified need.
- A report will be presented to Members regarding the knowledge gained through the pilot project on how to engage effectively with our local communities

Overall Rating **Amber (off track but plan in place)**

**Action CW1.2 – Delivery of Dartmouth Integrated Health Hub**

**Key Highlights**

Completion is scheduled for April with an opening date of May 2023. It is proposed that a report will be taken to Executive detailing the full benefits that the facilities will provide and the role SHDC has played.

**Key Risks / Issues**

**Looking ahead to the next 6 months**

Overall Rating **Green (on track)**

**Action CW1.3 – Support more people to live independently for as long as they choose through efficient delivery of housing related grant schemes**

**Key Highlights**

Spend on DFG’s is based on demand, over which the Council has no control, and at present the service is processing and approving applications in line with this demand. The Council has a healthy budget as a result of good performance and astute negotiations. We have completed 56 DFG’s and 49 accessible homes grants since April 2022 in South Hams.

With a wider Private Sector Renewal (PSR) Policy, the Council is able to spend the Better Care Fund on other areas such as home assistance and Energy Company Obligation topups. The Council is using part of the funding to support wider fuel poverty interventions and supplement national



grant programmes. This will also have a positive impact on climate change by supporting vulnerable lower income households to access lower carbon solutions.

**Key Risks / Issues**

We have recently agreed changes to our policy to enable more work to be carried out more quickly by reducing the administrative burden of means testing on some disabled facilities grants. This will enable us to process grants more quickly and therefore be able to provide our customers with eh adaptations they need faster.

**Looking ahead to the next 6 months**

We will continue to make best use of our Better Care Funding. Keeping people safe and able to live in their own homes for longer is of clear benefit to our communities but also benefits health services by reducing demand on them. Disabled adaptations may also facilitate transfer of care of hospital patients back to their own homes.

Overall Rating **Green (on track)**

**Action CW1.4 – Increase active participation in sport and leisure activities**

**Key Highlights**

Fusions annual summary report for 2022 activity will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting in April 2023.

**Key Risks / Issues**

**Looking ahead to the next 6 months**

Overall Rating **Green (on track)**

**Action CW1.5 Delivery of projects to enhance outdoor public spaces**

**Key Highlights**

Year	Spent	Allocated	Total Spent and allocated (cumulative)
<b>2021/2022</b>	£557,172	£446,503	£1,003,675
<b>2022/2023 so far</b>	£355,975*	£119,223	£1,213,151**

\* Some of the funds spent in 2022/2023 were allocated in 2021/2022

\*\* To avoid double counting this doesn't include funds allocated in 2021/2022 but spent in 2022/2023

As shown above, so far in 22-23, we've spent £355,975 and allocated a further £119,223, taking the total spent or allocated between 2021 and 2023 to £1,213,151. We're anticipating that a further £44,603 will move from allocated to spent by year end.

Projects completed in 22/23 include:

- Play area improvements in Kingsbridge, Brixton, West Alvington, Totnes and Lutton;
- Improvements to lighting and drainage at Modbury Recreation Ground;
- Improvements to facilities at Stoke Gabriel Cricket Club;
- Improvements to Follaton Arboretum, Totnes;
- New footpath at South Brent Recreation Ground; and
- Improvements to Filham Park, Ivybridge (Phase 1).



The total spent and allocated is below the original forecast allocation of £1,523,824 between 2021 and 2023. This is primarily due to some projects taking longer to progress than expected, for example:

- Ivybridge Town Football Club clubhouse project - original forecast allocation was for £270,000 s106 expenditure in 22/23. Plans undergoing review due to increase in building costs; planning permission and match funding also needs to be secured.
- Dartington outdoor swimming pool refurbishment - original forecast allocation was for £75,000 s106 expenditure in 22/23. Plans being developed; planning permission and match funding also needs to be secured.

These projects do not involve SHDC assets and are not being led by SHDC so project progress and expenditure is not within our control.

### Key Risks / Issues

Increase in building prices is delaying progression of some projects due to original plans becoming unaffordable and projects needing redevelopment.

In many cases progress and expenditure is not within the direct control of SHDC as the projects involved are not on SHDC land.

There is a risk that s106 funds are not spent within the required timeframes and thus have to be re-paid to the developer. Funds nearing the deadlines for expenditure are flagged by the s106 Monitoring Officer to ensure this does not happen.

### Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Projects expected to be completed within the next six months include:

- Installation of new play equipment at Woodlands Park, Ivybridge; and
- Purchase of new grounds maintenance equipment at Kingsbridge Cricket Club.

### Overall Rating

Amber – The total amount spent and allocated is below the original forecast allocation for the reasons explained above.

Officers will continue to progress relevant projects on SHDC land and facilitate projects being led by Town and Parish Councils and other relevant organisations. Members are actively encouraged to continue to engage with their Town and Parish Councils and other relevant organisations to facilitate the expenditure of s106 contributions and enable the delivery of projects to enhance outdoor public spaces in their areas.

New predications will be made for the expenditure of s106 funds on outdoor public spaces in future years.

**Action CW1.6 Work with the voluntary sector to plan how we can work better together in the future**

### Key Highlights



In December 2022, we launched a £50,000 grant funding scheme for voluntary sector groups that are working to support the Health and Wellbeing of our residents with a particular focus on cost of living. 37 applications were awarded funding to deliver a range of schemes including warm banks, hot meal clubs, activities in warm spaces.

Officers are now regularly attending meetings with the sector (arranged by the CVS Community Connectors). This is giving us a real insight into the voluntary sector activities taking place across the District.

South Hams CVS have recently appointed a new manager who is keen to work with the Council to ensure that we support one another in meeting the needs of the VCS.

#### Key Risks / Issues

#### Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- South Hams CVS will be invited to attend Overview and Scrutiny to present an update on their activities.

Overall Rating      Green (on track)

This update will be considered at South Hams District Council Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 10am. Watch live on  YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil>



## South Hams Digital Connectivity Update

February 2023

### Summary of work:

- Monthly engagement with main broadband suppliers (Airband, Openreach, Wildanet) and CDS. Please see appendix with updates on delivery dates.
- Airband delivery delays – pushing for updates from CDS/Airband
- Ad hoc support to broadband champions
- Local Government Association (LGA) report on the evaluation of the creation of a ‘digital champion’ within a district/borough level council to be published later this month.
- Awaiting outcome of further central funding from Project Gigabit to increase full fibre in Devon and Somerset. The contract would be managed by Building Digital UK (an arm of DCMC). Results expected March/April. Support to community groups paused until it is known if they may be part of a new public contract.
- Web tool to help residents/businesses identify ways to improve their broadband to be launched later in Feb. Discussions with LEP to develop this tool further and provide support for potential alternative digital connectivity options. LEP has optional £215k for supporting communities what could be in this way.

### Project Gigabit

- Project Gigabit has the next wave of central Gov funding to deliver fibre to areas the market will fail to invest in. Contracts will be managed by BDUK rather than CDS.
- South Hams is in Lot 6 of Project Gigabit, part of a lot with Devon and Somerset.
- At the end of 2022 BDUK obtained information from suppliers on where they provide a service and where they intend to cover in an Open Market Review. This provides the most up-to-date information on coverage. The OMR information has been shared with CDS but not with district level councils. BDUK have said they will engage with us when it is known if an intervention area will be set.
- We do have the data on a postcode level and know the number of properties within each postcode – however I have been told Airband delivery is not represented in this, such that an address benefitting from the Airband contract may be shown as ‘Under review’. This is particularly unhelpful for us as CDS have not shared the Airband coverage with us.
- In terms of lot 6 – currently BDUK are working with suppliers to understand if there are viable areas to delivery fibre in Devon and Somerset
- Project Gigabit procurement size 1,000 – 8,000 (smallest scale)
- It is probable suppliers will show limited interest in bidding for a contract across Devon and Somerset, or only parts of this area, due to the dispersed nature of properties. This has happened in other parts of the UK where procurements are paused/delayed.
- If no interventions areas are set (due to lack of supplier interest) delivery might happen on a community basis via Gigabit Vouchers.

### Other funding

- Gigabit Vouchers have increased to £4,500 per premise (residential or business), which is an increase from £1,500 for residential and £3,500 business.

- The LEP had given £500k for voucher top ups to CDS, however as the Voucher values have increased nationally the LEP expect this funding to be returned and could be used for another solution.
- Funding from Central Gov currently only supports Gigabit solutions (largely fibre) however they are currently trialling satellite solutions in very hard of reach locations. If Gov change their guidance to support alternative digital connectivity in remote locations other options can be considered.
- We are currently working with Teignbridge to devise a funding process to support homes and businesses who cannot improve their digital connectivity with fibre or fixed wireless. With this in place we will then be well placed to bid for potential further funding from the LEP or elsewhere to help smaller communities.

## Appendix:

### Openreach delivery of fibre (Q1 2023 update not yet received)

Area	Delivery dates
Dartmouth	70%
Kingsbridge	65%
Salcombe	30%
Stoke Fleming	46%
Ivybridge	28%
Kingswear	Planned to start July 23
Torcross	Planned to start July 23
Totnes	Planned to start July 23
Wembury	23/24
Loddiswell	24/25
Yealmpton	24/25
Sutton Cross	24/25
Holbeton	24/25
Stoke Gabriel	25/26
Modbury	25/26
South Brent	25/26

\*source: Openreach update report 24/02/2023

### Airband delivery of fibre

Area	Cluster ref	Delivery date
Berry Pomeroy	F015	Feb 2023
Marldon & Coombe Fishacre	F013	Q1 2023
Roborough to Elfordleigh	F018	May 2023
Rattery	F014	Summer 2023
Stoke Gabriel	F017	Q2 2023
Sparkwell to Bittaford	F019	Q2 2023
Dartmouth	F022	Summer 2023
Thurlestone to Salcombe	F030	End summer 2023
Yealmpton	F024	Q2 2023
Uggborough	F020	Q2 2024
Bigbury to Modbury	F027	Q2 2024
Halwell and Moreleigh	F021	Q2 2024



<b>Kingsbridge</b>	F028	Q2 2024
<b>Sharpham</b>	F016	Q3 2024
<b>Wembury</b>	F025	Q3 2024
<b>Noss Mayo to Mothercombe</b>	F026	Q3 2024
<b>Sherford</b>	F029	Q3 2024
<b>Blackawton</b>	F023	Q4 2024
<b>East Prawle and South Pool</b>	F031	Q4 2024

\*source: Airband wholesale website on 22/02/23

\*source: updates show in red from CDS press release 25/01/23

#### **Wildanet delivery of fibre**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Delivery date</b>
<b>Totnes</b>	2023
<b>South Brent</b>	TBC
<b>Salcombe</b>	TBC

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Report to: **Overview & Scrutiny**  
Date: **16 March 2023**  
Title: **Customer Access Strategy & Contact Centre Update**  
**Portfolio Area: Council Services - Cllr Hopwood**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y / N**

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: Jim Davis Role: **Head of Customer Service Improvement**  
Steve Mullineaux **Director, Customer Service Delivery**

Contact: **Jim.davis@swdevon.gov.uk**

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## **Recommendations:**

1. Note the approach and actions to implement the Customer Access Strategy set out in section 3.
2. Note the actions taken to improve the Contact Centre performance set out in section 4 and detailed in Appendix A.

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 Within the Council's Better Lives for All strategy "Delivering Quality Council Services" is a key theme. The strategy states that the Council will:
  - i. Become a 'Digital First' Council
  - ii. Use new technologies to deliver tangible service improvements to residents and deliver efficiencies for the organisation
  - iii. Support those residents in most need to get access to the services they need

- 1.2 It is important that we make contacting our Council as easy as possible, with clearly defined access options and in the most efficient way, whilst supporting those who cannot access our services online.
- 1.3 Increasing the consistency and standardisation of customer interactions is an important part of improving response times, overall efficiency, and service levels to deliver a better service

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council always looked to fine tune and adapt access routes based on ever changing customer demand. The Customer Access Strategy take a more strategic view to take advantage of new technology to guide customer behaviour down more efficient and more effective routes.
- 2.2 The Council operates with a very small Contact Centre compared to our demand. Other Council have around 20% more staff compared to the volume of calls received. This requires a focus on increasing productivity and guiding customer behaviour to maintain acceptable levels of performance but it also reduces resilience at peak times. This makes performance more variable.
- 2.3 New technology offers new ways to interact, which used correctly delivers capacity to support those where more targeted support is needed as well as smoothly the peak demand and allowing us to manage our capacity better.
- 2.4 Investment in key technology over the past 3 months forms part of the strategy to remove low level work and focus more time on customer service and adding value and benefit for our customers.

## **3. Customer Access Strategy - Update**

- 3.1 We are now live with three new access routes for customers; Facebook Messenger chats managed through Liberty Converse (with bots set up for out of hours responses), Home visits can be organised through the Contact Centre for complex or higher need cases, and the booking of face to face appointments is now available.
- 3.2 Capital funding bid for the new unmanned 'foyer' has been approved and long lead time materials already ordered. Building commencing as soon as contractors are available.
- 3.3 A new voice recognition switchboard is being implemented to speed up customer transit through the telephony system. This will be tested internally first before being released to the public. It enables quicker routing to the person, line or team for the customer and where appropriate will utilise active channel shift to encourage filling in of webforms or voice forms.

- 3.4 Work is continuing based on team availability for two high volume areas of the Council to increase online submissions and channel shift, EH & Licensing & Revenue & Benefits. 6 high volume processes for EH are already live. The use of Robots to reduce data entry will be starting in Q1 23/24.
- 3.5 In the last report the **Outcomes** we set to achieve by the end of 2024 were:
1. Our customers are satisfied with our online services and would recommend a friend to use them
  2. All customer facing forms are available on our website
  3. Our website and forms can be accessed on any device
  4. All digital services will look and feel consistent as one South Hams service to the customer
  5. Services are accessible digitally 24/7
  6. By the end of March 2024, 80% of interactions with residents are via our online channels
- 3.6 To date:
1. Online feedback shows an improving score of 4.34 out of 5 Stars
  2. New projects started, to move a large number of Environmental Health and Licensing forms online.
  3. Mobile & tablet testing for all forms and refreshed web content being built.
  4. Liberty Create working group created to improve webform visuals and customise views for individual councils
  5. Webforms already available but new options including messenger chat bots give additional out of hours options.
  6. Online interactions already at 80% with additional projects and directed channel shift options still in progress that will boost the numbers even more.

#### **4 Contact Centre - Update**

- 4.1 Appendix A contains details of performance, the actions already undertaken, and the actions that are planned over the coming months.
- 4.2 We are entering the busiest time of the year for calls but by utilising the flexibility of our call software and drawing in additional support from service areas we are hoping to manage the additional demand with less of an impact on wait times this year.

- 4.3 Three recent secondments to other parts of the organisation have reduced capacity in the Contact Centre which has affected performance slightly. This is around 20% of total capacity so has an impact on call performance. Recruitment is underway targeted at providing more support during our busiest times.
- 4.4 The contact centre, in addition to calls, now answer webchats, emails and general enquiry processes. Further work has been done to increase the range of processes they can answer and will shortly be implemented. This utilises the Contact Centre capacity whenever there is a drop in call demand and increases their productivity, whilst speeding up the response time for the customer. Complex enquiries can still be forwarded to the business support teams where necessary.
- 4.5 The reception area at Follaton House is being reconfigured to offer an improved service to customers and improved facilities for our tenants; workstations to submit webforms, video phones, intercom for our tenants and an inside waiting area, public toilets, bookable meeting room for face to face customer interaction. Excluding deliveries and attempts to contact our tenants, the outside telephone that receives calls from visitors to Follaton House now receives less than 1 call a day.
- 4.6 Work has commenced on the voice switchboard to free up Contact centre resource. Preliminary work on identifying Council and non-Council options, alternative phrases, and officer routing is well underway. Voice recognition training and testing will occur internally before making it public facing.
- 4.7 Where appropriate, standard dialogues will sit behind the voice routing giving customers options for webform links to be sent directly to their phone for active channel shift, or filling in some simple forms by voice.
- 4.8 Training to build after-call customer surveys to track live satisfaction and highlight training and improvement opportunities has taken place. This mirrors the approach taken with webforms and delivers an up to date and more rounded picture of customer feedback.
- 4.9 Capital bid has been approved to purchase an improved payment compliance package which will reduce call payment times, provide additional support for the customer, and reduce risk of unsecure payments. This will be considered with other telephony improvements to improve uptime and availability.

## 5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Note the approach and actions to implement the Customer Access Strategy set out in section 3.
- 5.2 Note the actions taken to improve the Contact Centre performance set out in Section 4 and detailed in Appendix A.

## 6 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	N	N/A
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	N	All improvements managed through existing budgets
Risk	N	
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	N	
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

### **Supporting Information**

**Appendices: Appendix A – Contact Centre Improvement Actions**  
**Background Papers: None**

**Approval and clearance of report**



# Customer Access Strategy Appendix A – Contact Centre Update

## South Hams O&S Committee – 16 March 2023

### Contact Centre Performance

1. The following charts show that call answering performance has improved significantly since August and conversely call waiting times have reduced.
  - a. Chart 1 shows the improvement in the percentage of calls answered within 5 minutes except Revenues & Benefits
  - b. Chart 2 shows the same data for the Revenues & Benefits Service

Chart 1

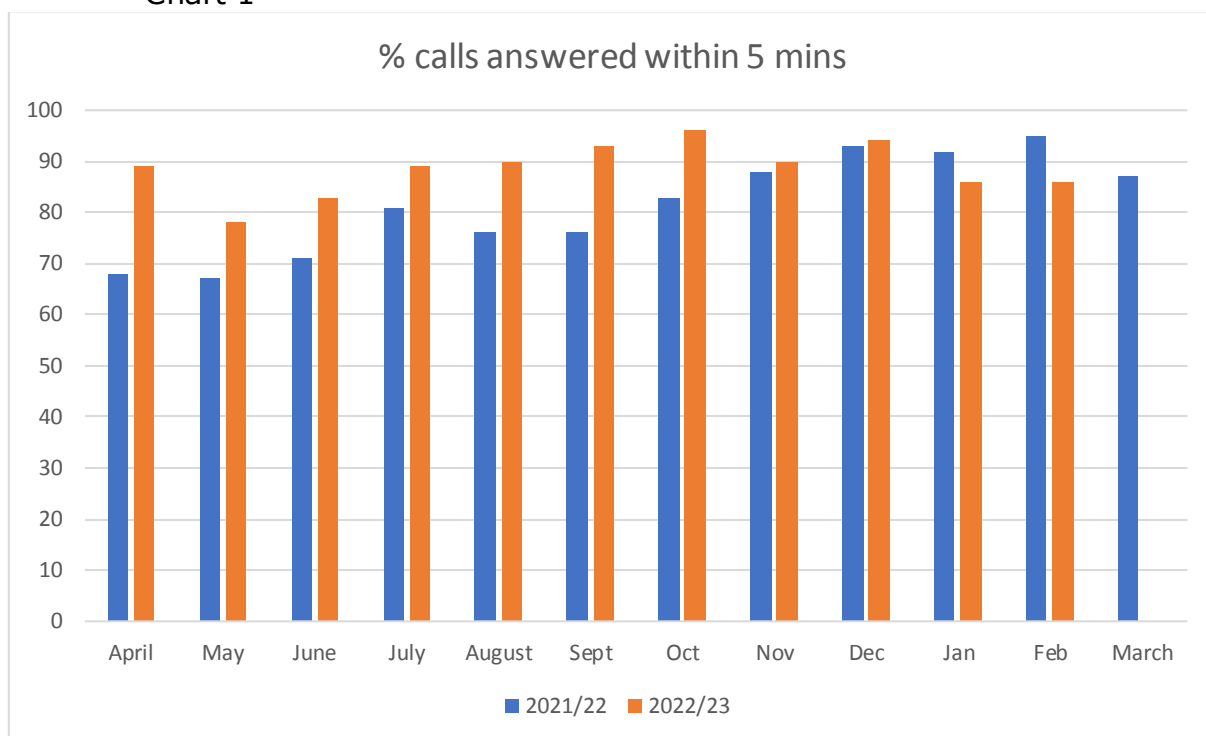
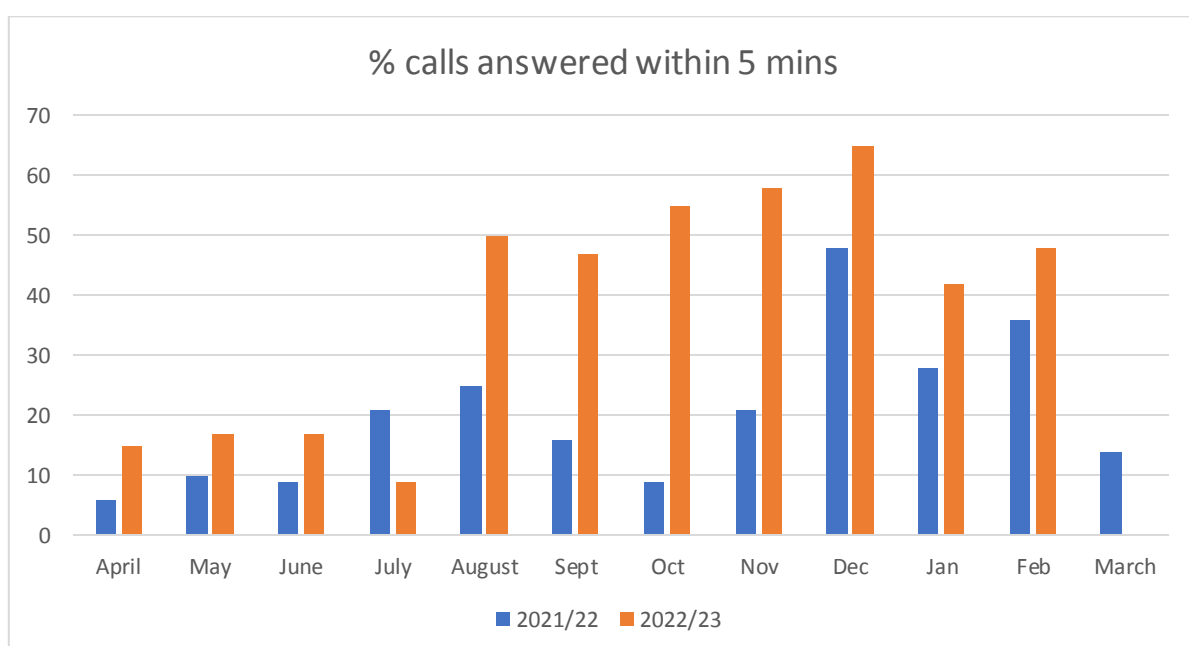


Chart 2



# Customer Access Strategy Appendix A – Contact Centre Update

## South Hams O&S Committee – 16 March 2023

c. Chart 3 shows the average call waiting time for all contact centre services including Revenues & Benefits.

Chart 3

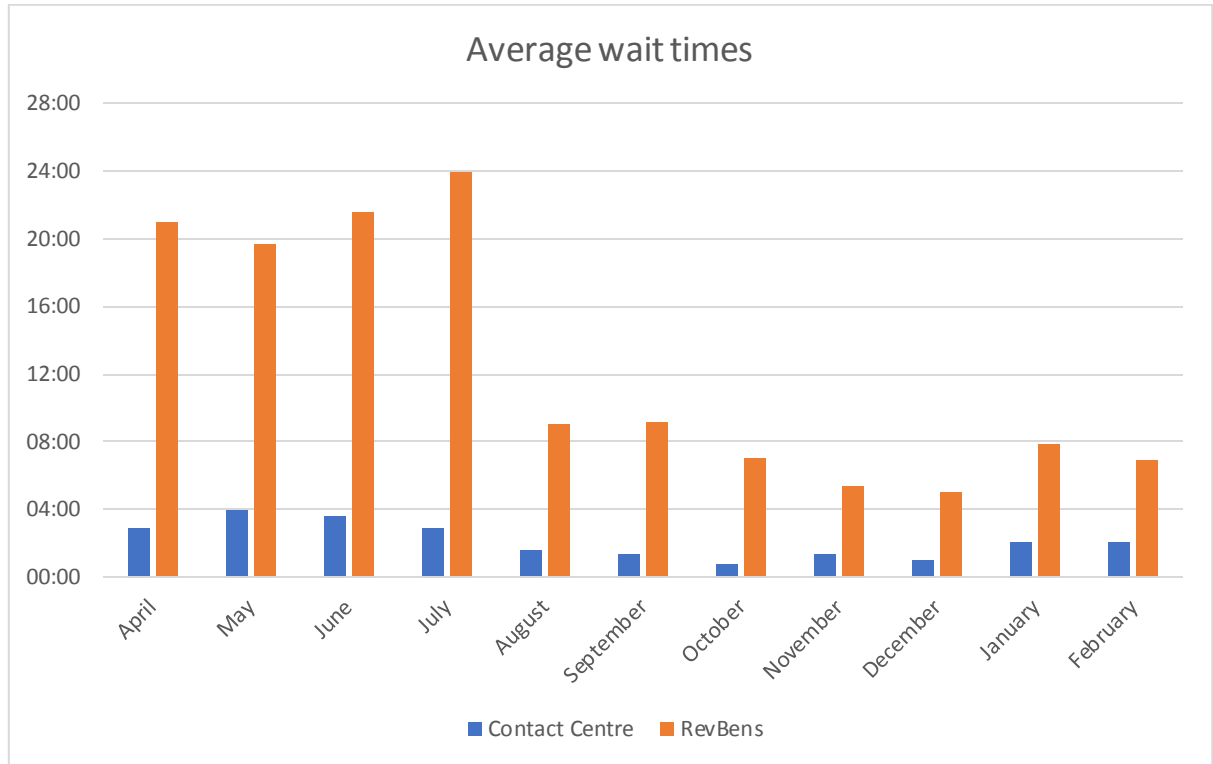
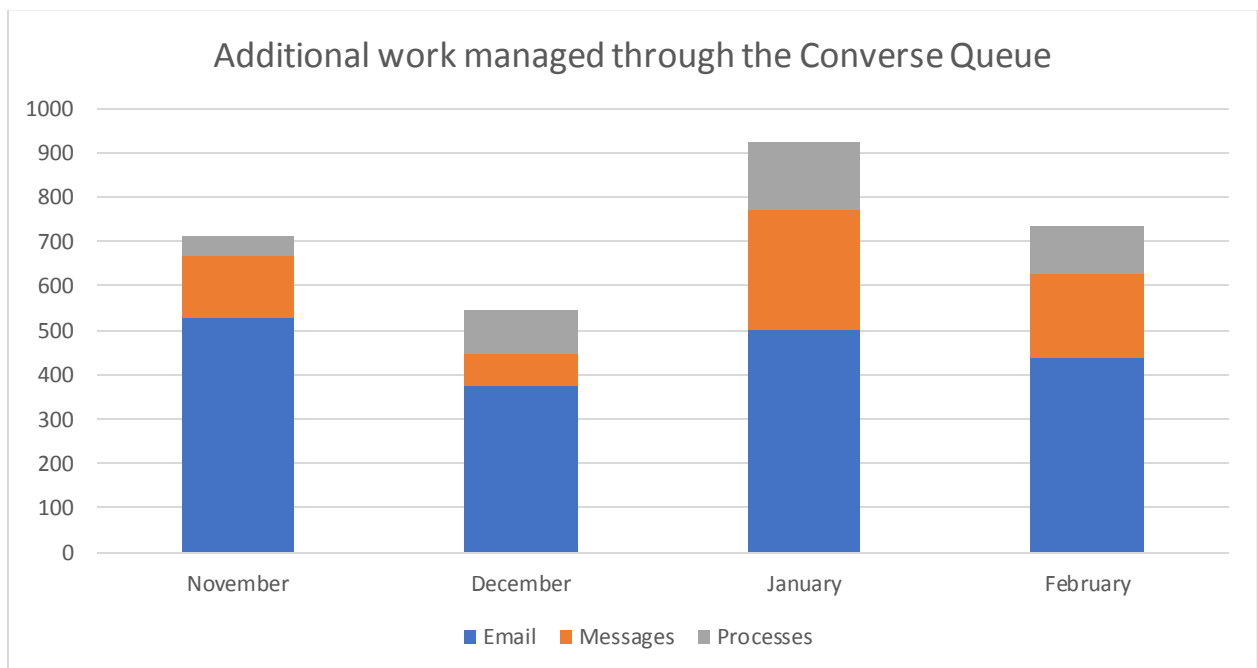


Chart 4



# Customer Access Strategy Appendix A – Contact Centre Update

## South Hams O&S Committee – 16 March 2023

These are lower priority tasks that are completed when call volumes are lower. Additional tasks and emails inboxes will be added to the call queue over time.

2. The following table details the improvements implemented or planned to improve contact centre performance. Previously completed tasks removed.

Action	Rationale / Benefits	Expected Timeframe
Increased training and support from the organisation	Additional training allows easier management of variation. Customer contact tends to clump so more multi-skilled staff mean peaks can be absorbed without significantly affecting wait times.	Revenues support organised for March billing time
Moving email requests to Webforms	Webforms reduce indexing and basic admin and ensure that all necessary information is provided at the start of a transaction. Automation can be applied. Information is consistent and prevents additional contact and failure demand. Type of transaction and effort required is known straight away to aid management of demand. Email information is unstructured and effort required is unknown unless triaged.	Additional RevBens and EH & Licensing processes being created
Directed, focused support, where necessary	Booking appointments online. Locality Officers providing home visits when needed. Call-backs for complex cases to prevent multiple contacts.	Completed
Moving phone calls to webchats	Ability to manage more than one conversation and conversations being less time critical eases management of demand. Facebook Messenger functionality enabled	Completed
Phone messages changed to improve call speed	Data quality improvements and standard call structure should improve call speeds by ensuring customers have necessary information to hand during call wait time	Delayed as all dialogues being reviewed after voice switchboard rollout
Social media direct messages managed through Liberty Converse	Same as above. More productivity from Contact Centre. Will enable one role to be absorbed back into the Contact Centre to support the phone lines	Completed
Moving more processes online	Around 80% of our highest volume processes are available 24/7 online but this varies per service area. Focus on moving the lower volume transactions across so virtually all Council transactions can be completed online. Automation applied where possible.	Ongoing

## Customer Access Strategy Appendix A – Contact Centre Update

### South Hams O&S Committee – 16 March 2023

<p>More dynamic allocation of resources to support customer contact</p>	<p>Service areas supporting peaks in customer demand to prevent duplication and failure demand in the Back Office. Customer service is everyone's responsibility, and good customer service is in everyone's best interest as it saves time down the line.</p>	<p>Proof of concept trialled. Implemented as part of Revenues billing support</p>
<p>Netcall infrastructure improvements – Automated switchboard, customer surveys, workforce management, screen recording</p>	<p>Automated switchboard releases around 0.7FTE to answer calls and delivers a shorter call/wait time to most customers. Fewer messages/options needed. Surveys and screen recording improve quality and training over time. Workforce management enables further development and support of other services.</p>	<p>Funded. In progress. Expected go-live for automated switchboard May 23</p>

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### INITIAL DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME PROPOSALS – 2022/23

Date of Meeting	Report	Lead Exec Member/Officer
16 March 2023	Council Delivery against Corporate Theme: Communities	Cllr Hawkins / Ian Luscombe
	Six-Monthly Update – Broadband	Gemma Bristow
	Customer Access Strategy (to include Contact Centre Review) – Quarterly Progress Report	Cllr Hopwood / Jim Davis
	Task and Finish Group Updates: - Consultation & Engagement Strategy: Verbal Interim Update	
	O+S Annual Work Programme ( <i>to include preparation for next meeting</i> )	
20 April 2023	Council Delivery against Corporate Theme: Council Services	Cllrs Hopwood & Baldry
	Task and Finish Group Updates ( <i>if any</i> )	
	Bi-annual Report – Fusion	Cllr Hawkins / Jon Parkinson
	O+S Annual Work Programme ( <i>to include preparation for next meeting</i> )	
<i>To be considered for scheduling:</i>	SWASFT – DCC update email dated Wed 6/7	
	Council Delivery against Corporate Theme: Homes	Cllr Pearce / Issy Blake

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Agenda Item 11

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