SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

NAME OF SERVICE: CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICES	PERIOD: FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21

1. DELIVERING OUR OUTCOMES

Our case studies help illustrate the positive contribution the Service has made to our communities and provides examples of good service delivery.

Corporate Outcome - People Live Active Healthier And Independent Lives

Business Outcome B0101: We Ensure Information And Support Is Available To Everyone

Caring For People / Community Food Project

a) Team members were redeployed to work on the logistics and co-ordination of the Covid Response food parcel implementation, thus maximising skills in the service to support the Covid response.

Success Measure: CSS101_03 Increase the % of telephone service enquiries received by CSC that are resolved at first point of contact.
Success Measure: CSS101_04 Reduce the average call waiting time for telephone customers.

a) When the Coronavirus lockdown occurred late March 2020 the council had to close its Service Points except for statutory face to face (F2F) interactions. In 2019/20 over 45,000 transactions had been done F2F so this demand had to be moved. Moreover the customers who used Service Points were largely the those who were less able to use digital and also those who were more vulnerable and needed more support in the pandemic e.g. by calling the new Coronavirus Helpline, hence their demands increased.

Ordinarily we would expect that this additional pressure on our call handlers would reduce both call response and call handling times but this was not the case. This was because a number of measures were put in place to rapidly match resources to demand and to reduce needless demand, including:

- Retraining Service Point staff to be able to manage customer contacts across all channels and applying them at peak contact times
- Using Service Point staff to do the bulk of the outbound support calls to Shielded and Test and Protect customers so that they did not have to get in touch with us, e.g. with Shielded customers 2552 received at least one call, 1637 agreed to follow up calls and 960 citizens who were asked to self-isolate have received support calls.
- Using Service Point staff to help other teams with special exercises that could have generated large numbers of contacts if there had been delays e.g. the provision of funds to families who usually receive free school meals during school holidays.

- Deployment of assistive technologies to help those less comfortable with online services, such as 24/7 voiceforms on our call centre numbers e.g. to automatically sign up to Supermarket priority delivery access. Also web chatbots to help signpost users to online services and an enhanced Browsealoud website support feature for those with sight and language difficulties.

Hence both the targets for contact enquiry resolution at first point of contact and waiting times for calls to be answered were fully met, despite the closure of Service Points and increased total interactions across all channels up from 582,770 in 2019/20 to 591,114 in 2020/21.

b) Developed our weekly news roundup to keep people informed and connected during Covid lockdowns. As well as our regular features on council service updates, jobs and consultations we included information on wide ranging support during lockdown, from guidance on staying healthy, to business support and sources of support. Our subscribers increased by 10% and as examples of feedback evidence, this helped address the social consequences of isolation.

The following are quotations from some of our subscribers -

"Your weekly news is a godsend, alone, keeping me in touch, great format."
"Thank you for such regular, concise, clear newsletters. So comforting to know we in isolation are included in outside life!....and I trust it!"
"Thank you, the updates are so helpful especially keeping those of us who don't get out up to date"

Corporate Outcome – Our Economy Is Diverse And Thriving
Business Outcome BO112: Argyll & Bute Is Promoted To Everyone

Success Measure: CSS112_01-Increase awareness and use of #abplace2b and www.abplace2b.scot

a) To help Argyll and Bute attract the people and skills it needs for a sustainable future, we developed the social media hashtag #abplace2b, to promote information about the area's great lifestyle, job and investment opportunities. An increasing number of members of the public, and partner agencies, use #abplace2b.

On Instagram alone for example there are already more than 24,000 photos of the area using this hashtag; we can draw from these to promote the amazing lifestyle and scenery that make Argyll and Bute a great place to live and work.

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Corporate Outcome – We Have An Infrastructure That Support Sustainable Growth

Business Outcome BO113: Our Infrastructure Is Safe And Fit For The Future

Success Measure: CSS113_01- Our IT capital programme projects are delivered on time and within budget

a) Despite the complications caused by supply chain failure regarding both Brexit and Covid, we managed to spend every penny of our capital allocation for 2020/21. Having anticipated delays early in the year goods were ordered months ahead of schedule and we worked with our suppliers to create a bonded store to allow early shipping from the far-east manufacturers.

Success Measure: CSS113_02-Deliver the ICT and Digital Strategy Action Plan

a) We delivered a new ICT and Digital strategy for 2021-24 and we have started to deliver major transformational projects such as the replacement systems for Finance, Carefirst and Resourcelink as well as the start of the migration to MS365 (Microsoft 365)
b) Our infrastructure requirements changed dramatically as staff moved from the office to home but our strategic planning meant this was an almost seamless process. Staff had access to all of the technology they needed to allow them to work from home.
c) Our governance meetings successfully transitioned online.

Success Measure: CSS113_06-Maintain the average time to resolve ICT incidents

a) Our ICT staff were dispersed across the region and operating from home, but we managed to maintain service levels at or above previous levels and our response times were as good as previous years.

Success Measure: CSS113_05-Unscheduled infrastructure down-time during service specific 'core-time' is minimised

a) Our network was redesigned and extended to include 1200 new working from home sites. Bandwidth was increased and re-routed to allow for so many people to simultaneously connect over VPN (Virtual Private Network) from home. We also included new split tunnelling technologies to maximise the throughput and minimise delays in connections.

Success Measure: CSS113_05-Unscheduled infrastructure down-time during service specific 'core-time' is minimised

a) We rolled out MS Teams (Microsoft Teams) to 500 initial users to work alongside our existing Skype infrastructure. This was in response to other organisations needing to use Teams to allow them to communicate both internally and externally as they didn't have an existing suite of technologies and policies in support of flexible or home working.

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Corporate Outcome - Getting it Right

Business Outcome BO115: We Are Efficient And Cost Effective

Performance Monitoring, Reporting and Scrutiny

a) Although the pandemic placed an unpresented demand on resources and services, the need to ensure our performance was effectively monitored and scrutinised was essential. To enable the council to continue appropriate scrutiny of performance and in line with the guidance from the Accounts Commission. We reconfigured the performance scorecards during the Covid 19 Pandemic to report in a more concise and targeted manner on KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to the Business Continuity Committee.

Living Wage and changes to our Terms and Conditions

a) As part of our commitment to being a Fair Work employer, we completed the review of the Pay and Grading Structure to consolidate the Living Wage. This enabled us to successfully meet the national deadline set by Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and the National Trades Unions of 1st April 2021. We also took the opportunity to fully review and modernise the Conditions of Service.

Success Measure: CSS115_03: Increasing percentage of self service and automated contacts through the Customer Service Centre and Website.

a) This year the Covid lockdown provided an unprecedented stimulus for our customers to move to using our digital services and those services were more than up to the task.

The table below shows the increase in use of online transactional services and the savings they provided....or to put it another way the additional cost if those online digital services had not been there and staff had to deal with the requests:

Year	Channel Shift Transactions	Potential Savings
2017/18	261,399	£460,878
2018/19	267,018	£464,865
2019/20	390,234	£670,710
2020/21	440,165	£914,871

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Central to this was meeting the huge demand for Covid related personal and business transactional and informational needs through the immediate creation of a spate range of coronavirus web pages. These were linked to an array of online resources that were constantly updated and heavily promoted through the Keep in the Loop Service that issued over a million alerts and notifications to citizens.

To end of April 2021 these have had 477,692 unique views with 87% customer satisfaction and they were central to Caring For People/Test and Protect and Business Grants support efforts that were integrated to back office systems and so helped thousands. Additional 24/7 help was there for those less able to use online services through voice automated services (39.3k calls handled and 8.7k payments taken worth £1.74m), and the Coronavirus Helpline that took 10,860 calls.

New technology such as web chatbots and voiceforms further assisted in reducing avoidable contacts or allowing them to be handled in a planned way to make the best use of agent resources. Hence the council's customer service infrastructure was never at breaking point.

Success Measure: CSS115_06 Maintain high customer satisfaction levels across the customer engagement teams.

a) The council's Registration Service faced unprecedented challenges in 2020/21 as death registrations due to Covid significantly increased, birth registrations were suspended for two months causing a significant backlog and wedding restrictions on numbers attending and Covid security were constantly changing. Yet the nearly 300 customers who completed a satisfaction survey still gave an over 97% satisfaction rating. This was because the Registrars speedily adopted a remote digital death registration service and adapted the Tell Us Once death notification service for 1124 customers. They put in place a new appointment based face to face service for birth registrations, used the Marriage Website, social media and a digital Wedding Diary to inform and accommodate those seeking weddings and civil partnerships. They also completed Covid risk assessments and put in place special arrangements to allow small weddings to proceed on council premises and pioneered virtual citizenship ceremonies .

Customers were fulsome in their praise of the professionalism and quality of service; like this customer from Rothesay:

"Made appointment by phone, very easy. Registered baby face to face in the office - well set up for Covid protection. Pleasant experience."

And this couple from Lochgilphead:
"We felt looked after in the kindest way from the very beginning of the process. We had phone calls, emails and a face to face in the office. Shona and Lorna couldn't have been kinder or more considerate. We felt in very safe hands and that they were a very important part of making our wedding the happiest day in what could have been difficult circumstances. Very grateful to them for coming to our home to marry us and make our day do special".

Success Measure: CSS115_05 Increase the Website search success rate based on customer feedback.

a) The Council website saw unprecedented demand in 2020/21 with over 4.4 million unique visits, 21,000 completed forms and nearly 210,000 uses of its Search engine. The key to customers finding what they need on the website is accessibility, so that users of all digital capabilities can locate, read and understand web content. All local authorities have their website accessibility independently assessed by SOCITM (Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation) against international web standards (WCAG 2.1), on an index from 1-100. At the start of 2020 our score was only 46, but throughout the year and pandemic the Web Team has made huge improvements to content, structure and navigability of the website, so that we now score 98 out of 100, are rated as excellent and are ranked 13th highest out of every Council in the UK.

98 Accessibility
13th place in UK Councils
Excellent

Level A - 98.1%
Level AA - 97.8%
Level AAA - 97.8%

These measure compliance against the WCAG 2.1 standard. What does this mean?
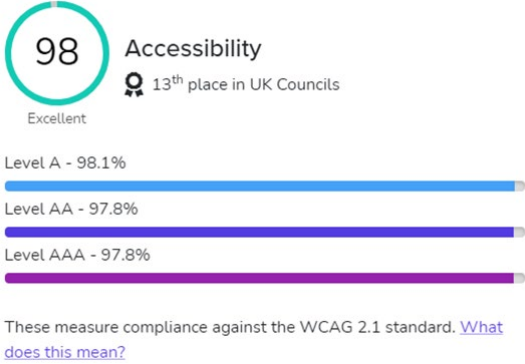
This is reflected in the overall satisfaction rating for the website which 84% of 917 respondents told us fulfilled the needs of their visit. Every successful visit to the website is potentially one less telephone call or email to council staff; letting them focus on service delivery. The most searched for subjects last year were:

Corporate Outcome - Getting it Right

Business Outcome BO117: We Encourage Creativity And Innovation To Ensure Our Workforce Is Fit For The Future

Wellbeing

a) In support of our employees during the pandemic, we accelerated the Wellbeing team's activity in communicating wellbeing information to staff. This included a dedicated section on the council website, a regular Wellbeing Wednesday bulletin with advice and guidance on wellbeing topics, promoted the EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) and the message that it is *'ok not to be ok'*.

The Head of Service took on a national Wellbeing Champion role and, jointly with NHSH (NHS Highland), the team developed a Wellbeing Action Plan using the wide range of resources available.

Working from Home

a) The team developed guidance and support for employees and managers who were moved rapidly to home working from March 2020. Flexi time was suspended and adjustments was made to support those employees with caring responsibilities, particularly children

2. SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

The significant challenges faced by the Service during 2020/21. These challenges either created specific pressures on the Success Measures or impacted on delivery. Specific additional activity or mitigating actions were carried out to reduce the negative impact on service delivery.

Corporate Outcome – People Live Active, Healthier And Independent Lives

Business Outcome BO101: We Ensure Information And Support Is Available For Everyone

The pandemic and the demands it placed on us was the Services' overall challenge. It is included here to highlight the unprecedented additional demands that the Service delivered and as a case study. However, meeting the additional demands due to the pandemic has resulted in other initiatives being put on hold or delayed.

Responding to the Covid pandemic meant providing a wide range of information about health, lockdown restrictions, business support, and impact on council services etc. This represented a significant, sudden and sustained increase in our volume of work. To address this, we had to put various other initiatives on-hold or re-schedule, for example developing www.abplace2b.scot as a route for attracting people to live and work in Argyll and Bute.

3. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT - WE ASKED, YOU SAID, WE DID….

The following are all the consultations and resulting actions that the Service has carried out during this period.

a) Customer Service and Engagement Survey November 2020: The aim of this survey was to establish the impact of Covid on how customers wish to interact with the council in a post-restrictions world. In particular the degree to which customers wish to retain face to face services and how they would like us to improve our digital and online services. It also checked on customer perception of council performance during the emergency response. 998 customers participated including 200 "Hard to Reach" customers. A Survey Outcome Report was presented to SMT in March 2021 with a list of recommendations that are being progressed and a report specifically on the Customer Service Points was sent to SMT at the end of May 2021.

Some of the other actions include a full review of the "Look and Feel" of the website, investment in additional systems that aid digital inclusion and the upgrade of the Contact Centre to allow it to integrate to MS Teams telephony.

b) The Customer Engagement Team operates a number of automated customer satisfaction and customer insight surveys that allow customers to provide input on the quality of customer service and elements that could be improved or enhanced. Surveys include:
- A pop up satisfaction/feedback survey on the website
- An automated quality survey put on acknowledgements after online forms have been completed
- A "what else would you like to see on the website" survey after website interactions
- An automated customer satisfaction survey offered to callers on certain lines in to the Customer Service Centre
- A quality of service survey offered to every person who registered a birth, death or marriage with our Registration Service
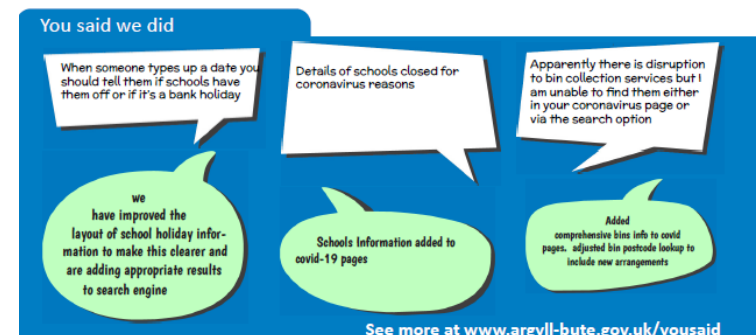
The feedback on these are used as part of continual improvements and are reported in the Quarterly Web Report

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CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICES – ANNUAL SCORECARD 2020/21

Customer Support Services Scorecard 2019-22
Scorecard owned by: Jane Fowler   FY 20/21

HR&OD Team Scorecard | Communications Team Scorecard | ICT Team Scorecard | Customer Engagement Team Scorecard

Click here for all Business Outcomes and Success Measures

Click here for Ex. Director Kirsty Flanagan Scorecard

BO101: We Ensure Information And Support Is Available For Everyone [CSS]

Success Measures — G

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

BO108: All Our Children And Young People Are Supported To Realise Their Potential [CSS]

Success Measures — G

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

BO112: Argyll And Bute Is Promoted To Everyone [CSS]

Success Measures — G

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

BO113: Our Infrastructure Is Safe And Fit For The Future [CSS]

Success Measures — A

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

BO115: We Are Efficient And Cost Effective [CSS]

Success Measures — A

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

BO116: We Engage And Work With Our Customers, Staff And Partners [CSS]

Success Measures — R

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

BO117: We Encourage Creativity And Innovation To Ensure Our Workforce Is Fit For The Future [CSS]

Success Measures — G

FY 16/17   FY 18/19   FY 20/21

Management Information

RESOURCES

People	Benchmark	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
Sickness absence CSS		6.0 Days	5.4 Days	G	↑
PRDs CSS		90 %	62 %	R	↓

Financial	Adjusted Budget	Actual			
Finance Revenue totals CSS	£7,879,299	£7,866,444	R	↑	

IMPROVEMENT

Status Trend

CSS Service Improvements 2017-21 Actions	Total No	Off track	On track	Complete
	17	4	4	9

Customer and Support Services Audit Recommendations	R	Overdue	Due in future	Future - off target
		1 ↓	1 ↓	0 →

Health & Safety	Overdue	Rescheduled	Actions in Plan	Complete
Service H&S Plan Actions	0	0	0	0
H&S Investigation Actions	0	0	0	0

Customer Service CSS		Customer satisfaction		
Customer Charter	G	Stage 2 Complaints	100 %	G →
Number of consultations		Stage 2 Complaints	100 %	G →

BO108: All Our Children And Young People Are Supported To Realise Their Potential [CSS] — Success Measure **G** →

	Actual	100 %	**G** ↑
CSS108_01-The percentage of Modern Apprentices that go on to positive destination after completing the Argyll and Bute Council Modern Apprentice Programme	Target	95 %	
	Benchmark	100 %	

BO113: Our Infrastructure Is Safe And Fit For The Future [CSS] — Success Measure **A** ↓

	Actual	On track	**G**
CSS113_01-Our IT capital programme projects are delivered on time and within budget	Target	On track	→
	Benchmark	On track	

	Actual	On track to revised plan	**G**
CSS113_02-Deliver the ICT and Digital Strategy Action Plan	Target	Complete	↓
	Benchmark	On track to revised plan	

	Actual	Yes	**G**
CSS113_03-The percentage of seasonal upgrades requested by our users that are completed on time	Target	Yes	→
	Benchmark	Yes	

	Actual	0.11 %	**G**
CSS113_04-Unscheduled application down-time during service specific 'core-time' is minimised	Target	0.80 %	↓
	Benchmark	0.11 %	

	Actual	0.02 %	**G**
CSS113_05-Unscheduled infrastructure down-time during service specific 'core-time' is minimised	Target	1.00 %	↑
	Benchmark	0.02 %	

	Actual	2.4 Hours	**G**
CSS113_06-Maintain the average time to resolve ICT incidents	Target	4.5 Hours	↑
	Benchmark	2.4 Hours	

	Actual	93.6 %	**G**
CSS113_07-Maintain our high average success score achieved for our IT projects	Target	82.0 %	↑
	Benchmark	93.6 %	

Customer Support Services Scorecard 2019-22
Scorecard owned by: **Jane Fowler**   FY 20/21

Click here for Outcome CSS101

Click here for Full Scorecard

BO112: Argyll And Bute Is Promoted To Everyone [CSS] — Success Measure **G** ↑

	Actual	23,800	**G**
CSS112_01-Increase awareness and use of #abplace2b and www.abplace2b.scot	Target	23,793	↑
	Benchmark	23,800	

BO115: We Are Efficient And Cost Effective [CSS] — Success Measure **A** →

	Actual		
CSS115_01-The cost of Strategic Organisational Development per Council employee	Target	£ 156	
	Benchmark		

	Actual		
CSS115_02-The cost of our Human Resouce operation per Council employee	Target	£ 270	
	Benchmark		

	Actual	86 %	**R**
CSS115_03- The percentage of employment contracts issued within 15 working days of receipt of the Successful Candidate Form.	Target	90 %	↑
	Benchmark	86 %	

	Actual	71.1 %	**G**
CSS115_04-Increase the percentage of all self-service and automated contacts through both the Customer Service Centre and the Web	Target	62.0 %	→
	Benchmark	71.1 %	

	Actual	76.0 %	**G**
CSS115_05-Increase the Website search success rate based on customer feedback	Target	71.0 %	↑
	Benchmark	76.0 %	

	Actual	95.6 %	**G**
CSS115_06-Maintain high customer satisfaction levels (satisfied or very satisfied) across the customer engagement teams	Target	90.0 %	↑
	Benchmark	95.6 %	

BO116: We Engage And Work With Our Customers, Staff And Partners [CSS] — Success Measure **R** ↓

	Actual	0 %	**R**
CSS116_01-The percentage of You Said/We Did actions are reported to the public following consultations	Target	80 %	
	Benchmark	0 %	

BO117: We Encourage Creativity And Innovation To Ensure Our Workforce Is Fit For The Future [CSS] — Success Measure **G** →

	Actual	0	**G**
CSS117_01-The percentage of delegates who have reported an increase in their knowledge and/or confidence following completion of the Argyll and Bute Manager Programme (Managing Teams)	Target	0	
	Benchmark	0	Covid Impact

	Actual	100	**G**
CSS117_02-The percentage of learners who agree that our corporate training courses, both online and face to face, have met their learning needs.	Target	85	→
	Benchmark	100	

	Actual	0	**G**
CSS117_03-The percentage of delegates who have reported an increase in their knowledge and/or confidence following completion of the Argyll and Bute Manager Programme (Preparing To Manage)	Target	0	
	Benchmark	0	Covid Impact

Customer Support Services Scorecard 2019-22
Scorecard owned by: **Jane Fowler**   **FY 20/21**

Click here for Full Scorecard

BO101: We Ensure Information And Support Is Available For Everyone [CSS]   Success Measure   G   ⬆

CSS101_01-Improve the current accuracy rate for registration of our births, deaths and marriages by **Update Due FQ1 2021/22**
Actual
Target
Benchmark

CSS101_04-Reduce the average call waiting time for telephone customers
Actual   20.0   G
Target   40.0
Benchmark   20.0

CSS101_02-Increase the percentage of 'Tell Us Once' death notifications that we share with other teams at the request of registration by customers
Actual   85.0 %   G
Target   84.0 %
Benchmark   85.0 %   ⬆

CSS115_05-Increase the Website search success rate based on customer feedback
Actual   76.0 %   G
Target   71.0 %
Benchmark   76.0 %   ⬆

CSS101_03-Increase the percentage of telephone service enquiries received by Customer Service Centre
Actual   95.1 %   G
Target   82.0 %
Benchmark   95.1 %   ⬆

CSS101_06-The percentage of media enquiry deadlines that we meet
Actual   85.6 %   G
Target   85.0 %
Benchmark   85.6 %   ⬇

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