

Meeting with Derby City Council on 24.11.14

Notes:

Present: Cllr Plenderleith, Cllr Heath, Bernard Fenton, Neil Sheard. Cllr Lisa Eldret unable to attend

Went out to tender September 2011. Machines implemented in February 2012.

2 machines (+installation) cost £33k. Look like an ATM. On separate power supplies.

Lifespan of machines is 5-10 years. Only 3 breakdowns since installation. Error rate negligible.

100,000 transactions – and no complaints. City Council to share business case document.

Touch screen. Kiosks can take the Council Tax payment cards or scan a barcode. Council staff available to help anyone who needs it.

Machines can process payments for Council Tax, rent payments, business rates, planning fees, building regs, penalty charges and licensing. Average 3,000 transactions per month over both machines.

Machines take debit/credit cards and cash. Receipts are given. Cheque payments are also taken but are “inelegant” – cost £3.33 to process each one. 1,200 cheque payments last year. 22% of cheque payments need further investigation (incomplete payment, bounce etc.)

City Council used to have 8 cashiers, now none. This was partly influenced by the refurbishment of the Council Offices – the retail premises that the function moved into had insufficient space. By the time they returned to the Council Offices, people were used to the kiosks.

Rushcliffe installed machine and also had a cashier – people chose the cashier over the machine, with hindsight, Rushcliffe would have discontinued the cashier function on installation.

Direct debits and internet payments increased after April 2012.

Reconciliation is easily achieved at the end of the day. Fine tuning the codes/refs

Kiosks can give change.

Savings to be made in processing payments. Machines can accept part-payments too.

Visit to Customer Services on 03.11.14

Notes:

Cllr Plenderleith and Cllr Heath. Angela Leese (Customer Services manager)

Visited Customer Services at 10am on the first Monday in the month. The previous Friday (31.10.14) had been particularly busy, with residents making their Council Tax payments in time for the 1st of the month. The waiting area was not overly busy, the ticketing system was explained. Discussed the layout of the waiting area, reception and Customer Services desk.

	2008/09	2013/14
Number of visitors		
Central reception	19,000	14,000
Customer Services Desk	27,000	20,000
Number of Payments	34,000	29,000

Telephone calls – contact centre	2008/09	2013/14
Number of calls	60,000	128,000
% answered in 20 seconds	75%	76%
% abandoned	11%	8%

	2008/09	2013/14
Total (Callers and Face to Face)	106,000	162,000

Comment cards are available to survey visitors' experience

Telephone system: We visited the call centre and discussed the call management procedures.

There are 6 options to help service delivery – this is the most effective number, more would be frustrating. Looking to upgrade to Intelligent Voice Recognition system (IVR)

In October 2014, 1705 automated payments were taken over the telephone (usually approx. 1500)

Approx. 300 calls a month are for the County Council, approx. 800 calls a month for housing maintenance, approx. 100 switchboard calls per day

Payments made at the Council Offices August 2014:

Split of Payments	Number of transactions
Debit/Credit Card	477
Cheques	682
Cash	1,099

After the meeting, Angie Leese shared a spreadsheet showing the number of payments made at the enquiry desk from April 2013-October 2014. This showed that April and May were the busiest months, coinciding with the start of the new financial year. Average number of transactions per month is 2,500.

Visit to Customer Services on 01.12.14

Notes:

Cllr Plenderleith and Cllr Heath

Visited Customer Services at 10am on the first Monday in the month. The waiting area was no more than a third full at any time and enquiries were being dealt with within approximately 10 minutes.

During this visit, and after the visit on 03.11.14, we spoke informally to some of the residents who were waiting, asked why they were waiting and, if it was for Council Tax payment, whether they would welcome a kiosk to make a quicker payment. Opinion was divided fairly equally: some would prefer to hand their cheque/cash directly to a person and were reasonably content to wait; others thought the option of a kiosk would speed things up.

During both visits, we were able to see at first hand the processes Customer Services have put in place to reduce waiting times to the minimum – both in the Council Offices and on the telephone. We were satisfied that these processes are as efficient as possible – and it is the sheer volume of enquiries that is causing the pressure at peak times.

We were also able to appreciate the difficulties presented by the physical layout of the reception area itself – and discussed whether remodelling would be feasible given the structure of the building.