

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21 October 2021 Follow-up Written Answers from O&S Committee

Agenda Item 4 – Organisation Portfolio Holder Updates

Question 1

Members asked for information on the percentage of the transactions undertaken by the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in the last six months. Approximately 60 plus online transactions with the public were handled through the CRM platform currently.

Written response

Based upon the last 6 months data the percentage of transactions undertaken by the CRM system was 45.9% with a further breakdown as follows:

Transaction Type (6 months, 21/04/21 to 21/10/21)	Volume	%	Source
Automated Telephony Payments	5054	5.2	Finance Team
CCT calls <i>minus</i> 2577 Phone Team transactions we know resulted in a CRM case. This avoids double counting.	47514	48.9	Netcall Activity Report
CRM cases	44554	45.9	Granicus system
Totals	97122	100.0	

Question 2

(i) **Cyber-attacks** – Members highlighted the increase in cyber-attacks on IT systems of companies and organisations more generally, following the increase in online working and asked how this was being addressed by the Council.

(ii) **Fraud and identity fraud** – how did the Council ensure it was protecting residents against fraud with the decrease in face-to-face contact and remote working? In particular dealing with potential identity fraud, such as criminals purporting to be calling from the Council. It was confirmed that the Revenues, Benefits and Fraud team dealt with any reported cases of fraud.

Written response

(i) Head of IT confirmed at the O&S Committee meeting that on the cyber front, IT monitors all systems and blocks around 2000 attempts a month.

(ii) Benefits and Fraud response - Applications for Council services were already being made through online application forms, with supporting documents being provided electronically or by post. Applicants wishing to apply for statutory services such as housing or Housing Benefit must provide evidence of ID, as well as other

supporting documents. Depending on the type of application, other checks are carried out to verify the applicant's details.

Follow-up interviews are carried out by phone, and in the event of an attempt to defraud the Council, formal interviews have taken place over the last 18 months, initially using interview rooms at Surrey Police sites and latterly at the Town Hall interview room.

Where external fraudsters call residents purporting to be from the Council, when these are reported to the Council the details can be passed onto a central national database. Unfortunately, it is becoming common practice for fraudsters to try and convince members of the public that they are from an official body, and our Comms team are proactive in making residents aware of this.

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Minute 37 - Organisation Portfolio Holder Updates

Question 1

Residential units for market rent in Marketfield Way, Redhill owned by Kooky Ltd (part of the Delph Group) – Members asked for more information on the rental apartments being developed on the Council-owned site on Marketfield Way site, Redhill. A written answer was requested on 1) service management charges 2) ground rents and to confirm best practice was being followed with regard to leasehold property management.

Written Response

The Council has entered into a pre-sale agreement to sell all 150 residential units on a 250 year lease to Kooky. Kooky is a Private Rented Sector (PRS) company, where the terms of the lease provide them with the internal demise (leased area) of the residential block and rights of access over the communal spaces to access them.

The Council will undertake the leasehold property management of the building (building envelope; services; communal parts) and Kooky will manage the internal apartment demise of the property.

Kooky will pay the Council a service charge for managing the building (building envelope; services; communal parts). The private tenants will pay a monthly rent to Kooky but will not be liable to pay a service charge, nor ground rent. The service charge is Kooky's liability.

The Council will set the service charge in accordance with RICS good practice guidance.

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Minute 38 – Environmental Sustainability – Progress Update

Question 1

A written answer had been provided to members on the Council's staged approach to working towards our 2030 net zero carbon target and use of carbon offsetting measures. A supplementary question from Councillor Essex requesting more detail on offsetting schemes and costs would be provided in a further written response to the Committee.

Written Response

Carbon off-setting has been provided by our Energy Contract Management Company, Beond, as part of their service. More detail on this provision can be found on their website [here](#), but for ease of reference, Beond states: "Where a fossil fuel supplier is the most competitive bidder, Beond pay for the carbon offset at no additional cost to the client. This ensures you get the leanest and greenest energy supply contract on the market."

When our remaining fossil fuel contracts expire (non-half-hourly electricity meters in September 2023, gas in October 2022), we will be switching those tariffs to bona fide green tariffs as far as possible. The amount of Certified Emission Reductions purchased can be seen on the UN's Carbon Offset Platform, [here](#) and [here](#). The total amount is equivalent to 1,498 tonnes of CO₂. The investment has been made in the North Longyuan Wulatehouqi Wuliji Wind Farm in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in China. More detail can be found about this project on the UN's website [here](#). In terms of money spent, Beond have advised: "The cost of these offsets was £0.374/tonne and they were purchased around 12 months ago. The cost of offsetting has spiralled since we bought these so they would be much higher were they to be purchased now."

Question 2

Members asked for a written answer on buildings owned and leased by the Council and plans to improve their insulation and install alternative heating sources such as heat pumps and solar panels on these buildings.

Written Response

A full list of Council owned, and leased assets is available on the Council website. To date, energy efficiency measures are installed 'as standard' via the rolling maintenance programme. It is intended to carry out site audits of our key operational buildings, to inform development of a detailed pipeline of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Information about these projects can be provided to members in due course.