

Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services
8th November 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

Dudley Council Plus Overview Report

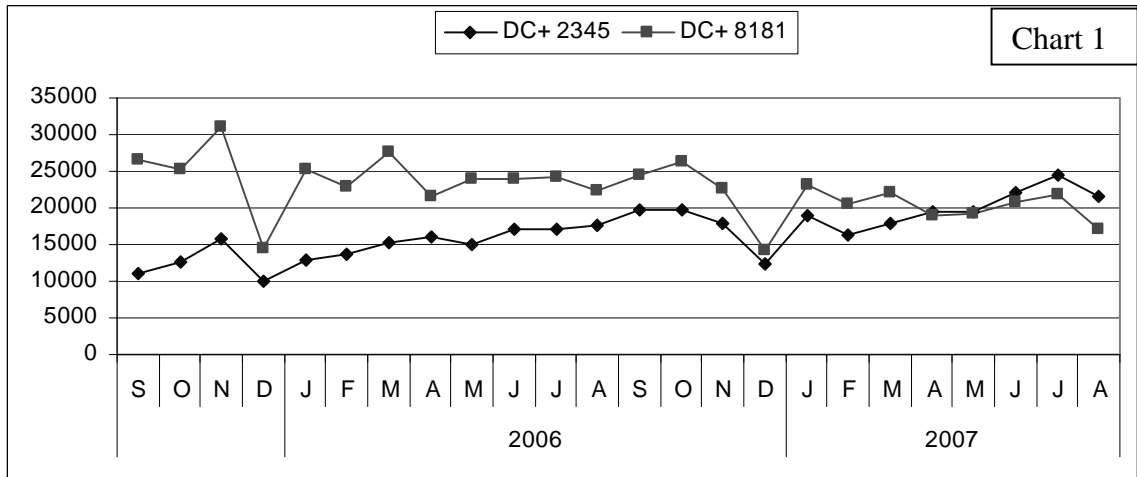
Purpose of Report

1. This report describes the performance patterns for key aspects of Dudley Council Plus during 2006-7.

Background

2. Dudley Council Plus has been established as the council's generic customer service function for nearly three years. It provides information on all council services at one point of contact and easier access for customers to increasing numbers of council services. Dudley Council Plus is open approximately 50% longer than normal office hours. Face to face, telephone, web and e-mail enquiries are the main channels used by customers. The Castle Street centre was opened in May 2005 as the first town centre location.
3. This report presents and explains performance data for key aspects of Dudley Council Plus's operations on behalf of all Directorates. The report does not repeat the way information is presented to Members through the usual performance reporting process but accounts for those data and highlights some key areas. These areas include: volumes of calls and callers; telephone and face to face response rates; abandoned calls; wait times.
4. Dudley Council Plus is busier than ever and has improved performance over the past year. The 'headline' data below give some indication of performance.
Dudley Council Plus handles at least:
 - o Half a million telephone calls per year
 - o 72000 face to face enquiries per year
 - o 96000 cash payments per year
 - o 6000 e-mails per year
 - o 26500 box office tickets sold per yearDudley Council Plus performs well:
 - o 80% of tel calls are answered within 30 secs
 - o 94% callers get through first time
 - o 90% customers are seen by an advisor within 10 minutes
 - o 97% of customers are satisfied with our service

5. Volumes of calls and callers:
Telephone calls answered

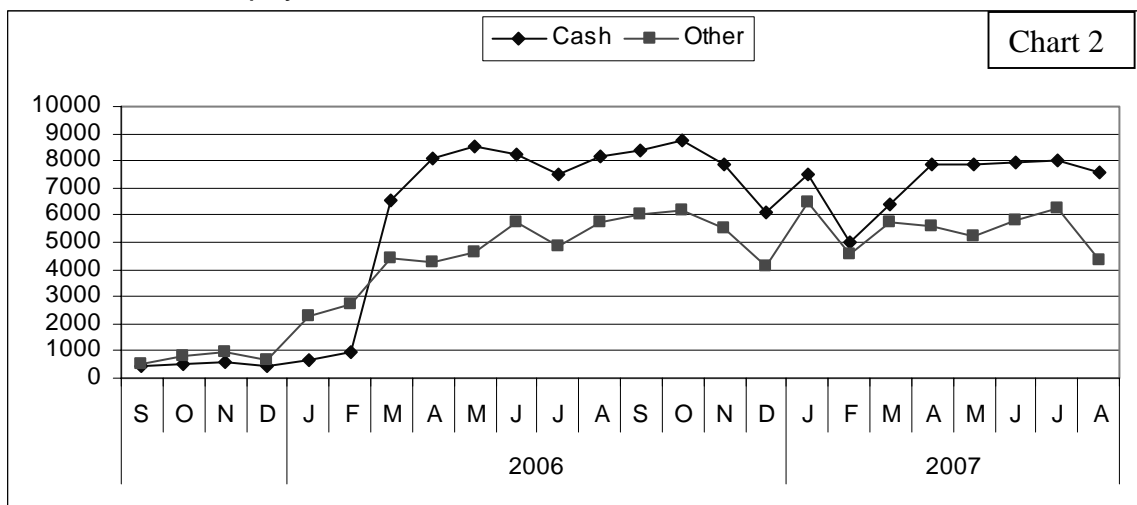


Switchboard (8181) volumes have been decreasing slowly; calls to 2345 are increasing.

December is a 'quiet' month for both numbers (Dudley Council Plus allocates staffing to meet demand).

Face to face callers

Numbers of cash payments and additional callers



Services provided other than cash payments include access to all services, cheque, debit and credit card payments, Box Office tickets, customers dealt with by assistants, internet users, meetings, etc.

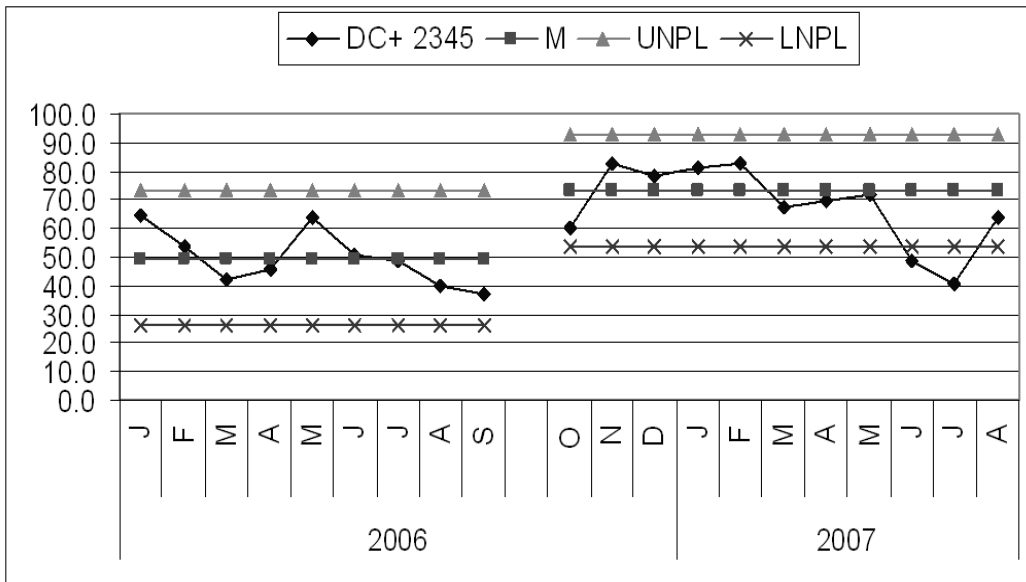
6. Response measures

2345: % calls answered within 30 secs

Changes to operations in Dudley Council Plus during autumn 2006 resulted in significant improvements. Events in June and July 2007, both outside the control of Dudley Council Plus, adversely affected response measures as Charts 3 & 4 show (see below)

For 2345, the **average** percentage of calls answered within 30secs in 2006-7 was **61.5%**. However, this single figure masks the true picture.

Further scrutiny of response times for 2345 reveals the following:



Follow

ing discussion and advice, changes to operations in Dudley Council Plus during last autumn resulted in significant improvements. Prior to this the **average response time was approximately 50%** of calls answered within 30 secs. Following the changes (which included contract re-negotiations and other operational improvements) the **average is now over 73%** of calls answered within 30 secs.

June/July 2007 – specific causes of decreased performance:

1. Green wheelie bins – public expectation was raised regarding the delivery of green wheelie bins; unfortunately there were problems with delivery and Dudley Council Plus were inundated with several thousand extra calls
2. Local floods – an unpredicted event (including Dudley Council Plus being flooded) also resulted in thousands of extra calls (e.g. for sandbags, blocked drains, etc.)

8181: % calls answered within 30 secs

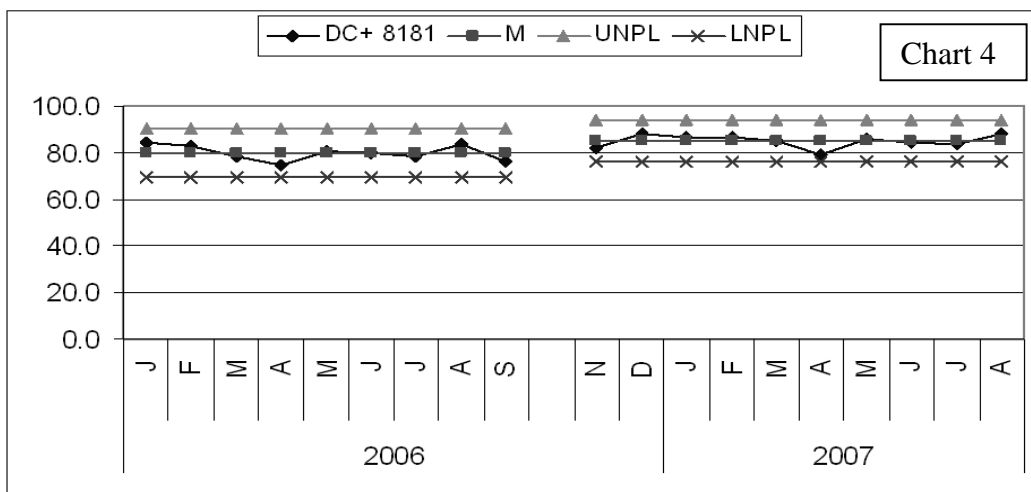


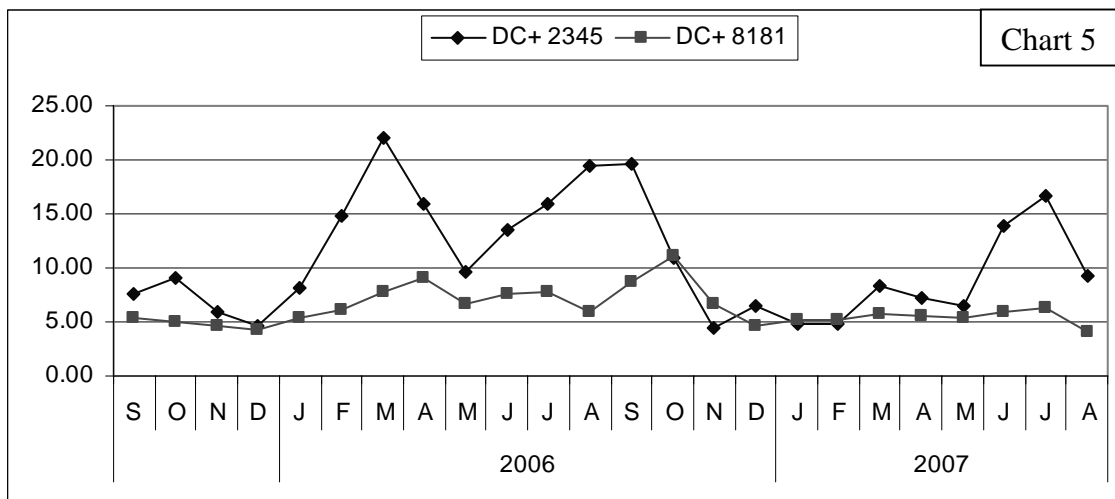
Chart 4

Performance has been very stable, **averaging at 85%** calls answered within 30 seconds (range is from 75% to 88%; data for October 2006 have been excluded due to a faulty report from data collection software)

Changes in Autumn 2006 resulted in a small improvement in performance

For information, in Charts 3 & 4 above, M is the mean; UNPL and LNPL are the two capability limits for Dudley Council Plus to maintain performance over time (i.e. unless other changes are introduced performance will normally vary between these limits).

7. % Abandoned calls



Changes to operations in Dudley Council Plus during autumn 2006 resulted in significant improvements

Events in June and July 2007 adversely affected this performance area as seen in Chart 5

For individual services prior to their transfer to Dudley Council Plus, abandoned, busy or unanswered calls ranged typically between 35% and 65%.

The Institute of Customer Services has said that many councils currently aspire to achieve abandoned call percentages as low as 15%.

8. Wait times

Target: 80% customers seen by an advisor within 10 minutes

Q1 2006-7	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1 2007-8
92.27%	81.94%	90.78%	87.20%	89.4%

Target: 80% customers making cash payments within 10 minutes

Q1 2006-7	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1 2007-8
82.50%	85.70%	87.30%	98.00%	92.2%

Customer satisfaction:

Q1 2006-7	Q2	Q3
91.2%	91.2%	97.1%

To be reported annually from 2007-8 onwards.

9. Staff utilisation rate

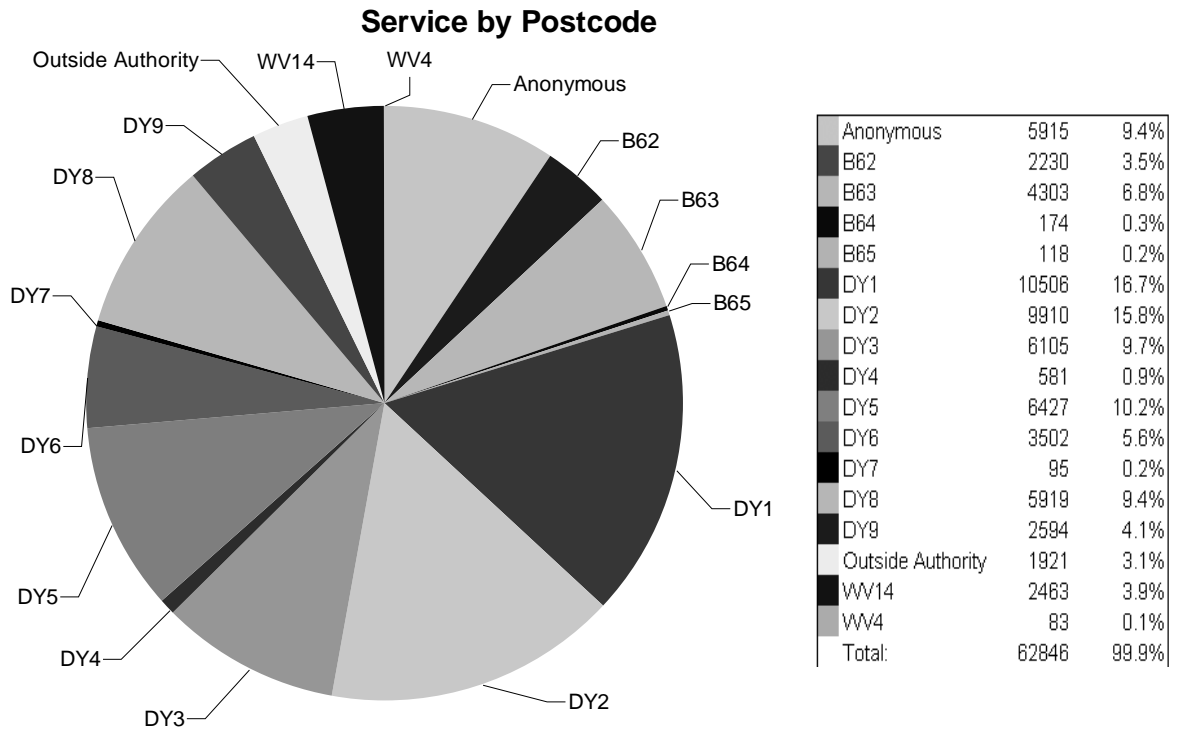
Between early 2006 and June 2007 Dudley Council Plus has **improved staff utilisation rate from 49% to 58%**.

Staff utilisation rate is a measure of 'time on task'. It is usually based on 85% availability (i.e. 100% contract time minus time for leave, sickness & training – typically totalling 15%).

The Varney review highlighted that the average utilisation rate in government call centres is 49% and private sector best practice, the aspiration for government centres, is typically 69%.

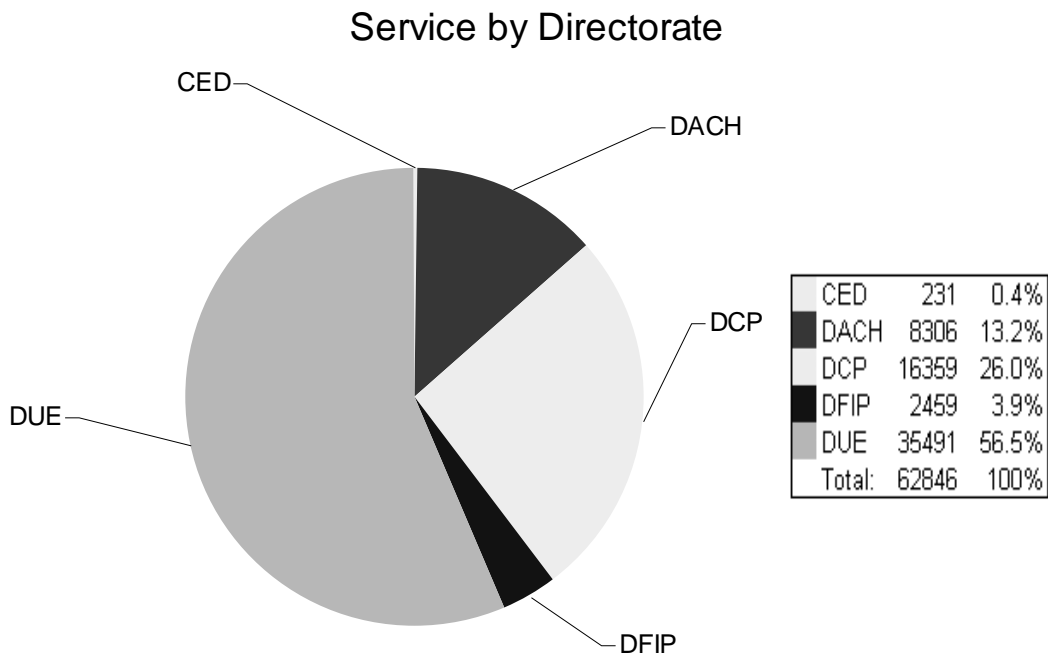
10. Management data

Service volumes by postcode (Jan-Jun 2007):



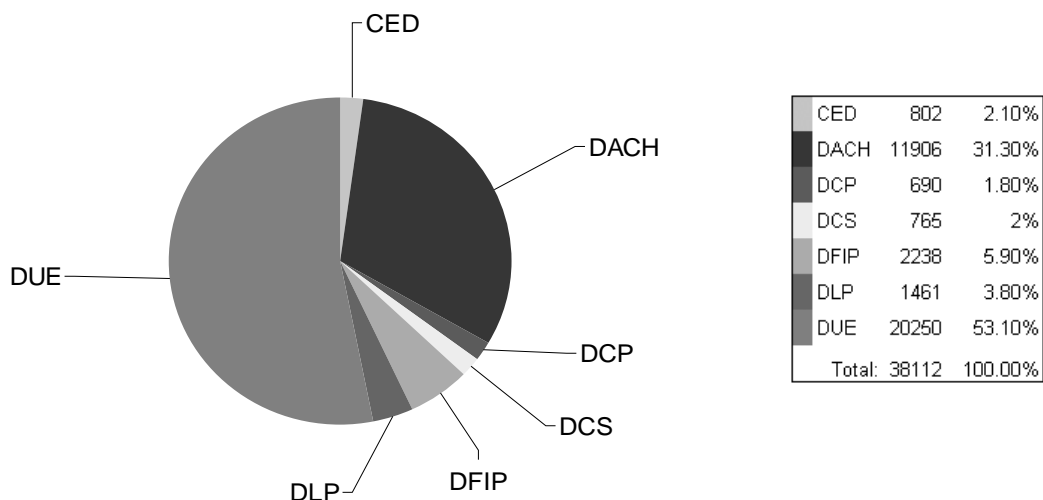
Service volumes by Directorate (Jan-June 2007):

Dudley Council Plus services include change of address, processing payments, balance enquiries, acknowledgement letters, CENTRO bus passes, etc.



Information & e-mail requests (Jan-June 2007):

Count of information Request and Email Back Office



11 Summary

Telephone and visitor volumes in Dudley Council Plus have **increased over time** as expected.

Key performances (as measured by % calls handled within 30 secs and abandoned calls) have **improved drastically** and stabilised over recent months.

Wait times are **consistently better than target**.

Utilisation rate has **improved considerably**

This work supports the theme of the Council Plan – Quality Service Matters

Finance

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Law

13. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which empowers the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its various statutory functions. The provision of a central reception arrangement is incidental to the whole range of the Council's functions.

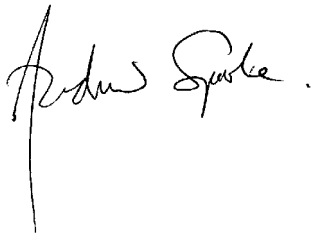
Equality Impact

14. The development of Dudley Council Plus supports the quality of access and delivery of services to all customers and takes into account the needs of minority groups

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that:-

- Members note the contents of this report and the performance improvements achieved in Dudley Council Plus



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