

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

CONTACT CENTRE

ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2008/09

Director: Clive Bainbridge Unit Manager: Derek Smith

SECTION ONE - SERVICE PROFILE

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE SERVICE

The purpose of the Contact Centre is to provide quick, easy and high-level quality access to all County Council information and services in a consistent and cost effective manner.

1.2 OPERATING CONTEXT

The Contact Centre consists of two business units :

Contact Kent

Over a 7-year period, Contact Kent has progressed from a switchboard service with 10 team members operating 09.00 – 17.00 hours Monday to Friday, to the current status of delivering and supporting over 60 internal and external services via both telephone and e-mail on a 24/7 basis. Contact Kent is the first point of contact for the people of Kent.

Handling up to 40,000 calls per week, Contact Kent dealt with 1.5 million contacts in 2006/07 including 90,000 e-mails and 92,000 outbound calls. Contact Kent's agents are multi-skilled and handle a variety of calls lasting from 30 seconds to 30 minutes.

Contact Kent deals with a wide variety of contacts which includes supporting internal customers such as Kent Highways Services, Kent Adult Social Services, Kent Libraries, Registration Services, etc. In addition, it works with external customers such as Maidstone Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for whom it provides 'out of hours' services.

Currently, Contact Kent is working with Kent Adult Social Services County Duty Service Team to develop an enhanced 'out of hours' service for clients. It is anticipated there will be a team of 12 'screening' agents who will be trained and developed to deliver this service.

Contact Kent is building strong partnerships in Kent with local councils, Kent Police, Primary Care Trusts, Kent Fire & Rescue Service and the National Health Service with a view to delivering services with or for them.

Consumer Direct South East (CDSE)

Consumer Direct South East is funded by the Office of Fair Trade (OFT) and delivers first level consumer advice to 8m people throughout South East England. It is delivered by KCC on behalf of the OFT which is responsible for advertising the

service to generate awareness and increase call volumes.

Currently, revenue generated is insufficient to meet costs but CDSE is predicted to grow with new services to be added, e.g.: Consumer Voice. The current contract expires in 2010 when a re-tendering process will take place. CDSE fully intends to bid for the new contract when the tender documents are released this summer. Stronger links are to be forged with the Local Authority partners, together with a review of funding arrangements.

Key Drivers in 2008/09

In 2008/09 we need to build on the progress already made through KCC's medium-term planning process to ensure there are stronger links between service and directorate planning. This will give a more joined-up approach linking the aims of Contact Kent with those of the KCC directorates to achieve more efficient and cost effective service delivery.

We are continuing to work towards the Government's target to electronically enable services as set out in the Council's IEG statements. The development of a multi-agency partnership programme working with district councils, Kent Police, Kent Fire & Rescue and others to deliver the Kent Connects programme is core to meeting the e-government target and KCC's role in community leadership.

As part of the Communities Directorate we share in its Vision, 'Together we're better' and will contribute to its priorities:

- Excellent services
- Personalisation
- Access
- Children and young people
- Health and wellbeing

Working in Partnership

- Kent Healthwatch with National Health Service and Primary Care Trusts.
- Kent Customer Services Network Group a working group of contact centre and customer service managers from 12 districts, Kent Police and Medway Council.

Working in KCC

- Gateway (KCC)
- Kent Highway Services
- Supporting KCC's kent.gov website as the helpline number for all internet services
- Supporting County Hall email box
- Handling the Chief Executive Department's calls when deputy is unavailable
- FirstCall (staff helpline for dignity and respect in the workplace)
- Libraries
- Adult Education
- Registration: lone-working, booking appointments, etc.
- Trading Standards: lone working, avian flu information line, etc.

1.3 USERS

In 2007/08 we asked for feedback from customers by sending out questionnaires for certain services and talking to visitors to our stand at the County Show. Below is

a brief outline of what has taken place during the last year and how the results have been used to inform the work we are doing.

County Show

In July 2007 the Contact Kent team ran a stand in the KCC marquee at the County Show, which provided information about the centre and gave people the opportunity to voice their views. Feedback shows that 95% of visitors to the stand felt that their call had been answered quickly, with 98% confirming that their call had been handled in a polite and professional way, with them being treated as an individual.

Kent Highways

The Contact Centre conducts monthly customer satisfaction surveys for Kent Highways and specific feedback is analysed and reported regularly.

Mystery Shopper

There are regular assessments made about the quality of service delivery using various Mystery Shopping exercises. Aside from those conducted internally, Contact Kent also took part in the Kent Customer Services Network Group's Mystery Shopper exercise, where various contact centres worked in partnership to assess delivery of key service areas.

Quality Control

Additionally, Contact Kent's Quality Programme means that 4 calls per Agent are assessed against agreed performance standards per month.

KCC Directorates

The Contact Centre Manager holds regular meetings with KCC Directorates which provide the opportunity to update these 'customers'. The meetings are an important feature in the work of engaging directorate customers in the work of the Contact Centre Management Team's expansion plans and also help shape the specific SLAs. In considering both the expansion of the current services or the addition of new ones, the Team will assess the resourcing and, hence, financial impact of any changes. This will be done in both isolation and with consideration to the potential impact that changes may have to our existing Service Partners and service delivery.

Complaints

All complaints received by the Contact Centre are either dealt with at the point of contact or are passed to the relevant Directorate/Unit to process.

Details of complaints regarding Contact Kent service delivery are recorded on a central spreadsheet with Team Leaders responsible for remedial action and amendments to working practices to prevent recurrence.

1.4 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE 2007/08

Key Performance Indicators

Indicator	Actual performance 2006/2007	Estimated performance 2007/08	Target 2008/09
Contact Kent			
Answer rate	96.7%	96.5%	95%
Answered within 20 seconds	84%	83%	80%
Depth of service	85%	85%	80%
CDSE			
Answer rate	98%	95.6%	95%
Answered within 20 seconds	80%	74%	80%
NI 14 (Cross-cutting Indicator): Avoidable contact: The average number of customer contacts per received customer request	New Indicator	New Indicator	Baseline established in 2008/9

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS/OUTCOMES IN 2007/08

Established Service Level Agreements with:

- Kent Libraries & Archives
- Blue Badge Service
- Property Services
- Registration & Coroners
- Adult Education
- Kent Highways
- Social Services out-of-hours duty screening service.

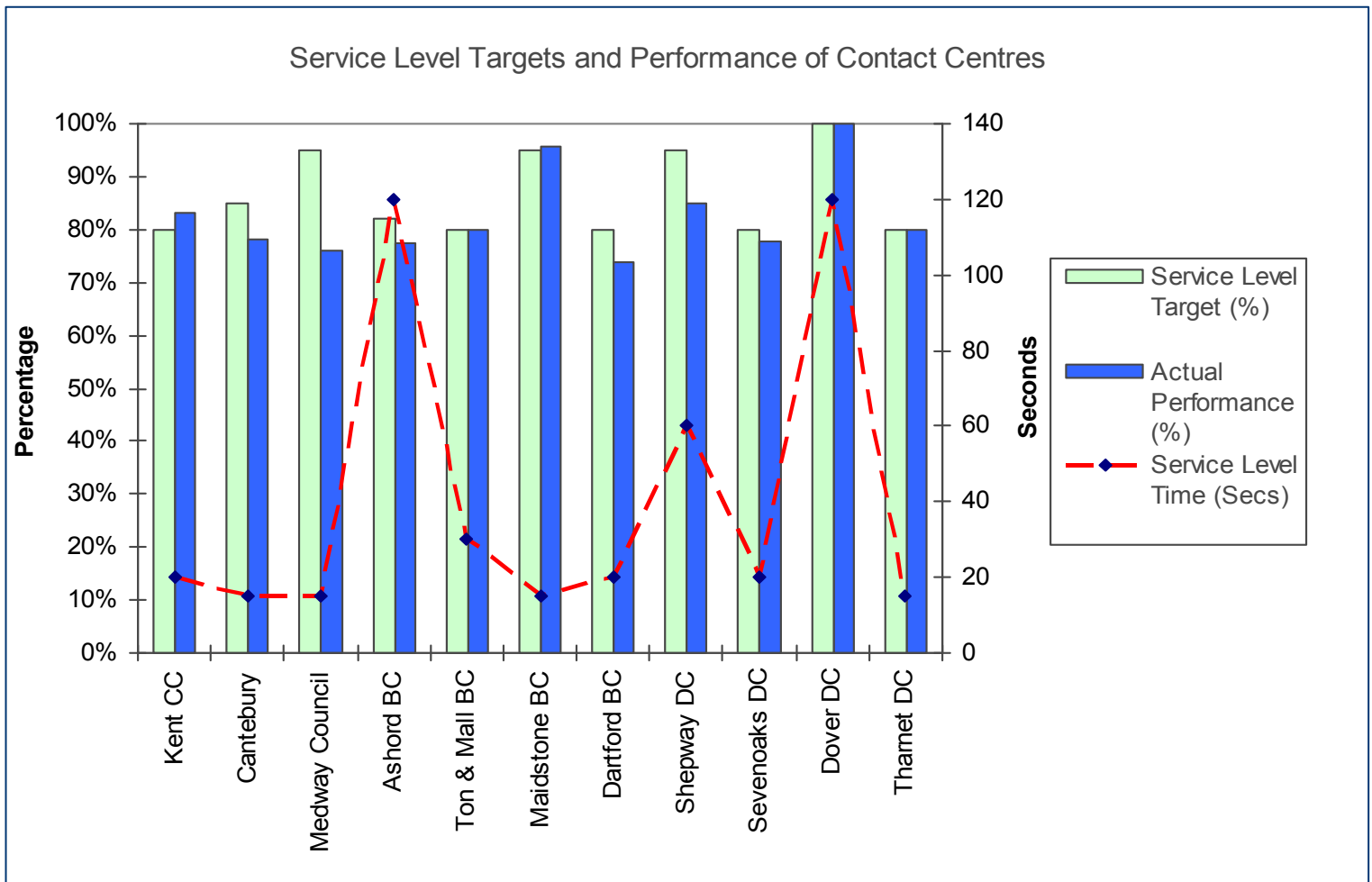
Delivered Council IEG statements:

- Developed detailed Frequently Asked Questions on CRM for all services
- Launched textbox service (replaced minicom), a service for individuals with a hearing disability

Delivered staffing around the clock with 'real' people:

- 14 new services managed by Contact Kent (including one-off campaigns, i.e. post office closures line)
- 24/7 opening consolidated including
 - full shift rostering to cover weekends and bank holidays
 - full shift working established with teams covering 8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday

1.5 SERVICE COMPARISON (with other public sector contact centres in Kent and Medway for 2007)



SECTION TWO - PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SERVICE

	Key Corporate / Directorate Targets	
PLAN	TARGET	LEAD OFFICER
T2010	Target 21- (Support for target). Support the launch and marketing of a new website, "What's on in Kent?" that will list sports and leisure activities and local organisations for all age ranges in the county write out in full	Edward Austin
Directorate Priority	Develop and demonstrate cross-unit and partnership working at a local level	Edward Austin
Directorate Priority	Develop recruitment and retention practices which improve the % of disabled people who are employed.	Edward Austin
Directorate	Achieve ISO 14001 Environmental Management System	Mark Crisp

priority / Towards 2010 Target 42	roll-out by 31 December 2008 (Support for this target).	
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Towards 2010 detailed action plans can be found at
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/publications/council-and-democracy/towards-2010-action-plans.htm>

2.2 OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of Contact Kent are to:

- deliver service excellence for all KCC operational services
- seek opportunities to expand the number of services handled helping KCC to deliver wider, high quality customer contact in a cost effective way
- act as a centre of excellence helping and advising customer contact areas on best practice
- support and enhance the KCC Internet strategy and other 'new technologies'

To achieve do this we will:

- improve access to services
- establish methods for delivering service excellence
- deliver business efficiencies
- lead in improving services through business process re-engineering

2.3 CORE SERVICES AND FORECAST ACTIVITY LEVELS

Core Services

See Appendix 1 for a full list of services.

<u>Core Activity Levels</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008 Forecast</u>
▪ Calls handled	1.34m	1.4m
▪ Calls answered	1.28m	1.33m
▪ Answer rate	96.5%	95%
▪ Calls answered within 20 secs	83%	80%
▪ Depth of service	85%	80%
▪ Other Contacts (emails, faxes and post)	137k	150k

PROJECTS, DEVELOPMENTS AND KEY ACTIONS

Where necessary, the Managing Director is authorised to negotiate, settle the terms of and enter the following agreements/projects:

Project/Development/key action	a/c manager	Links to Corporate/ Directorate targets	Deliverables or outcomes planned for 2008/09	Target dates
Establish, in conjunction with the two Kent PCT's, Kent Healthwatch	Derek Smith		Good working relationship with Health authorities established and service operational.	June 2008
Work with other public sector contact centres based in Kent to deliver recommendations (still to be formally approved) in the Pan-Kent Public Services Customer Contact Assessment	Clive Bainbridge Derek Smith		Contact Kent working closer with public sector contact centres in Kent and any formally agreed recommendations in process of being implemented.	March 2009
Lead in the establishment of a cross directorate CRM (customer relationship Management database) to integrate front office (Contact Kent) and back office (all Directorates)	Clive Bainbridge Derek Smith		Corporate CRM strategy developed. New CRM installed and integrated with operations in all services across KCC delivered by Contact Kent.	August 2008 December 2009
Identify other parts of KCC where Contact Kent could deliver an enhanced / more efficient public contact. In conjunction with those business units develop and deliver their services via Contact Kent.	Derek Smith		Additional services delivered by Contact Kent.	March 2009
Contribute to a cross Kent multi channel strategy group and re-define a channel strategy for telephonic / email access to Kent	Clive Bainbridge Derek Smith		Corporate channel strategy developed.	October 2008

Re-establish vision for Contact Kent within KCC	Derek Smith		New vision for Contact Kent developed.	March 2009
Return Consumer Direct SE to financial balance. Ensure future for service is robust by tendering for new services such as Consumer Voice and extension to scope of service delivered.	Derek Smith		Service financially secure New services won	March 2009 March 2009
Establish plan for moving Contact Centre to another site	Derek Smith	Office accommodation strategy	Feasibility study carried out, plan agreed by Property Board and any financial aspects included in MTFP.	March 2009
Develop homeworking pilot	Derek Smith		Homeworking pilot undertaken and assessed.	March 2009
Establish extra 'back office' services linked with existing business units	Derek Smith		Back office services reviewed and additional facilities in place.	March 2009
Deliver enhanced support for lone workers	Derek Smith		Lone worker policy reviewed and support enhanced.	March 2009
Streamline handling of emails	Derek Smith		Email handling system improved.	March 2009
Business Continuity Plan & Risk Assessment	Derek Smith		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan tested and updated every six months ▪ Risk assessments checked and updated every six months 	Sept 2008 March 2009 Sept 2008 March 2009
Equality Impact Screening and Assessing	Derek Smith		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All new policies, practices and procedures screened and impact assessed as necessary 	March 2009
Investors in People	Clare Rosling		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IIP action plan reviewed and updated every six months 	Sept 2008 March 2009

In line with financial regulations, capital projects will be subject to a review by the Project Advisory Group prior to approval to spend by the Leader.

USER/RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT PLANNED FOR 2008/9

Name	Start date/ end date dd/mm/yy	Consultation type	Target Group	Target area (Kent, Town, district, ward etc	Brief summary	What we want to find out and how we will use the information,(approx 25 – 50 words)	Statutory Yes/No	Feedback to public date	Contact name, e- mail & phone No.
Kent Residents Panel	Ongoing	Community	Residents of Kent	Kent	People of Kent involved with service delivery	To obtain feedback from delivery of services and to gauge public opinion on current issues and strategic direction	Yes		Nick Warren
KHS Customer Service Satisfaction Survey		Community	KHS customers	Kent	Obtaining feedback from KHS customers	Customer satisfaction in terms of customer service and quality of response to a problem on Kent roads, e.g. faulty street light, potholes, etc.	No		David Beaver

RESOURCES

- 4.1 STRUCTURE CHART**
See Appendix 2

4.2 STAFFING

	2007/08	2008/09
KS13 and above or equivalent (FTEs)	1	1
KS12 and below (FTEs)	186.5	187.8
TOTAL	187.5	188.8
Of the above total, the FTE which are externally funded : CDSE	55.5	57.4

4.3 CAPACITY, SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The move towards delivering more in depth support for social services will require additional training and the development of closer links with Children, Families & Education and Kent Adult Social Services.

Training needs to keep pace with service specific skills and to develop soft skills, such as objection handling and questioning techniques. We have commenced a program of Soft skills training and this will continue to roll out across the center throughout 2008/9

Emails are becoming increasingly complex and require specific skills.

Need to ensure sufficient staff are in the contact centre to manage services, including managing vacancies and sickness absence, as contacts are real time and cannot wait for replacement without hitting service levels.

Skill levels (the number trained in each service) are reviewed regularly across all of the teams to ensure that all services have sufficient cover throughout the period that they are open. This is an ongoing requirement as staff turnover affects skill levels within the center. To ensure this, we have a 6 month rolling training plan which is available to all staff to see.

Throughout the Service training requirements are identified during appraisals, these are collated into a service-level learning and development plan which, in turn forms part of a division-wide plan. Training embraces a wide range of methods from shadowing to formal training courses.

The Directorate has identified 3 development priorities which will be addressed in 2008/09 :

- Management audit (competence)
- Up skilling business support people
- Equalities (corporate)

SECTION 5 : REVENUE BUDGET

2007-08 Controllable Expenditure	FTE	Activity/Budget Line	2008-09								
£'000			FTE	Employee Costs £'000	Running Costs £'000	Contracts & Projects £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	External Income £'000	Internal Income £'000	Controllable Expenditure £'000	Cabinet Member
2844.0	150.0	Contact Kent	131.4	2661.9	620.1	28.0	3310.0	15.0	430.0	2865.0	MH
0.0	60.0	Consumer Direct	57.4	1239.1	213.0		1452.1	1452.1		0.0	MH
2844.0	210.0	Controllable Totals	188.8	3901.0	833.1	28.0	4762.1	1467.1	430.0	2865.0	
		<u>Memoranda Items:</u>									
		Central Overheads					0.0			0.0	
		Directorate Overheads					0.0			0.0	
		Capital Charges					0.0			0.0	
2844.0	210.0	Total Cost of Unit	188.8	3901.0	833.1	28.0	4762.1	1467.1	430.0	2865.0	

CORPORATE THEMES

6.1 Equality & Diversity

The Directorate Equality Strategy is being updated but will include the following objectives for individual services :

- Build on current intelligence to develop a more complete picture of current service users, and non-users, in terms of the national equalities strands and use this to inform service planning.
- Ensure that consultation for planning and decision making processes involves all sections of the community.
- Develop a better understanding of the groups of people whose views are seldom heard and find ways of engaging with them.
- Continue with the process of ensuring that all new policies, procedures, decisions and practices are screened for their impact.
- Complete the review of contracts and SLAs with external providers in order to ensure that equalities requirements are embedded and a monitoring system in place.
- Where possible ensure the service contributes to the Directorate's targets for disability employment.
- Introduce a pragmatic approach to monitoring equalities issues relating to complaints, building on the pilot that is being introduced for 3 months in February 2008.
- Respond to any equalities issues arising from the corporate inspection.
- Continue to provide Equality & Diversity training for staff and managers.

The Community Safety & Regulatory Services Division has an Equalities Group with representatives from each of the 6 service units. The purpose of this group is to ensure information from the Directorate Equalities Group is disseminated throughout the Division. Members of the group lead on equality issues for each service unit, e.g.: Equality Impact Assessments. Screening for Equality Impact Assessments has been led by members of this group. In addition, some members of the Division Equalities Group are Directorate Equality Champions – Age, Gender and Faith.

Examples of how the Contact Centre embraces equality and diversity:

- The Contact Centre services the Blue badge Holders of Kent
- The Contact Centre offers a textbox service for those customers who are hearing impaired
- The Contact Centre is first point of contact for Kent top temps translation service as promoted on kent.gov.uk.

6.2 Section 17 Crime & Disorder Act (Community Safety)

Contact Kent supports the Community Warden programme by ensuring their well being when lone working in the course of their role.

6.3 Corporate Environmental Performance & Climate Change Adaptation

The Communities Directorate recently published an Environment Policy which commits it to achieving ISO 14001 compliance – implementing, maintaining and improving an environmental management system across the organisation.

The Community Safety & Regulatory Services Division has an Environment Group with representatives from each of the 6 service units. The purpose of this group is to support the Directorate's commitment to achieving ISO 14001 compliance by sharing experience and best practice.

6.4 Investors in People

All service units in the Community Safety & Regulatory Services Division support Investors in People and have action plans which are updated on a regular basis.

IIP principles are taken into account in business planning and management, e.g.:

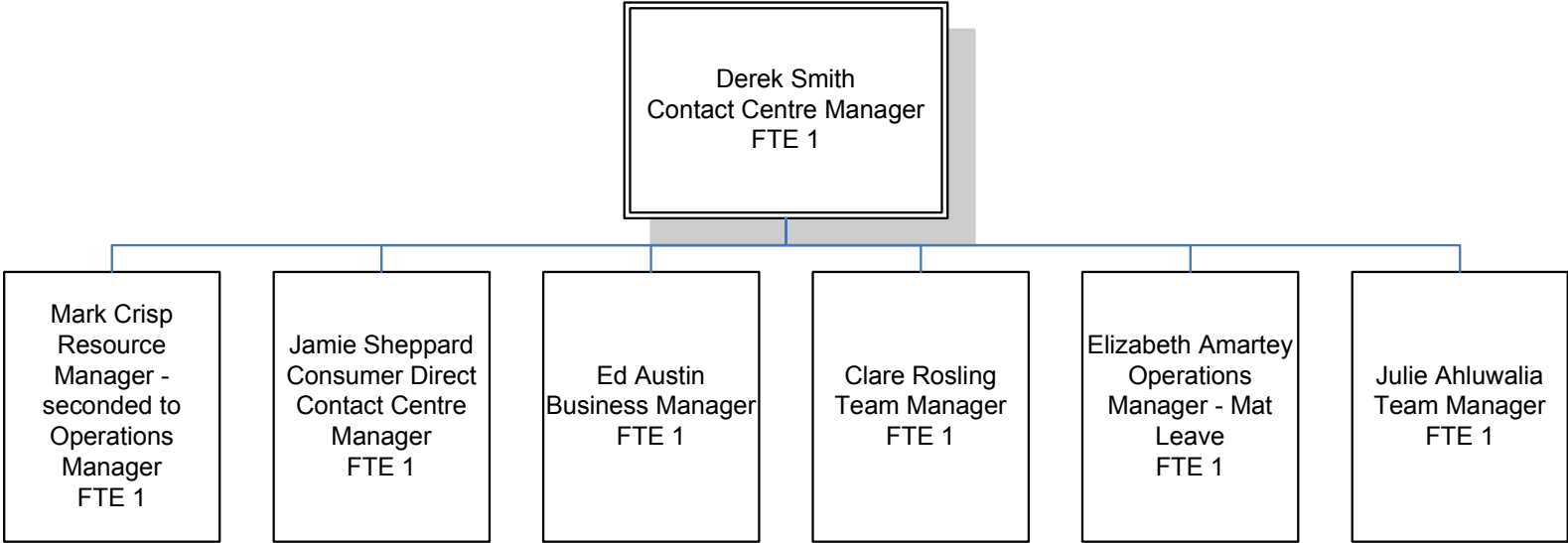
- Objectives in the business plan are translated into individual work plans
- Strong commitment to appraisal and development
- Strong commitment to equal opportunities in training, etc
- Recognition of good work
- Evaluation of training
- Celebration of success

Appendix 1: Services

247 Line	Kent Report Line; Unauthorised encampments
Adult Education	Kent Report Line; Waste Management
Adult Education Emails	Kent Residents Panel
Archives	KFM Helpdesk
Blue Badges : Online applications and post	KFM Helpdesk Emails
Blue Badges Emails	Kings Hill Switchboard
Common Land Searches : Postal service	Kroner Switchboard
County Hall Emails	Maidstone Borough Council Out Of Hours
Education Line	No Use Empty
E Gov/Internet Support : parish council web support	Payment Enquiries
Emergency Line; Animal Transportation	Pensions Campaigns
Emergency Line; Emergency Vicar / Registrations	Pensions Campaigns Emails
Emergency Line; Highways OOHs	Planning Applications
Environment & Waste	Recruitment
Environment & Waste Online Shop	Recruitment Emails
External Switchboard	Registration Of Births & Deaths
Further Education Awards	Registration Weddings / Civil Partnerships
Help Line	Schools Admissions & Transport
Internal Switchboard	Social Service Appropriate Adult
KCC Property Services	Social Service Drug Intervention
Kent Business Centre	Social Service 247 100
Kent Citizenship Ceremonies	Social Service 247 100 Self Assessment
Kent Citizenship; Nationality Check In	Social Service 247 100 Pre Paid Card
KCC Campaign Line - TCP	Social Services
Kent Libraries	Social Services E Mails
KCC User Survey	Social Services Out of Hours
Kent Highway Service	Travel Warrants
Kent Highway Service Emails	Travel Warrants Emails
Kent Highway Service – Speed Awareness Course	Tun Wells Borough Council Out Of Hours
Kent Report Line; Rogue Trader	Web Services

Appendix 2 : Structure Charts

Contact Centre – Management Team



Contact Kent - Management and Support

