



Cambridgeshire  
Police & Crime  
Commissioner

**To:** Business Coordination Board

**From:** Chief Constable

**Date:** 24 March 2015

## **CALL HANDLING PERFORMANCE UPDATE AND BUDGET APPROVAL FOR STAFFING UPLIFT**

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 To update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on current performance in relation to Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (“the Constabulary”) Call Handling performance and to seek approval for budget expenditure to uplift staff numbers within the Police Service Centre (PSC).

### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 The Board note the contents of this paper, including the investment in provision of new Interactive Voice Response technology (IVR) and Queuebuster Products within the PSC.

2.2 The Board approve the expenditure of £302,800 for the uplift in staffing within the PSC by 10 full time posts.

### **3. Call Handling Performance**

3.1 Emergency call handling performance has remained strong throughout the early part of the calendar year, with the target of 90% of calls being answered within 10 seconds (excluding those abandoned before the threshold) exceeded in every month, as shown in the table below. The 10 second target has now been exceeded every month for the preceding 52 months. The average wait time for February 2015 was 4 seconds.

### 3.2 999 Emergency Call Handling Performance

	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014	Sept 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015
Call Volume	7596	8256	8304	8203	9090	8980	10215	9308	8413	9257	8761	8335	7423	7140
% answer in 10 sec	98.00	96.30	96.10	96.30	96.05	96.01	93.44	93.41	93.78	93.30	94.92	94.28	96.79	95.52

(Call Volume and % of Emergency Calls answered with 10 seconds with FCR)

### 3.3 101 Non-Emergency Calls

	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014	Sept 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015
Call Vol	27297	26085	29369	27003	29753	31336	33400	29303	30331	30010	27836	25466	25614	25766
% ans in 30 sec	95.46	95.18	94.44	94.55	94.25	91.35	92.50	94.82	93.71	94.91	95.52	95.68	95.79	93.50

(% calls within PSC answered in under 30 seconds)

3.4 The above table sets out the sustained improvement in 101 non-emergency call handling performance with in excess of 90% of calls answered in less than the target 30 seconds which remains in line with the Police and Crime Plan.

3.5 The average wait time for initial response to the 101 call has ranged between 5 - 8 seconds during the last ten months. In February 2015 the average wait time continued was 7 seconds. This means that the vast majority of calls are answered and subject to an initial triage very quickly, allowing calls of an emergency nature to be prioritised and routed accordingly.

## 4. **Secondary Call Handling**

4.1 Every 101 call that comes into the Constabulary is subject to an initial triage assessment as outlined above. The initial triage assesses threat, risk and harm and prioritises accordingly. Any calls which are deemed urgent are routed to the Force Control Room (FCR) for immediate action. Any call that needs putting through to a department or extension number are routed accordingly. It is then calls that are of a general or crime recording nature that get routed through to separate staff within the PSC and it is here that a caller can experience some delay.

- 4.2 Approximately 50% of all calls get put through to these secondary numbers. Secondary call handling performance has experienced pressure over recent months. The average and longest wait times peaked in June and July 2014 however average wait times have reduced from these peak levels and to some extent stabilised as a result of additional measures put in place. There is unlikely to be any further performance improvement without additional investment and this forms the basis of the proposed funding uplift set out later within this paper.
- 4.3 The following table sets out secondary call handling performance since March 2014, with improvements and stabilisation in performance noticeable since the peak periods of pressure in June and July 2014.

### Secondary Call Handling

	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015
% Abandoned after 30 secs	13.35	13.42	16.74	19.79	21.27	16.68	16.47	13.49	12.39	10.81	10.54	14.72
Average Wait Time (minutes & seconds)	1.42	2.19	3.47	4.34	5.10	3.31	3.25	3.16	3.36	3.40	3.52	3.28
Longest Wait Time (minutes & seconds)	16.43	40.46	54.54	52.12	54.29	39.27	59.18	56.42	47.38	41.25	45.42	41.22

(% calls abandoned after 30 secs, Average Wait Time (minutes and seconds) and Longest Wait Time (minutes and seconds))

## **5. Action taken to date**

- 5.1 £10K has been spent on additional technology to allow secondary 101 calls to be routed into the FCR as well as the PSC as part of the main telephony infrastructure, thereby ensuring that the calls remain subject to recording, tracking and statistical analysis as currently exists in the Police Service Centre.
- 5.2 Finance has already been agreed for the purchase of new IVR and ring back facility (Queuebuster). This is currently being installed and this is estimated to be operational by early April 2015. The new IVR will improve functionality and allow better opportunities for callers to be routed to their intended destination in a more timely and efficient manner which in turn will reduce demand within the PSC. The new IVR will also bring the Constabulary in line with the product used in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire thereby enable collaborative options should the Public Contact Business Case take us in that direction. The new IVR will allow improved options to route calls direct to officers via both mobile and office based numbers.
- 5.3 Queuebuster will give the caller the option of a ring back whilst also retaining their place in the queue which should improve the caller experience and flatten demand peaks. It is also likely that a caller can select an alternative number to be called back on, such as a mobile in the event that they need to go out.

5.4 The technology outlined within 5.2 above has cost £59,749

**6. Staffing Uplift**

6.1 Extensive work has been undertaken to review call handling data in light of the performance pressures experienced in recent months. Work has been undertaken by our own Internal Corporate Performance Department and then subsequently by the Collaboration Team, supported by external consultants to ensure that any required uplift in staff in the short term is not at odds with potential medium to longer term collaboration options. This combined work has identified that there is a shortfall in staff numbers required to cope with current demand and provide an efficient secondary call handling service. This said, it is anticipated that the new IVR and Queuebuster will have a positive impact on demand reduction, similarly the roll out of mobile devices to front line officers will allow them to record crimes at source which will further reduce demand within the PSC.

6.2 It is also recognised that changes to the Home Office Crime Recording Rules which take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 will see an increase in upfront recording of crime at the point of initial call which is likely to place an additional demand on the PSC.

6.3 It is recognised that the current secondary call handling waiting times are longer than the Constabulary would ideally like and the longest waiting times are unacceptably high. From the work undertaken, the Constabulary is satisfied that it currently makes best use of the resources that it has and that they are appropriately aligned to demand.

6.4 Having considered all of the above, it is the Constabulary’s proposal to seek funding approval for the provision of 10 additional full time call taking staff for the PSC at a total cost of £302,800. This suite of measures will improve performance at the secondary call handling stage, improve resilience and ensure the service to the public is improved overall.

**7. Recommendation**

7.1 The Board note the contents of this paper, including the investment in provision of new IVR and Queuebuster Products within the PSC.

7.2 The Board approve the expenditure of £302,800 for the uplift in staffing within the PSC by 10 full time posts.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

<b>Source Document</b>	
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Supt Chris Mead, Head of Contact Management