

**POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

**2 DECEMBER 2014**

**REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**SERVICE STRATEGY FOR CUSTOMERS**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The report sets out the service strategy for customers from 2015 for the next five years. The strategy aims to improve services for the customer and increase customer satisfaction across the services by embedding the customer focused culture across the authority and partners.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to consider and approve the new Service Strategy for Customers in order that it may be communicated and incorporated into the main business of the Council**
- 2.2 **That delegation is given to the Head of Communication to make minor amendments to the strategy to ensure it remains current and up to date.**

**3.0 KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The last Customer Service Strategy produced by the Council dates back to 2005. It set the framework for providing good customer service and the channels available to the customer. Progress against the original strategy has been made however nine years on it is now out of date and requires a total refresh to take into consideration the current economic and digital needs of the customer.
- 3.2 The new strategy has been renamed so that it sends a very clear message across the organisation that this strategy is not just for the Customer Service Team but is about our commitment to delivering excellent services for all of our customers across all the service areas regardless of the access channel chosen.
- 3.3 The strategy sets out the vision for the future ensuring that service users will be at the heart of how the Council works and that there is an expectation for a high level of customer satisfaction.
- 3.4 The strategy gives a clear message that there is commitment and leadership from the Council to ensure there is a customer focused culture. It explains the level of commitment required from both employees and contractors to ensure the culture is such that it delivers the best outcomes for the customer across the services, partners and regardless of access channel. It explains how the Council is committed to recruiting and developing the right staff to have the relevant skills to deliver our aspirations.
- 3.5 The key drivers for the change in the strategy have come from the downturn in the economy and reduced public sector resources. There is a need to remove waste from processes wherever possible and ensure service delivery provides value for

money. This can be achieved by freeing up staff time from labour intensive administration or routine activities by automating transactions, designing out the risk of error and fraud from our processes and reducing duplication. The strategy dovetails with the vision of the Transformation Programme and much of the delivery of the strategy will be realised as a result of the programme.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The strategy has been designed to support the delivery of the Corporate Priorities with most emphasise on being “A well run Council” – Good services that are value for money

To provide high performing service that are efficient and meet customers’ needs

- Service that meet customer expectations
- A one team culture
- Deploy resources flexibly
- Innovate service delivery
- Efficient, effective, excellent performance

(taken from our priorities, goals and promises 2011-15)

- 4.2 The localism and transparency agendas put more emphasis on knowing and understanding our customers as well as putting our ways of working and failures to deliver under more scrutiny. The strategy ensures that service standards and performance targets are more widely publicised.
- 4.3 Service standards which form an appendix to this strategy will be revised in line with the Corporate Plan.
- 4.4 The overall theme of the strategy links well with the aims of the Transformation Programme which is reviewing and improving the start to end process for our most demanded services.
- 4.5 This strategy has interdependencies with the Communications Strategy, Equalities Policy, ICT Strategy, Community Partnership, Information Security and Sharing Policies and the Consultation and Engagement Strategy

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no on going revenue implications as a result of this strategy but there may continue to be some one off investment linked to securing behaviour change and the required digital take up. Overall the strategy aims to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery with in the individual services and across the Transformation Programme.
- 5.2 The Head of Communications has overall responsibility for the delivery of the strategy. All MBC staff have a role in delivering excellent customer service and making the strategy a reality
- 5.3 It is anticipated that the strategy will be delivered within existing resources however it is noted that services with high levels of customer demand are being prioritised for review under the Transformation Programme and therefore subject to individual

business cases and project plans.

## 6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no known legal implications as a result of this strategy. Due consideration will be given to Data Protection issues when dealing with customer information.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 No direct implications regarding community safety have been identified however by providing more effective and efficient customer service that promotes and deals with community safety will assist the Authority to meet its duty under the Crime and Disorder Act.

## 8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 The strategy aims to improve accessibility for all. Through improving services and accessibility it hopes to reduce the demand for specialist services and ensure easier availability of services for our most vulnerable customers and those with multiple and complex needs.

8.2 The Equality Impact Assessment for the strategy is at Appendix B

## 9.0 RISKS

9.1 The principal risks associated with the Authority failing to adopt the strategy and therefore improve the service to our customers are identified below

### Probability



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C	3,			
Low D		1,2,4		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→  
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Lack of clarity and consistency in service delivery across the Council
2	Ability to review and improve services reducing error, time, cost and potential fraud
3	Knowledge of customer needs – keeping pace with changing customer expectations
4	Increase in volume of complaints leading to poor reputation of the Council

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There is no impact on climate change as a result of this strategy

## 11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 Consultation on the strategy has taken place internally with employees.

## 12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards are affected by the implementation of the strategy .

Contact Officer Sarah-Jane O'Connor – HR and Communications Manager

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Appendices : Appendix A – Service Strategy for Customers  
Appendix B - Customer Service Standards  
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers: None

Reference : X : Council\?