

## POLICY FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

11 JULY 2017

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE ANNUAL REVIEW (YEAR 1)

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent review of the Council's Customer Service Excellence Standard by the appointed Assessor.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1 **The contents of the report be noted.**
- 2.2 **That the Performance Management Information Task Group (PMITG) be requested to consider a report from T3 and Management Team reviewing standards, performance targets, timeliness and quality of service as relevant to the areas of reference in the Customer Service Excellence Report.**

##### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The on-site annual review of the Council's compliance with the standards took place in late February 2017. The key purpose was to establish that the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) principles of the standard continues to be upheld and to establish the strength and areas that had improved over the past year. The Council submitted a self assessment in preparation for the initial assessment and this was updated for the review and provided supporting evidence against the elements of the framework that were found to be partially compliant at that time. Members will recall that the first assessment report was very good for the Council in that of the 57 standards within the framework, the Council was compliant with 50 of those standards and 'compliant plus' in four of those 50 standards. This left seven standards for which the Council was 'partially compliant'. The assessor advised the Council at that time that this was a good outcome from a first assessment, in particular the number of 'compliant plus' standards was not usual.
- 3.2 In completing her review the Assessor interviewed 20 staff which included the Chief Executive and the Head of Communications, three Managers, three Team Leaders, three Apprentices and nine operational staff. In addition two face to face interviews took place with partners and eight interviews with customers in receipt of different services, for example, planning and building control, customer services, housing, rent, benefits and anti-social behaviour. Customers were asked to provide feedback on the general service of the Council as well as the specific reason for contacting them.
- 3.3 A copy of the Assessor's Report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 It is pleasing to note that the report shows that the Council has continued to improve with respect to this performance framework. The outcome is that there are now only four 'partial compliance' elements (originally seven) and an additional two 'compliance plus' elements as well as retaining that status for the original four standards. The Assessor summarised this by advising that it was evident that the Council had responded positively to the feedback provided following the first year review as the evidence collected indicated at the review stage that four elements which were previously partially compliant were now compliant. Further, she indicated that those elements that were 'compliant plus' previously,

remained key strengths of the organisation as well as adding a further two elements following this review.

- 3.5 With respect to those areas that require attention, the Officers have developed an Action Plan which is attached at Appendix 2 to this report. In particular this addresses the main areas of improvement which Members will note are interlinked. There is a need to improve training and support for some elements of the Council's business delivery, as well as a requirement to review our service standards which it is accepted are challenging and examine those areas where service delivery is not in line with those expectations.
- 3.6 With respect to training, it is disappointing to note that although the Council arranged an offer of training for staff which dealt with certain aspects of the areas that they have commented to the Assessor that they were concerned about, this original training was not taken up. The Assessor was advised that this had been reorganised, however, it was taking place after her Assessment and this could not be taken into account with respect to this element of compliance. One of the areas of consideration for Senior Management and this Committee is the need to make certain training compulsory for certain employees. This will align the staff stated wish for certain types of training and the business need that it is effectively carried out thereby improving customer care and in performance. The suggestion by the Assessor that we add to our training schedule, regular training in relation to the complaints process and related issues will be implemented.
- 3.7 With respect to performance standards, the Assessor highlights areas of specific relevance to customer service and key areas of activity such as benefits. However, it is suggested that T3 Managers be asked to examine all service standards in relation to compliance, timeliness and quality of response and that separate service reports are made to the PMITG for consideration and recommendations made to this Committee as required. This is included as an overarching action relating to these two elements of the report in the Action Plan which also sets out other responses.
- 3.8 The Action Plan continues focus on these Areas of Improvement together with the main activities required for the Framework. Officers will continue to update and upgrade our approach in line with Members priorities.

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

- 4.1 These are as set out in the report Section 3.

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

- 5.1 There were no particular financial or other implications arising from this report which illustrated the Council's continuous improvement and narrowed its focus on areas requiring attention.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

- 6.1 There are no particular requirements arising from this report.

#### **7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- 7.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

#### **8.0 EQUALITIES**

- 8.1 Any change to process or procedure that requires an Equality Impact Assessment will receive one.

## 9.0 RISKS

9.1 There were no specific risks arising from this report, however an opportunity for the Council to continue to improve in its customer service approach is set out.

Probability



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

Impact →

Risk No.	Description
1.	Customer Service is not focused to meet the needs of our Customers
2.	Reputational issues are caused by poor compliance with Customer Service Standards.

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

## 11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Trade Unions have been advised of the consideration of making certain elements of Council Officer training compulsory.

## 12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All.

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Date: 19.06.2017

Appendices : Appendix 1: Customer Service Excellence Assessors Report  
Appendix 2: Council Action Plan

Background Papers: Notes of Assessment Interview.  
Council Review of Self Assessment.

Reference : X : Committees\PFA