

1 March 2016

Committee	Executive (Special)
Date	Wednesday, 9 March 2016
Time of Meeting	2:00 pm
Venue	Committee Room 1

ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND



**for Sara J Freckleton
Borough Solicitor**

Agenda

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the visitors' car park at the front of the building and await further instructions (staff should proceed to their usual assembly point). Please do not re-enter the building unless instructed to do so.

In the event of a fire any person with a disability should be assisted in leaving the building.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

To receive apologies for absence and advise of any substitutions.



3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the adoption by the Council on 26 June 2012 of the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct, effective from 1 July 2012, as set out in Minute No. CL.34, Members are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out on the Agenda to which the approved Code applies.

4. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive any questions, deputations or petitions submitted under Rule of Procedure 12.

(The deadline for public participation submissions for this meeting is 3 March 2016).

5. USE OF SPRING GARDENS AND OLDBURY ROAD

1 - 8

To agree the way forward for the Spring Gardens/Oldbury Road site, including the preparation of development proposals, and to identify any areas that may be declared surplus to service requirements whilst taking account of the current and future requirements for car parking in the Town Centre and the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document.

6. CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY

9 - 23

To approve the Customer Care Strategy and action plan.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING**WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL 2016****COUNCILLORS CONSTITUTING COMMITTEE**

Councillors: R E Allen, Mrs K J Berry, R A Bird, D M M Davies, M Dean, Mrs E J MacTiernan, J R Mason, R J E Vines (Chair) and D J Waters (Vice-Chair)

Substitution Arrangements

The Council has a substitution procedure and any substitutions will be announced at the beginning of the meeting.

Recording of Meetings

Please be aware that the proceedings of this meeting may be recorded and this may include recording of persons seated in the public gallery or speaking at the meeting. Please notify the Democratic Services Officer if you have any objections to this practice and the Chairman will take reasonable steps to ensure that any request not to be recorded is complied with.

Any recording must take place in such a way as to ensure that the view of Councillors, Officers, the public and press is not obstructed. The use of flash photography and/or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed and agreed in advance of the meeting.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee (Special)
Date of Meeting:	9 March 2016
Subject:	Use of Spring Gardens and Oldbury Road
Report of:	Simon Dix, Finance and Asset Management Group Manager Julie Wood, Development Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor D J Waters, Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The Borough Council is the freehold owner of both the Oldbury Road car park site and the Spring Gardens car park site including the lease of land to the Swimming Bath Trust for the Cascades leisure facility in Tewkesbury town. Both sites are key strategic sites within the town centre and yet the quality of place in both locations is poor and they do not generate a positive contribution towards the overall attractiveness of the town.

The development of a new leisure facility on Lincoln Green Lane, Tewkesbury has been delivered in association with the Swimming Bath Trust and will enable the surrender of the lease on the Cascades site.

This has presented the Borough Council with an opportunity to review the current use of the site and investigate the potential for redevelopment. In addition, the recent termination of an agreement to sell the Oldbury Road car park site has provided an opportunity to look at the wider area and a provide a holistic approach to potential redevelopment.

The Borough Council is committed to working with partners to further enhance the economic and social future of Tewkesbury town as laid out in the Tewkesbury Masterplan. This report explores a framework for effective utilisation of these key sites to further promote a sustainable and attractive town centre.

Recommendation:

That the Executive Committee RESOLVES to instruct the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive:

- I. to prepare development proposals for the areas edged red on the attached plan, and the wider environment, having regard to the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document and the primary considerations as highlighted in Paragraph 5.4 of the report;**

- II. **having regard to the current and future requirements for car parking in the town centre, the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document and the primary considerations highlighted in Paragraph 5.4 of this report, to identify areas within the sites edged red on the attached plan which may be declared surplus to service requirements; and**
- III. **to return to a future meeting of this Committee with the information required by Paragraphs I and II of this resolution.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

The combined factors of leisure provision relocation, the inability to complete the sale of Oldbury Road car park and the current oversupply of service led amenity on these sites presents the Borough Council, its partners and stakeholders, a unique opportunity to consider the future use of these sites in order to maximise their benefit to the town of Tewkesbury.

Resource Implications:

None directly associated with this report but there is an opportunity to better use the assets owned by the Council to help meet the financial deficit projected over the next five years and the potential partial withdrawal of the New Homes Bonus.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Any potential project which emanates from the exploration of options for this key site will be reported through the Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Partnership in addition to the normal reporting mechanisms of the Borough Council.

Environmental Implications:

The opportunity presented from the situation as outlined in this report creates the ability to significantly enhance and improve the current environmental amenity of this location within Tewkesbury town. A key component of any scheme will include enhanced environmental considerations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Borough Council is the freeholder owner of the sites edged red on the attached plans with the exception of a small site situated on the west side of Spring Gardens car park which is the toilet block constructed and transferred to Tewkesbury Town Council in March 2013. The Spring Gardens site came into the Borough Council's ownership following local government reorganisation in 1974 whilst the Oldbury Road site was purchased in 1994 with the intention of future development. The two sites have a number of current uses as described in the following Paragraphs.

- 1.2 The Spring Gardens and Oldbury Road site are extensively used for providing hardstanding car parking facilities. The Spring Gardens site has provision for 286 cars on non-market days and Oldbury Road provides a total of 96 spaces. The Council also provides parking of 46 spaces on the nearby Bishop's Walk site but as this site is on leasehold it has been excluded from this review.
- 1.3 A large proportion of the Spring Gardens site is currently leased to the Swimming Bath Trust for provision of the Cascades facility. In addition to car parking and the swimming pool, the Spring Gardens site also hosts a twice weekly market and a large part of the annual Mop Fair, which has long historic roots within the town.
- 1.4 In July 2012 the Council adopted the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document and, specifically, the appended Spring Gardens and Bishop's Walk Design and Development Principles document. The documents were developed in partnership with the Community Engagement Advisory Group and following consultation with local people. The documents set out the design principles for any redevelopment of the sites and communicate a vision for how the redeveloped sites will contribute to the wider enhancement and regeneration of Tewkesbury.
- 1.5 The documents identify both sites as being suitable for a mixed use development whilst also concentrating on re-establishing the historic grain of Tewkesbury town. Other principles established include preserving and enhancing the character of the town, maintaining and mending the continuity of building frontages, improving the quality of the public realm and maintaining sufficient levels of car parking.

2.0 LATEST POSITION

- 2.1 In March 2014, the Council agreed a conditional contract of sale for the Oldbury Road car park site to McCarthy and Stone for the development of later living accommodation. The sale was conditional on the approval of planning permission within eighteen months of the agreement. As this period expired without planning permission being granted, the agreement fell and the Borough Council retained ownership of the site. This has provided an opportunity to review the options for the site as part of a wider scheme incorporating Spring Gardens.
- 2.2 The development of a new leisure centre on the Public Service Centre site in Tewkesbury continues apace and is expected to result in the new centre being open to the public on 30 May 2016. It is at this point that the Cascades facility will close and the Swimming Bath Trust will surrender its current lease back to the Borough Council. The facility will not be required by the Borough Council, having developed the new leisure centre, and is therefore earmarked for demolition at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.3 The Borough Council conducted a review of its car parking strategy in 2014. The review included an independent assessment of the usage level of all Borough owned parking facilities and recommended a series of measures aimed at increasing the usage of car parks and ensuring visitors stay longer within our towns. The new strategy was introduced in April 2015 and has had a positive effect with an increase in ticket sales of 3.4% in the first nine months of the year and in particular an increase in the longer stay categories. However, in general, there still remains a significant under usage of car parks across Tewkesbury.

3.0 CURRENT USAGE

- 3.1** The Cascades facility occupies a space of approximately 0.56 acres of the Spring Gardens site and, as explained in Paragraph 2.2, will not be required by either the Swimming Bath Trust or Tewkesbury Borough Council for the provision of leisure from 30 May 2016. The area occupied by the current facility is significant in terms of size but also in terms of the parking provision required for staff and customers. Analysis of the refunds issued by Cascades for customers parking in Spring Gardens indicates that approximately 30% of all ticket sales in Spring Gardens are related to this use. It is expected that current parking requirements for leisure usage will migrate, in their entirety, to the new location on the Public Service Centre site, thereby significantly reducing the parking requirement within Spring Gardens. A simple extrapolation of the current usage would suggest approximately 95 less spaces will be required as a result of this migration.
- 3.2** The 2014 survey of car parks, commissioned from Gloucestershire County Council, indicated that levels of parking within Spring Gardens and Oldbury Road, including the current use related to Cascades, ranged from 25% to 40% and 50% to 65% respectively between a mid-week usage and a Saturday morning slot. Given that the survey was carried out in May 2014 the figures can be inflated to allow for the busier periods throughout the summer. In addition, a further allowance can be made for the increased ticket sales experienced over the last nine months. Making these allowances, suggests a usage ranging between 40% and 60% for the combined site in the busier summer months whilst usage outside of the summer reduces to 34% to 50% in an average month and 26% to 39% in the lower winter months.
- 3.3** For a car park to operate efficiently an allowance needs to be made for circulation, usually taken to be 20%, to enable visitors to park with relative ease. Even with allowing for circulation and for further potential increases in usage, the figures suggest that there is a significant oversupply of parking provision within the area. Added to this, the spare capacity within the other town parking facilities, and the usage associated with the Cascades facility that will be lost in June, highlight that the Council is not and will not be making the best use of its assets in its current provision and is not gaining the best return from holding those assets.
- 3.4** This analysis is clearly based on average figures and it is acknowledged that at peak times, e.g. mid Saturday morning in the summer, car parking usage can be high in the Oldbury Road and Spring Gardens sites. However, the converse is also true that the car parks are frequently less utilised than the analysis highlights with early morning, afternoons and months outside of the summer peak period reflecting significantly less usage.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1** It is clear from the preceding Paragraphs that the current underutilisation of Council assets for car parking provision will soon increase as the Cascades complex closes and the subsequent demolition of the site will add significantly to the over provision of service related amenity.
- 4.2** There is currently no identified need, within current service activities, to utilise the spare capacity available for service provision. It can therefore be concluded that the combined site has the potential for partial redevelopment opportunities.

- 4.3** An opportunity exists to explore additional usages of the current sites occupied by the two car parks to enhance the attractiveness and amenity of the whole town centre. Maintaining adequate car parking capacity, access to the weekly markets and the annual Mop Fair are key, but a redesign and effective review may provide options which would significantly improve the attractiveness of this area of the town and attract new facilities.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1** The effective use of assets is crucial for all public sector bodies in meeting the challenge of reducing core government support as well as providing effective services. It is important that the Borough Council utilises all of the assets it holds to extract value from all of its land and property holdings in order to support continued service delivery to the taxpayers of the Borough.
- 5.2** The combined site described within this report provides an exciting opportunity to investigate the potential for redevelopment to meet these aims but crucially also meet the Council's wider aspirations to further develop an economically successful town centre and support both the cultural development and the regeneration of an area of Tewkesbury that has been neglected for many years.
- 5.3** A brief for investigating these opportunities needs to be mindful of the principles established within the Masterplan:

Principle 1: Access and ease of movement - Repairing the historic grain of Tewkesbury by making places that connect with each other at the town scale and at local level.

Principle 2: Mixed uses - A complementary mix of uses that add to the life and vitality of the Town Centre.

Principle 3: Character - Preservation and enhancement of Tewkesbury's unique built and natural heritage.

Principle 4: Wayfinding - Connecting and making distinctive and memorable streets, spaces, buildings and landscape to create a strong sense of place.

Principle 5: Continuity and enclosure - maintaining and mending the continuity of building frontages to enclose streets and other public spaces and to ensure lively and safe streets.

Principle 6: Quality of the public realm - Creating attractive, safe and uncluttered streets and spaces for all users of the town centre, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Principle 7: Sustainability - Encouraging resource and energy efficient construction and reducing the need to travel by car for short journeys.

Principle 8: Functionality - Maintain sufficient levels of car parking, access and servicing for the town centre and new development as it comes forward.

- 5.4** The development brief will have a vision to create a sustainable, mixed-use development that provides the highest standards of public realm and architecture and embraces the historic character of Tewkesbury in an innovative and modern approach. The potential development should provide a complimentary mix of facilities, including retail, housing, car parking and public space as well as improving the existing connections within Tewkesbury town.
- 5.5** It is also critical to the success of any redevelopment that current uses are recognised and protected. These include provision of space for a twice weekly market, provision of space for the annual Mop Fair, provision of public conveniences and provision of sufficient car parking.
- 5.6** It also needs to be acknowledged that both car parking sites are currently listed as community assets under the Right-to-Bid scheme and any development proposals made that include a relevant disposal of land within the listed assets will need to comply with the requirements of that scheme.
- 5.7** It is suggested that Officers investigate the opportunities for the combined site and bring back proposals for consideration at the earliest opportunity. It is further suggested that the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management takes an oversight role in the development of these proposals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1** Discussions have taken place within the Tewkesbury Regeneration Partnership which includes the Tewkesbury Town Council and Chamber of Commerce. Full dialogue and consultation with the local community will be carried out when proposals are developed.

7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 7.1** Asset Management Strategy approved in November 2015.
Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document.

8.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 8.1** The government expects all public bodies to rationalise their asset base and make the best use out of the assets they choose to retain.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 9.1** Property implications as set out within the report. In addition, significant human resource from within the Council will need to be deployed to the project.

10.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 10.1** A potential beneficial impact on sustainability implications from any redevelopment of the site proposed.

11.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

11.1 A potential increase in the value extracted from the assets dependent on any proposals put forward.

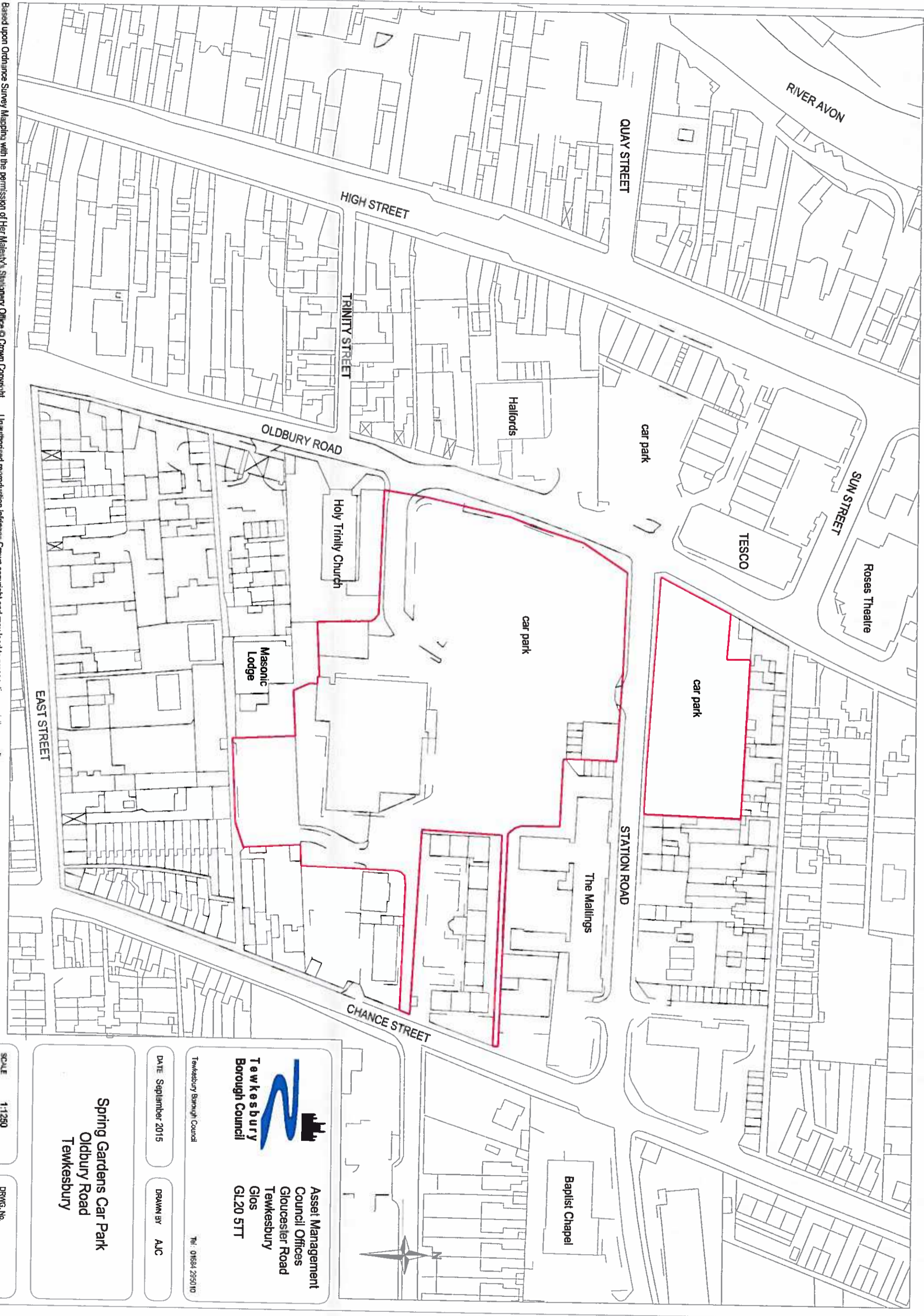
12.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

12.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: A – Plan of Sites.



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 <p>Tewkesbury Borough Council</p>	<p>Asset Management Council Offices Gloucester Road Tewkesbury Glos GL20 5TT</p>
	<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council Tel: 01684 295010</p>
<p>DATE September 2015</p>	<p>DRAWN BY AIC</p>
<p>Spring Gardens Car Park Oldbury Road Tewkesbury</p>	
<p>SCALE 1:1250</p>	<p>DWG. No.</p>

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee (Special)
Date of Meeting:	9 March 2016
Subject:	Customer Care Strategy
Report of:	Communications and Policy Manager, Clare Evans
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor M Dean, Lead Member for Customer Focus
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

In our Council Plan, we make the promise that we will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, treating people fairly and without bias. This Customer Care Strategy is an important step to making this a reality.

This Customer Care Strategy details how we plan to deliver our customer care and outlines the organisational commitments we will make to our customers.

In addition, our action plan, attached at Appendix 1, shows where we want to be and explains how we will monitor and report our progress in achieving these pledges. As part of our commitment to customer care, we will encourage the adoption of common customer care standards across the Council.

The strategy was taken to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop on 11 January 2016, where Members of the group endorsed it. The strategy was formally considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 23 February 2016 and it was recommended to Executive Committee for approval.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the Customer Care Strategy and action plan.

Reasons for Recommendation:

We want to provide the best possible service to all of our customers, particularly in terms of resolving queries at the first point of contact. We recognise how important first impressions are, and how vital it is to get things right from the start.

Every time a customer contacts us, we must remember that the way they are treated, the standard of customer care they receive, and the quality of the outcome all influence their opinion of us.

Resource Implications:

None directly resulting from this report.

<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>None directly resulting from this report.</p>
<p>Risk Management Implications:</p> <p>Without clear customer care standards there is a risk to our reputation.</p>
<p>Performance Management Follow-up:</p> <p>Delivery of the strategy is monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Environmental Implications:</p> <p>None.</p>

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Our Council Plan highlights our value that we will always put our customers first. We make the promise that we will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, treating people fairly and without bias. Supporting our values we also have an ethos that whatever we do will be 'better for customers, better for business'. This Customer Care Strategy is an important step to making these commitments a reality.

1.2 The standards within the strategy are fully supported by the Corporate Leadership Team, Group Managers and Operational Team Managers.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

2.1 While customer care is clearly important to us as a Council, we have never had a Customer Care Strategy before.

- 2.2** This Customer Care Strategy aims to:
- Introduce a set of customer service standards for staff to follow.
 - Make it easier, simpler and more convenient for customers to interact with us when requiring a service.
 - Use feedback from our residents' survey to help shape future service delivery.
 - Make sure our staff are equipped with the skills to deliver high quality customer service.
 - Promote approaches to delivering services that are more convenient for customers and less expensive to deliver for the Council.
 - In line with the Council's emerging digital strategy, utilise technology to manage and serve our customers' changing access needs better.
 - Work with our partners in the Public Services Centre to ensure our customers experience a seamless and worthwhile experience when visiting the offices.

3.0 CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

3.1 This strategy details a set of customer services standards which outline, for the first time, what our customers can expect from their experience with us.

3.2 The standards will be adopted and embraced across the Council, and we will continue to work towards them to become a truly customer focused organisation. They cover what customers can expect from us generally, as well as when they:

- Phone us.
- Email us.
- Send a letter.
- Visit in person.
- Make an enquiry online.
- Make a formal complaint.

4.0 THE ACTION PLAN

4.1 To help us achieve the commitments we set out in this strategy, it is supported by an annual action plan – which can be found as an appendix to the strategy. The action plan details how we will achieve our commitments to customer care and progress on this action plan will be reported each year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW

5.1 The strategy was originally on the Executive Committee Agenda for 13 January 2016. This was deferred to allow Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to review the strategy. This was a result of concerns raised by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had experienced poor customer service within certain service areas.

5.2 A workshop was held on 11 January 2016 for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take them through the draft strategy in particular, the customer care standards. Supporting this was a presentation from the Customer Services team to provide Members with an overview of the recently completed customer services review. A key message from officers, and supported by the Lead Member for Customer Focus who was in attendance at the workshop, was that customer service is a responsibility across the whole of the Council and not just that of the Customer Services team. For this reason, it has been called a Customer Care Strategy rather than a Customer Service Strategy.

5.3 Members who attended the workshop fully endorsed the strategy, in particular the move to introduce customer care standards. The strategy was formally discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2016 where again it was fully supported and recommended to Executive Committee for approval.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The strategy was taken to a workshop of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2016.

The Customer Care Standards were reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team, Operational Team Managers and Group Managers prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop.

8.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

8.1 The Council Plan and emerging Digital Strategy.

9.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

9.1 None.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

10.1 None directly.

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

11.1 None.

12.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

12.1 None.

13.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

13.1 None.

Background papers: None.

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Appendices: One – Customer Care Strategy action plan.

Customer care strategy

2016



“ We will put the needs of our customers at the heart of everything we do ”

January 2016

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“excellent customer service

is part of everyone’s role - and not just our customer services team”

Foreword

In our Council Plan, we make the promise that we will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, treating people fairly and without bias. This Customer Care Strategy is an important step to making this a reality.

Excellent customer service is part of everyone’s role – and not just our Customer Services team. To reflect this we are introducing a set of Customer Care Standards, which sets out how we will approach the way we interact with our customers over the different contact methods. We want to make sure that when our customers contact us, we are helping them get what they need in that first contact or as few as possible, and they are regularly updated along the way.

At the same time, we must support our emerging Digital Strategy to encourage customers to do more general tasks online so that our staff can concentrate on helping customers with more complicated queries.

In addition, we are also placing an emphasis on the importance of gathering customer feedback to help us shape future service delivery – something which we haven’t previously done.



I look forward to seeing this strategy being implemented and welcome the positive outcomes that Tewkesbury Borough’s customers will receive through improved customer service.

Cllr Mike Dean
Lead Member for Customer Focus

Introduction

Our Customer Care Strategy details how we plan to deliver our customer care and outlines the organisational commitments we will make to our customers.

In addition, our action plan (at appendix 1) shows where we want to be, and explains how we will monitor and report our progress in achieving these pledges. As part of our commitment to customer care, we will encourage the adoption of common customer care standards across the council.

Why do we need a strategy?

We want to provide the best possible service to all of our customers, particularly in terms of resolving queries at the first point of contact. We recognise how important first impressions are, and how vital it is to get things right from the start.

Every time a customer contacts us, we must remember that the way they are treated, the standard of customer care they receive and the quality of the outcome all influence their opinion of us.

Given the wider context local government sits in and the changing nature of the way in which people interact with us, we sit within a constantly changing environment. We must be able to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of our customers, while recognising customers who wish to contact us using traditional methods. We must be able to recognise and embrace any new opportunities for our customers and ourselves as they arise.

Who are our customers?

Everyone who lives, works, learns, visits and does business in Tewkesbury Borough is a potential customer of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

We know that:

- According to the Mid 2014 Population Estimates, our population is made up of people aged:
 - 0 to 19 = 19,010
 - 20 to 64 = 48,207
 - 65 to 84 = 16,040
 - Over 85 = 2,527
- Tewkesbury Borough Council now serves a population of 85,784.
- 94 per cent of our population is white British/Scottish/Northern Irish/English (Census 2011).
- 16.5 per cent of population has a disability which limits day-to-day activity (Census 2011).
- The borough’s population has risen in recent years and is predicted to rise significantly in the next 25 years.
- There are more than 3650 companies with a registered address in Tewkesbury Borough.
- Tewkesbury Borough attracts more than 1.5m visitors each year – bringing in £96m spend.

We need to make sure that the council is able to support all our customers so that we can provide an excellent customer experience, whatever their needs.

What are our customers telling us?

We want to provide the best possible service to all our customers. They are the best people to tell us:

- How we are doing.
- What we can do to improve a service.
- What problems they have experienced - this allows us, where appropriate, to apologise, put it right and stop it from happening again.

In developing this strategy we have gained customer feedback from our 2013/14 Residents’ Satisfaction Survey to make sure customers’ views contribute to the direction we will take.

The Residents’ Satisfaction Survey, which we carried out over the summer in 2013, revealed some very positive results including that:

- 80 per cent of people are happy with the way we run things – compared to 52 per cent in 2008.
- 91 per cent of people believe Tewkesbury Borough is a good place to live – compared to 86 per cent in 2008.
- The council is top performing when compared with results nationally, which for satisfaction with the area lived in is 82 per cent and for satisfaction with the local council is 70 per cent.
- 79 per cent of people felt very or fairly well informed by Tewkesbury Borough Council about the services and benefits we provide.
- As well as providing information on general levels of satisfaction, the survey also revealed that satisfaction with specific services has improved overall, including recycling and refuse collection, and keeping public land

clear of litter and refuse. This information was disseminated to services so improvements from our residents’ feedback could be made where possible.

The survey, which is anticipated to be carried out again in spring 2016, was conducted via postal questionnaires using a sample of 3000 addresses. Nearly 700 questionnaires were returned, which provided the council with statistical assurance that the responses were representative of those that would be given by the resident population of Tewkesbury Borough.

For a full breakdown of the survey’s results, please visit www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/satisfactionsurvey

What do we need to do?

Our Council Plan highlights our value that we will always put our customers first. We make the promise that we will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, treating people fairly and without bias. Supporting our values we also have an ethos that whatever we do will be ‘better for customers, better for business’.

To ensure we achieve this, our Customer Care Strategy aims to:

- Introduce a set of customer service standards for staff to follow.
- Make it easier, simpler and more convenient for customers to interact with us when requiring a service.
- Use feedback from our residents’ survey to help shape future service delivery.

- Make sure our staff are equipped with the skills to deliver high quality customer service.
- Promote approaches to delivering services that are more convenient for customers and less expensive to deliver for the council.
- In line with our emerging digital strategy, utilise technology to manage and serve our customers’ changing access needs better.
- Work with our partners in the Public Services Centre to ensure our customers’ experience a seamless and worthwhile experience when visiting the offices.

Customer experience

It should be a priority for all staff to ensure that we make our customers’ experience a good one.

We have developed customer standards that support the council’s values to create satisfied customers, both internally and externally. These standards cover all our contact approaches including the internet, email, telephone, letter, and reception desk. Our standards will be made public, so that our customers are aware of the commitments we are making.

A separate digital strategy details our online approach to make accessing services more convenient for customers and less expensive for us. Over time we expect this to significantly improve customer experience.

Customer Services team

We also have a dedicated Customer Services team, which operates primarily as our front of house – directing our customers to the correct point of contact. The team also provides customer service at our Advice and Information Centres across the borough, as well as being the main customer contact for Ubico.

The Customer Services team has undergone significant changes in recent months, following a service review carried out in 2015/16.

Prior to the review, the service was recognised as a welcoming service, valued by customers with a friendly ‘can-do’ attitude from officers. The team however was isolated from the rest of the council, lacked clarity on its vision for the service and over its demand/performance data.

Now the review is complete, the structure of the team has been aligned to meet the current demand placed upon it. The team is now set up to meet the concept of a ‘front of house, meet and greet’ including the main point of contact for all Ubico-related enquiries. The team provides information and advice for each different council service and provides access for thousands of different contacts via telephone, online and face-to-face points.

Customer care standards

The customer services standards, which are being introduced as part of this strategy, detail what our customers can expect from their experience with the council.

What customers can expect from us

- We will provide accurate and clear information in response to your enquiries.
- We will be polite, friendly and helpful at all times.
- We will use plain English and will arrange for a translator if required.
- We will be open and honest about what we can or cannot deliver.
- If you need special help we will try to make arrangements that meet your needs.
- We aim to get it right first time, and where this isn’t possible we will ensure that we will keep you updated as we look into your enquiry.

When you phone us

- Our aim is to answer your phone call as quickly as possible during our opening office hours Monday to Friday.
- If we need to transfer your call, we will pass on your details so you don’t have to repeat yourself.
- We will keep our voicemail messages informative and up-to-date so you know when you will get a response, and we will offer an alternative number if your call is very urgent.
- If the employee is on leave, the voicemail message will inform you when he/she will return and will provide an alternative number for you to call.

When you email us

- We will deal with your email as soon as possible.
- We will send a full reply within ten working days or an explanation of any delays with a new date for a full reply
- If the employee you email is away you will receive an automatic reply giving their return date, and the name and number of an alternative contact.

When you send a letter

- We will respond to enquiries made by letter within 10 working days. In most cases this will be a full response but if the issue will take longer to consider or resolve we will tell you.
- The reply will give the name, title, department, telephone number and work address of the person dealing with your query.

When you visit us in person

- Our offices will be clean, tidy and accessible to all customers.
- We will see you as quickly as possible – within five minutes of you arriving - but if there is a delay we will keep you updated and provide an explanation.
- We will regularly review information in receptions to ensure it is up to date.

When you make an enquiry online

- We will ensure information contained on our website is accurate and up-to-date.
- You will receive a response to your enquiry within 10 working days. In most cases this will be a full response but if the issue will take longer to consider or resolve we will tell you.

When you make a formal complaint

- All complaints are treated with respect and in confidence.
- We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days.
- We will provide a full response within 10 working days.

Delivery of customer care

We want to build upon our achievements in delivering quality customer care, and make sure that we support our staff in providing the best possible experience for our customers.







Our commitment through this strategy is to have a ‘can-do’ attitude and support customers by going the extra mile for them. This will be achieved by providing the customer with an efficient service, delivered by welcoming, knowledgeable and professional staff.

To help us achieve this commitment, this strategy is supported by an annual action plan, which details how we will achieve our commitments to customer care. Progress on the action plan, and any new actions, will be reported each year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Customer care strategy action plan 2016/17

The following actions will be completed by April 2017





Appendix one

Action	Description	Responsible officer	current status	Comment
To introduce a set of customer care standards across the council.	To work with staff and councillors to adopt a set of customer care standards, so that our customers receive a consistent service from the council. This will include appropriate promotion of the standards, including posters, online and in our Council Plan.	Policy and communications manager		Once this strategy has been adopted, the standards will be promoted internally and externally.
To provide customer service training to all services across the council.	To ensure staff are trained to understand the importance of customer service, and how to deliver quality customer care.	Policy and communications manager		This work has not yet started - anticipated start date of July 2016
To support the development of a Digital Strategy.	Work with the Policy and Communications team to ensure that quality customer care is a priority within the Digital Strategy. To promote digital methods as a first option to support the Digital Strategy.	Policy and communications manager Customer services team leader		Work has started on this, and quality customer care will be an important feature throughout the strategy.
To support the development of an integrated reception area for the Public Services Centre, which focuses on delivering quality customer care.	As the Public Services Centre develops, our front of house is likely to evolve. It is important that this area has a focus on delivering quality customer care.	Policy and communications manager Customer services team leader		
To review the effectiveness of the Advice and Information Centre buildings	To carry out a review the effectiveness of the AICs and decide whether the buildings they are located within are the most suitable.	Policy and communications manager		Work has not started on this yet - anticipated start date of March 2016.
To carry out a residents' satisfaction survey in 2016/17 and use the feedback to improve future service delivery.	Our last satisfaction survey was carried out in 2013/14. The council made a commitment to carry out a survey every two years so that we understand what our customers think of us. This was also picked up as being an important piece of work within the peer review report.	Policy and communications manager Corporate services officer		A report will go to Executive Committee for a decision on whether to continue to carry out a residents' satisfaction survey.




Customer care strategy action plan 2016/17

The following actions will be completed by April 2017

Appendix one

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To review customer feedback systems to ensure there is a consistent and approach and feedback is acted upon.	This is an important action from the Peer Review, and will allow us to ensure we are putting our customers' views and feedback into shaping future service delivery.	Policy and communications manager Corporate services officer		Work has not started on this yet but it is anticipated to start in March 2016.
To support the Customer Services team to complete Level 3 NVQs in customer service.	To encourage all members of the customer services team to undertake an NVQ of customer services. This will help us to ensure our team is trained to a high level in this area.	Customer services team leader		Members of the team are currently completing their NVQs.
To introduce a virtual customer forum to gain feedback on various issues, including emerging strategies and policies.	A virtual customer forum would allow us to gather the views of customers when we need it – for example when we are developing a strategy which would have a direct impact on our customers.	Communications and policy manager		An article encouraging members of the public to sign up to the virtual forum will be included in Tewkesbury Borough News spring edition.
To develop a new complaints framework	Review our system and plan how we can run this more effectively – both for the council and for the customer.	Programme officer		The new complaints framework will be introduced in March 2016.

Current status key

-  Work has not started yet
-  Work has started and is progressing
-  Work is on track for completion before April 2016

Clare Evans
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