

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	9 April 2019
Subject:	Customer Care Strategy Action Plan
Report of:	Head of Corporate Services
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Customer Focus
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

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

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

The action plan is reviewed annually, and this report provides an overview of the progress in delivering the 2018/19 Action Plan.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made in relation to the actions contained within the Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2018/19.

Reasons for Recommendation:

An annual action plan ensures we remain focused on providing 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.

Legal Implications:

The Council's obligations under the new General Data Protection Act and the Equality Act 2010 should be taken into account when implementing the recommendations set out in the action plan for 2018/19.

Risk Management Implications:

Without clear customer care standards, there is a risk to our reputation.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Delivery of the action plan is monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Council Plan highlights the Council's value to always put customers first. It makes 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'. Our Customer Care Strategy is an important step to making these commitments a reality.
- 1.2** The Customer Care Strategy was taken to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop on 11 January 2016, where it was endorsed by Members. The customer care standards within the strategy were reviewed by the management team prior to the workshop.
- 1.3** Our commitment throughout the 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 these commitments, the 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, is reported each year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 PROGRESS ON THE CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

- 2.1** A review of the 2018/19 actions for the Customer Care Strategy can be found at Appendix 1. The table shows the specific actions, a brief description of what work has been carried out for each action and their current status.
- 2.2** The majority of actions have been completed and a brief commentary supports each action. The Customer Care Standards continue to be embedded into services across the Council and help us to promote internally, and to our customers, the need to ensure a consistent service from the Council. Customer service training for front line staff took place in May 2018, which received excellent feedback from staff attending. The training focused around our standards, stressing the importance of placing the customer at the heart of everything we do.
- 2.3** During 2018/19, in support of our digital ambitions, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve our online forms. The number of online forms we now have on our website stands at around 50, which is, in fact, a reduction from last year; however, this is because we have been working hard to amalgamate forms to make reporting/paying/applying for our services as easy as possible. Whilst undertaking this work, it must be stressed that we retain a commitment to delivering a service to those that are not digitally enabled.

3.0 CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY – 2020 ONWARDS

- 3.1** Our Customer Care Strategy was first introduced in 2016. Since that time, we have made excellent progress in achieving the annual actions and putting our customers at the heart of what we do; however, we recognise that, after three years, it is time for the strategy to be refreshed and updated reflecting the changes we have made. It is therefore proposed that, rather than including a 2019/20 action plan, a new strategy and action plan is developed for approval in 2020. During 2019, the ongoing actions within the current plan will continue and the full review of Advice and Information Centres (AICs) will be carried out.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1** None

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1** 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 Management Team, Operational Team Managers and Group Managers prior to the workshop.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 6.1** The Council Plan and Digital Strategy.

7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 7.1** None

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 8.1** None directly

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

- 9.1** None

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

- 10.1** None

11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

- 11.1** None

Background papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2018/19