

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	23 February 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Customer Care Strategy
<b>Report of:</b>	Clare Evans, Communications and Policy Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor M Dean, Lead Member for Customer Focus
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	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 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.

## **Recommendation:**

**To RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE that revised Customer Care Strategy be APPROVED as set out at Appendix 1.**

## **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 arising from this report.

## **Legal Implications:**

None directly resulting from this report.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

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

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

Delivery of the strategy will be monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

**Environmental Implications:**

None.

**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 proposed strategy was taken to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop on 11 January where it was endorsed by Members. The standards within the strategy were also reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team, Operational Team Managers and Group Managers prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop.

**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. 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 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**5.1** None

#### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

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

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

#### **7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**7.1** The Council Plan and emerging Digital Strategy.

#### **8.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**8.1** None

#### **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

**9.1** None directly

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

**10.1** None

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

**11.1** None

**12.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

**12.1** None

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**Background papers:** None

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Customer Care Strategy