

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 May 2018
Subject:	Customer Care Strategy
Report of:	Sam Hammond, Corporate Services Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor M Dean, Lead Member for Customer Focus
Number of Appendices:	Two

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. Our 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 2017/18 strategy actions, as well as introducing the new action plan for 2018/19.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made in relation to the actions contained within the Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2017/18 and to ENDORSE the action plan for 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 strategy's action plan is 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'. Our Customer Care Strategy is an important step to making these commitments a reality.
- 1.2** The 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 also reviewed by senior management team prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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, will be reported each year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 PROGRESS ON THE CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

- 2.1** A review of the 2017/18 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. Notably, the introduction of the Customer Care Standards has helped us to promote internally, and to our customers, the need to ensure a consistent service from the Council. There are still pockets across the Council where the Customer Care Standards need to be embedded further. Customer service training for frontline staff is taking place early May and the standards will be core to this training.

2.3 During 2017/18, in support of our digital ambitions a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve our online forms, payment channels and continue to ensure the quality of our website. Whilst undertaking this work, it must be stressed we still retain a commitment to delivering a service to those that are not digitally enabled. A plan detailing new actions for 2018/19 can be found at Appendix 2 and this builds upon the work undertaken to date.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The strategy was taken to a workshop of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2016. The Customer Care Standards were reviewed by the senior management team, operational team managers and group managers prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 The Council Plan and Digital Strategy.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None directly

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

8.1 None

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

9.1 None

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None

Background papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1- Customer Care Strategy Action Plan progress update 2017/18
Appendix 2 - Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2018/19