

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 April 2022
Subject:	Customer Care Strategy
Report of:	Corporate Services Manager
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Customer Focus
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

The Council Plan makes the promise that the Council will put the needs of its customers at the heart of what it 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 commitment throughout the strategy is to have a 'can do' attitude, and support customers by going the extra mile for them. The strategy has an annual action plan which details how this will be achieved. This report provides an update on the 2021/22 actions and introduces a new set of actions for 2022/23.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made against the actions within the Customer Care Strategy during 2021/22 and to endorse the action plan for 2022/23.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Council wants to provide the best possible service to all of its customers, particularly in terms of resolving queries at the first point of contact. It is recognised how important first impressions are, and how vital it is to get things right from the start.

Every time a customer contacts the Council, 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. The action plan provides a range of ways in which we can seek to ensure a positive experience.

Resource Implications:

None other than Officer time to implement the action plan.

Legal Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

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

Performance Management Follow-up:

Progress in delivering the action plan will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

Environmental Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Council Plan highlights the value that the Council will always put its customers first. It makes the promise that the Council will put the needs of customers at the heart of what it does and listen to what they say - treating people fairly and without bias. Supporting the Council values there is also an ethos that whatever we do will be 'better for customers, better for business'; the Customer Care Strategy is an important step to making these commitments a reality.
- 1.2** This strategy builds on the previous Customer Care Strategy and reinforces the Council's values and ethos by setting out how it plans to deliver customer care, and what organisational commitments need to be made to customers to deliver our promises.
- 1.3** It is really important to recognise that customer care should be a Council-wide priority. While there is a dedicated Customer Services team, which acts as the front face of the Council for many visitors and callers, valuing customer care needs to be embedded in the culture for everyone who works for Tewkesbury Borough Council.

2.0 PROGRESS ON 2021 ACTIONS

- 2.1** To help us achieve the commitments in the Customer Care Strategy, it is supported by an annual action plan. The action plan is focused around the strategy's six themes and details how we will achieve commitments to customer care.
- 2.2** Good progress was made on last year's action plan, with 10 out of the 13 actions achieved. In particular, highlights include:
- Providing customer care training to all front-facing staff.
 - Engaging with our Citizens' Panel to help shape emerging services.
 - The roll-out of a new set of Customer Care Standards.

- 2.3** Two of the actions were not achieved, and both have been pulled forward as actions to deliver in 2022:

Action	Reason
Review the Customer Services team structure to ensure it delivers excellent customer care.	As a result of the pandemic, a member of the Customer Services team was redeployed to support the Business Grants team and remains in that role. Until the Customer Services team is back to capacity, it is difficult to carry out a meaningful review.
Carry out a review of our Advice and Information Centres to identify if they are fit for purpose.	A formal review has not taken place due to the closure of the centres through the pandemic.

3.0 NEW ACTIONS FOR 2022/23

- 3.1** A range of new actions have been introduced for 2022/23 under the same themes identified for 2021/22 (Appendix 2).

- 3.2** The aim for these actions is to support the commitments in the Customer Care Strategy and help to deliver the Council Plan value which puts customer care at the heart of everything we do.

- 3.3** The progress made against these actions will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2023.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** Not applicable

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 5.1** Council Plan 2020 to 2024
Digital Strategy
Communications Strategy

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 6.1** None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 7.1** Managed within current resources and budget

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
Appendix 2 - Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2022/23