



Communities Select Committee
19 March 2015

**Customer Promise – our commitment to
delivering excellent service**

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

The Communities Select Committee is invited to:

- consider research and feedback from staff, customers and members on the key drivers behind excellent customer experience
- recommend that Cabinet endorses the new Customer Promise and proposed approach to improving resident experience
- track progress against the commitment to improve Resident Experience.

Introduction:

1. On 10 February 2015 full council approved the Corporate Strategy and agreed that focusing on 'Resident Experience' is one of the organisation's three strategic goals.
2. To help better understand, define and improve Resident Experience we asked staff, members and customers to tell us what the most important principles are behind delivering excellent service.
3. The feedback from staff, members and customers has been used to inform our new Customer Promise which will be used as a framework to improve Resident Experience.
4. The new Customer Promise reflects our commitment to delivering excellent service and is intended to:
 - be easily understood by customers and staff
 - be followed by staff
 - lead to improvement and better resident experience.

Research

5. We spoke to people at road shows and in workshops, and conducted an online poll which received 1,136 responses and 240 comments. The following four themes emerged as being most important to people:
 - Treating people right
 - Making it easy
 - Keeping people informed
 - Getting it right
6. These themes reflect the conclusions of the following studies into the key drivers of customer satisfaction in the public sector:
 - 'What do people want, need and expect from public services?' Ipsos MORI (2010).
 - 'The Customer Service Excellence standard' Cabinet Office (2008).
7. The themes and research has been used to create our new Customer Promise which is at Annex 1.

Embedding the Customer Promise to improve resident experience

8. Once the Customer Promise has been agreed we will take the following steps to embed the principles into the organisation to improve resident experience.

Leadership and engagement

9. Strong leadership and engaging managers are critical to creating a customer-focused culture.
10. We will work with managers at all levels as part of the organisation's 'Employee Engagement Campaign' and ask them to actively promote and participate in creating a customer-focused culture.

Standards

11. The principles in our Customer Promise must be underpinned by clear service standards. For example, to fulfil the commitment to being responsive we must set appropriate response standards and monitor them to ensure they are met.
12. It is important that these standards also extend to those services which are not directly managed by the council. We will therefore also ensure that the principles within the Customer Promise and supporting standards are built into the council's commissioning processes.

Recruitment, induction and training

13. The recruitment process will be reviewed to ensure that competency based questions which reflect the commitments in the customer promise are included at interview.
14. The customer promise will be built into the induction process and will form the foundation for all customer service training

Reward and recognition

15. It is very important to recognise the right behaviours, therefore competencies to support the principles in the Customer Promise will be built into the staff appraisal system.

Measuring success

16. The following measures will help us measure success and drive improvement.
 - The quarterly resident survey.
 - Feedback measures at the point of customer interaction.
 - Complaints – a decrease in escalation and a decrease in avoidable complaints, such as those resulting from staff behaviour.
 - Changes in customer behaviour (e.g. increasing use of self-serve)

Conclusion

1. The feedback, research and proposed Customer Promise will be presented to the Select Committee on the 19 March 2015.
2. The Select Committee will also be invited to consider the proposed approach to embedding the principles within the Customer Promise into the organisation, in order to improve resident experience.

Recommendations:

3. That the Select Committee recommend that Cabinet endorse the new Customer Promise and approach to improving resident experience.
4. That the Select Committee track progress against the commitment to improve Resident Experience.

Next steps:

The Customer Promise will be taken to Cabinet on 24 March 2015.

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Sources/background papers:

- The Government's 'Customer Service Excellence standard (2008).
- What do people want, need and expect from public services? Ipsos MORI (2010).
- Engaging for success: enhancing performance through employee engagement, the MacLeod report (2009).
- 'SCC Employee Engagement Campaign' presented to People, Performance and Development Committee (6 March, 2015).