

ITEM

ITEM

Executive – 6 September 2007

Adoption of the Customer First Plan

Report of: Acting Head of Customer Services

Statutory Powers:

Financial Implications: There are no significant financial implications.

Purpose: To consider the Customer First plan which set outs service standards covering all customer facing services. Consideration of this item relates to CP6 – “Improve core service performance in a cost effective way”.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive formally approve and adopt the Customer First plan and agree the implementation timetable.

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council has for many years documented the service standards customers are able to expect when accessing a service.
- 1.2 However these service levels have not been well publicised and are difficult to obtain at the point of delivery.
- 1.3 It is also the case that awareness amongst staff of the current service standards could be improved.

2 Proposal

Customer First has a prime document which will become the Council's key document for detailing its commitment to providing high quality services. The Key features are as follows:

- 2.1 The document will set out in a very clear form the standards that the customer can expect from each service. Including what the customer can expect from each stage of a process of requesting and receiving a service.
- 2.2 The document will also set out relevant performance targets which measure the quality of the service from a customer perspective. It will be available in a variety of formats and services will be encouraged to issue these when a request for a service is made.

- 2.3 To promote better customer service across the organisation. There will be a communication campaign which is designed to ensure that all services are aware of the need to uphold and deliver on their service standards.

Part of the plan includes the appointment of a member and an SMT advocate. Their roles will be to ensure that high quality customer service is put at the heart of everything the council does.

They will be supported by the formation of an officer Customer Insight group, through which all customer experience, good and bad, will be channelled and actioned.

- 2.4 It is not practicable or cost effective to measure all service standards. Whilst some measurement will take place all standards will be widely advertised and customers will be invited to tell us when we fail to meet them. A revised complaints procedure will be incorporated into the document and the Council will show a willingness to accept and apologise for service delivery which falls below the standards set.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not proceeding: Excellent customer service may not be achieved, resulting in adverse publicity and poor satisfaction levels • Proceeding and raising customer expectations that can not be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed as soon as is practically possible. . • Ensure that all staff are aware and understand what service standards are expected before public launch. • Ensure that service standards, whilst robust are not over optimistic.

5 Human Rights Act

- 5.1 There are no obvious human rights issues arising from this report.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Customers are entitled to expect a good standard of service delivery and to know at what levels these are set. The customer first plan is a

way to publicise these at the same time as providing the first step in embedding a customer culture into the organisation

Tracy Winsor
Acting Head of Customer Services

Executive
6 September 2007

Background papers:

Customer First communication plan and timetable
Customer First corporate standards document