

CABINET

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| Date of Meeting | Tuesday, 14 March 2017 |
| Report Subject | Customer Services Strategy |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Corporate Management |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) |
| Type of Report | Strategic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed Customer Service Strategy (attached at appendix 1) is a replacement for the Customer Service Strategy 2010-13. This strategy proposes a strategic approach to transforming our customer interactions by delivering council services in the most modern and efficient way and embracing the potential of a digital shift.

The strategy is structured around the following three workstreams:

1. Face to face
2. Telephone
3. Digital

Each workstream lists high level outcomes to be achieved by the end of the strategy that will be supported by an annual action plan giving more details and precise timescales.

The strategy is closely aligned with the Digital Strategy and shares a Digital Customer workstream.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | Cabinet adopts the Customer Service Strategy. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY |
| 1.01 | <p>The purpose of the Customer Service Strategy is to set out a framework for how the Council will deliver modern and efficient face to face, telephone and digital services, with a commitment to providing excellent services to customers and value for money to the taxpayer.</p> <p>The Council's future service delivery must be focused on simplifying the way customers access services, understanding their journey with the council, giving customers control over the services they use, listening to and responding to feedback. Services which can be delivered digitally will be developed, allowing expensive resources to be focused on those services which cannot be delivered digitally to support the most vulnerable customers.</p> |
| 1.02 | <p>The proposed Customer Service Strategy complements the Customer Service Policy which describes what customers can expect when they contact the Council face to face, over the telephone or digitally. The implementation of this strategy will involve ongoing review of the customer service policy and changes will be made based on the needs of customers.</p> <p>The strategy is divided into the three workstreams which reflect the main customer access channels.</p> |
| 1.03 | <p>Face to face</p> <p>Face to face services will be in the main delivered through the five Flintshire Connects Centres in town centres across the county. There are a range of services available through the Connects Centres including Housing Solutions Triage, Blue Badge applications and benefit enquiries.</p> <p>The strategy recognises that face to face services are the most expensive customer channel. However, it is an important channel for a number of services where new or unexpected circumstances are presented, where human judgement is required and for our most vulnerable customers. The strategy aims to build on the successful development through Connects of services resolved at first point of contact and therefore removing duplication, multiple handling and further avoidable contact.</p> <p>A key outcome for the strategy is that face to face services are available across the county and delivered by highly skilled and knowledgeable staff to support the most vulnerable customers.</p> |
| 1.04 | <p>Telephone Contact</p> <p>The Council receives approximately 2.7 million calls per annum. There is the opportunity across the Council to develop contact centre working where calls are handled by dedicated and knowledgeable staff who can provide advice across a range of services and free up specialist officer time to focus on core business or priority cases.</p> <p>This approach enables the council to maximise efficient use of staff resources and manage peak customer demand effectively. The strategy</p> |

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| | will aim to resolve customer enquiries effectively at first point of contact and reduce call numbers by making services available on line. |
| 1.05 | <p>Digital</p> <p>Evidence from other Councils shows that embracing digital services can save the Council money, improve accessibility of services for the majority of residents and free up resource to support the most vulnerable customers. Even where certain tasks are not able to be delivered digitally (e.g. pest control or bulky waste collections) in many cases it will still be possible to improve the service for customers through options for online booking, payments or the provision of enhanced levels of information.</p> <p>A large proportion of households are using technology and expect to be able to access services on line at a time and location that suits them. By enabling customers to carry out high volume, simple transactions on line, the council can free up staff resources to deal with cases more appropriately and sensitively managed face to face.</p> <p>A key outcome for the strategy is that customers are confident and able to access Council services at a time and location convenient to them and that services that can be offered digitally are available, user friendly and build confidence in digital as a customer channel.</p> |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | The digital workstream of this strategy will require capital investment to further develop suitable digital solutions and a 5 year cost estimate has been submitted as part of the capital programme. The cost/benefit of each change will be assessed prior to commencement and the decision whether or not to proceed taken based on available resource and priorities at the time. |
| 2.02 | Realising the ambition of the strategy will require some service transformation. It is expected that some level of project management or support will be required to facilitate any large scale change. |

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| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | <p>The proposed strategy has been prepared jointly by Customer Services with involvement from officers across all portfolios.</p> <p>The strategy was presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th March and comments reported to Cabinet.</p> |

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| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | Implementing the strategy should help to increase the accessibility of services and to reduce inequality. |
| 4.02 | The strategy itself will be subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment. |

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| | Changes to services (especially within the digital work stream) will need to be assessed for equalities and impact on future generations as part of the scoping exercise. |
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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix One – Customer Services Strategy |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | None. Contact Officer: Katie Clubb, Customer Support Manager Telephone: 01352 703518 E-mail: katie.clubb@flintshire.gov.uk |

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| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | Contact Centre –a team of employees using specialist telephony software that enables the Council to effectively manage call volumes and call waiting times to ensure resources are managed according to service demand. Flintshire Connects – five town centre offices across Flintshire which provide a face to face service for customers to access more than 30 Council services |