

Improving the Customer Experience

The Current Situation

- There is a high demand on Council services with customer interactions in the tens of millions each year.
- These include provision of services for individuals, households, partners and for the wider community where we are enforcing the law normally on a specific individual.
- Most services are well run, but we appreciate that there is work to do.
 - Although the majority of customer demand is managed well, a small percentage of a 'large number' is still a 'large number'.

Vision Statement

On the 24 May Cabinet agreed that a key priority of the Council would be to put its residents first and treat both residents and businesses as valued customers.

Ensuring residents and other customers always have a positive experience when they contact the Council is paramount.

In practice this means ensuring that any interaction is a positive one with the Council being approachable, accessible, responsive and informative through the best use of technology.

Improving the Customer Experience - Principles

- **Create a positive customer experience** – when the resident needs to contact the Council by whatever means
- **Reduce the need for contact** – get things right first time and be proactive when there is a problem.
- **Ensure customers have a seamless journey through the Council for all their needs** – through joined-up technology, processes and information
- **Digital – the channel of choice** – ensure self service is simple to use and engaging so that it is the channel that residents actively choose
- **Provide alternative channels where required** – support people to self serve or provide an alternative means of contact for more complex issues
- **Aftercare** – follow up with the customer either to set expectations or check that the job is complete
- **Services are the best that they can be** – ensure that services are built around the customer

Create a positive customer experience

- Its everyone's responsibility
- Resolve the issue or offer solutions in good time
- Manage expectations
- Standard response times for services which are understood by all
- Communicate variance in standard service times if needed to customers
- Officers skilled in customer service, talking and writing simply, accurately and with the customer in mind
- Understand who is the customer when it comes to enforcement and act accordingly.
- Ensure the persistent complaint procedure is effective and understood.

Reduce the need for contact

- Getting things right first time to avoid the need for complaints
- Understand where we are not getting things right first time and quickly correcting the problem as well as answering the customer
- Using data and focus group, picking up recurring issues and proactively resolving them

Reduce the need for contact

- Proactive communication with the customer (eg. providing early information on major roadworks)
- Provide information that is accurate timely and easy to understand
- Reducing the need to call
 - Digital post with embedded links
 - Website promotion (e-newsletter, what's new)

Seamless Customer Journeys

- Always consider the whole customer journey with the front and back end joined up
- Joined up digital and technology platforms and associated processes that allow information to flow as required by the customer.
- Ensure staff have all the information they need to hand when talking to customers and can directly capture information customers provide directly into the IT system.
- Move from Devolved to Unified Apps model to help ensure IT integration.

Digital – the channel of choice

- Website quick & easy to use so that customers prefer to use it
 - Consistent look & feel
 - Personalisation
 - Tracking & Online progress checking
 - Effective & seamless signposting through outbound communication

Provide alternative channels where required

- Helping customers to use digital channels
- Introduction of web chat, co-browsing, videoconferencing and other modern channels
- Use of Digital Champions to assist those who need help
- Understanding of which customers need to use phone and F2F

Provide alternative channels where required

- Resourcing the Contact Centre appropriately with levels of skilled staff to manage F2F and telephony with plans to handle surges.
- Understanding where people want to speak to somebody where the service is online only
- Move of general enquires through Library service, starting with Greenhill
- Use of Resident and Member focus groups to understand the issues

Aftercare

- Updating with progress
 - Online Tracking
- Use of 'Near Me' geo-positioning functionality to provide updates
- Manage expectations
- Confirm completion of the request and ask for customer feedback
- A clear and robust Complaints process for when things go wrong

Services are the best that they can be

- Using data, define where the key issues are and the root of the problem.
- Customers at the heart of service design
- Understanding the end-to-end journey from the customer perspective
- Continual improvement of whole customer journey
- Process and technology considered together.
- The customer experience is built into project documentation

Services are the best that they can be

- Staff trained in improvement techniques such as systems thinking
- Ideas generated by staff and by customers
- Central small team of continuous improvement experts to be centre of excellence supporting services.
- Review where we use the Whole Service Review model

Structure & Governance

- Services own their whole customer journeys
- Joined up front end of the Journey through Access Harrow
- Resource PH as Cabinet Lead
- Senior Customer Experience officer lead to bring focus, ensure high level of standards and act as centre of excellence.
- Customer Experience Board, with senior representatives from across the council reporting to Leader/PH and CSB, to lead the introduction of the Customer Experience Strategy, and ensure performance is developed and maintained
- Customer service champions

What are we bringing back?

- The plan to implement the CS Strategy
- Business analysis including resident feedback, service feedback
- The governance and suitability of the IT infrastructure to support the proposals
- The programme of work required to implement the proposals
- The associated costs and benefits
- The Equality Impact Assessment