

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **1 November 2018**
Title: **Customer Satisfaction Action Plan**
Portfolio Area: **Customer First**
Wards Affected: **All Wards**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**
Date next steps can be taken:
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision) **Executive and Council**

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel RECOMMENDS to the Executive to:

- 1. Endorse the proposed Customer Satisfaction Action Plan as detailed in section 5 of this report.**
- 2. Support the proposed Customer Service Standards as detailed in Appendix B of this report.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report is presented by the portfolio holder for Customer First and details an action plan to improve customer satisfaction across all Council services.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 6 October 2018 a report was presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the results of a recent Council Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- 2.2 Overview & Scrutiny Panel Members noted with concern the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey and requested the production of a comprehensive action plan to be presented at this, the November meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

3 Outcomes/outputs

3.1 The Council is due to undertake a further Institute of Customer Service Customer Satisfaction Survey in October 2019. This section of the report details a set of suggested 2019 survey outcomes. The outcome scores have been devised by consulting with the Institute of Customer Service and by closely benchmarking the Council's existing results against the average local council scores.

3.2 Whilst the Council will look to improve all measures and scores ahead of a follow-up survey in October 2019. There are 3 main measurable outcomes that the council will look to improve over the next 12 months. These are;

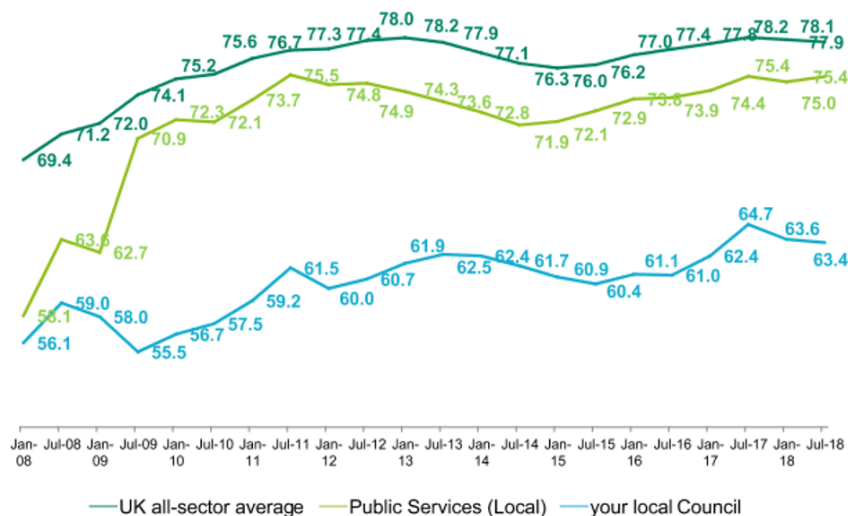
- *Improvement in the overall benchmarking score*
- *Improvement in the 'right first time' score*
- *Improvement in the 'keeping customers informed' score*

3.3 Outcome 1

A minimum 5.1 point improvement in the Council's overall benchmarking score in 12 months' time when the Council conducts its next Customer Satisfaction Survey. Thereby bringing the Council's score in line with the average national UKCSI (UK Customer Service Index) for local councils of 63.4

3.4 A stretch target of a 7.5 improvement, being mindful however that Institute of Customer Service figures show that local council scores have improved on average by only 1 point per year over the last 10 years to reach the current figure of 63.4 out of 100 points. See graph below.

local council customer satisfaction trends



3.5 Outcome 2

A minimum 15% uplift to the Council's 'right first time' score in next year's Customer Satisfaction Survey. Thereby bringing the Council's score to 56.3% and slightly surpassing the average national UKCSI (UK Customer Service Index) for local councils of 56.2%

3.6 Clearly we should strive to get all services delivered 'right first time' every time and will make every effort to exceed this 56.3% target.

3.7 Outcome 3

A minimum 1.2 point uplift to the Council's 'keeping customers informed' score in next year's Customer Satisfaction Survey. Thereby bringing the Council's score to 6.2 and in line with the average national UKCSI (UK Customer Service Index) for local councils of 6.2 out of 10 points.

3.8 A stretch target of a 2.7 point uplift bringing the Council in line with the UKCSI average for all service sectors.

4 Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 Do nothing option

The Council could have chosen to disregard the results of the Council's recent Customer Satisfaction Survey and take no further action. However, in doing so the Council would be failing to act upon valuable customer feedback and would be at risk of reputational harm.

4.2 Take action option

By setting targets as detailed in section 3 above and devising an action plan as outlined in section 5 below the Council is proactively responding to the Customer Survey results. It is therefore deemed appropriate to pursue this option.

4.3 It is important to note that the targets detailed in section 3 will be delivered without any additional resources. Any changes in external factors such as additional budget pressures or changes in central government priorities could impact on our ability to deliver the action plan detailed in section 5.

5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1 In order to meet the outcomes outlined in section 3 above it is recommended that officers pursue the actions illustrated in the timeline shown in Appendix A attached. A detailed description of each action is given in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.14 below.

5.2 Customer Service Standards

Based on feedback from Members and comments provided by staff at the recent customer satisfaction staff away days it is apparent that there is a need for the Council to adopt a set of clear Customer Service Standards. Preliminary research has been undertaken to look at service standards operated by other local councils. Attached is a set of draft standards that officers would welcome Members views on in order that a set of service standards can be adopted by the end of November this year. Please see Appendix B.

5.3 Customer communication review

Launch and promote a set of Customer Service Standards and systematically review communication to customers to ensure standards are met.

5.4 Standardised team meetings

Ensure all team meetings feature customer satisfaction and routinely ask did we get it 'right first time' this week? Resulting in teams taking ownership of service failures and regularly reviewing complaints and compliments to hone their service offering.

5.5 Recording mechanism to review and act upon service failure

Devise a standardised form and process to be used by teams and Members when they identify specific service failures and ideas for service improvements.

5.6 Focused snagging team

Through the Council's Programme Board establish a group of officers to act as a snagging team to review and coordinate suggested service improvements. Thereby ensuring improvements complement one another and do not cause undue service failure elsewhere in the organisation.

5.7 End to end review of high volume services

Assign resource to both Waste and Development Management services to conduct systematic end to end service reviews. It is envisaged these reviews will highlight ways in which processes might be simplified and improved. Thereby making the customer's experience when engaging with these services much more satisfying and less open to complaint.

5.8 Customer focus groups

Establish customer focus groups to test high impact processes prior to going live and rolling out to the rest of the public.

5.9 Regular 'how was it for you' surveys

Introduce weekly surveys for completed processes where customers are contacted via their preferred method of contact and simply asked 'how was it for you' and 'what could we do to improve'. The rationale for introducing these quick weekly surveys is to gauge a gradual understanding of whether service is improving as opposed to waiting 12 months for the main Customer Satisfaction Survey to be conducted.

5.10 Ongoing staff training

It is anticipated that the regular 'how was it for you' surveys and service reviews will highlight the need for staff training in areas such as inbox management, use of plain English, managing expectations, etc. Staff resource from the Council's HR and Communication Teams has been factored in to aid the delivery of necessary training.

5.11 Monitor staff performance

Ensure all staff are performance managed against each of the Council's service standards through regular one to one meetings with their manager and identify any areas for celebration or improvement.

5.12 Prominent progress reporting

In order that all Members can chart the progress made in improving customer satisfaction it is proposed regular progress reports are provided in the weekly Members' Bulletin and at monthly Executive meetings. To motivate staff it is proposed progress is reported in the weekly staff newsletter the Friday Flash and that the general public are kept informed of the Council's progress via the Annual Report published in May and via minutes of Executive meeting on Modern Gov the portal containing all Council minutes.

5.13 National Customer Service Week 2019 and survey launch

Participate in National Customer Service week commencing on 7 October 2019 and use it as a launch for the Council's second Institute of Customer Service Customer Satisfaction Survey.

5.14 Review 2019 Customer Satisfaction Results

In January 2020 present the findings of the second Institute of Customer Service Customer Survey results to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Overview & Scrutiny Panel have a responsibility to assist the Council in identifying areas for improvement and to make any necessary recommendations to the Executive and Council.
Financial	Y	There are no financial implication as a result of this report that have not already been budgeted for.

Risk	Y	A failure to review and act upon customer satisfaction levels could lead to: Lack of coherent delivery Reputational harm Ineffective use of resources Poor quality service These risks are mitigated by: The recommendations outlined in this report
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Safeguarding		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Other implications		-

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Customer Satisfaction Action Plan Timeline

Appendix B – Draft Customer Service Standards