

CABINET
14 May 2024

Customer Experience Strategy
Report by Executive Director of People

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the council's new Customer Experience Strategy.
- b) Endorse that the annual update of the strategy and the action plan should be overseen by the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Summary

1. Improving customer experience is a key area of focus for the organisation. A wide-ranging programme of work is in place to ensure interactions with customers are of a consistently high standard and a customer-first approach is at the heart of everything the council does.
2. One of the key elements of the programme is the development of a new Customer Experience Strategy. The strategy sets the direction for how the council wants its employees to interact with customers and colleagues as well as emphasising the importance of council values and behaviours.
3. The aim of this strategy is to demonstrate to customers that the council is putting them first and to ensure everyone across the council understands the importance of good and consistent customer service regardless of their role. The strategy applies to all council employees and not just the Customer Service Centre.

Background

4. This is the council's first Customer Experience Strategy. It supplements the existing Customer Service Charter and Standards and aims to formalise with employees the positive vision the council has for its customer experience and its commitment to continuously improve.
5. The strategy has been developed with input from a range of stakeholders, including through 1:1 conversation, an online survey, and ideas boards. This

insight has enabled the council to build a detailed picture of the changing needs and expectations of its customers and how the council can best support them. A full report of the engagement can be found in Annex 2.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

6. The Customer Experience Strategy supports many of the Council's Strategic Priorities, in particular:
 - Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of our residents.
 - Support carers and the social care system.
 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economy, and social benefit.

Financial Implications

7. There are no direct budgetary implications associated with the strategy. The expectation is that any budgetary implications that arise from actions will be managed within existing service area budgets.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer, Kathy.Wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

8. There are no legal implications associated with the strategy.

Comments checked by: Paul Grant, Head of Legal, Paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

9. The delivery of actions within the strategy will be delivered within existing council resources.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

10. The development of the strategy will have a positive impact on equality, diversity, and inclusion for people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and more widely. This is because the plan will take a data driven approach to understand the needs of the council's customers better and equip employees with relevant training. The plan also sets out to better understand the various channels different groups need to access our services and where the council can automate in some areas to spend more time on

complex matters that require face to face or phone calls, so no one is digitally excluded.

11. As the strategy is put into action, the council will ensure people from different backgrounds, languages and access needs can make contact easily and feed into this work. Therefore, this strategy does not have any negative impacts on equalities.

Sustainability Implications

12. The action plan may have a positive impact on sustainability as there is a more appropriate and considered use of physical and digital resources when contacting customers which might support less resource wastage. There is also the potential that, through linking this work with strategies such as digital inclusion, the council can support the use of reusable technology. Finally, through improving customer interactions, for example through better partnership working, the council can work more effectively to complete sustainability initiatives as set out in the council plan.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Customer Experience Strategy
- Annex 2: Engagement Report
- Annex 3: High Level Action Plan Feedback

Report by Stephen Chandler, Executive Director of People
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