

Report to: **Overview & Scrutiny**
Date: **25 February 2020**
Title: **Customer Satisfaction Improvement Plan Update**
Portfolio Area: **Customer First – Cllr Jeff Moody**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: **Jim Davis** Role: **Customer Improvement Manager**

Contact: **01803 861493 or jim.davis@swdevon.gov.uk**

Recommendations:

That the Committee note the progress made to date and highlight any areas for a more in-depth update.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is the first of quarterly updates on customer satisfaction, including areas for change detailed in the Hub report: Access to services – A borough wide review
- 1.2 Customer satisfaction activities have been brought together under the new Customer Improvement Manager role
- 1.3 It brings together and reports on ongoing activities taking place to increase customer satisfaction, improve customer service, and increase our value to the customer.
- 1.4 The majority of changes will be timed to coincide with the deliveries of the Future IT programme which will have a major effect on customer satisfaction over the coming year.

2. Background

- 2.1 Customer satisfaction affects many of the council priorities but is primarily focused on: Council – Delivering efficient and effective services, and Wellbeing: Supporting positive, safe and healthy lifestyles and helping those most in need

- 2.2 To deliver improved customer satisfaction council wide, we need to consider the effects both positive and negative on any changes as well as the effect of maintaining the status quo and any opportunity cost lost. Decisions made in this area need to be backed up with good data to show the effects on the customer.
- 2.3 Customer satisfaction improvement effort have been delivered by all managers and leaders throughout the council. This led to many activities with varied results. The new structure is designed to increase accountability and enable a more strategic approach to customer satisfaction.
- 2.4 Improving customer satisfaction will cover:
- Improving services (Future IT)
 - Improving access to services (Recite Me, better resource management, etc.)
 - Improving support for services for the vulnerable (identifying, communicating, and delivering support to those that need it)
 - Reviewing complaints procedure
 - Improving delivery of processes (productivity)
 - Changing officer focus of customer satisfaction (moving from the transaction to the effect on the customer/community)

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 Updates from 'Access to Services' report
- 3.2 Increased promotion of online services for those able to self serve
- Implementation of Recite Me Accessibility toolbar. Recite Me offers a range of accessibility tools to make using the website easier including but not limited to: Translation to over 100 languages, screen reading (in 35 different languages), screen mask, ruler, styling changes (to support dyslexia, ADHD, autism or visual impairments), screen magnifier.
 - Intended to support the estimated 15-20% of residents who don't interact online due to difficulties in using websites, not an inability. This includes support for residents with visual difficulties (including age related) as well as neurodivergent conditions.
 - Ensures we comply with upcoming legislation changes. Saving around 1000 hrs in effort to reformat all documents on the website by September.
 - Cloud-based with minimal implementation effort or support required.
 - Recite Me's launch will be supported by the communications team to encourage community awareness of the benefits of the toolbar and deliver increased channel shift to support ongoing council aims.
 - Customer focus groups will be developed to support roll out of the new 'council account' functionality. The format will include group sessions as well as 'at home' testing for feedback on new processes.
- 3.3 Continue to support those most in need

- Data from the Ockment centre shows low usage and a slow but consistent drop in customers, with the highest volume request being replacement recycling vessels.
- The majority of visitors are from Okehampton and anecdotally, are passers-by rather than customers planning to use the service. Whilst providing a service, it doesn't seem to support those most in need. It isn't clear whether there isn't demand, it doesn't suit those who would benefit, or current communications and press attention isn't reaching the part of the population that would benefit.
- There is limited data on the numbers of residents who may benefit from additional support, such as home visits.
- It is proposed to capitalise on local knowledge of members to capture details of residents that may be in need of additional supports and difficult to reach by other methods, online, print press etc.
- This would provide information to judge the scale and location of the need and hence the most effective response. It would also allow proactive contact to be made to those who would benefit from additional support.

3.4 Building upon partnership working

- Collaboration and partnership working has been selected as a one of SLT's priorities and communicated to all staff through the Staff Briefings.
- New customer satisfaction calls have been developed to undertake root cause analysis on customer satisfaction problems (captured from a variety of sources including complaints, CST, ELT and Member submissions). They will focus on the effect on customers rather than solving the problem itself, and will involve officers from across the council to capture multiple viewpoints. The template will include partnership working as a standard solution as we try and make strategic, collaborative working a normal way of doing business.

3.5 Develop assisted self-service at the Tavistock Reception

- This approach will be paused until further in the implementation phase of the Future IT programme.
- The benefit in the short term will be limited until the additional functionality enabled by the low-code solution becomes available.

3.6 Refocus and extend coverage of Council outreach borough wide

- Localities will undertake a series of events throughout the borough including in areas of deprivation to capture data on need and desire for local face to face services.
- It is proposed these be advertised locally and could be held in conjunction with Councillor surgeries.
- The sessions would be informal and based around a 'coffee morning' approach. They will be focused on capturing local issues as well as providing customer service advice. They would capture information on local need, customer benefit, awareness of access routes, type of query, identifying customers needing additional support, etc. This would

provide the dataset needed to judge the correct level of outreach needed and wanted by the residents.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 This customer satisfaction report provides an update rather than setting out of options.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The Customer Improvement Manager role is heavily involved in the Future IT programme which will be a major focus of the council for the next year but there are a number of other projects planned to improve customer satisfaction.
- 5.2 Complaints
- New approach built on negotiation and empathy with training provided. Improved learning and feedback approach to complaints. Improved structure for our complaints handling procedure to reduce rework and cost to the council.
- 5.3 Customer satisfaction groups
- Officer groups undertaking root cause analysis on customer service problems to find implementable solutions. These will replace weekly customer satisfaction calls. The groups will consist of case managers and specialists working fortnightly over a 4 month period, supported by ELT members, to embed problem solving and change management skills they can apply within their usual workplace.
 - Focus groups and users for testing new processes
- 5.4 Productivity
- Work to develop productivity measures for each area and refocus managers on increasing productivity
 - Extending usage of Work Optimisation Tool to other areas to improve productivity and reduce management workload
 - Developing Work Optimisation Tool to include forecasting function to enable better workforce resource planning
 - Rebuilding processes to deliver increased automation
- 5.5 Future IT
- The new low-code solution gives us the ability to design software around our needs rather than relying on a supplier's standard approach.
 - Officer meetings are scheduled to capture all current requirements and any future desires that will enable simpler customer interactions, quicker response times, better workflow management, additional functionality (such as offering additional support or selling services, like garden waste via the customer account). Designing against our needs now will reduce implementation costs over the year.

- Preliminary scoping of requirements for a Member’s portal with functionality to give options in receiving updates has taken place and sessions for Member feedback detailing early proposals will take place in April/May.

5.6 Proposed schedule for in-depth update of customer satisfaction activities

Meeting	Area	Description
Q1	Customer Satisfaction Groups	Process, benefits and changes delivered by customer satisfaction groups
Q2	Complaints approach	Update on structure changes, new approach and training, customer feedback results
Q3	Future IT Changes	Changes and new functionality and how it is affecting customer satisfaction
Q4	Productivity updates	Feedback on new measures, productivity improvements and further projects

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	N	No direct implications
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	Purchase of Recite Me was approved by SLT and will cost around £2000 per council per year. Time savings in year 1 from the Corporate Web editor role will far surpass the costs and additional channel shift should ensure ongoing value for money and benefit far exceeding the cost.
Risk	Y	There are risks associated with changes to customer satisfaction approach. Strong data collection to evidence decisions should reduce these risks to a low level
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Efficient and effective council Supporting positive, safe and healthy lifestyles and helping those most in need
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	N	No direct impacts
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		N/A

Safeguarding		N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		N/A
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Background Papers:

Access to Services – a Borough wide review