

Subject:	Customer Experience Strategy		
Date of Meeting:	21 March 2019		
Report of:	Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Rima Desai, Brian Foley, Victoria Paling	Tel: 01273 291268, Tel: 01273 293109, Tel: 01273 291805
	Email:	rima.desai@brighton-hove.gov.uk, brian.foley@brighton-hove.gov.uk, victoria.paling@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	(All Wards);		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval in principle from the Committee for the Customer Experience Strategy which will be further developed through engagement with customers and staff.
- 1.2 This strategy has been developed with the Customer Experience Steering Group to improve customer experience across the organisation which in turn will improve customer satisfaction with our council.
- 1.3 Our customers include everyone who lives, works, visits or does business in Brighton & Hove. Customers include those who need to interact with the council as well as those the council has to interact with, such as where we have a duty of care
- 1.4 We have created this strategy as a means to
 - Ensure a shared understanding of what a good customer experience feels like
 - Plan the actions needed to achieve good customer experience, learning from best practice both internally and externally.
 - Embed a consistently good standard of service delivery with resilience and efficiency, in a fair and inclusive way.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the Customer Experience Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 for the purposes of further engagement with customers and staff.

- 2.2 That the Committee notes that the developed Customer Experience Strategy will be brought back to the Committee for final approval following the engagement with customers and staff after the elections in 2019/20.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Levels of satisfaction with the local area are higher in Brighton & Hove (89%) than nationally (78%) as per the latest City Tracker survey results.
- 3.2 The overall current customer satisfaction with services provided by the council is at 55% compared to our target of being in line with the national average of 60%. The result for dissatisfaction has remained broadly static over the last 4 years in the context of national trend of increasing dissatisfaction with Local Authorities with Brighton & Hove City Council figure of 22% against the national average of 21%.
- 3.3 Individual key services provided by the council conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Out of 26 services that conducted surveys in 2017-18, only 3 services had a satisfaction level of less than 60%.
- 3.4 The Customer Experience Steering Group (CESG) has been set up to find ways to improve the customer experience which in turn will improve customer satisfaction. This group consists of all key services across the council.
- 3.5 The CESG has established Customer Promise and Customer Vision and an action plan to achieve the vision. The strategy brings together the work that has been done by the CESG over the last 18 months to ensure commitment at the highest level. The strategy will also help with clarity and coherence of communication given the wide range of services and stakeholders involved.
- 3.6 The Customer Experience modernisation programme which brings together the work carried out by the CESG gets reported to the cross-party Modernisation Member Oversight Board.
- 3.7 One of the key areas of focus of the CESG for 2018/19 has been to handle customer dissatisfaction in an effective and considerate way. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve this such as providing training from the Ombudsman (external Government body responsible for independently investigating complaints that reach to them), setting the standards for the complaints response and quality assuring sample responses across the organisation to feedback to responsible officers. The initial result of this work shows right direction of travel e.g. complaint response time has improved, and the proportion of cases escalated to independent investigation has reduced.
- 3.8 Our Staff Survey results show that 89% of council staff care about how the organisation is perceived by citizens. However, only 23% feel council works as one big team working collaboratively for the good of our customers. To address this we have introduced a Customer Experience Ambassador role to systematically enable joint working and embed One Council approach across the organisation. 'One Council' will create a way of working where customers

experience a response which is similar in 'style' and consistently helpful regardless of the service they approach.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The strategy will be further developed with customers and staff and an associated business case will be developed for the Committee's approval. The business case will outline the options of delivering our best within existing resources or request for additional funding to enhance customer experience.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Customer Promise was developed by seeking views from customers. There will be further engagement with customers.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Customer Experience Strategy will enable the council to deliver consistent, resilient and efficient services across the organisation which will improve levels of customer satisfaction.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any costs associated with the Customer Experience Strategy will be met from existing resources.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Peter Francis

Date: 18/2/19

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The proposals contained in the strategy are within the Council's powers to implement and will help the Council in discharging its function regarding the promotion of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. In addition to improving the customer experience, they will contribute to the achievement of the Council's duties under the Best Value Act 1999,

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

Date: 18/02/2019

- 7.3 Equalities Implications: As part of the customer engagement work, we will liaise with a range of community groups, particularly those representing people who share protected characteristics, where data suggests there might be specific barriers. The importance of understanding equalities implications is a core part of

the awareness raising sessions designed for the Customer Experience Ambassadors across the council.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1 – Customer Experience Strategy