



CABINET: 5 November 2019

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE:
21 November 2019**

**Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources (Interim) and
Corporate Director of Place & Community**

Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor I. Moran and Councillor J. Wilkie

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SUBJECT: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020-2022

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek approval of the Customer Engagement Strategy and associated action plans.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

2.1 That the Strategy and associated action plans be approved.

2.2 That the Corporate Director of Transformation and Resources and the Corporate Director of Place & Community, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, be authorised to amend the Strategy and action plans having considered agreed comments of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.3 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 November 2019.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3.2 That the proposed Customer Engagement Strategy be considered and that agreed comments be referred to the Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources and the Corporate Director of Place & Community, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Tenant Involvement Strategy, which outlines the Councils commitment to Tenant Involvement and Engagement as part of the Housing Regulators requirements, outlined plans for 2016-2018 and is therefore now out of date.
- 4.2 Following the November 2017 restructure within Housing and inclusion, the remit of the then tenant involvement team broadened to become that of customer engagement and therefore no longer solely focussed on the Housing and Inclusion Services, but with a wider approach to citizen and digital engagement.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The Council wishes to be a listening organisation that supports customers to be involved and engaged.
- 5.2 There are currently a number of ways to engage and consult with customers throughout the Council. The Customer Engagement Strategy aims to ensure the principles of good engagement are adhered to and that the Council has a consistent approach.
- 5.3 The Customer Engagement Strategy (Appendix A) embeds our approach to digital engagement, customer feedback and tenant involvement, with each having an associated action plan.
- 5.4 The strategy builds on and incorporates actions from the Digital Inclusion Strategy which was adopted in 2015.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 6.1 To ensure the strategy meets the expectations and aspirations of the Council, interactive workshops were held with senior managers across all directorates invited. The workshops covered key questions to gain an understanding of the requirements and vision for staff in relation to customer engagement.
- 6.2 In addition to this all directorates were asked to provide a list of consultations taking place during 2019/2020 to gain an understanding of the current levels of customer feedback. The consultation diary is shown in Appendix B. This will be updated each quarter by the Customer Engagement Team to ensure any new consultations required are captured providing an opportunity to identify any 'You Said, We Did' outcomes.
- 6.3 Over the course of the last year there has been a number of conversations taking place with customers and stakeholders that have helped to shape the strategy. Such as:
 - Citizens survey
 - Your Voice – tenant feedback group
 - Market research at the customer service points
 - Tenant Scrutiny Group

- 6.4 A consultation took place to hear the customer voice and test the aims and principles of engagement detailed in the Customer Engagement Strategy. This showed high levels of support from the 111 customers who completed the feedback questionnaire.
- 6.5 Through effective engagement and feedback mechanisms as per the strategy, we will develop a culture of 'You Said, We Did' as a way to evidence how customer's views are used to shape Council services.
- 6.6 This information was collated and reviewed by the Customer Engagement Manager and used to develop the principles of engagement and the associated action plans. The Local Government Association (LGA) 'New Conversations, LGA guide to engagement' was also used to identify best practice.
- 6.7 The Tenants Scrutiny Group has endorsed the strategy and will have a role in monitoring its implementation as part of the co-regulatory compliance framework.

7.0 REGULATION

- 7.1 Whilst customer feedback and digital engagement are appropriate for all Directorates, tenant involvement is specific to Housing and Inclusion in order to meet regulatory requirements. The strategy takes account of the recommendations which are outlined for consultation in the Housing Green paper and the anticipated outcomes of the future White Paper which is due to be launched in Autumn 2019.
- 7.2 The strategy supports the Council's duty to consult and evidences continuous improvement.
- 7.3 This strategy is designed to supplement and not replace the requirements detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement used by planning.
- 7.4 It is important to recognise the pace of change through regulation, technology and customer preference. With this in mind, the strategy is a 3 year plan but will be reviewed through customer feedback each year and will be reflected in the action plans for each year.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Customer Engagement Strategy and associated Action Plans will drive the delivery of the Council's ambitions by establishing how the Council will be a listening and conversing organisation

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report as costs will be met from current budget resources.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The development of the Customer Engagement Strategy and associated action plans helps to mitigate the risk that the Council will not deliver its aspirations in terms of channel shift and effective delivery of services.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

Appendix A - Customer Engagement Strategy

Appendix B - Corporate Consultation Diary 2019

Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix D - Minute of Landlord Services – 30 October 2019 (Cabinet only)

Appendix E - Minute of Cabinet – 5 November 2019 (Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee only)