Governance Committee

14 November 2017

Appendix 2   Key developments in 2017/18 for the customer experience project

1.   The following are the key developments of the project taking place in 2017/18:

1.1   The **Customer Promise roll out** started in August 2017. As identified in the initial analysis phase of the customer experience project, more staff training was needed on customer experience. As part of the roll out the following has been provided:

- A new customer service e-learning module for all staff. It is part of the new starter induction and is also available to all staff for refresher training. It will provide a resource for managers to use if staff members are moving into roles with new or different interactions with customers and where training needs are identified as part of their personal and professional development.

- Customer service guidance has been updated and is available on the intranet, explaining the importance of the Customer Promise, how to deliver on the Promise, and wider guidance and instructions on how to provide excellent customer service. Development of the guidance involved working with staff in public-facing teams across the Council. The Customer Service Team within Communities, Economy and Transport (CET), who is managing the roll out, will continue to work collaboratively with staff to keep the intranet guidance up-to-date and relevant.

- Lunchtime learn sessions in September 2017, arranged at the main sites of the Council. Providing support to staff and an opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the Customer Promise. The Customer Services Team within CET is available for ongoing support across ESCC. The roll out will be closely monitored by the team and any feedback will be used to update the guidance on the intranet and to reflect points that are raised by staff.

- There will be bi-annual refresher reminders on the Intranet for staff regarding the Promise, including an offer of a lunchtime learn session to provide an opportunity for staff to discuss any concerns or queries.

- The Customer Promise will be launched to the public in November 2017. It will be added to the Council's website and included in the autumn edition of *Your County*. The Promise will be displayed in spaces where the public visit us, such as public libraries, reception areas, among other locations.

1.2   **Imbedding the Customer Promise with commissioned services.** As part of the Customer Promise roll out, we will explore how to embed our values and standards into new contracts and commissioned services, so that customers get the same customer experience whoever is providing its services. Work is underway with Procurement to look at how the Customer Promise becomes part of the service standards developed in contracts.

1.3   **Pilot the feedback customer experience measurement system.** Through this pilot we are enabling customers to rate the quality and relevance of information and services available on and via our website, as well as telling us about the quality of responses to enquiries and requests which we respond to via social media and email. The feedback system pilot will run until February 2018. The questions being asked on the feedback surveys are aligned with the values and standards on the Customer Promise, this means we can directly evaluate and report back on how well we are delivering on our Promise.

1.4   Analysis reports will be given to managers throughout the pilot to provide valuable insight into our customers' experiences and needs. We are trying to create a simple, unified way for customers

to give us feedback, without needing to make a complaint, which we can quantify, analyse and use methodically to improve our services.

1.5   A short-term benefit will be that the real time data from the system will be used to improve any immediately resolvable issues. The medium-term aim will be gaining a broader understanding of findings, trends, and lessons learned through the information gathered, building a comprehensive picture of customer experience across the Council.

1.6   Through this pilot, we will evaluate if it's possible to gain meaningful information and analysis which can be directly applied to improve customer experience, service delivery and business efficiency. The final analysis of the pilot will be presented to CMT in April 2018, with recommendations for the next phase of the customer experience project.

1.7   The **Corporate Content Strategy Group** was formed in September 2016, which brings together the (website) content strategy groups in Adult Social Care and Children's Services, key information providers from the other directorates, and Digital Services. The group was formed to ensure joined up working between directorates to avoid duplication of information and development work, in relation to the Council's website. The group also works to improve the web author model and share best practice in maintaining and improving web content. The group will also contribute to the feedback pilot, providing a unique council-wide group of strategic information-providers to analyse the results to determine how to improve information and services available on the website.

1.8   **Customer services manager meetings** will re-start in December 2017. There is drive from colleagues in district and borough councils and within the County Council to meet on an operational level for information sharing and more joined up, practical approaches to providing information to our residents. The Corporate Content Strategy Group will play a key role, being able to provide both strategic and technical advice on developments, which include more seamless signposting and reducing duplication of information.

1.9   **Customer Champions:** We are exploring the potential of staff in customer facing roles volunteering to be Customer Champions to provide peer support to other staff. We hope this type of approach could promote good customer service from staff who are passionate about it and would help to further develop a positive customer service ethos around the Council.

1.10   Investigate and report on customer feedback systems for our other channels: phone, letter and face to face.

2.   **Development of Customer Experience: customer contact data**

2.1   Whilst the Council gathers data on webpage hits, phone calls received, and some correspondence by email and letter, we currently lack a single, comprehensive dataset of customer contacts across all channels, including customer contacts with outsourced and commissioned services. We are currently exploring the work that would be required to create a comprehensive view of our customer interactions on an ongoing basis, in order to evaluate the cost benefits of doing so. Our initial view is that the following benefits could be gained from bringing this data together:

- Providing senior managers, CMT and Members with oversight of customer interactions across different channels, with trends in volumes and channel shift.
- Better oversight of how well our customer service standards are being met, by reporting against KPIs (e.g. telephone and correspondence answering times).
- Enabling us to target customer experience feedback measurement systems to areas of highest volumes.
- Identifying opportunities for channel shift to reduce cost and improve efficiency, for example by replicating success in other areas of the Council.
- Provide evidence to ensure consistency across the Council and outsourced services in delivering excellent customer service or be able to identify areas where we can improve customer experience.
- Increase accountability to customers and residents of East Sussex by publishing customer satisfaction and performance data.