

To: **Executive**
26 January 2021

Customer Experience Strategy 2021 - 2024
Executive Director of Delivery

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To approve the Council's new four-year Strategy for Customer Experience.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Executive approve the Customer Experience Strategy 2021 – 2024 (attached)

2.2 That the Executive agree the outline work programme included in the Strategy

2.3 That the Executive agree the governance arrangements proposed in paragraph 3.3

3 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.1 A clear direction for Customer Experience is important for the Council, to ensure the work of the Customer Experience department continues to contribute effectively to the strategic objectives of the Council, and the ongoing satisfaction of residents with the services the organisation provides.

3.2 The work programme is reasonably well defined for the first year of delivery. However, beyond that timeframe, it is difficult to predict exactly what projects will be needed, as this environment continues to evolve.

3.3 Governance of the strategy will be managed through existing structures. Progress on the delivery of the strategy will be managed through the Ways of Working User Panel, which will meet monthly. Half-yearly progress reports will be taken to CMT, and annual reports to the Executive. The annual review by the Executive will also approve the work programme for the following year.

4 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 Continue operating "business as usual" but without any review of the strategic direction. This approach risks missing opportunities, or the work of the Customer Experience department being focused in areas that do not meet the Council's strategic objectives.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 Background

The previous strategy ran from 2017 to December 2020, and has helped to deliver many benefits, including:

- A top-class, fully accessible website
- Introduction of web-chat to our website
- Use of email for large mailings, replacing printing and posting
- Reducing cash and cheque payments
- Extending the use of social media to engage with residents
- SMS being used for reminders, e.g. unpaid council tax bills
- Online bookings for services such as bulky waste collections
- Online bookings for events in Parks and Libraries

It is now time to build on the achievements to date, and adopt a new strategy that takes us further, delivering a modern experience for both external customers and internal stakeholders. The strategy focuses mainly on extending the use of our existing digital channels and implementing new digital channels to increase our efficiency and meet customer needs.

- 5.2 To develop this new strategy, we have undertaken consultation and engagement workshops with a range of stakeholders. Online workshops took place with Elected Members through Executive Briefing and Overview and Scrutiny meetings, and with CMT and DMTs.

As part of the development of the Ways of Working programme, a number of workshops were held with staff from across the organisation. The principles of how we work coming out of these workshops have significantly influenced the direction of this strategy. Digital transformation is at the heart of the strategy.

- 5.3 The new strategy is focused around five key themes, which emerged through the workshops and the full details of which are covered in the strategy. In summary, these are:

5.3.1 Organising ourselves around customer needs

5.3.2 Designing excellent customer experience

5.3.3 Growing a “Customer First” culture

5.3.4 Digital by design

5.3.5 Using data and intelligence to improve customer experience

- 5.4 The work programme emerging from the strategy is still in development. The first year’s workload is reasonably well defined, with a focus on extending the use of existing digital channels to a wider range of services, the merger of the currently diverged contact centres, beginning a review of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and ensuring the changes implemented as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic are not lost.

Further projects will emerge during the year and will inform the work programme for future years. It is important that the strategy is sufficiently flexible to allow the organisation to trial new technologies as new needs emerge, and opportunities are identified.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the report or its recommendations

Financial Advice

- 6.2 This strategy maps the direction of travel within the organisation for Customer Experience and when upcoming projects are approaching commencement, any relevant funding requirements will be reviewed and the appropriate approval sought. The financial implications for the projects in year one have not yet all been fully identified, however some projects will be covered by the Cloud Migration project, namely the move to cloud telephony.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Each project established under the Customer Experience Strategy will undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of its initiation phase.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5

Background Papers

Contact for further information

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