

Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 13 April 2026

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Report Summary	
Report Title	Customer Experience Strategy 2023-2027 Progress Report
Purpose of Report	This report provides members of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee with an update on the progress made by the Council in relation to embedding the Customer Experience Strategy.
Recommendations	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee note the progress of the delivery of this strategy and the ongoing work.
Reason for Recommendation	Embedding the Customer Experience Strategy forms apart of the 2023-2027 Community Plan.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In the 2022 Resident Survey, residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the Council as well as give specific feedback on areas of improvement. A key area of improvement identified was Council Communication. As a result of this, the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) set-up a working group to develop a Customer Experience Strategy to improve the quality and consistency of customer experience. Looking at elements such as how customers get in touch, how enquiries are handled and how the Council constantly improves its customer service and learns from customer feedback.
- 1.2 The whole Council is dedicated to serving the diverse range of people who live and work in our district and as such the strategy was developed with our Council values in mind to ensure that the people and businesses, we serve are at the forefront of everything we do.
- 1.3 Success will be every customer receiving the best possible service and that means adapting the Councils approach to provide the best possible service to each customer and their individual needs, allowing our customers the freedom to choose how they wish to communicate with us, and listening to our customers' feedback and using this feedback to drive improvement.
- 1.4 As such Cabinet approved the adoption in principle of the Customer Experience Strategy and Customer Promise in July 2023 and this was formalised in February 2024 and was incorporated within the Councils Community Plan.

2.0 Progress to Date

2.1 The Performance Report is produced on a quarterly basis and reports progress against the Council's Community Plan. This information is gathered both qualitatively through updates against activities contained within the Community Plan, as well as quantitatively through data collected against key performance indicators. This provides the Council with a robust overview of performance and enables scrutiny of the services that are delivered to communities in line with the ambitions outlined in the Community Plan. Several activities contained within the 2023-2027 Community Plan help the Council measure performance in relation to the customer experience when interacting with the Council.

2.2 This has enabled us to measure some of the key outputs as a result of the strategy implementation, these have included:

- Ensure the new Customer Experience Strategy is fully embedded in the operations and culture of the Council.
 - This has included key updates such as the implementation of the Customer Satisfaction Officer, who plays a key role in supporting the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy.
 - In person customer service training was delivered to approximately 100 staff. Due to their working patterns, the teams based at the Palace Theatre/NCWC, Brunel Drive and Farrar Close, received video training.
- Reinvigorate the Residents' Panel to ensure the panel is representative of the demographic profile to help drive service improvement across the Council.
 - The process to reinvigorate the Resident Panel has been completed, the aim was to revitalise the panel to improve engagement, as well as understand how representative the panel is of the districts demographic profile. There were 701 residents on the panel before the refresh however they were largely inactive and nothing more was known about these residents aside from their name, email address and that they were over the age of 18. As part of the refresh, it was important to gather more information to understand how representative the panel is and to provide the opportunity for targeted consultation. Therefore, the refreshed Resident Panel sign up process now collects a range of relevant data to help our residents be a part of influencing and informing decisions which impact upon them and their communities.
- Expand the range and quality of services available online, whilst ensuring we are accessible to all with continued telephony and face to face options for all residents.
 - The process of transitioning to a new website hosting platform was approved to provide improved accessibility of all Council owned websites. As a result, this has helped to increase the range and quality of services online for customers.
 - The procurement of a new telephony system began in Q4 2024/25 and during Q2 2025/26 the contact centre solution was replaced with a new solution – Puzzel. This implementation was jointly managed between teams, and a significant amount of time was invested within testing of the system and training colleagues to use the system effectively. This resulted

in a smooth transition, which went live on 27 August 2025 and meant that there was no down time for our customers which is a fantastic achievement. The next stage is to develop and roll out webchat, which will further expand the range of ways in which we are here for our residents. We anticipate that our webchat function will be ready to go live during quarter 4 2025/26.

- A review on online council tax forms has just commenced with the aim of making them more customer friendly.
- A review of the email acknowledgements, focussing on “what happens next” was undertaken of Environmental Services online forms. This included redrafting 50 automated emails, created a further 88 to allow for an automation that will keep customers better informed and create efficiencies in both Environmental Services and Customer Services. Providing additional information has enhanced the experience the customer receives and has resulted in fewer follow- on customer enquiries.
- Expand customer satisfaction measures, both internally and externally, through regular surveys and other means
 - As part of our work to expand and embed a broader range of customer satisfaction measures to drive performance improvement, we commenced with customer satisfaction surveys on complaint handling. The information gathered through this process provides insights around how to improve complaint handling and any key changes are reported via the Customer Feedback Report.
 - Further surveys were carried out to provide insight for the recently approved Digital Strategy.

2.3 The Council’s Performance Management Framework also incorporates a number of key performance indicators which measure the customer experience and provide valuable data insights to drive performance improvement.

The Framework has several strands to it including:

- Awareness and Action
 - This stage looks at how customers first come across our services and the information we provide. The indicators show how we reach residents, businesses and visitors across different platforms.
- Engagement and First Contact
 - This looks at what happens when people first get in touch with us and how easy it is for them to access the right service. This helps show how well we handle customer demand across different channels, from phone calls and webforms to face-to-face enquiries. Together, these measures give a clearer picture of how quickly we respond, how accessible we are, and how smoothly customers can start their journey with the Council.

- Service Delivery
 - This stage looks at what happens when things go wrong and how effectively we put them right. The indicators give a picture of the types of issues customers raise, how often concerns escalate, and where services may be under pressure. Together, these measures help us understand the volume and nature of problems across the district and highlight where improvements may support quicker or more consistent resolution.
 - Resolution
 - This stage focuses on what happens when things go wrong and how effectively we put them right. The indicators give a clearer picture of the types of issues customers experience, how often concerns escalate, and how well we respond to them.
- 2.4 In addition, the Customer Feedback report is produced twice per year and presents an opportunity to see what complaints are being submitted across the organisation and it provides an understanding of how the customer is receiving the services we deliver and is a form of performance management to inform how well we are doing and where we can improve.
- 2.5 Feedback, both positive and negative, is crucial for identifying areas needing improvement and preventing larger issues. Significant work has been carried out on the complaints policy, procedure and staff training. Key developments include comprehensive training for complaint handlers, a complaints toolkit, complaint response templates and adjustments to accommodate new Housing Ombudsman response times.
- 2.6 The report is shared with the Senior Leadership Team, Member Champion for Complaints, Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and the Housing Assurance Board. This enables consideration to be given if there are any themes and actions, they need to undertake to improve the services they provide.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 During this year, work will continue to deliver the actions set out in the strategy including:
- Deliver the next phase of customer service training. This will be via e-learning.
 - Develop service standards for individual business units, that do not currently have them
 - Further promotion of the Customer Promise

4.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Implications Considered			
Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable			
Financial		Equality & Diversity	
Human Resources		Human Rights	
Legal		Data Protection	
Digital & Cyber Security	Yes	Safeguarding	
Sustainability		Crime & Disorder	
LGR		Tenant Consultation	

Digital Implications

- 4.1 The Customer Experience Strategy aligns closely with the ambitions set out in the Council’s Digital Strategy, particularly its commitment to using technology, automation and data to deliver seamless, consistent and efficient services for residents. The Digital Strategy emphasises improving user journeys, expanding digital self-service, and ensuring that digital transformation is governed, accountable and responsive to changing needs. These same principles sit at the heart of the Customer Experience Strategy, which calls for clear, consistent processes across all channels, greater use of online services, and an organisational shift toward customer-led design. Together, they reinforce a shared vision of a modern council where digital capability, accessibility and service standards are fundamental to improving customer outcomes.
- 4.2 Both strategies also enshrine a “no customer left behind” ethos, reflected in the Digital Strategy’s focus on addressing digital exclusion, promoting digital literacy and ensuring services remain accessible to all. This directly complements the Customer Experience Strategy’s recognition that not all customers can or will use digital channels and that assisted support must remain strong and inclusive. The combined effect is a unified strategic direction: digital where possible, human where needed, and consistent, transparent service standards throughout. In practice, this alignment ensures that digital transformation is not pursued in isolation, but as a core enabler of customer experience improvement and a driver of better outcomes across council services.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Cabinet Meeting 11/07/2023](#)

[Cabinet Meeting 20/02/2024](#)

[Community Plan 2023-2027](#)

[Previous Quarterly Community Plan Performance Reports](#)