

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Customer Services
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Lion

Recommending:

That the report of the Customer Portfolio Holder be noted.

Customer Strategy 2022/23 Update

1 Work is progressing on **improving the website** to make it easier for customers to find information and complete transactions. A small group of customers attended a face-to-face consultation in November to give initial feedback on the work to improve the search function plus look and feel of the pages. Work will continue to improve the overall look and feel plus simplification of online forms and the team will continue to consult with customers at each stage.

2 Residents who **pay with cash** at the Broadway office have now received an Allpay card along with details of how they can conveniently pay their bills at Post Offices throughout the district. They have all been provided with the customer contact centre details should they require support. Closure of the Broadway office on 29th November has been explained to customers on the website and social media as well as signage in the Broadway office.

3 Work is now commencing to develop the **Members Portal**. This will provide Members with a one stop shop for access to all information and systems needed as well as single password sign on. This is a very positive step in supporting Members on their digital journey.

Customer Service

4 To address the issue of **Officer phones not being answered** in a timely manner, all Team Managers will be completing a 'fix the basics' customer service health check. At the next wider leadership event in December Managers will sign up to three actions to improve customer service, these will include a commitment to return phone calls in a timely manner, up to date voicemail messages and all outgoing communications to advise of response times to manage expectations.

5 A key challenge has been a lack of analytics to understand; why customers call, what the barriers are to using digital methods, as well as visibility on customer service standards when the contact centre has to transfer calls to back office technical teams. A **data capture form** is to be introduced which will collect this information.

The form will enable the Customer Service team to identify trends on reasons for calls, allocate call back requests, monitor and track responses within Service Level Agreements

(SLA) as well as providing performance reports. If calls are not returned an automated escalation will be sent to the Team Manager. All Managers will have access to the reports to address any areas of concern. The intention is to implement this as soon as possible and launch to all Managers in December.

6 Following an initial discussion, regular meetings with **Town & Parish Council** clerks are to be set up to help improve two-way communication. The Customer Service Manager and Contact Centre Manager will be attending the Local Councils Liaison Committee meeting on 29th November to answer questions raised and agree the most effective communication channels.

7 **Digital skills coaching** started 31st October every Monday from 9-10.30am at Limes Centre Chigwell. This will be working with the Limes Farm Residents Association Group to bolt on to the existing Community Café. Sessions will run for six weeks with a review of demand in December.

8 The next **Members Coffee Morning** was held during October and well attended. The customer service team gave a presentation on **the most effective ways to contact the Council**. The presentation is available at the link below.
<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Quickest-and-easiest-ways-of-contacting-EFDC-Members-Coffee-Morning-Presentation.pdf>

9 Members will be aware of the ongoing issues with the current **Waste and Recycling** contract and the number of missed collections. The Customer Service team continue to work closely with our waste team to provide up to date information to residents via the website.