CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD

AGENDA ITEM 4

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 December 2016

Customer Services Strategy

Reason for the Report

1. To examine how well the Council is managing its gateway to customer services, including observation of the Council's frontline call centre service (C2C), consideration of progress in delivering the Digital and Customer Services Strategies, focusing on current performance, and challenges faced.

2. Papers attached to this report in preparation for the Scrutiny are as follows:

    Appendix 1: C2C Annual Report 2015/16

    Appendix 2: Cardiff Council – Digital Strategy 2016

    Appendix 3: Cardiff Council – Customer Management Strategy 2012

    Appendix 4: Contact Centre Core Data for October 2016

    Appendix 5: Web Core Data.

Background

2. The Connect to Cardiff service (C2C) is based at Wilcox House and is the main point of contact for all customer requests for Council services. The centre was recently awarded the 2015/16 Welsh Contact Centre Award for People Engagement.

4. During the Committee's 2016/17 work programming discussions Members expressed an interest in visiting C2C when the Committee next considered customer services, prior to holding a full Scrutiny Committee at Wilcox House.

5. The Committee therefore agreed in September 2016 to align its C2C visit alongside scrutiny of the Organisation Development Programme (ODP) Customer Service Strategy.

Issues

6. The major services currently offered by C2C are:
   - Council Tax (online forms, payments, reminders/summons, payment agreements, and council tax benefit);
   - Waste Management Requests (non collection reports, bulky collections & street cleansing);
   - Highways (street lighting, drainage & highway defects);
   - Housing (benefit, housing repairs); and
   - Parking (enforcement, permits).

7. The Council's OD Programme has highlighted that a digital strategy for service access is key to delivering customer service improvements. The Digital Strategy attached at **Appendix 2** sets out how the Council will address all of the components necessary to achieve a digital transformation. The Strategy highlights that delivering digital services will require a change in vision and goals; people; buildings; technology; processes and culture.

8. The Council's Customer Management Strategy attached at **Appendix 3** was published in 2012 and is due to be refreshed in 2017. It sets out the *vision* for the way customers are managed across all services; the *strategy* which will deliver this vision; and the approach and general guidelines for *the development of customer access channels*.

9. Since C2C was established 15 years ago in September 2001 there has been a revolution in the way that the general public has accessed services. On-line shopping and banking transactions are now fully accepted and used by a large proportion of the population. In addition, social media and mobile technologies such as smartphones are a way of life.

10. A primary driver for the Council's Customer Management Strategy is to reduce costs, and the Strategy illustrates there is a strong link between improved customer management and savings. To achieve this vision, the Strategy is focused around four key themes:

- Understanding and meeting needs;

- Informed and engaged customers;

- Customer focused culture; and

- Accessible and integrated service provision:

11. The Strategy proposes the development of new access channels including web, mobile apps, phone and face-to-face (via Citizen Hubs primarily), and encourages a general shift in channel usage from higher cost to lower cost channels. This involves:

- Designing access channels with the needs and preferences of our customers in mind, ensuring that we enable those who require it to use face to face services;

- Encouraging greater use of the most cost-effective contact methods;

- Creating a positive experience for customers through their use of these new access channels and types of interaction;

- Actively encouraging service areas to work together with each other and with Customer Management;

- Learning and innovating continuously; and

- Identifying savings by analysing customer experiences and end to end cost to serve data.

12. The preferred access channels to achieve customer efficiencies are Web; Telephone self-service; Phone; Face to Face (for customers unable to access cheaper channels, offered via Citizen Hubs.); and Apps.

13. Non-preferred access channels that are discouraged for general use are White Mail (Post): Email: Face to Face (other than via Citizen Hubs for those who need it): and Text (SMS):

Scope of the Scrutiny

14. The Scrutiny will commence with a full tour of C2C and all services delivered, followed by formal Committee in session. Questions are welcome during the tour but will only be recorded if also asked during formal proceedings.

15. Committee members may wish to consider the services offered by C2C; the methods by which customers can make contact with C2C (e.g. telephone, email and web chat); levels of customer satisfaction; progress that has been made in implementing the Strategy since 2012; and how in practice implementation of the Digital Strategy is contributing to improvements in customer service.

16. Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member (Corporate Services & Performance) will be in attendance. Isabelle Bignall (Assistant Director, Communities and Customer Services), and her team Rachel Bishop (Contact Centre Manager), Emlyn Nash (Corporate Customer Services Manager) and Lowri Morris (Assistant Contact Centre Manager), will present the current arrangements for managing customer services and answer any questions Members may have.

17. During the formal proceedings there will be two presentations covering
   - Web Presence and Digital over view: *Isabelle Bignall and Emlyn Nash*
   - C2C Customer Strategy and experience: *Rachel Bishop.*

Legal Implications

18. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are

implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to the Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decision taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirements imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (he) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

19. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to contribute its comments and observations to inform the customer vision for C2C; the future refresh of the Customer Services Strategy; and the application of a customer centred Digital Strategy.

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30 November 2016