



An inquiry report of the:
Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Customer Leadership

May 2018



Cardiff Council

CONTENTS

Contents.....	2
Chair's Foreword.....	3
Terms of Reference for the Inquiry.....	5
KEY FINDINGS.....	6
Vision & Strategy.....	6
Leadership.....	6
People.....	8
Customer Expectations.....	9
Policy and Processes.....	11
RECOMMENDATIONS	12
Context	15
Key Evidence.....	19
Vision & Strategy.....	19
Leadership.....	23
People	25
Customer Expectations.....	32
Policy and Processes.....	41
Inquiry Methodology.....	45
Legal & Financial Implications	46
Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee	47
Committee Terms of Reference.....	48
Appendix 1: Draft Customer Charter.....	49
Appendix 2: Institute of Customer Services Membership.....	50

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This report into Customer Leadership within the Council follows previous scrutiny work involving C2C, and committee visits to its offices, where we were able to witness the Council's customer service interface at close quarters. It also springs from anecdotal feedback which might be summarised as:

'There are pockets of customer service excellence within the authority but it is not a core value which permeates the whole organisation. There is a need to share this best practice so that all our customer interactions match that high standard.'

We started with the widely recognised C2C customer experience. We were also pleased to recognise other services within the Council that had developed their customer leadership and changed, in fundamental ways, their working practices and attitudes at the customer interface.

The task group also felt it was important to evaluate the Council's customer service effectiveness against other organisations from the private and not-for-profit sectors.

In our meetings with Welsh Water, Admiral and British Gas it was reassuring for the task group to learn that some of our customer interfaces match those of highly regarded companies. We also learned a great deal about what it means and, importantly, what it takes to create an organisation-wide customer centric culture which is constantly reinforced from the top.

Our recommendations are not numerous, but if accepted they will be challenging. They will involve a culture shift, which will reverberate throughout the Council and demand new behaviours from our managers and staff.

However, the task group considers that the organisation is at a stage when such change will be welcomed and, indeed, will be essential as the Council moves into the digital age. The report coincides with the appointment of a Chief Digital Officer who we are recommending is tasked to drive the customer leadership agenda forward. We believe our recommendations dovetail closely with Cardiff's digital ambition.

I am grateful for the support of my task group colleagues Councillors Berman and Cunnah, and for the support of Nicola Newton, Principal Scrutiny Officer, whose essential contribution helped to keep everything on track.

Following the support of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee for the report, I am pleased to recommend its findings and recommendations to the Cabinet.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor David Walker

Chair, Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. At its meeting on 20th September 2017 the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee agreed the Committee's 2017/18 work programme would include a task and finish inquiry into the Council's approach to customer leadership. The Terms of Reference for the inquiry were agreed as follows:

To explore opportunities for embedding customer culture and leadership across the Council by:

- Clearly defining the challenges, such as diverse services, multiple touch points, and a large number of staff.
- Reviewing existing best practice internally and externally
- Identifying mechanisms for improvement such as customer charter, customer "champions" across the Council, and corporate customer service training.

To examine Council policy (guidelines) for supporting the digitally disadvantaged (Digital inclusivity)

To make recommendations for improvement in Customer Leadership.

2. The outputs/outcomes from this investigation were to be:
 - To produce a report that uses the evidence gathered to make recommendations to the Cabinet for improving customer leadership across the Council.
 - To include a draft customer charter that promotes a customer centric culture internally.
3. The Committee agreed that the Membership of the task & finish group would comprise:
 - Councillor Rodney Berman
 - Councillor Stephen Cunnah
 - Councillor David Walker (Chair)

KEY FINDINGS

Vision & Strategy

KF1 Customer service is about continuous improvement that places the customer at the centre of an organisations culture and ethos. Customer focussed organisations such as Welsh Water, British Gas and Admiral have in place vision statements that place the customer at its heart.

KF2 The Council delivers multiple, diverse services on a large scale. It has pockets of frontline customer engagement excellence, however its internal customer management is not uniformly characterised by the same level of excellence.

KF3. Diverse service delivery requires a diversity of staff, and many roles are not traditionally customer centric. To develop a council-wide customer culture, the customer service expertise that exists within the Council's C2C service should be shared widely, both internally (back office) and frontline to improve customer focus and understanding.

KF4. The Council's strategic planning processes are well embedded and include the Corporate Plan, Directorate Delivery Plans, Team Plans, and Personal Reviews. There is a clear intention that all plans stem from or feed into the plan above or below respectively. However, for the Council to facilitate a culture of customer focus and leadership the combination of these plans must provide a framework and clear line of sight that has the customer at its centre.

KF5 The Council does not have a customer service charter, a customer vision or a customer strategy to which all services are committed.

Leadership

KF6 Effective customer service starts with a customer service vision emanating from the top of the organisation.

KF7 A step change in the profile and understanding of customer service is required across all management roles in the Council.

KF8 Responsibility for the new vision and leadership in customer service should sit with the Chief Executive. However, the new Chief Digital Officer senior appointment should hold council wide authority for Customer Service excellence in all Directorates. The role should ensure consistent Council wide adherence to customer service standards and, where necessary, recommend how services should be structured to achieve excellence in this area.

KF9 The Council could make better use of the customer expertise held within its C2C frontline service. Members consider there is potential for a comprehensive programme of customer-focussed projects led by C2C and sponsored by the Chief Executive. Such a programme could take a lead, for example, in developing customer strategy and standards, customer service training, good customer practice, and social media. C2C's services, experience and expertise could be made available to enhance customer service effectiveness in all Directorates. If it becomes evident that a service would benefit from C2C's customer expertise, resources may need to be put in place to facilitate the sharing of expertise.

KF10 A network of customer champions, such as the Cardiff Ambassadors network, should become the central focus for launching the customer service vision, the sharing of expertise, and reinforcing customer leadership in each service area.

KF11 Where it becomes evident that there are customer service management needs or shortcomings in service areas, a cohort of middle managers should be identified, who with the right support, advice and training will be tasked to raise customer service standards and change the culture.

KF12 It is essential for customer leadership training to focus on all levels of the organisation.

KF13 All service areas should be required to actively and positively take part in leading culture change

People

KF14 The inconsistency of customer service across the Council is an issue that would benefit from being addressed. Consequently, there are Council services that currently do not always handle customer enquiries in line with expected standards of customer service.

KF15 All service areas will have their own ethos and culture. Turning an organisation's culture into one of customer centricity results from multiple actions, not simply one initiative. It will require a change of culture involving all staff within each directorate.

KF16 Virtually all members of staff interact with customers, they may be internal to the organisation, external bodies, or residents in receipt of Council services.

KF17 The Council's values are brought to life through its people, who can be empowered to take on new challenges. The Cardiff Ambassadors programme, and Cardiff Managers training are good initiatives, which can be used for developing a customer service culture. There is an opportunity to refresh the Cardiff Ambassadors network and engage operational managers more closely in the Ambassadors programme.

KF18 The C2C service has a customer centric microclimate. There is an opportunity to expose other frontline Council services to this climate, share expertise, and secure on the job training. This can be done by inviting customer-facing staff into the C2C environment for a period of time.

KF19 All management teams should be accountable for good customer service. A hands on management approach by operational managers can ensure that customers have a good experience when using council services. Consistent monitoring of the quality of these interactions should be part of the process of continuous improvement.

KF20 Managers at all levels have an opportunity to focus on the expected behaviours of a council employee detailed in the Council's Employee Charter during Personal Review conversations. Such conversations should assist the member of staff to consolidate their understanding of whether their customers are internal, external or both. These conversations should be consistent across the organisation.

KF21 Some managers may avoid challenging conversations with staff. Senior managers may also avoid challenging conversations with operational managers. At all levels, it is important that interactions between manager and employee are based on respect. Such challenging conversations will be essential in creating a customer-focussed culture.

KF22 It is important that high standards are applied when recruiting staff to customer facing positions. To achieve this may require directorates adopting C2C's policy of only recruiting staff who match the expected competencies.

KF23 The Council's corporate induction training would benefit from a review and refresh to include a strong customer service element.

Customer Expectations

KF24 Frontline customer service delivery lacks consistency in its application across directorates. Consistency of customer experience is important. Standardisation, alignment, and a consistent approach to customer service across teams and their leaders is essential.

KF25 Understanding who the customer is, and what they expect from the service the Council offers, whether internal or external customers, is critical to service design. All staff should understand who their customers are, their expectations, and whether their role delivers a back office function serving internal customers, or a frontline function serving external customers.

KF26 Silos can affect the consistency of customer service across the Council. Where this is the case, barriers can be broken down by senior management action, to

ensure customers are central to the service the team delivers and that staff become outwardly focussed.

KF27 Management training in customer care is transferable. The Council has been invited to experience Admiral's customer leadership approach first hand, by spending time with the company or inviting key Admiral people into the Council to provide advice and support.

KF28 Customer focussed organisations such as British Gas and Welsh Water use Net Promoter Score (NPS) to evidence the effectiveness of their customer service. The customer is invited to score 1-10 following an interaction with the company, and is then asked whether they would recommend the service. The Council does not operate such a feedback system and would benefit from exploring its potential benefits.

KF29 Welsh Water has a strategy to ensure the company's plans are increasingly customer-led whereby they actively involve the customer in the company's decision-making and business planning process. This approach requires an investment in customer research and customer engagement activity.

KF30 The Council would benefit from support and guidance in its customer leadership journey. The Institute of Customer Service (ICS) is the professional body that could support such a journey. ICS is nationally recognised for its work in helping organisations to move towards establishing a customer service ethos. It also helps by externally measuring and reporting on customer service performance standards.

KF31 To address customer service excellence the Council would benefit from

- Customer research and insight into how our customers perceive us.
- Benchmarking against other local authorities and against a wide range of customer focussed service providers.
- Accreditation such as that provided by ICS, including access to services to develop high performing individuals and teams.
- A major people development initiative to demonstrate commitment to and help make the vision a reality.
- Networking and Knowledge Sharing across sectors.

Policy & Processes

KF32 There is a broad range of customer demand in terms of levels of service. Ninety five per cent of customers do not require personal interaction and will make full use of digitally based systems. It is however important that the Council offers a fallback position for those that would prefer a conversation or who lack digital hardware.

KF33 Digitalisation can lead to customer interface efficiencies but is not a panacea for achieving across the board high quality customer service. Senior managers are key to supporting service area interactions with the customer.

KF34 The Council can produce good performance information. This should improve as more robust customer service data is gathered through digitalisation, and agents have better information to hand. How the organisation uses data will be important. Digitalisation should enable greater insight, trend analysis and forward planning.

KF35 British Gas employs multi-skilled contact centre staff, trained to offer all services. The company aims to resolve 80% of requests for service first time. To achieve this the company holds customer data that enables 'data visioning', a mechanism that advises the agent on the best 'next step', to ensure the right information is provided to the customer, to avoid customer queries escalating into requests for service. A data visioning approach brings ICT and the customer together behind the frontline and has the potential to drive out poor performance with better performance information informed by better digital data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The task group has identified opportunities for placing the customer at the heart of Council service delivery. It will require raising the profile of customer service both politically and operationally. Members consider this step change is well within the organisations reach.

The Cabinet is recommended to:

R1 Evaluate then strengthen the customer focus of the Council's suite of strategic planning documents, introducing a clear customer-centric line of sight by developing:

- A new Customer Vision statement; (KF1,4,5)
- A Customer Charter that embraces customer service values and behaviours, such as the draft attached at *Appendix 1*; (KF1,4,5)
- A Customer Service Strategy to deliver customer focussed service both internally and externally. (KF1,4,5)

R2 Improve the Council's understanding of customer needs and expectations by involving the customer in business planning through customer research, engagement activity and use of customer insight data. Undertake a new Customer Service survey that provides a baseline as to the present consistency of the customer experience, service delivery and staff behaviours.
(KF29,31,32,34)

R3. Embrace the requirement for clear leadership of the customer service vision by facilitating a step change in customer service awareness and understanding across all management roles, but specifically:

- Giving the Chief Digital Officer a mandate and full authority to ensure council-wide consistency of customer service standards.
(KF6,7,8,11,12,19,20,21)

R4 Develop the culture, management accountability and customer training at all levels that will encourage consistency of service excellence by:

- Putting in place customer focussed training and development for all Council staff, frontline, back office, team leaders and managers to ensure staff behaviours reflect the Councils customer vision;(KF11, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25)
- Introducing a new senior management focus on customer service council-wide, in-line with the customer service charter, recognising that it is senior managers who hold the key to service improvement by breaking down silos;(KF2, 13, 15, 19, 26, 33)
- Encouraging individual employee commitment to customer service by introducing a customer focus to the Council's statement of employee values; (KF20)
- Ensuring each member of staff understands who their internal or external customers are. This can be re-enforced through the Personal Review conversation; (KF16, 20, 25)
- Introducing customer service as a standing item at team meetings (KF13)
- Refreshing the Ambassadors network to share the customer service vision of operational managers; (KF10, 17)
- Refreshing the corporate induction process to embrace a customer focus; (KF23, 25)
- Evaluating the Council's recruitment policies to ensure they re-inforce the emerging customer culture; (KF22)
- Making the customer expertise of the Council's C2C contact centre widely available to provide training for customer facing staff across the organisation; (KF3, 9, 18, 26)

R5 Explore the invitation to experience Admiral and Welsh Water's customer leadership approach first hand, by spending time with the companies or inviting the company representatives into the Council. Secure opportunities for senior managers to spend time with these organisations to experience their customer service focus and culture. (KF27)

R6 Secure membership of the Institute of Customer Service as the professional body that could support the customer service development journey. The task group recommend *Trusted Advisory Network* membership as the Council has some of the building blocks for effective customer service in place but is facing a major set of challenges if it is to embed customer service throughout its operations.(KF30,31)

R7 Facilitate central monitoring and direction of the customer service experience and other data by:

- Introducing the Net Promoter Score system to benchmark progress in customer satisfaction. (KF28)
- Driving out poor performance with better performance information informed by robust digital customer data. (KF34)
- Exploring and introducing data visioning to support customer service delivery and to improve consistency of service.(KF34, 35)
- Using the impartial ICS monitoring and rating system to evaluate the Council's customer service performance.(KF30, 31)

CONTEXT

4. Cardiff Council has many external and internal customers, requiring a workforce with a wide variety of skills and expertise to deliver its multiple diverse services. Front facing city services such as Recycling and Waste; Parking, Roads and Travel; Schools and Learning; Council Tax; Leisure, Parks and Culture; Planning; Social Services; Libraries and Archives; and Housing; and back office support services, such as Finance; Legal and Governance Services; Human Resources, ICT, Strategic Estates; Strategic Planning, Performance and Partnerships support.
5. In July 2017 the Council's new Administration set out a policy programme and associated delivery commitments entitled 'Capital Ambition' establishing the Cabinet's key priorities for the five year municipal term, and outlining a programme of action to continue to drive the city economy forward, whilst ensuring that the benefits of success are felt by all residents. Capital Ambition focusses on four main areas: *Working for Cardiff – Making sure that all citizens can contribute to, and benefit from, the city's success.* *Working for Wales – A successful Wales needs a successful capital city.* *Working for the Future – Managing the city's growth in a sustainable way,* and *Working for Public Services – Making sure public services are delivered efficiently, effectively and sustainably in the face of rising demand and reducing budgets.*
6. The Cabinet has approved a four year Capital Ambition Delivery Programme with corresponding corporate governance and performance management arrangements to support the priorities outlined in Capital Ambition, taking into account that the Council faces severe financial pressures, service demand pressures, and the Welsh Government's emphasis on collaboration to deliver its programme of local government reform.
7. The Council's response is to identify more efficient ways of working, more extensive use of technology, and new partnerships with public, private and community organisations. The Cabinet has made it clear that the refresh of

priorities would require adjustments to the Council's budgetary and corporate planning frameworks. Going forward, the principles that will underpin how the Council develops in the coming years are: *getting the basics right; digital first; putting communities front and centre; joining-up of frontline services; purposeful partnerships; and a new deal with citizens.*

8. Cardiff Council's four Capital Ambition Priorities form the basis of its Corporate Plan 2018-21, and in turn the Corporate Plan links the Priorities to the Well-being Objectives of Cardiff's Public Services Board, setting out the steps and actions the Council will take to make progress in achieving these objectives. There are seven Well-Being Objectives, which are linked to the four Capital Ambition Priorities as follows:

Priority 1: Working for Cardiff

Well-being Objectives:

- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
- Cardiff is a great place to grow older
- Supporting people out of poverty
- Cardiff has Safe, Confident and Empowered Communities

Priority 2: Working for Wales

Well-being Objective:

- A Capital City that Works for Wales

Priority 3: Working for the Future

Well-being Objective:

- Cardiff's Population Growth is managed in a Resilient Way

Priority 4: Working for Public Services

Well-being Objective:

- Modernising and Integrating Our Public Services

9. The Corporate Plan is a clear statement of the strategic priorities of the organisation, and as such will be underpinned by a Delivery Plan produced by each Directorate, which will provide greater detail on how the well-being objectives contained in the Corporate Plan will be delivered.

10. In 2001 the Council set up Connect to Cardiff (C2C) as the first point of contact with the Council for the citizen of Cardiff. C2C currently deals with a range of enquiries through phone, email and webchat including benefits and council tax enquiries, parking and traffic enforcement, waste and highways enquiries and requests for Council housing repairs. Over the years, C2C has become an award winning centre of excellence for good customer service.
11. During the period this inquiry has been active the Council has implemented a senior management review. The C2C customer services function has moved from the Communities, Housing and Customer Services Directorate, and going forward will be the responsibility of the Chief Digital Officer within the Resources Directorate.
12. The task group's research and evidence gathering has highlighted the importance of an organisation's customer service strategy feeding into its corporate planning framework. The Institute of Customer Service highlights that customer service is about continuous improvement. It points to the importance of embedding people, process, strategy & culture within the Corporate Plan.
13. The ICS framework for a customer strategy is:
- Commitment - Looking at the strategic focus of the organisation and how strongly the vision, mission and values are lived and breathed
 - Capability - Are people recruited and developed against customer-focused competencies? Are people developed, supported and enabled to deliver your service proposition?
 - Consistency - Consistency encourages a 'right first time' attitude, with processes mapped to meet customer expectations
 - Credibility - Credibility is about meeting and exceeding customer expectations. How you deliver on promises and how your brand and integrity is upheld
 - Continuity - Managers and leaders should value their people and encourage a team approach. Do staff feel valued and engaged? Is customer service performance recognised and rewarded?

- Creativity - Is a culture of continuous improvement and innovation nurtured and encouraged? In addition, are staff actively involved in this process?

KEY EVIDENCE

14. Members of the task group considered the views of internal and external customer service experts to identify best practice. The evidence gathered can be separated into five clear themes that merit consideration for the development of a customer service focus across the organisation. They are: the *Vision and Strategy* required to embed customer service; the *Leadership* required to steer a customer focus; how *People* are central to embedding and delivering customer focus; the importance of understanding *Customer Expectations*; and what *Policies and Processes* need to be put in place to support a customer leadership focus.

Vision & Strategy

15. Throughout this inquiry all witnesses have clearly expressed the importance of a customer focussed vision statement, which places the customer at the centre of the organisations culture and ethos. The task and finish group heard evidence from all witnesses that supports this view: -

16. The Institute of Customer Services (ICS) states customer service is about continuous improvement and should feed into an organisations Corporate Plan. People, process, strategy & culture must all be embedded into the Corporate Plan.

17. The Customer Services team at C2C considers that corporate guidelines for good customer engagement are evident within some parts of the Council's front line service delivery, however, the Council's process for managing and improving interactions with internal customers is not characterised by the same level of excellence.

How other organisations achieve customer focussed Vision and Strategy

Welsh Water

18. Welsh Water is a monopoly, with 1.3 million customers. It is a “not for profit” company, where profit is used to keep costs down, and to invest in services and maintenance. The company places customers at the heart of its business. Its vision statement is ‘*We will earn the trust of our customers every day*’, developed following the Chief Executives fully inclusive engagement with staff.
19. Welsh Water is chasing customer-led success and recognises why it needs to change in a world of Amazon delivering in an hour, Apple reading fingerprints and Spotify creating bespoke playlists. Their customers have to understand the value and benefits of the water produced. Welsh Water has amongst the highest water industry charges, but considers it offers good value for money, compared with Severn Trent Water, a company with no coastline, whose annual charges are typically £100 cheaper per annum. Welsh Water acknowledges their biggest challenge, in all parts of the business, is the customer relationship.
20. The company’s key regulator is The Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT). It also answers in part to Welsh Government; water is a devolved responsibility whereas sewage is not. This may well change with the introduction of the Wales Act in 2020.
21. Welsh Water identifies its three main challenges to delivering a customer focus as:
- The scale of the operation,
 - The diversity of its staff, and
 - The need for customer focus to be companywide.
22. Welsh Water ‘hard wire’ the vision (*to earn the trust of our customers every day*) into services delivery through KPI’s. There are KPI’s for all parts of the business.

23. The Company's strategy is based on six customer promises, and all long-term plans for 2020 -25 fit under these six promises.

- Clean safe water for all;
- To safeguard the environment for future generations;
- A personal service that's right for you;
- To put things right if they go wrong;
- Fair bills for everyone;
- A more sustainable and prosperous future for our communities.

24. Business Plan enablers include four external, *People & Culture; Process and Policy; Systems; Insight and Reporting* and two internal, *Customer Involvement and Profile Raising*,

25. At a corporate level Welsh Water is breaking down silos, making it safe for staff to speak up. The business has 100 employee engagement champions providing feedback to managers, though the company acknowledges that recruitment of such champions is sometimes difficult.

26. An example of the company's customer focus in action occurred on Boxing Day 2017, when 8,500 properties in Llanrumney, Cardiff had no water. Welsh Water's managing director was filmed onsite making a public apology. There were 14,000 views of social media video updates. Because of such proactive communications, 90% of comments on social media were positive, and the company received just one complaint.

Admiral

27. Admiral's vision is to be '*The market leading claims service*', and as such its strategic priorities are:

- Customer, Customer, Customer;
- Great place to work;
- Business performance;
- Technology & Data.

28. The company considers the vision ambitious but very achievable. Key messages are:

- A compelling positive vision and clear goals;

- Customer, customer, customer – a comprehensive understanding of the customer's needs and future expectations;
- Communicating the right information at the right time;
- A great place to work - an environment where people enjoy coming to work and can achieve their full potential. Hiring the right handlers and managers;
- Loyalty;
- Teamwork;
- Recognising and rewarding the highest achievers;
- Business performance – minimising claims costs and maximising efficiency;
- Technology and data – investing in technology to drive service excellence and provide real-time business insight.

29. The company has a four-pillar framework for Customer service, to which all the company's objectives are aligned:

- Communication;
- Equality;
- Reward;
- Fun.

30. The Directors of Admiral aim to create a company culture that makes it a great place to work. The company offers a career, encouraging entrepreneurship amongst its employees. This approach is supported by a strong communications strategy, regular training videos featuring senior management, and by giving its employees shares in the company.

British Gas

31. British Gas has a UK strategy built around the customer. Its ultimate objective is to be a market leading low cost customer experience. The company claims to be in the top quartile of the industry for cost per serve.

32. British Gas has contingency plans in place to address a fast changing market and increasing numbers of competitors. The company has launched Hive, the system with which the customer can control heating and observe pets remotely whilst not at home.

33. The British Gas Plan for UK customer operations includes cultural transformation. This will be achieved by creating and embedding a culture of continuous improvement, breathing life into its values on a daily basis, and empowering its leaders with the capabilities to have quality conversations driven on performance and behaviour.
34. The British Gas mantra is improvement, which is achieved through people; therefore, going forward the company recognises that unions will need to be involved in the customer service agenda.

Leadership

35. An Institute of Customer Service report '*The Customer Service Dividend*' published in December 2017 identified eight key enablers for customer focus facilitating improved performance. These are leadership, employee engagement, insight, customer experience design, consistency, relentless focus on problems and complaints, effective measurement, innovation and continuous improvement. At the top of the list is Leadership. The report concludes that organisations need to maintain consistent focus, benchmark performance and continuously develop in these eight key enablers of effective investment in customer experience, and there are a number of key actions that can facilitate this:
- Ensuring that there is appropriate customer experience, expertise and accountability at senior management level;
 - Setting customer experience measures which reflect the organisation's purpose;
 - Signalling a strategic commitment to customer service by including customer experience strategy and results in annual reports and accounts.
36. For Cardiff Council, leadership in customer service is both political and operational. Strategic direction and political goals are delivered by the Leader and Cabinet, supported by the operational senior management team, led by the Chief Executive. Having heard a broad range of evidence the task group

considers effective customer service starts with the clear enunciation of a customer service vision, starting at Leader and Chief Executive level.

37. Members consider a step change may be required to raise the profile of customer service across all management roles. The Council's new senior management structure bringing together all visible services is considered by the Chief Executive to be a step in the right direction.
38. There is a need for a broader customer service role at senior management level to ensure consistent adherence to customer service standards. The current role of Assistant Director Customer Services and Communities includes C2C, the Council's Website, CCTV, the Alarm Receiving Centre, and Rent Smart Wales. It does not have a council-wide customer service role, enforcement powers or responsibility.
39. The task group considers that silos can exist in large organisations, and this is the case at Cardiff Council. To break them down requires an authority that currently the Customer Services team at C2C does not have. The Chief Executive has a major role in making this happen.
40. Members consider there is potential for a comprehensive programme of customer-focussed projects led by the Chief Digital Officer and sponsored by the Chief Executive. Such a programme could look at, for example, departments developing customer strategy and standards, customer service training, measuring good customer practice, and social media. However this would require C2C holding a customer service governance mandate, and there are structural and leadership implications that would need to be addressed for this to happen.
41. Members consider that where it becomes evident that a service would benefit from C2C's customer expertise, a service area review of customer service effectiveness could be undertaken. This would clearly require resources.
42. There are pockets of good customer service that could share their expertise across the organisation. This could be achieved via a network of customer champions. Members note that a network already exists in the Cardiff

Ambassadors network which might be developed to embrace the customer service vision.

43. To achieve a change in customer service culture there may be change management issues in some service areas where there is room for improvement. Senior managers are key to supporting service area interactions with the customer and where there are change management issues, there are individuals and a cohort of middle managers capable of taking on the customer agenda.
44. The Assistant Director Customer Services and Communities advised Members it would be advantageous for customer leadership training to focus on all levels of the organisation, starting with directorate and team leaders.

People

45. Members have heard from all witnesses that the right **culture** and excellent staff engagement is central to delivering effective customer service, whatever service the organisation is delivering. The right culture will be characterised by managers who understand they are **accountable** for customer service, and by **training** staff at all levels in skills required to deliver the organisations vision for its customers.

Culture

46. The Customer Services team at C2C considers it important to offer an innovative service, and are trying to inject their values across the organisation. C2C is a member of the Welsh Contact Centre Forum, and last year was nominated call centre of the year having previously won a major staff engagement award the year before. .
47. This level of focus on customer service is not shared consistently across the Council; however, there are pockets of excellence in customer leadership. The Customer Service team acknowledges that there are Council services that do not always handle customer enquiries with the same level of customer service expected at C2C.

48. Members endorse the customer service ethos at C2C, and recognise that it is not endemic across the organisation. They consider it important that a customer service ethos permeates from the Operational Manager level.
49. Whilst there are good examples of teams turning customer culture around, such as Highways, which is a good case study, there is an issue of consistency of customer service within the Council. Members report that some service area written responses to a Member enquiry on behalf of a constituent could not be sent to the constituent directly.
50. All service areas have their own ethos and culture. Therefore, in reviewing customer expertise across the organisation the Customer Services team consider it will be important to separate customer service from other issues.
51. There is an opportunity to share expertise, culture and training by inviting customer-facing staff from other service areas into the C2C environment for a period of secondment and training.
52. The Customer Services Team believe front line staff must be empowered to resolve customer service issues. The Cardiff Ambassadors programme and Cardiff Managers training, are initiatives that could be used in developing a customer culture.
53. The Cardiff Ambassadors network needs a refresh and the Customer Services Team feel there is an opportunity to engage more closely at the Operational Manager level to ensure they become involved in the programme.

How other organisations achieve customer focussed culture:

British Gas

54. In June 2017, British Gas invited all staff to take up a development opportunity to become energetic, engaging and passionate people. Their aim was to bring the

company's values to life through its people. Three hundred volunteer Values Ambassadors were trained in the organisation's values, and asked to share their experiences with over a thousand colleagues.

55. To embed its customer service culture across the organisation British Gas has introduced the MAGIC (*make a good idea count*) staff engagement programme. It encompasses customer strategy, campaigns, and stakeholder commitment to develop ideas. Ideas from employee interactions with customers are posted on the MAGIC group site, supported and developed in collaboration with colleagues, and tracked by the MAGIC team, who work with stakeholders to make the idea a reality. If the idea is successful, a senior manager presents the employee with a framed certificate and a gift voucher. MAGIC applies equally to field engineers. The scheme means customer interactions are improved and employees feel empowered. MAGIC has a strong recognisable brand identity, continuity across all communication platforms, focuses on collaboration and connecting people with a modern look and feel, and is used visually on digital signage and posters across sites to embed culture. It is important to demonstrate that senior leaders endorse the MAGIC scheme

Admiral

56. Admiral Group, one of the UK's largest private car and household insurers, is Wales only FTSE 100 company, based in Cardiff. It has a £5bn turnover and the company was happy to share its expertise for embedding customer culture and leadership with the Council. Admiral Group was launched in 1993. Its customer base has increased from 1.49 million in 2007 to 5.15 million in 2016. The last 2 years has seen an increase of 66%. Key to its success is a customer focussed culture achieved via:

57. Good communication - all messages to staff are consistent and clear. Admiral considers that it offers a good product, focussed on the customer and its business performance. Offices are all open plan. There are no barriers between

levels of seniority. The company breaks down silos with monthly workshops bringing customer services, renewals, sales and claims departments together.

58. Reward and recognition – central to Admiral's culture is the reward and recognition of staff. "Please" and "thank you" are important. There are internal incentive plans, the Chief Executive's awards, and free fruit is available to employees throughout the day.
59. Admiral has a culture of "no blame" and openness. The company is considered a developmental environment. Fun half-day team afternoons take place four times a year.
60. Employees are encouraged to feel empowered and a change programme is in place. Admiral management encourage staff to raise issues. The company believes a customer culture results from multiple actions not one thing. Admiral considers that its approach is transferable to any business.

Accountability within Cardiff Council

61. The Customer Services team (C2C) has observed a lack of responsibility for customer service excellence in some areas of the Council, and highlights a need to be clear that all management teams are accountable. The team consider that Operational Managers must acknowledge the importance of a positive experience to the customer when using council services, and that achieving a positive experience requires a hands on management approach.
62. Managers have the power and the opportunity during performance development reviews to say that they have concerns about individual behaviours. It is important that such conversations are consistent across the organisation and that focus is given to the expected behaviours detailed in the Employee Charter, including customer service behaviours.
63. The Customer Services team (C2C) consider it is important that Operational Manager are accessible and engaged with their staff. When staff are actively

disengaged, senior management must ask how it is being addressed. Customer service in Libraries has been turned around with a management focus on customer service. When an agent or a frontline member of staff is overheard dealing with a customer in a less than customer focussed manner, the manager has a conversation with that individual. A staff focus group has been introduced to re-enforce good customer behaviour.

How other organisations deliver customer focussed accountability:

Admiral

64. Henry Englehart's Seven Principles of People Management are key to being a manager in the Admiral Group. They are:

- Put yourself in the place of the people you manage.
- Remember your targets, but keep in mind that very few of them will be met without the effort of those you are managing.
- Get out of your chair
- Never forget how important you are to the people you manage
- Pitch in and help. Do not do everything, but do not automatically delegate.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate. Feedback, feedback, feedback.
- Leave your ego at the door when you come in each morning

Training

65. Members heard that across the Council there is often a management fear of having challenging conversations when they are necessary. The Senior Management Team recognises that managers need to practice difficult conversations. If a team member needs to be spoken to on an issue, such as improving his or her customer service approach, the conversation may require a change of tone. It is important that interactions between manager and employee are based on respect. If they are not then managers may need to be challenged to establish how they are speaking to staff.

66. The Customer Services team at C2C consider that recruitment is important. C2C are creative within the Council's recruitment policy. Candidates attending C2C for interview experience an enthusiastic introduction to the contact centre from the point of arrival for interview. Temporary posts are often difficult to fill. Cardiff Works candidates are often considered unsuitable for C2C work, and whilst the contact centre is a part of Cardiff Council, a more suitable calibre of customer service staff can often be sourced externally. C2C considers the policy of taking Cardiff Works personnel might need to be reconsidered. In respect of recruiting Welsh Language agents, C2C engage with fifth & sixth forms across the City.

67. The task group considered that the Council's Corporate Induction training needs reviewing and refreshing with the customer in mind. The onus is currently on service areas to send new starters on induction training. It is not automatic. Members consider the Corporate Induction needs to include a customer service element, and it is important that all new starters attend this training.

68. C2C staff training - on commencing work with C2C new starters benefit from a 3 week, bespoke corporate induction and training package. Time keeping is critical. The C2C induction highlights the benefits of working for the Council, where they fit in, who the service area partners are, and starts building bridges early.

69. Staff at C2C are considered as good as their last customer call. Managers hold monthly one to ones with agents, have weekly team meetings, and focus on development in Personal Development Review conversations. C2C would be content with PDR's quarterly for all grades.

How other organisations deliver customer focussed training:

Admiral

70. The company works hard to get recruitment right first time. It is important to have the right senior management and the right call handlers. Admiral has dedicated

managers who are expert at recruitment. New employees receive 12 months of training within a supportive environment. Occasionally new recruits underperform. Where this is the case individuals receive support.

71. Additionally Admiral supports its Managers in pursuit of customer service excellence. Training material containing clear messages recorded by senior managers is uploaded monthly to the company i-learn system.
72. The company has an equal opportunities manager who carries out a corporate health check, and assesses individual employees understanding and commitment to equal opportunities.

British Gas

73. A new Personal Performance and Development Review system aims to embed continuous improvement as "*the way we do things around here*". There is performance related pay and a quarterly bonus system.
74. British Gas uses two key measures to assess agents' skills levels – utilisation and handling time. The company has discovered agents 'over serve', reducing their own capacity but also annoying the customer and leading to longer queues. The customer wants the fastest service.
75. Team leaders listen in to assess and develop staff abilities. The company uses a three-improvement outcome model framework that focusses on customer outcomes. 1. Achieved the required standards, 2. Some improvement/development required, 3. Customer outcome not met, action required.
76. Apprentice engineers receive a training at the company's academy in Treorchy, placing emphasis on British Gas values. A typical employee's training will include a lot of e-learning, including understanding the customer ethos of the company.

Customer Expectations

77. How the customer chooses to interact with suppliers and demand services is changing, and organisations need to adapt their customer service approach to sustain and improve performance. Consistency of customer experience is key. Similarly, understanding who your customer is and what they expect from the organisation, whether internal or external customers, is critical to successful outcomes. Evidence to support the importance of understanding customer expectations is as follows:
78. Cardiff Council's Chief Executive considers the consistency of the customer experience is important. There is an opportunity to improve the organisation's effectiveness at dealing with service lead officers to address service consistency. Standardisation of customer service, alignment, and a consistent approach to customer service across teams and their leaders is important.
79. It is important that all staff understand who their customers are, whether they deliver a back office function and serve internal customers (eg Members Services; HR, Finance) or external customers (eg adult services, waste management, highways).
80. Silos can affect the consistency of customer service and where this is the case require senior management action. For example if C2C experience issues when dealing with a highways request for service they refer to the senior manager (Operational Manager Infrastructure and Operations), who will break down silos within his service area to ensure that customer need is the key focus.
81. Members heard from the Operational Manager Infrastructure and Operations that customers are central to the service his team delivers, and has been achieved by:
- leading the customer service approach by example,
 - breaking down barriers and silos across the Council.

- introducing Balanced Scorecards, with customer focussed objectives in team plans.
- ensuring staff understand the customer is always right even when they may not be.
- monitoring staff performance to improve customer service.

82. The highways service considers it is important to merge technical skill with a customer focus in staff behaviours. Staff behaviours that are encouraged include:

- no raised voices in an open plan office.
- “thinking about how we do things” - looking at the customer rather than the service first.
- employing competent team leaders.
- wanting staff to come to work happy.
- acknowledging that the 5-minute conversations are important.

83. Considerable effort goes into dealing with the 0.01% of customers that generate corporate complaints.

How other organisations develop a culture of addressing customer expectations:

Admiral

84. The customer is front and centre of everything Admiral does. The DNA code for Admiral is a customer centric model addressing customer culture based on the following framework; Communication; Right People; Empowerment; Our Customer; Reward and Recognition.

85. Management training in customer care is transferable. Cardiff council officers have been invited to experience Admirals customer leadership approach first hand, by spending time with the company (eg a week at a time). Alternatively, the company has offered to come to the Council to support and advise on customer service training.

British Gas

86. British Gas aims to give customers a reason to choose them. They routinely use NPS (Net Promotor Score) to measure their “first fix rate”, against which the customer is invited to rate them. For clarity, first fix is when a customer query is resolved at the first point of request. British Gas is aware the online customer journey is not always as slick as it should be. Whilst all calls are automatically surveyed by NPS, just 10% of customers will complete the survey. However this level of response is still worthwhile.

Welsh Water

87. In October 2017, Welsh Water’s Board approved a strategy to actively involve the customer in the company’s decision-making and business planning process. This ensures that the company’s plans are increasingly customer-led. This approach requires customer research and customer engagement activity.

88. The company aims to raise its profile with customers to build trust through increased familiarity. Components of this enabler are:

- Campaigns & education(eg media, TV, food fayres/events)
- Customer communication
- Digital customer interactions

89. Welsh Water monitors customer ‘*painpoints*’, analysing what causes customers the greatest pain.

90. Similarly to British Gas, Welsh Water uses NPS to evidence the effectiveness of customer service. The customer is invited to score 1-10 following an interaction with the company, and then is asked whether they would recommend the service. Welsh Water’s NPS score has increased over time and it has set targets it is aiming to reach. Importantly, through this approach Welsh Water knows it compares favourably with all other water companies.

91. Welsh Water has 'Trusted Advisory Network' Membership of the Institute of Customer Services (ICS), at an annual cost of approximately £10,000 pa. The business set itself the challenge of achieving excellence/distinction within 3 years, by 2020. Having made a conscious decision to join the scheme 18 months ago, it took six months to complete the initial assessment. It will require commitment. To be competitive the whole organisation has to be a part of the ICS challenge.
92. ICS has assigned a client manager to Welsh Water, requested contact details of staff at all levels, and a sample of customers to contact. Welsh Water would be happy for the Council to view their ICS process map.
93. Welsh Water has found membership of the ICS particularly useful over the last 12 months for benchmarking against other water companies, but also for benchmarking outside of its sector. Within the company, there is respect for the ICS inspectors, who understandably keep their cards very close to their chest in assessing progress to retain impartiality.
94. Having identified that the Council would benefit from support and guidance in its customer leadership journey, the ICS was identified as the professional body that could support such a journey. The task group invited the professional institution to give evidence to assess whether its framework of support could be useful as the Council considers where next on its customer journey. A conference call presentation provided the following profile of the institution, its services and the benefits of membership:
- The Institute of Customer Services (ICS) is a not-for-profit membership body whose KPI is to raise the levels of customer satisfaction in the UK. It has over 450 members, 80% from the private sector, 20% from public and third sectors, including Councils and more than 4,000 individual members. Additionally the ICS provides secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Customer Services. ICS membership is growing nationally every day.

- In January 2018 the UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI) measured customer priorities (based on 10,000 customers, 13 sectors, and 253 organisations), and listed the top 20 priorities as follows:
 1. Competence of staff (in person)
 2. Staff doing what they say they will do
 3. Competence of staff (over the phone)
 4. Helpfulness of staff (in person)
 5. Handling of the complaint
 6. Product reliability
 7. Outcome of the complaint
 8. Attitude of staff
 9. Staff understanding the issue
 10. Helpfulness of staff (over the phone)
 11. Speed of resolving complaint
 12. Product/service quality
 13. Value for money
 14. Friendliness of staff
 15. Ease of doing business
 16. Speed of service
 17. The ease of getting through
 18. Condition of delivered goods
 19. Ease of finding what you want
 20. Price/cost
- This index is published twice a year, and in January 2018, top performers were Amazon, First Direct, Yorkshire Bank, Superdrug and John Lewis. Whilst no Councils appear in the top 20, membership of the ICS provides the potential to benchmark against the best, and several Councils are members including Birmingham and Nottinghamshire.
- The UK customer satisfaction index re-enforces that excellence in customer service starts with employee engagement. Research in 2016 indicated that a one-point increase in employee engagement leads directly to a 0.41 increase

in customer satisfaction. ICS believe that improved service levels start with employee engagement.

- As reported in the *Vision and Strategy* section, and the *Context* section of this report, ICS highlight that customer service is about continuous improvement, and as such strongly believe customer strategy should feed into the organisations corporate planning. People, process, strategy & culture must all be embedded in the Corporate Plan.
- In the view of ICS, when an organisation addresses its customer strategy it is important to consider the following:
 - Commitment - Looking at the strategic focus of the organisation and how strongly the vision, mission and values are lived and breathed
 - Capability - Are people recruited and developed against customer-focused competencies? Are people developed, supported and enabled to deliver your service proposition?
 - Consistency - Consistency encourages a 'right first time' attitude, with processes mapped to meet customer expectations
 - Credibility - Credibility is about meeting and exceeding customer expectations. How you deliver on promises and how your brand and integrity is upheld
 - Continuity - Managers and leaders should value their people and encourage a team approach. Do staff feel valued and engaged? Is customer service performance recognised and rewarded?
 - Creativity - Is a culture of continuous improvement and innovation nurtured and encouraged? In addition, are staff actively involved in this process?
- The ICS can assist the Council by allocating a Client Relationship Director (CRD). The CRD will organise the following support:
 - Thought leadership – how to lead by example from the top
 - UKCSI: Barometer of Customer Satisfaction
 - Bespoke research and insight sponsoring opportunities

- Benchmarking & Servcheck
 - ServiceMark accreditation to sustain operational excellence
 - People Development – professional, management and coaching qualifications
 - Critical friend to challenge and advise
 - Networking events and best practice knowledge sharing
 - Measurement tools, plans and support to continuously improve business performance.
- Servicemark accreditation is nationally recognised. It is the UK national standard, which demonstrates an organisations commitment to, and achievement in customer service. An organisation has 6 months to achieve it from point of application. If successful, a 3-year accreditation is reviewed after 18 months. The institute is very supportive of its members throughout the process. Each year they undertake a **Servcheck**, - an assessment tool, which measures employees' engagement with the organisations customer service strategy and measures employee engagement, providing the results. Secondly, they undertake a **Business Benchmark** survey of customer contacts the organisation provides, assessing how customers rate the organisation, priority measures to improve the customer experience. Thirdly, the CRD undertakes an independent assessment and delivers a report with recommendations for action planning. Servcheck plus Business Benchmarking plus **Assessment** will provide a clear, honest reflection and establish gaps that need to be filled. The Client Relationship Director will advise when the organisation is ready to be assessed. The organisation can set a 5-year plan; there is no pressure to achieve ServiceMark.
 - Training people – ICS recommend developing people through its bespoke customer service training. There are short courses and professional qualifications on offer. For the organisation this improves performance, quality and consistency of service, develops a coaching culture and utilises the skills of the trained coaches in other areas of the business, it also rewards and recognises employees.

- With ICS membership comes the training of coaches to deliver ‘ServiceFocus’ in-house training in year one. This training helps embed a consistent approach to customer service excellence across the organisation; focusses on key skills, behaviours, and competencies; motivates and engages employees; is quality assured to Institute standards and includes 1-year individual membership of the Institute for delegates.
- The ICS offers four professional qualifications in customer service that typically take 6-12 months to complete.
- The ICS offers a management qualification, a professional grounding in customer service management 12-month programme for customer service leaders and managers. These are online courses supported by face-to-face days.
- Membership of the ICS can be either ‘Trusted Advisory Network’ or ‘Discovery Roadmap’.
 - A *Trusted Advisory Network* Membership is advised for an organisation that has some of the building blocks for effective customer service in place but is facing a particular set of challenges if it is to embed customer service throughout its operations. For such an organisation, the business and customer environment is constantly evolving and there is a continuous need to manage the impact of change. This may be dealing with reputational issues that can break quickly in the media and social media, through to simply trying to maintain consistent customer service standards across a complex organisational structure. The Institute can help work across organisational boundaries to create a seamless experience that brings all the pieces together and aligns activity with the strategic priorities. Work will be at a strategic and operational level to ensure that customer service plays a genuine part in creating an advantage for the Council and helps to achieve its strategic goals. The cost of Trusted Advisory membership is £10,000 a year over 5 years. With this membership comes

significant people development, specifically two sessions on coaching skills for up to 15 coaches, and two assessor training programme places.

- A *Discovery Roadmap* membership is advised where the organisation understands the importance of offering consistently excellent engagement across the customer journey. In order to sustain service improvement, a clear direction, measurement and accountability are required. It is critical that the Council can demonstrate to its stakeholders the ways in which enhanced customer service positively impacts on its performance and results. With this membership, the Institute will help the Council to develop a comprehensive customer service roadmap and engagement plan that will meet the on-going needs of its customers, create sustained improvements in service and improve results. By understanding the Council's strategy and priorities, it will recommend a relevant blend of insight and knowledge, tools, training and practical solutions that will raise customer service performance levels to meet customers' needs. The cost of Discovery Roadmap membership is £30,000 for 5 years.

- Membership entitles the organisation to attend the Institute's events programme, including an annual conference and customer satisfaction awards to network, and share best practice.
- Importantly the ICS points to key enablers of effective investment in customer experience. They are:
 - Leadership
 - Employee Engagement
 - Consistency
 - Relentless focus on problems, complaints, getting the basics right
 - Insight
 - Effective measurement
 - Customer experience design and processes
 - Innovation and business improvement

- In summary to address customer service excellence the Council requires and ICS offers:
 - Research and Insight - a dedicated Client Relationship Director to work with us to offer guidance, support and challenge to the organisation.
 - Benchmarking - access to a wide range of products and services to benchmark and improve business performance.
 - Accreditation – access to services to develop high performing individuals and teams.
 - People Development - standards, which demonstrate commitment to and achievement in customer service.
 - Networking and Knowledge Sharing (across sectors)
- Members consider the Council is happy to learn from the private sector as well as the public sector, and therefore consider Trusted Advisory Network level Membership of the ICS is the right approach for the Council's needs.

Policy & Processes

95. The customer service experience is supported and enhanced by the policy and processes introduced across an organisation that enable consistency of delivery and sharing of customer insight data. Throughout this inquiry, the task group has heard that change in the form of the digitalisation of processes is the framework on which the Council's customer service can be improved. Evidence supporting this is as follows:

96. Whilst all customers are different, 95% do not require personal interaction with an agent, they simply need reassurance that their query is being dealt with. It is thought that most Cardiff Council customers will be comfortable with and even prefer to access services digitally, particularly out of hours. However, it is important that there is a fall-back position for those that prefer a conversation with an agent.

97. There is a sense that formality in customer exchange creates work. It is therefore important the Council secures an end-to-end digital approach to service delivery, has better information to hand, and works with partners to join relevant information in one place.
98. It is considered important to deal with the low value requests for service digitally and refer more difficult requests to service areas.
99. The Council already has many front facing digital services, however the back office processing the request for service is manual. For example, almost 70% of parking permits are applied for online, and processed manually. City Operations are currently rolling out improvements to parking machines - smart parking, where the customer can log in and out of an app on their phone and is then billed for actual usage.
100. The digital interface is a key growth area; however, the Chief Executive is clear that digitalisation is not a panacea for achieving excellent customer services across the board. The wide range of council services will make digitalisation a challenge, for there are services such as cleansing, highways and neighbourhood services that cannot be delivered digitally.
101. The Chief Executive considers the performance information published by the Council is good, and will improve further as more robust data customer service information is gathered through digitalisation.
102. The Chief Executive and Assistant Director Customer and Communities consider it is important that ICT and the customer are brought together behind the frontline. How the organisation uses data is important. Different capabilities are required, more trend analysis, forward planning and better statistics.
103. Customer service and digital expertise will need to be developed rather than imposed upon staff.

104. Work is underway to develop the Cardiff App, which will give the Council more control of large customer volumes. The Council is also about to re-launch its web site, which will mirror the App. Some simple transactions will be available online.

How other organisations deliver customer focussed policy and processes.

Admiral

105. Admiral has a technology and data project group. Every month a technical partner spends an hour with managers. The agenda is simply how systems and processes can be improved. The company recognises there is a natural fear of automation, change and digitalisation amongst its employees. However, digitalisation will go ahead, and will provide the company with useful information. The company tackles employee concerns about transformation/digitalisation through designated 'change champions'.

British Gas

106. British Gas point to recent technological advances that have changed the way the company deals with requests for service. The introduction of automated voice has resulted in just 20-30 calls out of 100 being transferred to an operator. This means 70% of customer requests now receive an automated response, which has significant implications for the cost of delivering customer services.

107. The British Gas strategy is that contact centre staff are multi-skilled and can offer all services. The company aims for an 80% resolution of first requests for service. To achieve this the company holds customer data, and through data visioning can advise the agent on the 'next step'. This practice of data visioning to suggest the best next action aims to avoid customers escalating queries.

108. British Gas aims to increase self-service with the introduction of Smartmeters. It currently has 4million customers on Smartmeter.

109. The company's STAR approach to embedding continuous improvement is built on operational improvement and leadership theory. It has four phases –

Study (analyse and understand current performance from the customers perspective), Test (design and pilot new ways of working to act on the system and meet the customer purpose), Act (embed and roll others into the new way of working), Review (review and continuously improve again and again). This approach also applies to the back office.

INQUIRY METHODOLOGY

The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee Customer Leadership task group was charged by the full committee with delivering a report for its consideration. This report uses the evidence gathered by the task group to make key findings and recommendations to the Cabinet of the Council in respect of Customer Service Leadership. To achieve this the Committee's Principal Scrutiny Officer has worked closely with the Council's Customer Services Team to identify appropriate witnesses, and taken a steer from all members of the task group. The task group received evidence from the following witnesses:

Internal Witnesses

Paul Orders Chief Executive;
Isabelle Bignall; Assistant Director Customer Services;
Matt Wakelam, Head of Infrastructure and Operations;
Rachel Bishop, Operational Manager, Customer Services;
Lowri Morris, Assistant Contact Centre Manager, C2C;
Mike Pope, Customer Service Trainer, Cardiff Council.

External Witnesses

Mike King, Head of Claims, Admiral Group;
Mike Mullins, British Gas;
Alun Shurmer, Director of Customer Strategy & Communications, Welsh Water;
Frances Ball, Business Development Manager, Institute of Customer Services.

The primary evidence from witnesses was supplemented by secondary desk-based internet research. Key messages from the research have been drawn to Members attention, and informed questioning during evidence gathering. The key findings and recommendations are the unanimous view of the task group.

Details of all evidence considered by the task group and used in the preparation of this report are contained within a record of evidence that is available for inspection upon request.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Executive/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers of behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

-

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Councillor David Walker
Chair



Councillor Rodney Berman



Councillor Bernie Bowen Thomson



Councillor Joe Boyle



Councillor Stephen Cunnah



Councillor Owen Jones



Councillor Norma Mackie



Councillor Rod McKerllch



Councillor Jim Murphy

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To scrutinise, monitor and review the overall operation of the Cardiff Programme for Improvement and the effectiveness of the general implementation of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, including:

To scrutinise, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Council's systems of financial control and administration and use of human resources.

To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the Welsh Government, joint local government services, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non-governmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.

To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures which may enhance Council performance and service delivery in this area.

APPENDIX 1:

Customer/Citizen Charter

DO RIGHT BY YOU

We promise to:

- ✓ Be polite, helpful and considerate and take time to listen to you / treat you with respect
- ✓ Offer a straightforward, personal and quick customer service experience
- ✓ Consult and engage with community and customer groups to identify customer needs
- ✓ Communicate with you in plain language and avoid using jargon
- ✓ Protect your personal information
- ✓ Treat you as an individual and according to your needs

GIVE YOU A CHOICE WITH HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

We will:

- ✓ Clearly advertise all the ways you can access our services (including face to face)
- ✓ Design services that reflect the diverse make up of Cardiff
- ✓ Ensure social inclusion by giving you a choice in how you contact us
- ✓ Give you a voice on social media or improve / increase how we engage with you on social media
- ✓ Make more of our services available online to use at a time that suits you

GET IT RIGHT

We will:

- ✓ Do what we say we will do
- ✓ Say sorry and put things right if we make a mistake
- ✓ Tell you what to do next if you are not happy with how you've been treated
- ✓ Use your feedback to shape our services
- ✓ Train our staff to the highest standards

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We ask you to:

- ✓ Treat our staff with respect
- ✓ Tell us when something changes and give us the correct information at the right time
- ✓ Give us the opportunity to put things right first
- ✓ Provide us with honest feedback
- ✓ Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, join our citizen panel and participate in surveys and consultations

APPENDIX 2: Institute of Customer Services Membership

The link below will take you to the Institute of Customer Services website, where details of the *Trusted Advisory Network* membership can be found

<https://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/membership>

Scrutiny Services, Cardiff County Council
County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW
Tel: 029 2087 2296 Fax: 029 2087 2579
Email: scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk