

Customer Services

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Committee with a progress update on the Customer Services project, developed in response to recommendations made within the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee's inquiry report on Customer Leadership.

Structure of the Papers

2. Attached to this report to enable the scrutiny are a series of appendices as follows:

Appendix 1: Recommendations of the Customer Leadership inquiry by PRAP

Appendix 2: Presentation – Customer Leadership Update

Appendix 3a: Customer Service Standards

3b: Customer Charter

3c: Children's Customer Charter

3d: Customer Service Training Suite

3e: Survey E-mail Template

3f: Customer & Digital Champions Framework

Background

3. In 2018 the Committee published an in-depth review of the Council's approach to customer leadership. Having received evidence from a range of customer focussed internal and external contributors, the evidence was used to develop recommendations based on the evidence heard throughout.

4. The Terms of Reference for the inquiry sought to explore opportunities for embedding customer culture and leadership across the Council by; reviewing best practice internally and externally; identifying mechanisms for improvement such as customer charter, customer “champions”, and corporate customer service training; examining Council policy for supporting the digitally disadvantaged; and finally to make recommendations for improvement in Customer Leadership.

5. The Committee made 7 recommendations to the Cabinet, (see extract attached at **Appendix 1**), 6 of which were accepted, – *R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7*, and 1 which was partially accepted, *R6* – Secure membership of the Institute of Customer Service as the professional body that could support the customer service development journey, as the Council was facing a major set of challenges if it was to embed customer service throughout its operations.

Programme of Work

6. In December 2018 the Committee was presented with the Programme of Work to be undertaken by the Customer & Leadership Delivery Team to address the seven recommendations. The timeline for all actions was forecast to be complete in February 2020. Key elements of the programme were strengthening the Council’s strategic planning documents with a customer focussed Vision, Charter and Strategy; Undertaking a customer service survey; Developing customer training at all levels; Sharing and learning from good practice within companies such as Admiral, British Gas, and DVLA; Exploring membership of the Institute of Customer Service; and creating performance measurement of the customer service experience.

7. The Committee agreed as a part of its work programming for 2019-20 to programme an update on how the corporate focus on customer leadership is progressing one year on.

Previous Scrutiny

8. Following the December 2018 scrutiny Members felt there had been clear presentation of progress on the Customer Leadership agenda. There was clear project management in place in response to the Committee's inquiry, with milestones and responsibilities set out for each of the seven recommendations.
9. Members welcomed plans for a customer roadshow that aspired to motivate the workforce, and the intention to launch a Customer Charter at the commencement of the 2019/20 personal review cycle.
10. Similarly Members welcomed the plans for Level 1 customer focussed training relating the Council's values to an employee's internal colleagues and customers, endorsing a training plan comprised of different level modules. However Members were concerned as to how well resourced the Council was to support customer training for all staff. Members indicated they would be looking to monitor coverage in support of taking this agenda forward in the future. The Cabinet response indicated the Council would be working with the Academy and Cardiff & Vale College to ensure delivery of different levels of the customer service training and to ensure adequate sessions were available for staff. The Cabinet welcomed the opportunity to return to Committee to report the number of sessions delivered and the number of staff who attended by service area.
11. The Committee highlighted Members considerable experience of accessing the Council's frontline services, and the Cabinet responded that workshops would be held with internal and external customers to gain valuable customer insight and feedback.
12. Members felt there was an opportunity to extend a customer perspective to the child's experience of Council services over time, a recommendation that

the Cabinet agreed with and sought to work on with the Children's Advisory Forum.

Way Forward

13. Councillor Chris Weaver (Cabinet Member – Finance, Modernisation & Governance), Isabelle Bignall (Chief Digital Officer) and Rachel Bishop (Head of Customer Services) have been invited to update the Committee and present any progress made in addressing the issues raised in the action plan presented in December 2018.

Legal Implications

14. 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 Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of 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 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 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

15. 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

16. The Committee is recommended to note the progress update and agree whether it wishes to forward any comments, observations, concerns or recommendations on the Customer Services project to the Cabinet Member, Finance, Modernisation & Performance.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

7 November 2019

Background Paper

Full Report of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

“Customer Leadership”, published in April 2018. Available on request.