

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 3 NOVEMBER 2009

Title:

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2009 -2012

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Taylor-Smith]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The Executive is being asked to consider and approve the proposed Customer Service Strategy for Waverley 2009-2012.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The proposed Customer Service Strategy sets out the overall framework and strategic direction for the development of customer services across the Council in accordance with the Council's priority of promoting and achieving value for money and customer focus. The delivery of customer service can also have a positive impact on improving the lives of residents.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

Excellent customer service would contribute positively to the benefit of all sections of the community. Ensuring service is targeted to the more vulnerable would contribute to the Council's priority of improving lives.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

There will be resource implications involved in the delivery of a Customer Service Strategy and the Action Plan included sets out estimates of cost. Specific projects emerging from the strategy will be considered as part of the usual budget making process.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Need for a Customer Service Strategy

1. Customers now have increasing expectations of customer service to provide quicker and easier access to the information they need, Waverley has recognised this and has put customer focus as one of its key priorities. Unlike many private sector organisations our services are diverse - from discretionary services such as providing leisure facilities to statutory elements such as refuse collection. Despite the diversity of activities in which Waverley is involved it is one organisation working for and on behalf of its residents, tenants and businesses.
2. The inevitable strain on public sector finance in the years ahead will also be a key driver for customer service in that the same or more will need to be delivered with fewer resources.
3. Waverley's Place Survey results in the national survey undertaken by the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Department, in the Autumn of 2008 placed Waverley in the bottom quartile of authorities on the indicator for 'Overall satisfaction with your Council'. Although this indicator cannot be linked solely to customer service it would be reasonable to conclude that improving customer service would have a positive impact on the public's perception of the Council.
4. The overall aim of the strategy is to improve customer satisfaction levels in the face of increasing demands and expectations.

Customer Services Special Interest Group

5. The Executive in October 2008 set up a Customer Services Special Interest Group (SIG) to advise the Portfolio Holder with the following terms of reference:
 1. *To establish an overall framework and strategic direction for the development of customer services across the Council with the aim of delivering high quality, professional, accessible and consistent services.*
 2. *As part of this process, to review the opportunities for refocusing the role of locality offices and in particular explore the possibilities of co-location of facilities and shared service provision.*
6. The Executive in July 2009 considered a report from the Customer Services SIG, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Customer Service on the second part of the above terms of reference on the future role of local offices.
7. The proposed strategy resulted from the work of the Customer Service SIG and its completion concludes the first part of the terms of reference of the SIG. It is proposed that for the short-term the SIG will continue to meet in order to monitor progress on the Action Plan.

8. For information a copy of the Council's ICT Strategy (Vision and Direction of Travel 2009 – 12), which was approved by the Executive in June 2009, is attached as this supports and is aligned with the Customer Services Strategy.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive approve the Customer Services Strategy 2009-2012.

Background Papers (SD(E))

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Roger Standing **Telephone:** 01483 523221

E-mail: roger.standing@waverley.gov.uk

