

**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE - 10 JANUARY 2017**

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**Title:**

**CUSTOMER SERVICES REVIEW**

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Tom Martin]

[Wards Affected: All]

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**Summary and purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to secure the support of the Executive to proceed with the next stage of the Customer Services Review. This will involve an evaluation of the options identified by the Foresight Customer Services Officer Group.

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

Customer Services is a Corporate Priority. The Foresight Customer Services Group comprises a range of officers from front line services around the Council and is led by the Head of Customer and Corporate Services.

**Financial Implications:**

There are no immediate financial implications given that this is the research stage of the review. If the outcome of the review recommends revenue or capital investment, a business case and justification will be presented to members.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

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**Introduction**

1. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on 22 November from the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Customer and Corporate Services. The presentation is attached as Annexe 1.
2. Within the presentation the Foresight Group had put forward a number of options for change which, based on the review work carried out to date, should be explored and evaluated. Examples include:
  - Revise the performance management system to ensure decision makers have a holistic, evidenced diagnosis of how a service is performing
  - Channel shift to encourage customers to make contact in alternative ways
  - Assess options re customer point of contact
  - Assess options re dedicated customer services staff
  - Assess options re the Council's local presence in the community
  - Assess options re customer contact management systems
  - Review strategies, policies and service standards

- Identify and review operational processes which will drive service improvement
- Assess options to facilitate a drive of cultural change (including a commensurate training programme)
- Design a communication plan to support, facilitate and launch the approach to Customer Services

### **Observations from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

3. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following observations at its meeting on 22 November 2016:

Corporate O&S Committee welcomed the initiatives of the Officer Group to improve Customer Service at Waverley. The Committee was pleased that the work was being driven by officers, and that the approach was evolutionary rather than trying to be 'transformational'.

Whilst mindful of the needs of those older residents who found it difficult to use digital services, the Committee agreed that this was likely to be a diminishing proportion of residents, and it was important that on-line services were developed for customers who were able to 'self-serve' and happy to do so.

The Committee discussed whether the closure of the Locality Offices had created a perception of the Council not being accessible; however, it was acknowledged that the Locality Offices were expensive to operate and there were more efficient ways of responding to customer requests, including supporting visiting officers with mobile technology.

The Committee also noted that Customer Service and Value for Money were separate Corporate Priorities, and that there may be a need for investment to improve customer service, without it necessarily being linked to direct cost savings. There were benefits to be had from releasing officers from handling routine transactions, to give them time to respond to more complex enquiries.

In conclusion, the Committee endorsed the recommendations for future work to be carried out by the Customer Service Officer Group, to continue the improvements in Customer Service at Waverley.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive request the Head of Customer and Corporate Services and the officer Foresight Group to continue the review and evaluate/progress the change options specified within the body of the report.

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### **Background Papers**

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

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