

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**VALUE FOR MONEY AND CUSTOMER SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

19 NOVEMBER 2018

Title:

CUSTOMER SERVICES REVIEW

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Storey
Wards Affected: All

Summary and purpose:

To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the schedule of activity agreed in November 2017.

To comment on the proposals set out in the attached Project Initiation Document (PID) in respect of customer access arrangements/customer services structure.

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

Customer Services is referenced in the Corporate Strategy Priority Theme 1: People

Financial Implications:

These are detailed in the PID and anticipate a saving of at least £240k from base budgets once implementation is complete.

Legal Implications:

No immediate legal implications

Progress Update

In October 2017 Overview and Scrutiny considered a schedule of proposed activity designed to improve the corporate customer service offer, this was subsequently considered and agreed by Executive in November 2017.

An officer Customer Services Group has been meeting regularly during 2018 to progress the action plan and a great deal of work has been achieved on producing on-line forms which have proved popular with customers. Progress on other aspects of the project has been slower than originally envisaged. However with the support of the new Chief Executive the project is now fully underway and the first meeting of the Project Board will take place on 8 November. Feedback from that meeting will be presented to the Committee verbally.

Progress to date is as tabulated:

| Agreed Action (November 2017) | Update |
|--|--|
| <p>Review/refresh the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework • Customer Services Strategy • Policy/Procedures • Service Standards • Operational Processes | <p>The performance management framework has being refreshed and relaunched. The revised model is much more in line with the recommendations made by the Customer Services Group.</p> <p>Although a draft strategy and service standards were produced finalising these is dependent on the outcome of the proposals set out in the PID. Policies, procedures and operational processes will flow out of the strategy in due course.</p> |
| <p>Channel Shift - A business case has been submitted and agreed and implementation is underway.</p> | <p>Channel shift work is underway within the parameters of our existing environment. There are two live streams of work for the Housing and Revenues service areas, with facilities now in place to allow channel shift for the housing rent function. Our channel shift capacity will increase significantly once the required work to the IT environment is carried out as referenced in the PID.</p> |
| <p>Customer Services Technology - Whilst in time we expect the numbers of calls made to the Council to diminish (as has been the trend for some time with the increasing use of e-mail), at present 50% of all customer contact is made by 'phone and so traffic is still significant.</p> <p>We are seeking to procure appropriate software and technology to enable our customer call groups to be more effectively managed. This includes the display of real time data in terms of caller numbers, waiting times etc as well as offering the ability for supervisory staff to connect to live calls.</p> | <p>As an interim measure the Housing and Environmental Services call groups which are more recognisable customer service centres have been equipped accordingly. The solution was relatively low cost and operates within parameters that will be extended when we have a final structure in place.</p> <p>In Housing single telephone numbers have been introduced. Calls for the repairs service and the Tenancy & Estates Team are now handled by one customer services team.</p> |
| <p>Establish metrics to inform future delivery model decisions - The Foresight Customer Service Group made a number of recommendations about customer access arrangements and customer service structures that generated high levels of debate and interest in the officer community.</p> | <p>This work has now been completed and evaluated. The outcome is as set out in the PID.</p> |

Proposals

Although some progress has been made it is important, given the potential impact on structures, that the Customer Service Project has support across the organisation and is mobilised and managed accordingly. There is also an initial investment required to achieve the objectives envisaged.

Securing the support of the Value for Money and Customer Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is part of this process.

Members will also note that the PID includes proposals to engage with Surrey County Council and to explore any partnership opportunities that respond to our objectives.

Recommendation

The Value for Money and Customer Service O&S Committee is asked to comment on the detail of the project and endorse the approach as set out in the PID.

Background Papers

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

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: David Allum

Telephone: 01483 523338

E-mail: david.allum@waverley.gov.uk