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**REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 25 APRIL 2023**

**SUBJECT: CUSTOMER CHARTER UPDATE**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider and approve the updated Customer Charter in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (37) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to matters monitoring and developing customer access and information.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the committee considers and approves the updated Customer Charter.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council provide a wide range of services to the public in Moray. It is important that the public (as stakeholders and as customers) can rely on high standards of customer service from the Council.
- 3.2 The Council's Policy and Resources Committee agreed a [Customer Focus Strategy](#) and a [Customer Charter](#) on [29 April 2015](#). (Para 10 of the minute refers).
- 3.3 The **Customer Focus Strategy** set out actions to improve the Council's customer focus in response to the 2012/13 Best Value inspection report. This report noted that the Council needed to take a more strategic approach to customer focus.

- 3.4 The actions set out in the Strategy are now embedded in council practices and include:
- Customer care [web page](#).
  - Training modules for staff.
  - Improving performance monitoring and reporting.
  - Improving the performance information for the public to see on the Council's web pages.
  - Providing councillors with details on complaints.
  - Roll out of Customer Services self-assessment.
  - An officer group to monitor actions.
- 3.5 These actions are now embedded in the Council's Performance Management Framework and, as the Strategy has served its purpose, it is not proposed to renew it.
- 3.6 The current **Customer Charter** sets out service standards which the public can expect from the range of services across the Council and received praise from external consultants who reviewed the Council's customer service offer 2019.
- 3.7 Given changes to the ways customers interact with the Council the current Charter would now benefit from review.
- 3.8 The pandemic has had a major influence on both our customers and our working styles. Technology continues to change and develop the way we work and how our customers engage and access services. We therefore must look to embrace and harness these changes and have reflected these in our promise to our customers. We also want to inform our customers how they can support and allow us to deliver high quality customer service.
- 3.9 The current Charter set out minimum standards which all customers could expect when dealing with Council services and has been adopted across the Council. It should be noted that only partial service calls are routed through the Customer Contact Centre where service standards are for 93% of calls to be answered. For the last reporting period the service achieved 93.3% with 77% of these answered within 60 seconds. Call handling information is only available in the Customer Contact Centre but the Charter requires calls to be answered promptly by services not routed through the Contact Centre.
- 3.10 The Council has changed the way face to face customer contact happens for many services. We have moved away from a walk in service at Access Points located in Buckie, Elgin, Forres and Keith and introduced Information Hubs at all Libraries across Moray, where customers and visitors are supported to access Council services. They are provided with free access to a telephone or digital device to contact customer services or complete online where required.

- 3.11 Where customers do need to see an officer for a discussion or support then they can now do this in person or virtually. Services now arrange appointments to see customers when required. These can either be held in person with a suitable location agreed for the appointment or could be completed online using tools such as Teams or Near Me.
- 3.12 Whilst the current Charter sets out the minimum standards which all our services promise to meet, some services have higher national or service pledges that apply. An example would be Social Housing Charter which sets out the national standards which apply. No work has taken place to review or update any of these as part of the refresh of Council's Customer Charter.

#### **4. Proposals**

4.1 An updated Customer Charter taking account of the changes in customer contact is attached as **Appendix 1**. Changes from the current Charter shown as tracked changes. In summary these are:

- Provide Information Hubs for public enquiries.
- Facilities for attending appointments remotely.
- Provide free access to a telephone or PC at Information Hubs.
- Encourage the use of our online services where possible.
- Use of data to help shape future service delivery.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Corporate Plan sets out our vision, values and priorities. By working together to deliver and achieve these will ensure a strong core of services are achieved to meet our customer's needs. The update to the Charter will help deliver on this commitment.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The need for a clear policy/strategy on how the Council places its customers at the heart of service delivery

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications

**(d) Risk Implications**

No risks have been identified as part of this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications as part of this report

**(f) Property**

None

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The Council's ongoing commitment to equalities is set out in the Charter which underlines key customer rights in this area.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been identified by this report.

**(i) Consultations**

Consultations have taken place with Equalities Officer.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 The Customer Focus Strategy continues to reflect the strategic approach which has been embedded in council practices. Customer Charter which sets out the standards that the public can expect reflects how the approach for customer contact has developed.**

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| Author of Report:  | Andy Donegan Customer Development Manager   |
| Background Papers: | <a href="#">Report</a> to P&R 29 August 2017 – update on customer focus<br><a href="#">Report</a> to Audit and Scrutiny 19 June 2019 – update on customer focus |
| Ref:               | SPMAN-2045703626-246 / SPMAN-2045703626-245   |