

Cabinet

14 October 2021

Customer Service Excellence Standard Review June 2021

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet

1. Notes and comments on the outcome of the Customer Service Excellence Review which took place in June 2021.
2. Agrees the actions to address the partial compliances listed in the table in section 1 of the report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Customer Service Excellence Standard Reaccreditation took place in January 2020 and the Review over a 2-week period during June this year.
- 1.2 The Standard requires annual reviews which check compliance against the Standard, including progress on the previous compliance framework, levels of complaints, customer satisfaction with service delivery and developments which had taken place since the last audit to areas highlighted for continuous improvement. The annual reviews allow us to ensure we have maintained the standards we have achieved to date, check progress on our areas for improvement and identify those areas we need to pay more attention to.
- 1.3 The 2021 Review was undertaken 6 months late due to Covid-19 pressures on services. The Review included an assessment of several customer journeys from each Directorate over a six-day period via Microsoft teams.
- 1.4 The customer journeys were identified by the Directorates. During this time the Assessor, via Microsoft teams, met with staff, partners, and customers to check that we are working on the partial compliances and areas for improvement highlighted in the reaccreditation, that we still comply with the elements of the Standard and that we continue to maintain our high standards of customer care.
- 1.5 Details of the content of the review can be found at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.6 From the 2020 Reaccreditation:
 - All 13 areas for improvement were signed off.

- One of the 5 partial compliances was signed off - the outstanding 4 remain from this review and are detailed by the Assessor in the table below:

Ref	Element	Assessor's Comments	Recommended Responses
1.3.4	We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.	Although there are some areas where you can evidence improved satisfaction this is not yet consistent. There is a requirement for metrics to be established for customer satisfaction/positive customer experience. There is a commitment to look at customer satisfaction and failure demand as part of the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy and review metrics and analyse outcomes within the Customer Service Centre and wider. This is to remain as a Partial Compliance as the comments have not yet been completely addressed.	<p>The Council has initiated a Customer Experience Programme (CEP), complete with Programme Manager who started in post in May 2021, and a programme Board whose remit is to oversee all the Council's priority customer experience projects. In addition, the board is designing a set of Customer Experience Standards, Principles, success criteria and measurements for adoption by the council for services within the Customer Experience Programme.</p> <p>The Customer Experience Strategy has been in place for over a year now, and there has been progress made on its accompanying action plan which was reported to the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2021. The Strategy and its action plan are being led by the Business & Customer Services Team and work is being undertaken to ensure that both the Strategy and the Programme work together to achieve the same outcomes for the customer.</p> <p>The CEP will engage with the refresh of the Corporate Performance Framework taking place this year to ensure that measures relating to customer experience are meaningful.</p> <p>Customer, digital and data have been brought together as a single programme, so that customer experience drives digital, and is informed by robust data. An example of this new approach is a review of the schools admissions system (2 of the priority projects sitting within the CEP) which will be a pathfinder for the wider programme by identifying failure demand and designing it out.</p>

Ref	Element	Assessor's Comments	Recommended Responses
3.3.2	We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements and offer better choices.	<p>Looking at the key point of access point – the website - an issue on feedback was identified. The most prominent feedback request point is the 'Was This Information Useful' button. This is intended to capture feedback about the web page only, but this was not clear to customers.</p> <p>You have started to look at data and better understand this issue and found that just under 50% of responses – 1,947 contained comments and of these 1,205 did not relate specifically to the user experience provided by the website or the information contained on that page but focused on the service offered and included some specific requests.</p> <p>Due to the competing priorities during the pandemic a process has not yet been established to ensure comments and feedback received are reviewed/triaged in a timely manner and comments passed to relevant service areas for action. In addition, there is an area you may wish to consider for improvement alongside this - Although you do evaluate the way customers interact with your services, some services set up during the pandemic may have this evaluation. (e.g., not all calls are recorded.) You may wish to consider reviewing this. This is to remain as a Partial Compliance as the comments have not yet been completely addressed.</p>	<p>Response provided in 2020 Currently, comments are received via the 'Was this information useful?' option at the bottom of every page which are checked weekly. We propose increasing this to a daily task, with focus on identifying comments that constitute enquiries.</p> <p>Response 2021 A process has been developed and agreed to ensure that all customer feedback via this button is being monitored and actioned by the appropriate team. The detail of this process will be provided as evidence to the Assessor at the 2022 review.</p>
5.1.1	We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications, and personal callers.	As some customer contacts into the website are going to the wrong place and customers are having to chase responses as the process mentioned in 3.3.2 above has not been established. This remains a Partial Compliance	This is associated with the element and response above and will be covered by the actions described above.

Ref	Element	Assessor's Comments	Recommended Responses
5.2.3	We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.	There has been good progress against this element since the previous assessment. There is more evidence of teams sharing information. These cross-team approaches are increasing, and the 'silo' effect is lessening due to an increased awareness of what other teams do. In part this has come about due to the laudable way all teams have pulled together in the response to Covid19. As it is still work in progress to establish this culture in all areas this remains a Partial Compliance	<p>Response provided in 2020 During the last consultation/engagement exercise WFRS worked with the library network to promote and communicate the consultation details. It is planned that WFRS will consider ways to utilise the mobile libraries as an information link for its prevention activities.</p> <p>Response 2022 We will continue to build on the work carried out during 2020 and improve the way we share customer information internally. One project which should impact this significantly is the new CRM system. It is planned that access to customer information will be enhanced across the organisation when this is implemented. The timetable for this project is approximately 12-18 months.</p>

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The costs are included in the council budget with an annual budget of £6,934.

3. Environmental Implications

None.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 Outcome of the Review

The Assessor recommended the continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard and this recommendation was ratified in July.

4.2 The review identified:

- 4 elements at compliance plus (Appendix 4)
- 25 areas of good practice (Appendix 4)
- 4 elements at partial compliance (detailed above)
- 5 areas for improvement (Appendix 3)

4.3 The Assessor's full report can be found at **Appendix 1**.

4.4 The ongoing Customer Service Excellence standard accreditation will be considered as part of the customer experience programme's wider work on implementation of the Customer Experience strategy.

4.5 The Assessor highlighted areas for improvement which are listed in **Appendix 3**. Responses have been provided to these and where appropriate actions have been recommended in the appendix.

4.6 Four elements at compliance plus and 25 areas of good practice were highlighted as a result of this review. Details can be found in **Appendix 4**.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Actions recommended for the partial compliances to be completed by January 2022 prior to the Review.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Customer Service Excellence Standard Assessor’s full report

Appendix 2 – Details of content of the review

Appendix 3 – The Assessor’s highlighted areas for improvement with recommended actions where appropriate.

Appendix 4 – The Assessor’s highlighted compliance plus and areas of good practice

Background Papers

None

Supporting Information

The following link provides general information about the standard and detail of the elements within the standard -

<https://www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com/about-the-standard/customer-service-excellence-standard/>

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