

Cabinet

Complaints Policy

14 May 2020

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the Complaints Policy attached as an Appendix to the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Policy aims to consolidate the Council's approach to complaints and to provide clear structure for customers and staff alike. It will also ensure that opportunities for learning and improving are maximised.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As an Organisation, the Council's core purpose is to "Make Warwickshire the best it can be." The Complaints Policy is framed by our commitment to 'making information and advice freely available.'

- 2.2 In addition, the Policy is linked to the Customer Experience Strategy 2020-2025 (approved by Cabinet 16 December 2019), the Promise within the Strategy and with other core strategies, including

- The Council Plan 2025
- Digital and Technology Strategy 2018-2021
- The People Strategy
- The Commercial Strategy

3.0 Context

- 3.1 Over the years, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has invested significant resources into developing its customer feedback model in order to ensure it continues to meet its statutory obligations and achieve County Council strategic objectives. As demand for services increases and resources continue to be constrained, the Council's approach becomes ever more important and the need for a clear and coherent Policy for working with, and for, customers is now paramount.
- 3.2 As the Council moves forward with its operating model, it is pertinent to review and refine the service offer so that it helps the Council to achieve its vision of making Warwickshire the best it can be.

- 3.3 The Policy will replace numerous pieces of guidance, advice notes and procedures as a single, coherent framework, underpinning the approach. It will be launched alongside a simplified suite of guidance, training options and website content.
- 3.4 The Policy is a key part of the customer feedback review and will be supported by a new case management system in order to refresh the Council's approach to learning from complaints. It will help the Council to proactively manage demand that has been caused by a failure to do something right for the customer, and support and empower staff to deliver a consistent experience to our customers that is as good as the best.

4.0 Policy Development

- 4.1 The draft Policy has been informed by colleagues within the Council, including colleagues from Legal Services.
- 4.2 Benchmarking was also undertaken to include the review of current complaints' policies from other local authorities, approaches by those within the locality network group and best practice Government guidelines.

5.0 Customer Feedback Ambition

- 5.1 Currently, the Council's approach to learning from complaints is more reactive than proactive. The Policy, alongside the new case management system, will allow the Council to more quickly identify themes and track trends. It will also provide structure for training and development of staff, which will build resilience and consistency and in turn, reduce failure demand.
- 5.2 Customer feedback will inform the commissioning of services and will also provide information to help improve service delivery across the Council as it should be learning from customer feedback, including complaints.
- 5.3 The Policy and its adoption will also introduce more clarity for customers and allow them to develop self-service techniques with the issues they may have.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 In summary, the Council's future service delivery must be presented clearly for both staff and members of the public. The draft Complaints Policy will provide part of the framework for that clarity of delivery and will enable a greater focus on learning from customer feedback.

7.0 Financial Implications

None.

8.0 Environmental Implications

None.

9.0. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

9.1 Policy to be implemented as soon as possible in Q1 2020-21.

9.2 New complaints case management system aims to be implemented in Q2 2020-21

Appendix

Customer Complaints Policy

Background Papers

None

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The report was not circulated to members prior to publication.