

Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee

Agenda

Members of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee:

Cllr J L Thomas (Chairman)

Cllr G K Nurden (Vice Chairman)

Cllr P E Bulman

Cllr I J Mackie

Cllr S J Catchpole

Cllr M L Murrell

Cllr S M Clancy

Cllr S M Prutton

Cllr S I Holland

Cllr D Roper

Cllr K S Kelly

Cllr J Emsell (Ex-officio)

Date & Time:

Thursday 24 June 2021 at 6.00pm

Place:

Council Chamber Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0DU

Contact:

James Overy tel (01603) 430540 Email: james.overy@broadland.gov.uk

Website: www.broadland.gov.uk

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

If a member of the public would like to observe the meeting in person or to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to committee.services@broadland.gov.uk, no later than 5.00pm Monday 21 June. Please see further guidance on the options for public speaking at page 2 of this agenda.

Rules on Public Speaking

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- Through a written representation (which will be read out at the meeting)
- In person at the Council offices

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AGENDA

1.	To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8	4
2.	Apologies for absence	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2021	6
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5.	Moving Towards a First Class Customer Service	26
6.	Exclusion of the Public and Press	
	To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)	
7.	ICT & Digital Strategy Review	57
8.	Finance System Business Case	87

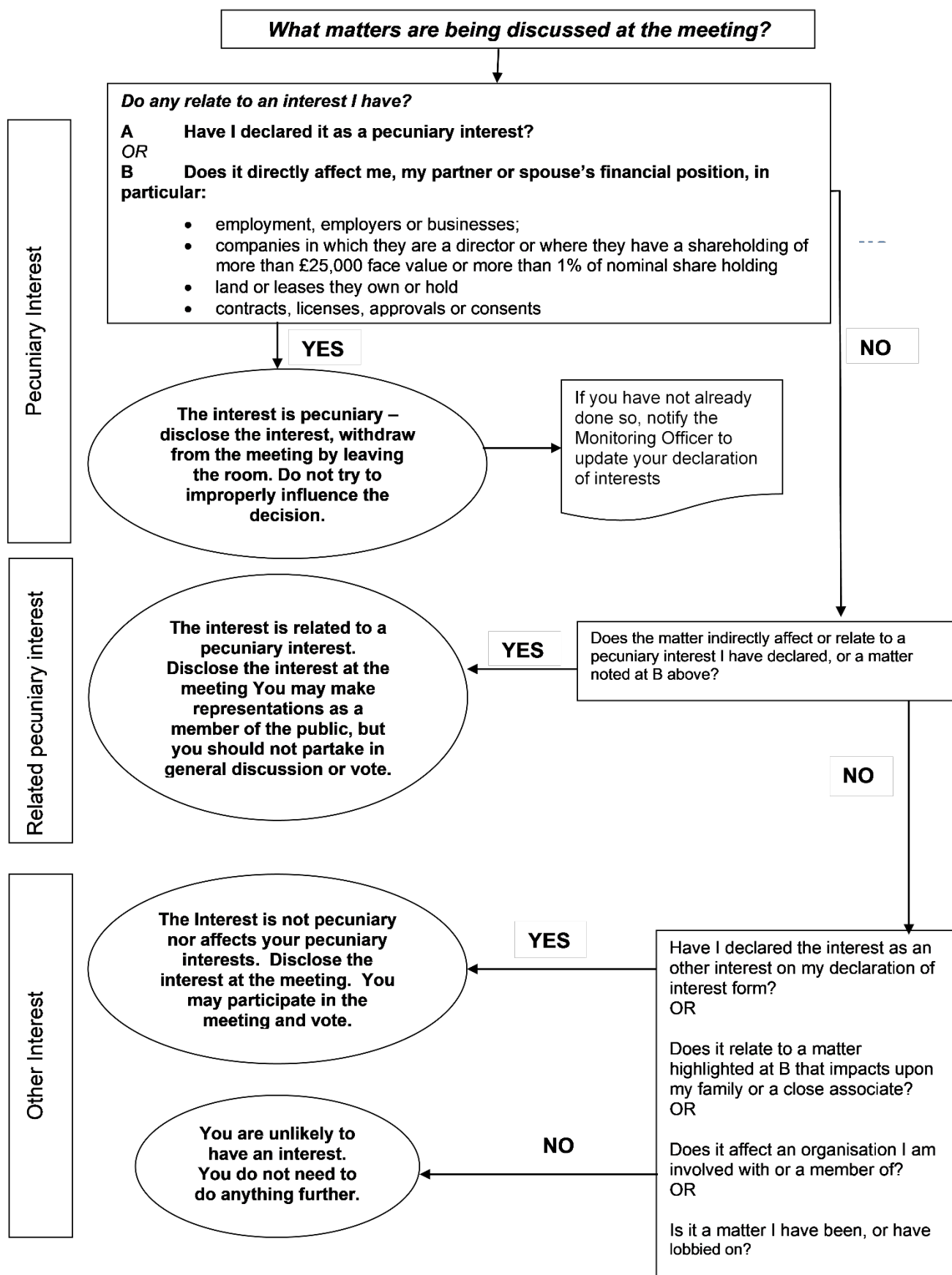
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.
Does the interest directly: 1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position? 2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner? 3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council 4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own 5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary. Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.
Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above? If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.
Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.
Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE**

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF





SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee of Broadland District Council, held on Tuesday 6 April at 6pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: G Nurden (Chairman for the Meeting), P Bulman, S Catchpole, S Holland, D King, I Mackie, M Murrell, S Prutton and D Roper

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor: J Emsell,

Officers in Attendance: The Director Resources, Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Chief of Staff, Programme Manager, Strategy and Programme Manager, Democratic Services Officers (JH, JO)

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mackie, Cllr Murrell and Cllr J Thomas. The Chairman and the Committee sent their condolences to Cllr Thomas, who had recently suffered a bereavement.

26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee held on 17 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Minute No: 21 - Social Prescribing

In response to a query regarding the funding of Citizens Advice, the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that she would respond to this question outside of the meeting.

Minute No: 23 – Member IT

In answer to a question the Chairman confirmed that it had been recommended to Cabinet that it would be more appropriate to retain the current iPads and wait and review the new software provision to assess if this solved the IT issues that had been raised by members.

27 SPARK TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Assistant Director Chief of Staff introduced the report which provided an update on the major projects that were currently being progressed as part of the SPARK Transformation Programme.

The joint website development was progressing and on target with editors from each Directorate continuing to review and migrate content. More detail about progress with the website project would be provided in the following agenda item.

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) informed members that the joint email project was red status, due to a key vacancy in the IT Team that was proving hard to fill. Officers were now working to a revised date later in the year for the roll-out to staff, with members progressing in April/May. Migration of systems and services into a new single domain was progressing well, however, and was at green status.

The development of one network of IT infrastructure across both Councils was at amber status, as the timelines for the implementation were still to be finalised with the contractor.

Work on the strategic approach to systems transformation, which would combine back office software for both Councils into one system was at amber status. A final review report had been completed and would be presented to members in due course.

The development of a business intelligence framework was at green status. Work on the development of principles, data standards and pilot studies would be undertaken before being rolled out across both Councils.

The New Ways of Working Programme was at amber status. Reopening to customers would commence on 12 April 2021 and would be initially only in exceptional circumstances where face to face meetings were absolutely necessary. In the longer-term the programme would be looking at how new ways of working impacted on requirements for utilising office space.

The customer satisfaction/experience project was at green status. A draft customer strategy and charter had been completed and a survey was in

pilot status that would utilise customer feedback to improve services in the future.

A project was underway to look at an alignment of both Councils complaints procedures, to ensure that a consistent and robust approach was taken to handling complaints. It was anticipated that a draft joint policy would be presented to the Corporate Management Leadership Team later in April.

Organisational Development was at green status. The strategic aim of the project was to become an employer of choice. Training had been arranged by consultants Myers-Briggs to support leadership development. The project aimed to get the best out of staff and to ensure that managers were fully equipped to do so. The Council also had a broad spectrum of over 100 online staff development courses delivered through Skillgate.

Procurement of the Waste Contract was at green status. A decision to award the contract was anticipated in September 2021.

A review of the Council depots was being developed to assess if they were fit for purpose. A condition survey for Frettenham had been completed and a critical decision path plan was being developed.

The best in class housing programme was due to go live on 8 April 2021.

In response to some queries from the Chairman the Committee were advised that the new ways of working project would include consultation with staff, members and customers to ensure that the risks and benefits were clearly identified and to ensure that there was no detrimental effect on the level of service provided by the Council.

The Assistant Director Chief of Staff also informed members that there were arrangements in place for the smooth transition of her areas of responsibility, when she left to take up a post elsewhere later in the year.

In respect of complaints, the Committee was advised that each Council had different policies and procedures in place neither of which were better than the other, but it was felt that having a new approach in line with best practice would be beneficial.

The Committee was informed that SPARK was not an acronym, but the name of the overarching transformation programme. This would be made clearer in future reports.

In answer to a query about office accommodation the Committee was advised that agile working, which was a mixture of working from home and in the office was beneficial for the work/life balance of staff and had proven very popular. Moreover, performance and the delivery of services had improved during the pandemic and had made it self-evident that the new ways of working would be the way forward for the One Team.

Members were also advised that process and procedure was being looked at as part of the organisational development project, which aimed to develop the best in class for staff and for customers. Similarly process, policy and procedure was considered for a wide range of the projects that made up the Transformation Programme.

The Chairman emphasised that he would like to be reassured that members were consulted and involved in the process before major transformational decisions were made.

In response the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee received regular updates on the Transformation Programme, as did Portfolio Holders and that any decisions would be subject to member sign-off.

The Director of Resources added that the reason that the O365 rollout was initially being made available to members was as a result of the consultation and feedback received via the member IT survey.

In respect of the review of the depots, the Committee was informed that it was too early in the process to provide a timeline for the report stage, but that an update could be brought to the next meeting.

AGREED

To note the content of the report with regards to the progress made with the programme.

28 JOINT WEBSITE PROJECT UPDATE

The Programme Manager introduced the report, which provided Members with an update on progress with the project to develop a new joint website for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils.

Since the project update in October, over 50 staff across all service areas had received training in the use of the new content editing system, in order to edit and publish to the new website. Editors had been reviewing existing content to determine what should be migrated across to the new site and what needs to be amended or created. Staff were also identifying what content was applicable to customers of one Council only and what content was applicable to both Councils' customers.

Editors had also been provided with guidance on how to write in plain English, apply a consistent style and for the content to be accessible, in order to meet central Government requirements for all public sector organisations.

The software supplier had completed branded templates for the content editing system, which would be followed by testing and review between 6 to 15 April. During this time three all-member sessions via Zoom would be held to take members through the website and seek feedback. Key elements being looked at would be content, templates and functionality.

Member involvement in the testing and review phase was being sought and subject to final changes and configurations, it was planned to go live with the new website on 2 June 2021.

In response to a query about accessibility for people with dyslexia, it was confirmed that the website would be compliant with 'double A' web content accessibility guidelines.

AGREED

Members to note progress with the website project so far.

(The meeting concluded at 8.05pm)

Chairman

Spark Transformation Programme Update

Report Author(s): Sinead Carey
Strategy and Programmes Manager
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01508 533661

Portfolio: Transformation and Organisational Development

Ward(s) Affected: None

Purpose of the Report:

This report provides the Committee with an update on the major projects that are currently being progressed as part of the SPARK Transformation Programme.

Recommendations:

1. To note the content of the report with regards to the progress made with the programme.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the major projects that are currently being progressed as part of the SPARK Transformation Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 In July 2018, the Council agreed to the Feasibility Study to progress collaborative working with South Norfolk Council.
- 2.2 The Council has been ambitious in its approach and over the last year and a half, has achieved significant progress including establishing the one joint team serving the two councils and beginning on the transformation journey. The SPARK Transformation Approach and Programme were established in January 2020 and work has been underway to progress and implement a range of transformational projects as referred to in **Appendix A**.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 Positive progress is being made across the SPARK Transformation Programme as a whole. As can be seen, a large proportion of the projects that we are currently progressing are those which are corporate wide and needed to build the base and infrastructure for further transformation of our services in the future e.g. IT Infrastructure. There are also a range of directorate transformation projects which are also underway and being managed by each service area.
- 3.2 The document at **Appendix A** provides an update on each of the corporate wide projects (see below) which form the programme, including a RAG status and delivery milestones.

Project or Programme	Overview	Key Delivery Milestones
Joint website Current RAG status – Green	Development & Implementation of a single website across the two Councils	• P1 – Initiation and Planning – August 20 (complete) • P2 – Systems installation – Sept 20 (complete) • P3 – Designs – Nov 20 (complete) • P4 – Custom developments – Feb 21 (complete) • P5 – Template Build – March 21 (complete) • P6 – Training and content population – Apr 21 (complete) • P7 – UAT testing – May 21 (complete)

		• P8 – Go Live – June 21 (complete)
Joint email Current RAG status – Red	Development of a single email system on the new domain (southnofolkandbroadland) including a migration to o365	• P1 – Create new internal network/domain for joint IT systems – Sept 20 (complete) • P2 – Migrate user accounts from legacy networks to new network – Feb 2021 (trial migrations now started) • P3 – creation of single O365 environment – Nov 2020 (complete) • P4 – migrate Members – April – May 2021 (ongoing) • P5 – migrate staff – May – Nov 2021
Domain migration As above.	Migrating our systems and services onto the new domain name	As above.
One network Current RAG status – Green	A phased approach of IT infrastructure development to build a single network across the two Councils	Phases to be defined with supplier. Target delivery Q1/Q2 2021/22
Strategic approach to systems transformation Current RAG status – Amber	Developing a strategy for our wider systems approach to replacement of future service systems.	• P1 – Mobilisation and Discovery – Oct 20 (complete) • P2 – Service and Tech Landscape – workshops – Jan 21 (complete) • P3 – Design Principles and Data Architecture – Jan – Feb 21 (ongoing work to finalise) • P4 – Options Appraisal and Development of Roadmap – Feb 21 (complete) • P5 – Finalise recommendations and present – Feb 21 (complete) The recommendations are being picked up in the IT & Digital Strategy which has been drafted • P6 – Implementation – 4 year phased programme of work – March 2025 (TBC) Roadmap contained within the draft IT & Digital Strategy.
Business Intelligence (BI) and Governance	Developing and implementing a business intelligence framework that develops the	• P1 – Discovery and development of

Current RAG status – Amber	organisation into an insight and intelligence led culture of continuous improvement.	recommendations – Jan 21 (complete) • P2 – Agree BI Principles, Data Standards and Proof of Concept – April 21 (ongoing) • P3 – Implementation of outcomes from P2 – July 21 (ongoing) • P4 – Roll out to organisation in line with transformation programme – Ongoing
New ways of working programme Current RAG status – Amber	Programme to look at how we can take learning from our response to the pandemic to rethink the workplace and adopt new ways of working across the organisation that will benefit both our staff, members and our customers. In the longer-term, the programme will also be looking at the impact of our new ways of working on our future requirements for utilising office space.	To be delivered by Q2 21/22: • P1 - Rollout of measures to enable staff to return to the office (complete) • P2 - Establish programme / scope remaining projects (complete) • P3 - Rollout desk booking and interim measures for customer reopening and post (ongoing) • P3 - Rollout remaining laptops and member IT solutions (ongoing) • P3 - Rollout second phase measures for customer reopening + post (ongoing) • P4 - Scope archiving solutions and future office requirements (not yet started) • P5 - Rollout archiving solution and any further required office space changes (not yet started) • P6 – Develop options for office accommodation in the future (ongoing)
First Class Customer Service Current RAG status – Green	A phased project looking at how we can gather and utilise customer insight and feedback to improve our services for the future.	• P1 – Discovery and development of recommendations – Dec 20 (completed) • P2 – Delivery of recommendations – June 2021 (ongoing) • P3 – Implementation – November 21 (not yet started)
Complaints approach	South Norfolk and Broadland Councils currently have different complaints policies	• P1 – Implement short term solution – Feb 21 (completed)

Current RAG status – Green	and processes. This project will make proposals to align the processes, policies and systems to create a consistent and robust way of handling complaints across the two Councils to provide the right outcomes for our customers.	• P2 – Alignment of processes, policies and systems for complaints handling – April 21 (ongoing – revised delivery timeline of July 21 due to papers going to July Cabinet meetings)
Organisational Development Current RAG status – Green	The projects support the strategic aim of becoming an Employer of Choice through effective people management and leadership development	Scoping to be delivered by end of Q4 20/21 for the below projects: • Project 1 – Cultural Development (ongoing) • Project 2 – OD to support leadership development (complete) Delivery of projects by Q2 21/22. Programme to be moved to business as usual for delivery.
Broadland Procurement of Waste Contract Current RAG status – Green	Project to procure the new contract for Broadland District Councils waste service.	• P1 – Pre procurement Sept – Oct 2020 (complete) • P2 – Selection stage Dec – Feb 2021 (complete) • P3 – ISIT Feb – April 2021 (complete) • P4 – Negotiation – May – June 2021 (ongoing) • P5 – Decision to award September 2021
Review of Councils' Depots Current RAG status – Amber	Review of Council Depots Future Options Report to review whether they are fit for purpose moving forward, to look at alternative locations and to create a business case for any changes.	• Project plan with key milestones currently being developed.
Best in Class Housing Programme Current RAG status – Green	Upgrading the Housing IT system to fit with the best in class work stream whilst also mitigating the impact of the capita (BDC housing system) revocation of licence notice.	• Delivery of new system in April 21 (complete). New projects to be added to the programme and tracked through SPARK.

4 Other options

4.1 None.

5 Issues and risks

- 5.1 **Resource Implications** – these are managed by each project on a case by case basis.
- 5.2 **Legal Implications** – considered with each project as appropriate
- 5.3 **Equality Implications** – considered with each project as appropriate.
- 5.4 **Environmental Impact** – considered with each project as appropriate.
- 5.5 **Crime and Disorder** – not applicable to this report.
- 5.6 **Risks** – risks are managed on a project basis and are escalated through to the strategic risk register if appropriate.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The report has been provided to the Committee as requested to ensure they are kept up to date with the key project work of the Council.

7 Recommendations

- 1. To note the content of the report with regards to the progress made with the programme.

Appendix A - Spark Transformation Programme

Highlight Report – Blue/Corporate Projects

Updates as of: 1 June 2021

Corporate Hub

1 Joint Website Development and implementation of a single website across the two Councils

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Emma Hodds

Business Lead - Mel Taylor (Andrew Mewes in the interim)

Project Phasing

- P1 – Initiation and Planning – August 20 (complete)
- P2 – Systems installation – Sept 20 (complete)
- P3 – Designs – Nov 20 (complete)
- P4 – Custom developments – Feb 21 (complete)
- P5 – Template Build – March 21 (complete)
- P6 – Training and content population – Apr 21 (complete)
- P7 – UAT testing – May 21 (complete)
- P8 – Go Live – 2 June 21 (complete)

Update:

- Final content checks conducted for go-live.
- Communications (internal and external) completed
- Pre go-live IT team & Jadu technical checks/configurations for go-live.
- Website went live successfully on 2 June.

Priorities:

- Replace Jadu Search with Google Custom Search once Google has indexed the new site.
- Formal project close down and handover to Business as usual.

2 Joint Email Development of a single email system on the new domain (southnfolkandbroadland) including a migration to O365

RAG Status – Red ●

This project is currently red due to resources within the team that need to be used on multiple projects and the original timeline (April 2021) being delayed.

Senior Sponsor – Emma Hodds

Business Lead – Tom Sayer

Project Phasing:

- P1 – Create new internal network/domain for joint IT systems – Sept 20 (complete)
- P2 – Migrate user accounts from legacy networks to new network – Feb 2021 (trial migrations now started)
- P3 – creation of single O365 environment – Nov 2020 (complete)
- P4 – migrate Members – April – May 2021 (ongoing)
- P5 – migrate staff – May – Nov 2021 (not yet started)

Update:

Roll out to Members

- As of end of May, 39 BDC Members and 45 SNC Members have been migrated and trained on the new O365 environment. It is expected that by the beginning of June, all members will have been migrated and trained.
- ‘Takeaway’ training material has been produced in the form of bitesize clips and written training material with screen shots. There will be made available via Connect and also within folders in the Members’ committee papers sharepoint sites.

Roll out to Staff

- Workshops have been held with our supplier, Insight, to explore options for progressing the roll out to staff. The outputs from these workshops have been shaped into a proposal that has been agreed by the project sponsors.
- User acceptance testing of systems within the O365 environment has progressed.

Priorities:

- Close down of the Members O365 project.
- Develop a proposal with options for the IT Project Board on accelerating the roll out of shared mailboxes and single email for staff.
- Prepare for roll out of O365 to staff, including ensuring all laptops have the latest Microsoft apps and security.

3 Domain Migration Migrating our systems and services onto the new domain name

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Emma Hodds

Business Lead – Tom Sayer

Project Phasing

- As above.

4 One Network A phased approach of IT infrastructure development to build a single network across the two Councils.

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Emma Hodds

Business Lead – Tom Sayer

Project Phasing:

Phases to be defined with supplier following formal signing of the contract.

Target delivery Q1/Q2 2021/22

Update:

- Project delivery has commenced, starting with mobilisation and planning workshop on 11 May 2021 to understand timelines – to include our supplier; Phoenix Software Limited
- Partial upgrade of Thorpe Lodge data centre to accommodate extended electrical requirements, cooling and fire suppressant and reconfiguration of space. This has been specified and approved.
- Orders have been placed for required data network connectivity between the 2 primary sites

Priorities:

- Further planning workshops are being hosted by our supplier; Phoenix Software Limited, to focus on:
 - Networking
 - VXRail
- The project plan and timelines will be updated. A proposal is being shaped up to address the resource constraint within the ICT & Digital team, which is currently focussed on O365 roll out.
- Commission the required remedial work at Thorpe Lodge data centre.

5 Strategic Approach to Systems Transformation Developing a strategy for our wider systems approach to replacement of future service systems.

RAG Status – Amber ●

Work is taking place to review recommendations for final agreement with methods and then discussion with CMLT and members regarding proposals and next steps.

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – David French

Project Phasing

- P1 – Mobilisation and Discovery – Oct 20 (complete)
- P2 – Service and Tech Landscape – workshops – Jan 21 (complete)
- P3 – Design Principles and Data Architecture – Jan – Feb 21 (complete)
- P4 – Options Appraisal and Development of Roadmap – Feb 21 (complete)
- P5 – Finalise recommendations and present – Feb 21 (complete)
- P6 – Implementation – 4 year phased programme of work – March 2025 (TBC)

Update:

- Agreement from Directors/MD on (i) Methods proposed roadmap and (ii) agreed to take forward the recommendations from the Methods of drafting a Digital and ICT Strategy which will incorporate the Roadmap and other recommendations from the Methods report.
- Progression of new Digital & ICT Strategy in conjunction with Methods to draft stage and presented to CMLT.

Priorities:

- Approved Strategy to then be presented to Panel/Policy committees and Cabinets for agreement

6 Business Intelligence and Governance Developing and implementing a business intelligence framework that develops the organisation into an insight and intelligence led culture of continuous improvement .

RAG Status – Amber ●

This project is currently amber due to resources needing to be sought to deliver the pilot. Budget has recently been approved to bring in resources but this will remain Amber until the pilot is underway.

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – Shaun Crook

Project Phasing

- P1 – Discovery and development of recommendations – Jan 21 (complete)
- P2 – Agree BI Principles, Data Standards and Proof of Concept (Pilot) – April 21 (complete)
- P3 – Implementation of outcomes from P2 – July 21 (ongoing)
- P4 – Roll out to organisation in line with transformation programme – July 21 onwards

Update:

- Budget is being sought through Cabinet to allow for additional resources to be brought in to support the implementation of a pilot project.

Priorities:

- Subject to funding being agreed, commence scoping the pilot project, including the resources needed to deliver the piece of work.

7 New ways of working (NWOW) Programme The programme comprises several interdependent strands; the phased return of our staff to the office, reopening to our customers, equipping all staff with laptops, providing IT solutions for members, the introduction of a new desk booking system, a review of our post and scanning functions, virtual customer meetings and data archiving. In the longer-term, the programme will also be looking at the impact of our new ways of working on our future requirements for utilising office space.

RAG Status – Amber ●

This programme of work remains Amber due to some minor delays in timelines due to projects either being paused or resource required on other priority projects.

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – David French

Project Phasing

To be delivered by Q2 21/22:

- P1 - Rollout of measures to enable staff to return to the office (complete)
- P2 - Establish programme / scope remaining projects (complete)
- P3 - Rollout desk booking and interim measures for customer reopening and post (ongoing)
- P3 (cont.) - Rollout remaining laptops + member IT solutions (ongoing)
- P3 (cont.) - Rollout second phase measures for customer reopening + post (ongoing)
- P4 - Scope archiving solutions and future office requirements (ongoing)
- P5 - Rollout archiving solution and any further required office space changes (not yet started)
- P6 – Develop options for office accommodation in the future (ongoing)

Update:

- **Laptops:** Project is now in the close down phase and has been delivered.
- **Member IT:** Migrated and trained 39 BDC Members and 45 SNC Members in the new O365 environment.
- **Canteen Project:** post-Apr 21 interim catering arrangements in place for staff at both main sites, this is linked to the future office project.

- **Future Office:** Overarching Programme Scoping Template signed off at CMLT. Invitation to tender has been issued for independent options appraisal and business case.

Priorities:

- **Post:** Determine deliverables and revised timeframe for Phase 2 activities.
- **Member IT:** The O365 for Members part of the project will be closed down and ICT and Digital resources will be re-focussed on the roll out for staff.
- **Future Office:** Confirm programme governance arrangements, programme structure (incl. projects and workstreams) and the supporting resources required.

8 First Class Customer Service A phased project looking at how we can gather and utilise customer insight and feedback to improve our services for the future.

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – Shaun Crook

Project Phasing

- P1 – Discovery and development of recommendations – Dec 20 (completed)
- P2 – Delivery of recommendations – June 21 (ongoing)
- P3 – Implementation – November 21

Update:

- Informal briefings held on the Customer Strategy, Customer Charter, Customer Service resource (alongside Complaints project) to Joint Leaders and UNISON.

Priorities:

- Progress the draft Customer Strategy, Customer Charter, Customer Service Structure (alongside Complaints project) through the relevant committees.
- Conduct the initial analysis of the pilot Customer Satisfaction survey data.

9 Complaints Approach South Norfolk and Broadland Councils currently have different complaints policies and processes. This project will make proposals to align the processes, policies and systems to create a consistent and robust way of handling complaints across the two Councils to provide the right outcomes for our customers.

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – Hannah Mawson

Project Phasing

- P1 – Implement short term solution – Feb 21 (completed)
- P2 – Alignment of processes, policies and systems for complaints handling – April 21 (ongoing – revised delivery timeline of July 21 due to papers going to July Cabinet meetings)

Update:

- Complaint handling training organised, with the training taking place in June and July.
- The complaint handling policy and the unreasonably persistent complainants' policy was taken to Joint Leaders for review prior to coming into Cabinets in July.

Priorities:

- Deliver complaint handling training.
The complaint handling policy and unreasonably persistent complainants' policy to be progressed through the relevant committees.

Resources Hub

1 Organisational Development The strategic aim is to become an employer of choice. Drive the One Team approach and ensure that HR and OD activities are aligned to the One Team Organisational Delivery & Strategic plans. The projects support the strategic aim of becoming an Employer of Choice through effective people management and leadership development.

The Areas of Focus:

1. Our People, Our Approach
2. Performance Lifecycle
3. Strategic Projects
4. Development of Management Cohorts
5. Wellbeing

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Emma Hodds

Business Lead – Helen Molloy

Project Phasing

Scoping to be delivered by end of Q4 20/21 for the below projects:

- Project 1 – Cultural Development (complete)
- Project 2 – OD to support leadership development (complete)

Delivery of projects by Q2 21/22.

Update:

- Contact in place with Management Development Programme provider (MTD) and project plan under development for programme delivery.

Priorities:

- Project 1
 - Myers Briggs Type Indicator assessments to be included as part of Management Development programme. Assessments and coaching sessions to be scheduled and run during May and June.
 - All people related frameworks to include One Team values to embed values & behaviours of One Team – this work is ongoing & One Team values will continue to form the basis of people related programmes going forward.
- Project 2 – Review proposals from suppliers and agree preferred supplier.
 - Preferred supplier selected (MTD); procurement process ongoing.
 - Design & development phase, delivery date in diary for June.
- The project will be moved into business as usual for the delivery phase.

People and Communities Hub**1 Broadland Procurement of Waste Contract**

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Simon Phelan

Business Lead – Sarah Bruton

Project Phasing

- P1 – Pre procurement Sept – Oct 2020 (completed)
- P2 – Selection stage Dec – Feb 2021 (completed)
- P3 – ISIT Feb – April 2021 (ongoing)
- P4 – Negotiation – May – June 2021 (ongoing)
- P5 – Decision to award September 2021

Update:

- Waste Service Programme Board Meeting signed off the Tender Evaluation
- ISIT Moderated comments
- Broadland review evaluation report and moderated comments
- Letters issued to applicants and the first negotiation with Bidders took place

Priorities:

- Manage clarifications from Bidders
- Hold the second negotiation session
- Waste Services Programme Board to close negotiations and enter ISFT
- Issue ISFT with Bidders to produce ISFT bids and then submission and evaluation.

2 Review of Council Depots Future Options Report to

review whether they are fit for purpose moving forward, to look at alternative locations and to create a business case for any changes.

RAG Status – Amber ●

Senior Sponsor – Simon Phelan

Project Phasing

Project plan with key milestones currently being developed.

Update:

- Initial scheme design for new South Norfolk depot completed.
- Condition survey completed for Frettenham Depot
- Initial cost plan for outline scheme design being developed for South Norfolk depot.

Priorities:

- Review site options for South Norfolk in terms of suitability.
- Develop detailed Critical Decision Path Plan

3 Best in Class Housing Programme Includes upgrading the Housing IT system to fit with the best in class work stream whilst also mitigating the impact of the capita (BDC housing system) revocation of licence notice.

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Mike Pursehouse

Business Lead – Louise Tiernan

Project Phasing

- Delivery of new system in April 21 (complete).

Update:

- Abritas upgrade went live – 8 April.
- Communications plan, including to residents, members, Landlords, other agencies and internal has continued.

Priorities:

- Finalise working practise and procedures with other internal teams and systems (e.g. Finance and Benefits).
- Best in Class Housing – to continue with the programme of projects. Currently being scoped is the Customer Journey (Marketplace) and Temporary Accommodation and Private Sector Leasing Projects. The next update to Members will include these projects as the housing IT system is now being closed.

Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service

Report Author(s): Shaun Crook
Transformation & Innovation Lead
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Portfolio: Transformation and Organisational Development

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

This report provides the Committee with an overview of current progress and findings of the Customer Satisfaction and Customer Complaints projects.

The report sets out a proposal for our Customer Strategy and Customer Charter, recommendations in relation to the creation of a Customer Experience & Insight lead role, and a new Complaints Handling Policy, incorporating an Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy, to allow us to transform our future customer provision.

Recommendations:

SIEC to recommend to Cabinet the following proposals;

1. The proposed Customer Strategy for adoption by the Council.
2. The proposed new policies for Complaints and Unreasonably Persistent Complainants for adoption by the council.
3. The proposed Customer Charter for adoption and to be published externally for our customers

SIEC to note and comment on the following proposal;

4. The proposed new Customer Experience & Insight lead role and supporting customer service structure

1. Summary

- 1.1 **Customer Satisfaction** is a Corporate Project within the SPARK Transformation Programme. Research was conducted late 2020 to document the current approach to customer satisfaction and to investigate the approach of other organisations both in the private and public sectors. Workshops were held with staff across the council to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in our current customer service provision and to gather their ideas on how we could transform the way we serve our customers in the future. This work resulted in a series of recommendation papers which were discussed and subsequently approved by the Corporate Management Team.
- 1.2 **Complaints** is a project within the SPARK Transformation - New Ways of Working Corporate Programme. Research was undertaken in 2020/21 to understand current complaint handling practices and processes and to research how other organisations manage complaints. This included a series of meetings with staff who regularly deal with complaints and with several Assistant Directors. In addition, we considered guidance published by the Ombudsman. This work resulted in a recommendation paper which proposed a new Complaints Policy and Unreasonable Complainants Policy both of which were considered and subsequently approved by the Corporate Management Team.

2 Background

Customer Satisfaction

- 2.1 Research was conducted late 2020 to document the current approach to customer satisfaction and to consider the approach of other organisations both in the private and public sectors.
- 2.2 Workshops were held with staff from all areas of the organisation to identify areas of strength and weakness in our current customer service provision. We also gathered their ideas about how we could transform the way we serve our customers in the future.
- 2.3 Best practices and agreed ambitions were identified and used to formulate a proposed Customer Strategy, a Customer Charter, and to develop an approach for gathering consistent and measurable customer feedback, initially in the form of a corporate Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- 2.4 The existing Customer Service team provision was reviewed to ensure that it was suitable to deliver the proposed Customer Strategy.
- 2.5 The Councils 2021/22 Delivery Plan includes a Customer Satisfaction measure for which it has not yet possible to produce any data for. This work helps move us to a position where we can firstly baseline a Customer Satisfaction measure and then start to report our performance against that measure.

Complaints

- 2.6 Investigation was undertaken in 2020/21 to understand current complaint handling practices and processes and to research how other organisations manage complaints including considering published guidance from the Ombudsman.
- 2.7 A series of meetings were held with staff who deal with complaints to identify strengths and areas for improvement with the current approach.
- 2.8 Best practices and future ambitions for handling complaints and dealing with unreasonably persistent complainants were identified and two new policies, with supporting processes and procedures were developed.

3 Current position/findings

Customer Satisfaction - Findings from the review

- 3.1 Across the council there is already lots of really good work to engage with our customers, however this tends to be in at service level or for specific reasons. During the COVID-19 pandemic 'response' and 'recovery' phases through engaging with customers, more often and in different ways we have started to learn how customer behaviour and customer expectations are changing as a result of the new ways of working we adopted during the pandemic.
- 3.2 We deliver some great customer service performance across the council but there are also times when we don't quite meet the levels we would like. When this happens, we don't have an overarching corporate Customer Strategy with an agreed 'Vision' for the type of Customer Service we aspire to deliver.
- 3.3 In most cases we deliver a great service and our customers support us to do our jobs effectively, however on occasion things don't go as well as we would like. When this happens, neither our customers nor our staff have a published Customer Charter to refer to. A Customer Charter sets out what customers should expect from us and what we expect from them. Generally, organisations of this size have this type of document to underpin their customer service standards.
- 3.4 Without a Customer Strategy and Charter officers do not have a clear framework to work to in relation to customer service standards nor a reference point to challenge customers behaviour if inappropriate.
- 3.5 We gather customer feedback and insight in different ways across the organisation, but we don't currently have a consistent way to gather and analyse this data at a corporate level to inform and shape decision making. We regularly engage with our customers but there is no corporate or standard mechanism for customers to give us their feedback on a regular and ongoing basis. This means we are unable to measure our performance in this regard or consistently gather

customer insight to shape service improvement and transformation.

- 3.6 The councils have Delivery Plan performance measures for Customer Satisfaction, but without a corporate or standard mechanism to measure this it has not been possible to produce any data to date.
- 3.7 During our review we identified a number of customer related tasks which help us to engage with, analyse and understand customer experience and behaviour. When these tasks were gathered at a corporate level, this identified a gap in the current Customer Service structure.
- 3.8 Individually, services work hard to meet customer demand but currently there isn't a dedicated business lead responsible for transforming our customer provision to meet changing customer needs and behaviours and ensure we maximise opportunities afforded by our new flexible, remote working contracts to further enhance our service provision.
- 3.9 There is a real desire and passion across the organisation to really engage with our customers to help shape our service transformation and customer service provision.

Complaints - Findings from the review

- 3.10 The council has an established complaints handling process in place, which ensures that we deal with complaints in line with statutory guidance however the council currently has no published complaints handling policy or unreasonably persistent complainants' policy.
- 3.11 Complaints are currently handled initially at an informal stage and then escalated to a formal stage if requested by the customer.
- 3.12 Complaints at the informal stage are not recorded and therefore can remain at that stage for some time without being effectively managed to ensure they are dealt with in a timely manner. This can mean that complaints that may be ongoing for a long time at the informal stage are not visible to senior leaders.
- 3.13 Because complaints at the informal stage are not recorded, they cannot be collated, analysed or used to help shape service improvement for our customers. This can lead to the causes of dissatisfaction remaining unresolved and potentially to repeat complaints.
- 3.14 Whilst many complaints are handled effectively, without a clear policy and supporting processes and procedures they are handled differently across directorates which means that the standard of responses can vary delivering inconsistent outcomes for customers.
- 3.15 There is currently no organisational oversight for complaints and analysis and reporting of formal complaints is limited. Around 40% of the Councils we case studied have an independent officer that gives an impartial overview of complaints at formal Review Stage (Stage 2).

- 3.16 Currently it is possible for the staff member who dealt with a complaint at the informal stage to deal with the complaint at the formal stage. It is considered good practice to have the complaint reviewed by a different member of staff to provide an independent assessment.
- 3.17 Around 90% of the Councils we case studied have a two-stage formal process with an Investigation Stage and a Review Stage. This is also identified as good practice by the Ombudsman.
- 3.18 Although individual services implement changes following an upheld complaint there is no structured 'lessons learned' approach across the organisation to ensure that we change processes to reduce errors and avoid repeating the cause for complaints.

4 Proposed action

- 4.1 By putting our customers at the heart of what we do, across the organisation, we can reap the benefits of improved customer satisfaction, delivering efficiencies through service improvements and reducing waste by identifying and resolving causes of dissatisfaction and complaint. We believe that the best way to embed this way of working across the organisation is by clearly setting out our ambitions through a Customer Strategy and supporting Vision and by being open with our customers about what they can expect from us and what we expect from them through a Customer Charter.
- 4.2 As we emerge from the pandemic it is vital that we understand and react to changing customer behaviours and expectations as we shape and transform our services as we continue to develop our One Team, Two Councils model. To do this effectively we need to have the right resources and mechanisms in place to gather, collate and analyse Customer feedback and insight and ensure that our decisions are informed by data.
- 4.3 We are therefore proposing the following recommendations;

Customer Satisfaction

- 4.4 **Implement a new Customer Satisfaction Strategy and Customer Charter** (as set out in Appendix 1)
- 4.5 A new Customer Satisfaction Strategy and Customer Charter brings a range of benefits that we have set out below;
 - 4.5.1 Customer satisfaction is not only about measurables such as how long something takes or how many times something happens. It is also about an emotional reaction. Really engaging with our customers on a personal level will

allow us to know how our customers feel about our services.

- 4.5.2 By engaging with our customers more widely it means that customers can help shape our services and we deliver outcomes that are to their benefit, whilst making our processes more efficient and cost effective.
- 4.5.3 Understanding more about our customer demographics will enable us to target our communications more proactively to inform and reduce unnecessary contact.
- 4.5.4 The Customer Charter provides a key point of reference, a reason to challenge what we do, and a performance standard to aspire to. It should be used and embraced alongside our current organisational values. It will underpin customer-focused activities and support actions to deliver culture change across the organisation.
- 4.5.5 It helps us move to a position where we can establish a baseline measure for Customer Satisfaction and then start to report our performance against that measure.
- 4.6 **Introduce a dedicated Customer Engagement & Insight Lead role on a 2-year Fixed Term Appointment** (with the option to extend to a permanent role by agreement) (as per Appendix 2, part A)
- 4.7 The funding for the new role is contained within the Covid Funding Paper which will be going to Cabinets in June.
- 4.8 Appointing a dedicated Customer Engagement & Insight Lead will bring a range of benefits that are set out below;
 - 4.8.1 Currently there is a range of customer engagement related work which is either done on an ad-hoc basis and therefore incurs a hidden cost to the organisation or not currently resourced. By moving responsibility for this work into a single role, it will release capacity elsewhere and reduce duplication of effort.
 - 4.8.2 The new lead will have overall responsibility for analytical and research work of customer data to provide holistic oversight and help deliver the strategic ambitions of our councils and to support our transformation agenda.
 - 4.8.3 Funding this role from the Covid budget recognises that role will be crucial to understanding changes in customer behaviours and expectations post the COVID-19 pandemic. This role will also be key to ensuring that we then use this to transform our customer service provision by maximising opportunities presented by flexible and remote working from any location.
- 4.9 **To move line management for the core Customer Service Team** (as per Appendix 2, part B)

- 4.10 We propose to move line management from Place directorate to the new Customer Engagement & Insight Lead under the AD Transformation, IT and Digital within the Resources directorate. There are a number of benefits that we have identified, and these are set out below.
 - 4.10.1 It recognises the corporate nature of the team and provides an improved escalation route for feedback and ideas to improve the customer service provision.
 - 4.10.2 It places the team within the structure of the AD for Transformation, IT & Digital alongside key enabling teams.
 - 4.10.3 It will enable the team to support how we embed the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation and enriches job satisfaction.

Complaints

- 4.11 **Implement the proposed complaints handling policy** (as set out in Appendix 3).
- 4.12 There are a range of benefits that we have identified which will be realised by implementing the new Complaints policy which we have set out below;
 - 4.12.1 The proposed complaints handling policy offers a two-stage formal process, an Investigation Stage and a Review Stage which still provides a clear focus on resolving the complaint at the earliest opportunity but also ensures we capture learning points at both stages to improve services and reduce causes of dissatisfaction and complaint.
 - 4.12.2 It ensures that complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction are progressed without unnecessary delay, that early contact is made with the customer to discuss their issue and that the complainant then receives updates and a timely response at each stage.
 - 4.12.3 It ensures that a complaint is reviewed by a different person at the Review Stage from the person who carried out the Investigation Stage to ensure the complainant receives an objective review.
 - 4.12.4 Ensures that ownership for handling and managing complaints will remain within the appropriate service area but with an independent review of our Stage 1 responses to ensure that our responses are reviewed from a customer perspective in line with our customer charter and provides objectivity.
 - 4.12.5 It introduces a quality assurance review across all complaints at the Review Stage to ensure that we have done everything we should to resolve the complaint before it escalates to the Ombudsman.

4.12.6 It will reduce the number of cases that need to be dealt with directly by the Managing Director but leaves a path for this to happen in the more contentious cases.

4.12.7 Aligns the complaints processes for both Councils which enables officers to work in the most efficient way.

4.13 **Implement a new Unreasonably Persistent Complainants' policy** (as set out in Appendix 4).

4.14 There are benefits that we have identified which will be realised by implementing the new Unreasonably Persistent Complainants' policy which we have set out below.

4.14.1 The unreasonably persistent complainant's policy provides staff with a framework on how to deal with complainants that may be behaving in what the Council deem as an unreasonable manner.

4.14.2 It provides a clear process for decision making in these cases

4.14.3 Aligns the unreasonably persistent complainant's processes for both Councils which enables officers to work in the most efficient way.

5. Other options

5.1 The Council could decide to maintain the current/existing arrangements and ways of working with regards to customer experience and complaints, however, this would mean that the benefits set out above would not be achieved.

6. Issues and risks

6.1 **Resource Implications** – If the decision to extend the new Customer Engagement & Insight Lead beyond the initial 2-year contract is made then ongoing funding for this role would need to be identified.

6.2 **Legal Implications** – None identified

6.3 **Equality Implications** – None identified

6.4 **Environmental Impact** – No impact identified

6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – No impact identified

6.6 **Risks** – None identified

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This report sets out proposals that will form key steps to moving towards delivering a first-class customer service and enabling us to shape and transform our customer service provision to enable customers to achieve the right outcome, at the right time and in the right way.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 We ask that SIEC recommend to Cabinet:

- 8.1.1 The adoption of the proposed Customer Strategy and Customer Charter

- 8.1.2 The adoption of the proposed Complaints Handling Policy

- 8.1.3 The adoption of the Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy

- 8.2 We ask that SIEC note and comment on:

- 8.2.1 The appointment of a new Customer Experience & Insight Lead role

9. Background papers

- 9.1 There are no background papers.

Moving towards a First Class Customer Service

Appendix 1 - Customer Strategy including Customer Charter

2021

Version 1.0

Our Customer Strategy

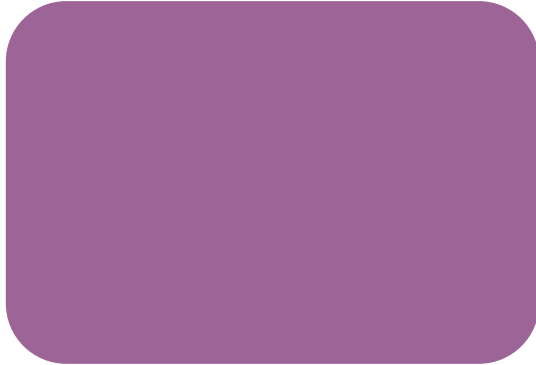


Background

We are here to serve our customers and to enable them to be able to access services in the right way and at the right time. We want to ensure that we involve and support them as effectively as possible.

We have some good examples of great customer experience but we always strive to do better.

We will be improving our service by;



Introducing a consistent mechanism for our customers to engage with us and provide feedback and help shape our services

Introducing and publishing customer service performance data to show how we are doing.

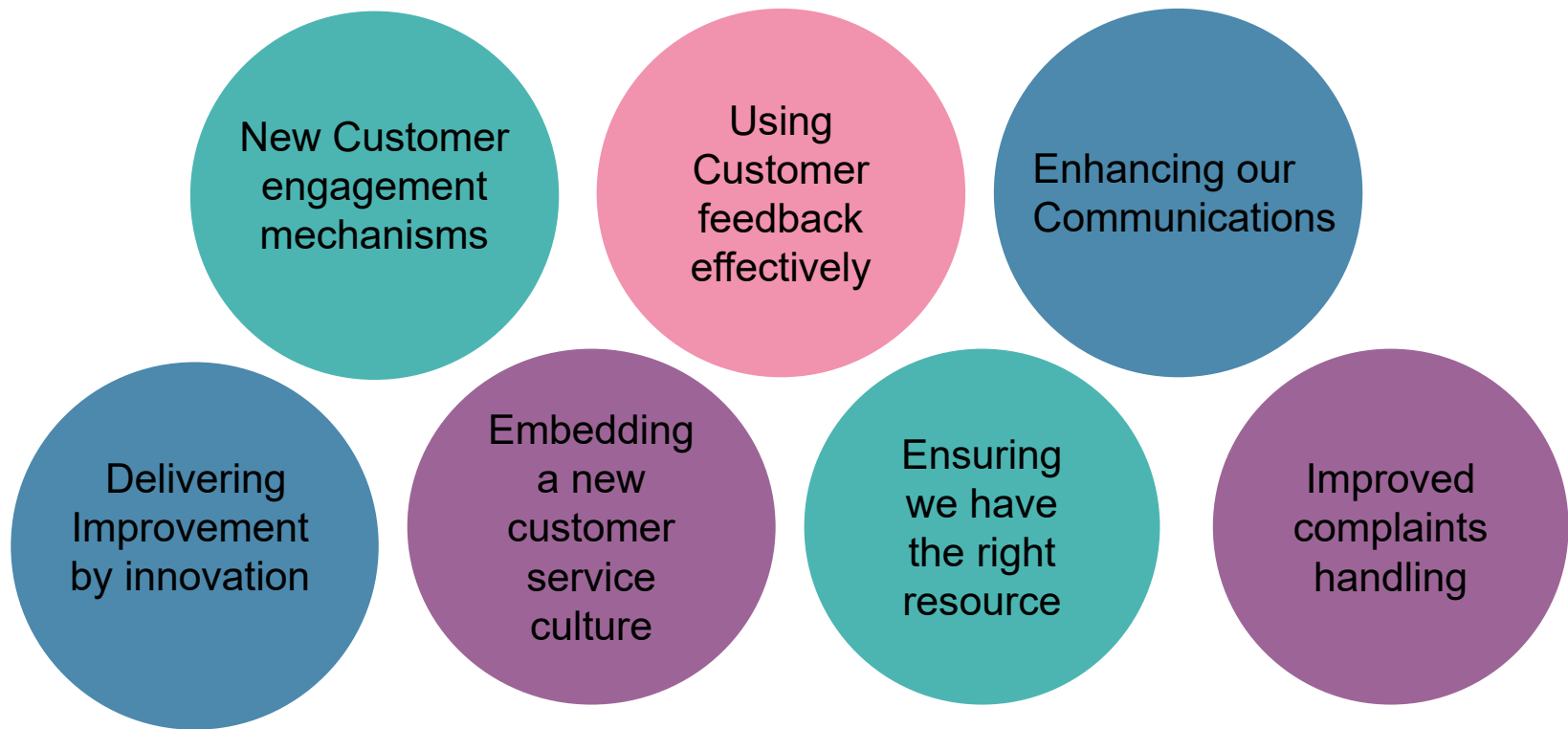
This document sets out our approach in more detail.

To have a Customer Service culture that builds a strong relationship between us and our residents, businesses and partners across Broadland and South Norfolk.

To allow open and free flowing feedback, in a way that is appropriate to the customer, giving us the ability to recognise areas of success and use feedback to continuously improve our services.

To ensure that services are designed around our customer needs and that they can access services through multiple channels and at times that they need us.

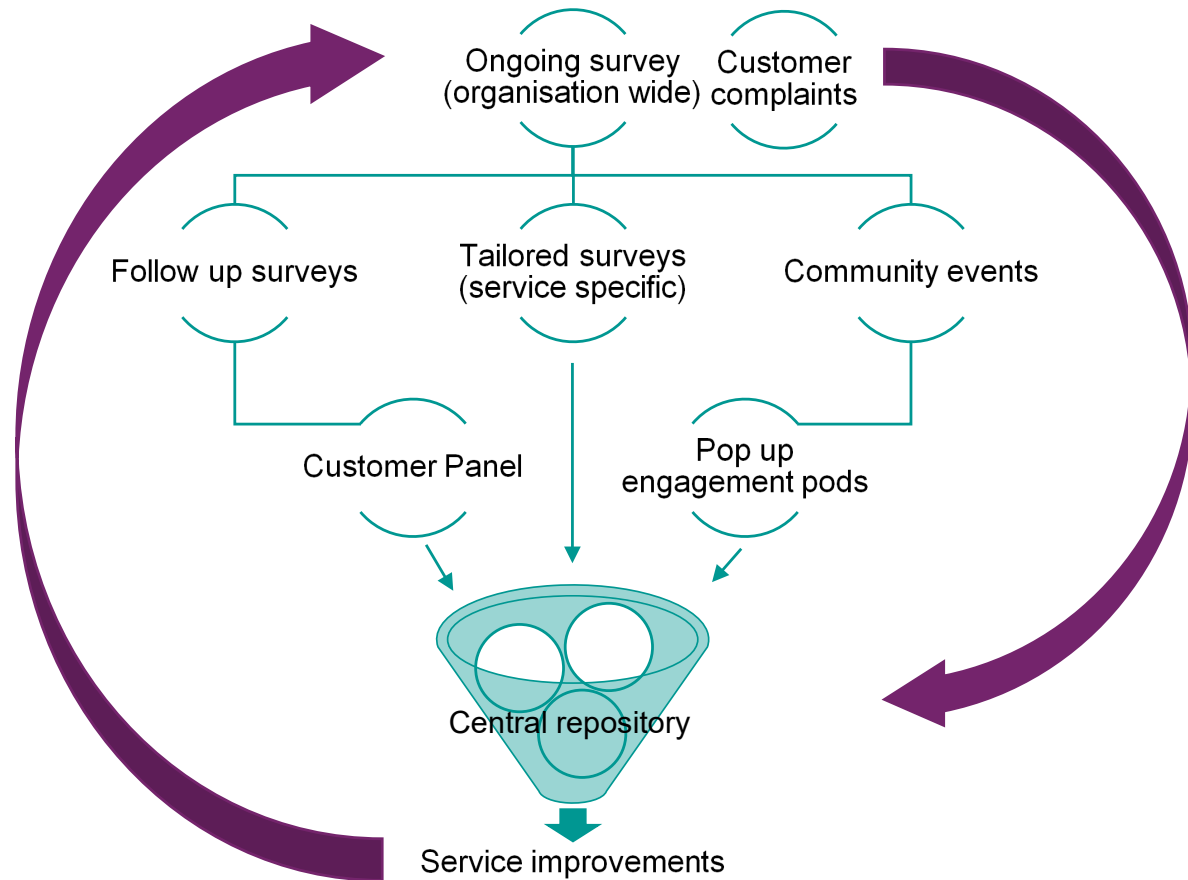
How will we deliver it?



All feedback should be seen as good feedback, and should be used to inspire service improvements that will benefit our customers.

We will look to expand our opportunities to engage with our customers, as displayed by the graphic, right.

Service specific, tailored and transactional surveys will also be used to improve customer experience.



Our new Customer Charter

We will make it clear how you can contact us and access our services

We will treat you with respect, courtesy and understanding

- Communicate with you in plain English with no jargon
- Identify ourselves and give you our names
- Respect your right to privacy and confidentiality
- Make sure our team have the skills, behaviours and tools they require to deliver services to you

We will listen, understand, and get things done

- Keep you informed with up to date information about the services you use
- Do our best to put things right that have gone wrong
- Try and resolve your query the first time you contact us. If we can't, we will let you know the next steps.

You can help us achieve this by

- Always treating our staff and contractors with respect and courtesy
- Giving us all the information we require to help us meet your needs
- Giving us feedback on our service so we can learn and improve
- Telling us when something changes
- Asking us to explain anything you are not sure about



Who is our customer?
Any individual, group, organisation or business that resides in, does business in or with, or visits, the Broadland or South Norfolk district



Website

- Aim to have the website available 24 hours a day all year round
- Continue to improve the services available online
- Ensure our website and online processes are clear, quick and easy to use



Telephone

- Keep waiting times to a minimum. In times of high demand, we will keep you informed.
- Update automated messages regularly with up to date information
- When returning your calls, staff will clearly state their first name, their department and their reason for calling



Face to face

- Make sure our buildings are welcoming, safe and fully accessible
- Where possible provide you with bookable appointments
- If there is a delay or change to your appointment we will explain why and keep you informed.



Social media

- Share relevant and timely information
- Be clear and concise
- Respond to questions as quickly as possible



Written communication

- Ensure all service email addresses have an 'automatic reply' which clearly explains what will happen next
- Make sure all emails contain our contact details
- Make sure any letters we send contain a reference so they are easy to trace if necessary



Innovation

- Use new technology, as it becomes available, to create more ways for you to get in touch with us
- Make more of our services available online and look for ways to increase our flexibility so you can contact us at a time that suits you
- Keep up to date with emerging technology that we could use to help you to get the right outcome, at the right time and in the right way

Moving towards a First Class Customer Service

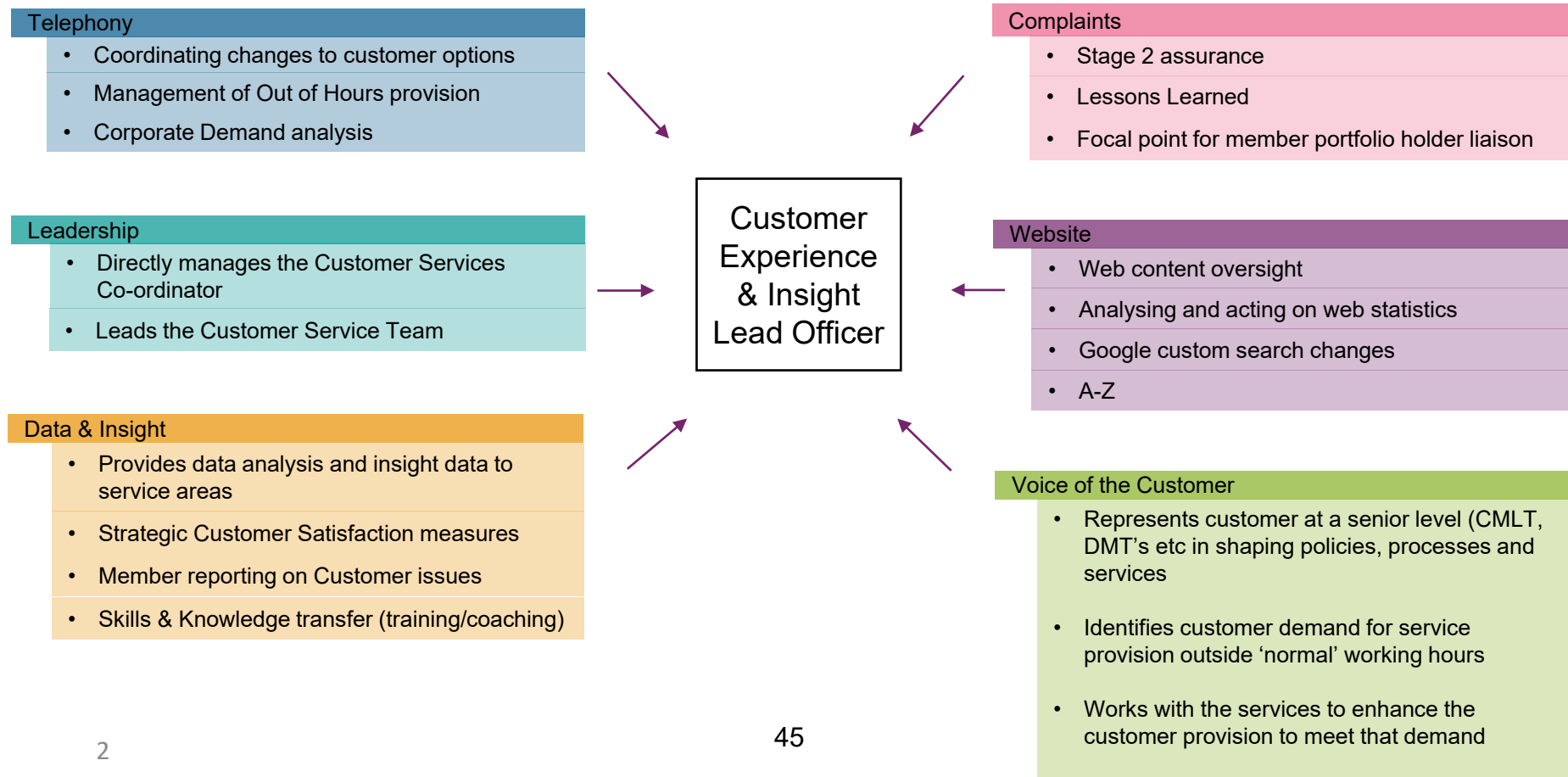
Appendix 2

- A) Customer Experience & Insight Lead Role
- B) Customer Service Structure

2021

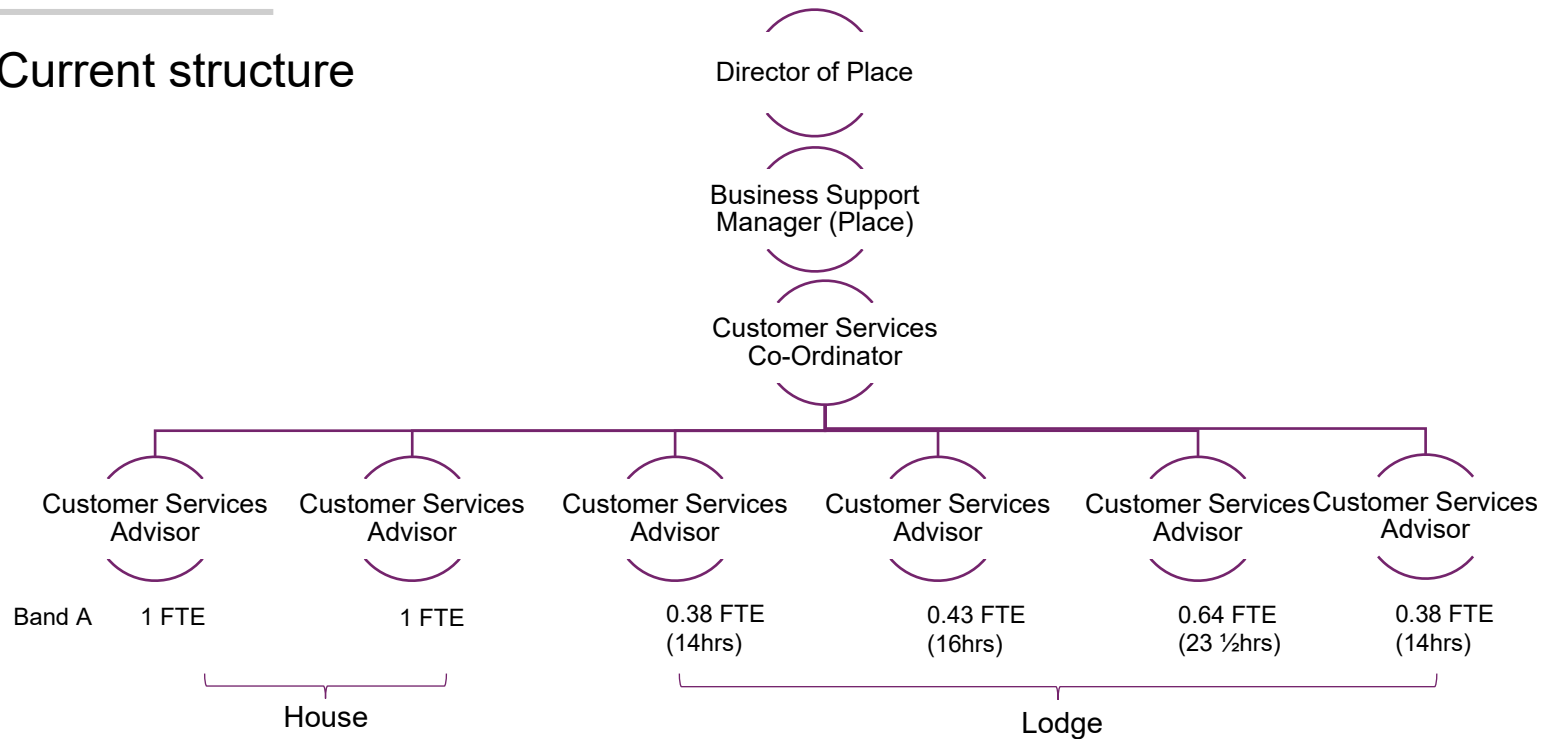
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We are recommending a new role which would effectively fill a gap in our existing structure and bring together all on the customer related responsibilities into a single, central point to ensure a cohesive and strategic approach to delivering the Customer Strategy and ensuring that we embed the behaviours set out in the Customer Charter.



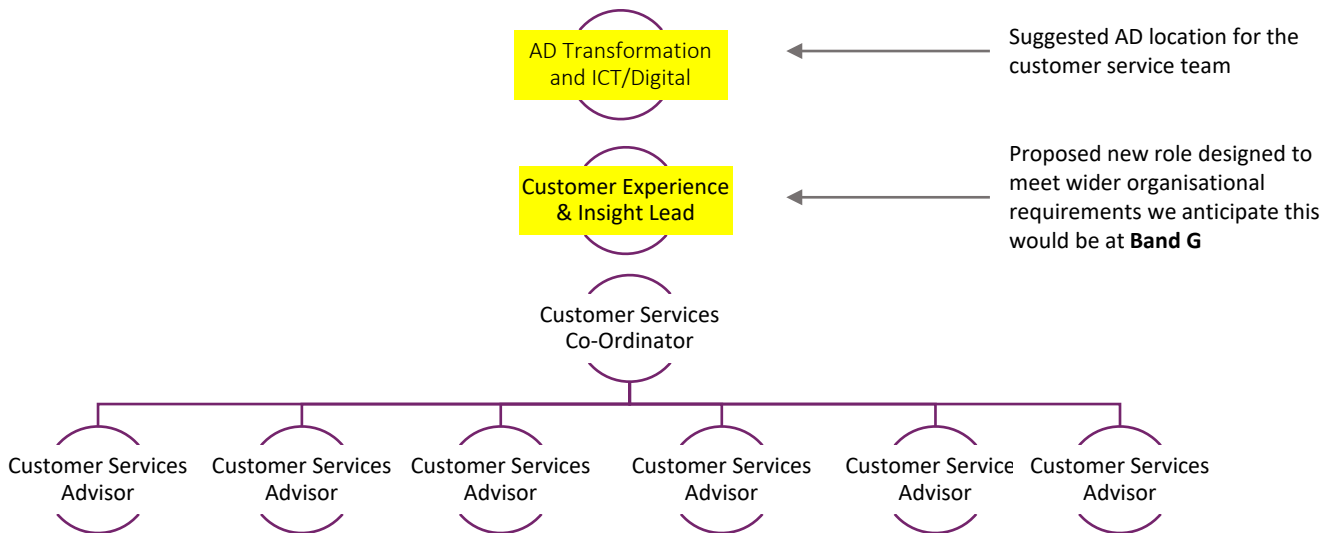
B) The Customer Service Structure

Current structure



Proposed structure

In order to deliver against our Customer Satisfaction Strategy, our Customer Service provision needs be appropriately placed and suitably resourced within the structure of the organisation.



We propose the current provision is moved from Place directorate into the Resources directorate, under the new AD for Transformation and ICT/Digital for the following reasons:

- It moves responsibility for the team to a new Customer Experience & Insight Lead role which has overall responsibility for overall customer experience.
- It brings the Customer Service provision in the same directorate as Comms, Transformation and Innovation, ICT/Digital and Facilities. This places them in the best place to help shape our new Customer Strategy approach and influence how we engage with our customers including social media and digital services as well as our face-to-face offering.

Appendix 3 - Broadland District Council Complaints Policy

Introduction

This complaint policy sits alongside our overall customer satisfaction strategy and should be considered alongside our customer charter.

At Broadland District Council we are committed to continually improving our services and ensure that we put our communities and residents at the heart of everything we do.

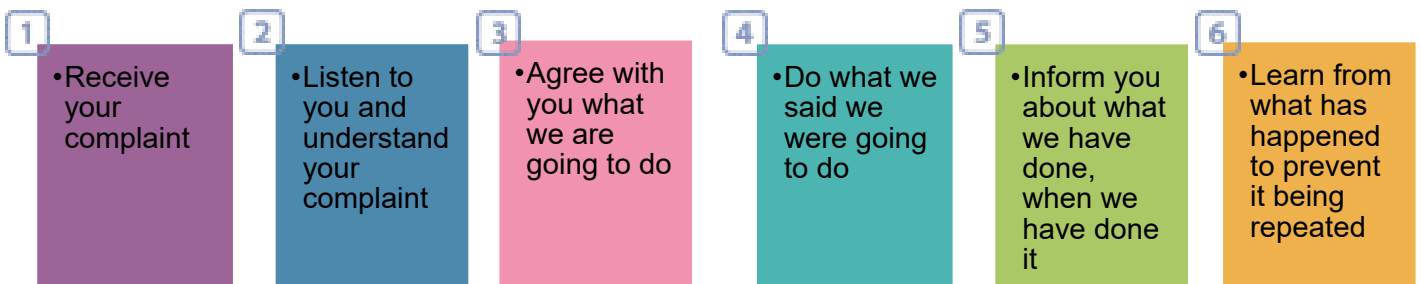
In order to do this, we encourage, our residents, businesses, visitors, community groups and any other group or individual that uses or are affected by our services (referred in this policy as complainants) to tell us when things go wrong. This is important because then we can put things right and learn from our mistakes.

This policy sets out how we handle complaints from our complainants in a simple and timely way that is open and transparent.

Our definition of a complaint is:

“An expression of dissatisfaction about a council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response.”

The following steps are applied to all complaints received and we will:



Good complaint handling means:

Being customer focussed	Being open and accountable	Acting fairly and proportionately
We will ensure our complaints process is easy to find and use and keep our complainants informed.	We will have a process that is transparent and admit when things have gone wrong.	We will base our decisions on sound evidence and explain clearly why they were made
Putting things right	Seeking continuous improvement	Getting it right
When we have done something wrong we will apologise and take steps to put it right	We will learn from complaints received and use this to improve our services	We will comply with the law and follow our own policies.

Stages of Complaint

Our aim is to resolve complaints for our complainants as quickly and simply as possible. Our principle is to provide a high-quality response which resolves the issues raised by the complainant and finds a suitable outcome.

Stage 1

- This is the investigation stage.
- Responsibility sits with the manager responsible for the service.
- The purpose is to fully investigate the complaint and the emphasis is on trying to reach a resolution. If a resolution cannot be reached, the complainant has the right to escalate their complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2

- This is the review stage.
- Responsibility sits with the Director of the relevant service area
- To carry out a review of the response we provided to the complaint at Stage 1 to and to review any new relevant information provided by the complainant.

When we receive a Stage 1 and 2 complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge the complaint.
- Contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and agree what we are going to do.
- Investigate the complaint and do what we say we will do to resolve the complaint.

- Keep the complainant informed and notify them if there is a delay and commit to a new timescale in which they will receive a response.
- Contact the complainant to tell them what we have done and why we have done it (the outcome and reasons for the decision).

For Stage 2 complaints we will also:

- Establish why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1.
- Try to deal with the cause of the dissatisfaction before it escalates to Stage 2.
- If there are no grounds to investigate at Stage 2, contact the complainant to explain our decision.
- If there are grounds for a review at Stage 2 then follow the above procedures for all complaints

In our responses where applicable:

We will:

- Acknowledge when things go wrong
- Apologise when appropriate
- Improve procedures so similar problems do not happen again

Response Times

We aim to resolve all complaints within 15 working days. However, if a complaint can be resolved sooner, then we will make every effort to do so. Some more complex cases may take longer but we will ensure you are kept informed.

Next Steps

If you have been through all stages of our complaints procedure and are still dissatisfied, you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to review your complaint.

The Ombudsman investigates complaints in a fair and independent way - it does not take sides. It is a free service.

The Ombudsman expects you to have given us chance to deal with your complaint, before you contact them. If you have not heard from us within a reasonable time, it may decide to look into your complaint anyway, this is usually up to 12 weeks.

The Local Government Ombudsman looks at individual complaints about councils and some other organisations providing local public services.

Contact

Website: www.lgo.org.uk
Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Opening hours
Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm (except public holidays)

Continuous Improvement

We are committed to learning from the complaints we receive and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. To do this we will:

- Regularly report the complaints received to senior leaders along with lessons learned.
- Review and make changes to policies and procedures where necessary.
- Provide relevant training to staff.

Other types of feedback or enquiries

The following will not be dealt with under this policy but will be dealt with under their own policy/procedure:

- Complaints of fraud or corruption
- Whistleblowing
- Hate incidents
- Information requests
- Member misconduct

Retention Guidelines

The following sets out our retention guidelines for all complaints received:

Stage 1 & Stage 2 Complaints

- Destroy 2 years after the closure of the complaint. Unless the complaint has been escalated to the Ombudsmen (see Ombudsmen retention guidance).
- Files will be reviewed and destroyed on a monthly basis.

Ombudsmen Complaints

- Destroy 6 years after the closure of the complaint.
- Files will be reviewed and destroyed on a quarterly basis.

Appendix 4

Policy: Unreasonably persistent contact or complaints/complainants

Introduction

1. The majority of complaints will be resolved through our complaints handling process and policy and all efforts should be made to do so. However, in a small number of cases people pursue complaints in a way that can impede the investigation of their complaint, or can have significant resource implications for the council. This policy has been formulated alongside our customer charter to deal with the small number of complaints which make it necessary for special arrangements to be taken.
2. Before implementing the provisions in this policy, officers must consider whether the council's procedures have been followed correctly, make sure full and reasonable responses have already been given and decide if the complainant is now unreasonable.
3. The council has a duty to provide a safe working environment and system of work for its officers. Regardless of this policy, abusive, offensive or threatening conduct may be referred to the police to take action as appropriate in addition to any action the council may decide to take.

Unreasonable complaints

4. We have formulated this policy in accordance with guidance from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in relation to the definition of **unreasonable complaint behaviour and unreasonable persistent complaints**.
5. We define unreasonable complaints as contact for persons who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the council, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints.
6. Examples include the way, or frequency, in which complainants raise their complaint with staff or how complainants respond to officers dealing with the complaint.
7. Features of an unreasonable complaint include the following examples (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own imply that the complaint will be considered as being unreasonable).

The following are non-exhaustive descriptions of the behaviour of an unreasonable complainant who may:

- Have insufficient grounds for their complaint and be making the complaint only to inconvenience the council, or for reasons that he or she does not admit or make obvious
- Refuse to specify the grounds of a complaint despite offers of assistance from council staff
- Refuse to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- Refuse to accept that issues are not within the remit of the complaints policy, despite having been provided with information to this effect.
- Refuse to accept that issues are not within the power of the council to investigate, change or influence (e.g. insisting that there must not be any written record of the complaint or that a certain officer shall or shall not deal with the matter).
- Make groundless complaints about staff dealing with complaints and seek to have them dismissed or displaced.
- Make an unreasonable number of contacts with the council in relation to a specific complaint or complaints
- Make persistent and unreasonable demands of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained (e.g. a complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent and/or complex letters, telephone calls or emails or demands to be seen immediately when coming to the council offices)
- Raise new or secondary issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process
- Change the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed

- Adopt an excessively scattergun approach, by pursuing a complaint with the council and at the same time with a member of parliament, other councils, members of the council, the council's independent auditor, the police, solicitors and the Local Government Ombudsman
- Refuse to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion; repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome and/or denying that an adequate response has been given
- Make the same complaint repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints procedure has concluded, and insist that the minor differences make it a new complaint to be dealt with.
- Combine some or all of these features

Classification

8. The proposal to classify a complainant as unreasonably persistent or as behaving unreasonably should be made by the Director of the service area to which the complaint is being made and this should then be ratified and decided by the Corporate Management Leadership Team (CMLT) see points 11 and 15 below.
9. A written record shall be kept of why the complainant is believed to be unreasonable, what information has been considered and the decision made by (CMLT). The council shall act in a proportionate, fair and objective way.
10. If more than one service area is being contacted by the complainant, or both councils (South Norfolk and Broadland) are also being contacted, perhaps with different complaints, a nominated officer will co-ordinate the response and may consider setting up a joint meeting to agree a cross service / cross councils approach.

Initial notification

11. When an unreasonable persistent complaint / complainant has been identified, a final offer to meet face to face should be made by the service lead (Senior Manager or above) to explain to the complainant that the council may consider applying this policy due to the unacceptable behaviours. These should be explained along with the content of this policy. After the meeting or if the meeting is declined a letter or email will be sent to the complainant - see point 15 and the template letter for persistent

complainants 'Important information regarding future correspondence', which will explain the action the council is taking.

Options for dealing with an unreasonable complainant

12. The options which the council may consider include:

- Refusing to accept a complaint or to amend the terms of the complaint
- Requesting contact to be in a particular format (e.g. letters only)
- Requiring contact to take place with one named member of staff only
- Restricting telephone calls to specified times/ days / duration
- Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- Letting the complainant know that the council will not reply or acknowledge any further contact with them on the specific topic of that complaint or at all

In deciding on an appropriate option, care will be taken:

- Not to interfere with a complainant's statutory rights e.g. to attend council meetings or view papers, when making such restrictions
- To make sure that the council takes appropriate action in response to a matter included in a complaint where necessary
- If we have a duty of care as we are their current landlord e.g. temporary accommodation

13. These options are not exhaustive and other factors individual to the case or service may be relevant in deciding an appropriate course of action. For example any arrangements for restricting a complainants contacts must take into account the complainants circumstances such as age, disability, literacy levels, race, vulnerability and additional needs.

14. If none of the options listed above offer the protection that staff are entitled to, other options may be available, such as taking out an injunction against a complainant or involving the police. These will be considered on a case by case basis, in consultation with legal services as necessary.

15. When a decision has been made as to the appropriate restrictions to be used, the MD (after it has been ratified at CMLT) will write (email) the complainant explaining the council's decision and the nature of restrictions being made. (Refer the template letter as mentioned in point 11).

16. If a complainant considers that the council is acting improperly or unfairly when making restrictions, they have the option of complaining to the Local Government Ombudsman which will have been explained in response to stage two complaints.

17. Appropriate managers, Executive Assistants and staff e.g. those likely to be involved in implementing the restrictions should be notified of the decision.

Reviewing decisions

18. All restrictions will be subject to review, at least once every six months. Service areas may wish to review within a shorter time period to take account of changes of circumstances and/or behaviour.