



Report of the Head of Digital & Customer Services

Corporate Services & Financial Resilience Service Transformation
Committee – 25 July 2023

Digital Transformation: Customer Services / Communication and Engagement with the Public

Customer Charter and Service Standards

Purpose:	To discuss the draft Customer Charter and Service Standards attached at Appendix A and consider the questions posed at section 2.3 of this cover report.
Policy Framework:	Successful and Sustainable Swansea Digital Strategy 2023-28
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance and Legal
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Committee discusses the draft Customer Charter and Service Standards (Appendix A) 2) Consultation and engagement with residents and businesses is undertaken prior to any final decision on adoption
Report Author:	Sarah Lackenby
Finance Officer:	Jeff Dong
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Excellent Customer Service aligned with our Service Standards is the first goal of the new Digital Strategy agreed by Cabinet in April 2023. Within that Goal the Council made a commitment to, “Review and publish our

service standards so residents and businesses know what to expect when they contact the Council”.

- 1.2 Service Standards are already in place across the Council, however they are not all held in one place. Heads of Service and Directors across the organisation have been involved in the review of existing service standards and the development of a new Customer Charter.
- 1.3 The Committee is asked to review and discuss the draft Customer Charter and Service Standards (Appendix A). These comments will inform the next steps around consultation and engagement with residents and businesses.

2. Customer Charter and Service Standards

- 2.1 Customer Charters are considered good practice and provide a framework for communicating how the Council will meet the expectations of our residents. In addition, a Customer Charter provides clear and concise statements detailing ways by which the organisation can measure customer service levels.
- 2.2 The Service Standards demonstrate what each front facing service within the Council will adhere to, with the timescales for dealing with a query.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to discuss the draft Customer Charter and Service Standards (Appendix A) and the following questions:
 - The Charter lists a series of promises to residents across a range of ways for people to access services. Would the Committee like to see any changes or additions?
 - The Service Standards have been reviewed by Heads of Service and build on existing service levels. They have also been described in ways which residents may ask for services, as opposed to a Council hierarchy. When the information is online it will be easy for people to search using key words. However, could this be improved to make it easier for residents to find the information?
- 2.4 The next step is to undertake consultation and engagement with residents and businesses on the draft Customer Charter and Service standards. The draft will develop in response to any feedback before presenting a final version to Cabinet in the autumn.

3. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

3.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

3.2 An IIA Screening Form has been completed (Appendix B) with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required.

Summary of findings:

- The Customer Charter and Service Standards will have a medium positive impact across all groups as residents and businesses will know what level of service to expect when they contact the Council
- Consultation and engagement will be undertaken following discussion at the Service Transformation Committee. A survey and face-to-face meetings will be used to gather feedback and input from residents. The Service Standards are already in place, some of which are statutory, therefore changes will not be possible for some areas. As part of the process consultation and engagement will be undertaken with key stakeholders, including for example:
 - Disability Liaison Group and Parents and Carers
 - 50+ Network
 - Poverty Forum
 - Organisations that support Welsh Language
 - LGBT Forum

Services may also undertake their own consultation and engagement where changes are being proposed, this may include co-production where appropriate

- This work delivers on the Transformation and Financial Resilience well-being goal and steps in the Corporate Plan. The aim of the Charter and Standards is to meet the expectations of residents when they access Council services
- Risks are considered to be low as Service Standards are in already in place, some of which are statutory. The Charter will be discussed with residents and businesses
- The cumulative impact is considered to be positive at this stage in development and the IIA will be reviewed following the consultation and engagement work.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A	Customer Charter and Service Standards Draft
Appendix B	IIA Screening