

Policy Development and Review Committee		Agenda Item: X
Meeting Date	18 November 2015	
Report Title	Draft Customer Access Strategy 2016 to 2019	
Cabinet Member	Councillor Andrew Bowles, Leader	
SMT Lead	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact	
Head of Service	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact	
Lead Officer	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add recommendation 2. Add recommendation 3. Add recommendation etc 	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has developed a draft revised Customer Access Strategy (at Appendix i) which sets out our approach and priorities for providing effective and efficient ways of accessing and delivering of services to our customers, in ways which meet their needs and preferences.

2 Background

2.1 The Council's first Customer Access strategy was adopted in 2013. This effectively documented the way in which we were delivering our services, particularly since the inception of the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and recognised the wider breadth of ways in which customers want to transact with the Council. It also introduced the Customer Charter, which defines the broad standards of service that we strive to deliver and our commitment to Customer Service Excellence which defines a framework for customer service, looking at provision from the customers' perspective.

2.2 The initial draft of the revised strategy maintains many of the current themes, but significantly acknowledges the emerging technologies and customer preferences to access services through different means which are more convenient and readily available.

2.3 The MKIP service transformation project which has seen a successful bid for Transformation Challenge Award funding for Swale, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Councils, centres on providing the technical infrastructure needed in order to deliver

our services through different channels. The revised strategy recognises this and explores different ways of service provision which exploit the general demand for self-service access through various devices such as mobile devices, and using social media to interact with the Council, where appropriate.

2.4 To this end, the strategy will be aligned with the emerging Communications strategy to ensure compatibility.

3 Proposals

3.1 This report invites the Committee to consider whether the draft revised Customer Access Strategy achieves our aims of ensuring that our customers will be able to access our services in an easy and convenient manner, which is balanced with the need for the Council to provide these services in an efficient and cost effective manner as possible.

3.2 Feedback from the Committee is specifically sought on the following areas:

- Is the title of the strategy correct? Is Customer Access Strategy clear for people to understand?
- Is the context of the strategy right, in terms of balancing the need for improved efficiency and cost effectiveness when designing service delivery methods.
- Are the overarching aims and objectives of the strategy correct, or do we need to add any other aspects?
- Are the five key themes correct? Do we need to add more context or detail to any of these themes, or the outline actions in order to deliver them?
- Any other general comments?

4 Alternative Options

4.1 No alternative options have been considered at this stage, but this will be revisited following feedback from the Committee and public consultation.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Some customer feedback has previously been used to shape the current strategy and more recently the Customer Charter.

5.2 Besides consideration by the Committee, we propose to consult more extensively with our customers once we have a working draft of the proposed strategy

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This strategy support the Corporate Plan, specifically a Council to be Proud of and the outcome: an organisation which continually and actively seeks new ways of achieving better results at lower cost, and in which all employees are supported to experiment and innovate to improve the way they do their jobs.
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no Financial implications to consider at this stage. There will be individual requirements for investment to overhaul some service areas, some of which will be covered by the TCA project funding, and other by individual specific funding bids to transform service areas. Efficiency savings will also be derived form the overall programme, though it is not possible to identify them specifically at this stage
Legal and Statutory	There are no Legal and Statutory implications of this strategy
Crime and Disorder	There are no Crime and Disorder implications of this strategy
Sustainability	No specific sustainability issues, other than by making access to services available through digital means will ensure that costs are kept to a minimum and therefore services may be more sustainable as a result.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no Health and Wellbeing implications of this strategy
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There will be some risks associated with migrating some service to a digital self service basis, in that customers will be able to access these services without the need for intervention by officers who might be able to redirect customers if an opportunity is seen. It will be incumbent on the design of the services to minimise such issues and to ensure appropriate levels of take-up of the new services takes place to justify the investments made in transforming them.
Equality and Diversity	It is intended that by providing a wider number of opportunities and routes to access our services that they will be more widely available and accessible. This will be factored into the service redesign projects

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: draft Customer Access Strategy 2015/16.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None.