



## CABINET

Tuesday, 22 September 2015

### ACCESS & CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY 2015/2019 'JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE' (REP1288)

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek approval for draft Access & Customer Care Strategy 2015/2019 'Journey to Excellence'.
2. Strategic priorities are enabling customers to help themselves by making on-line services the 'preferred choice' for doing business with WDC, increasing first contact resolution to free up resources, identifying and reducing avoidable customer contact and effectively managing customer demand to reduce costs and improve efficiency

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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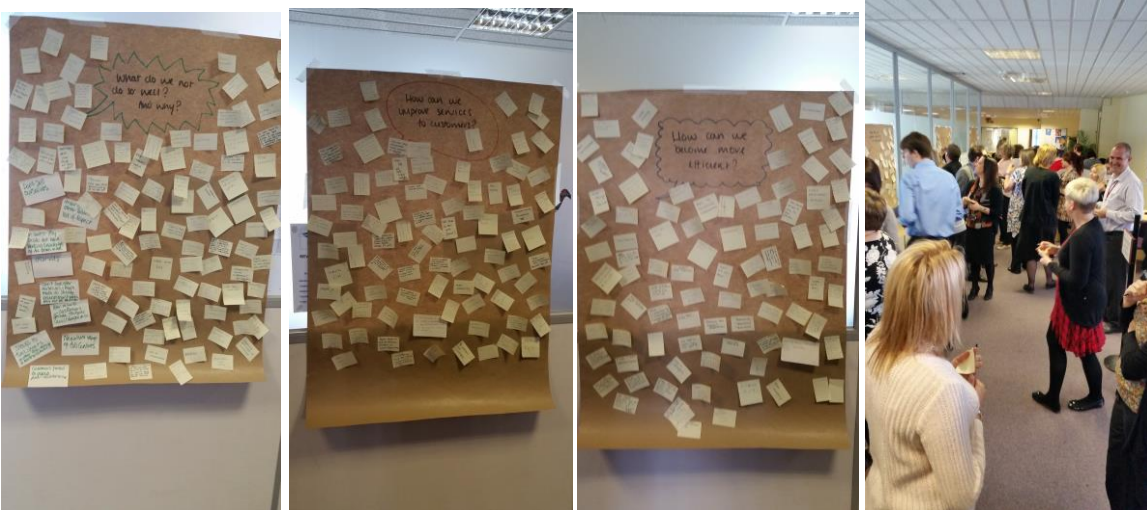
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All wards across the district
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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Frank Mortimer
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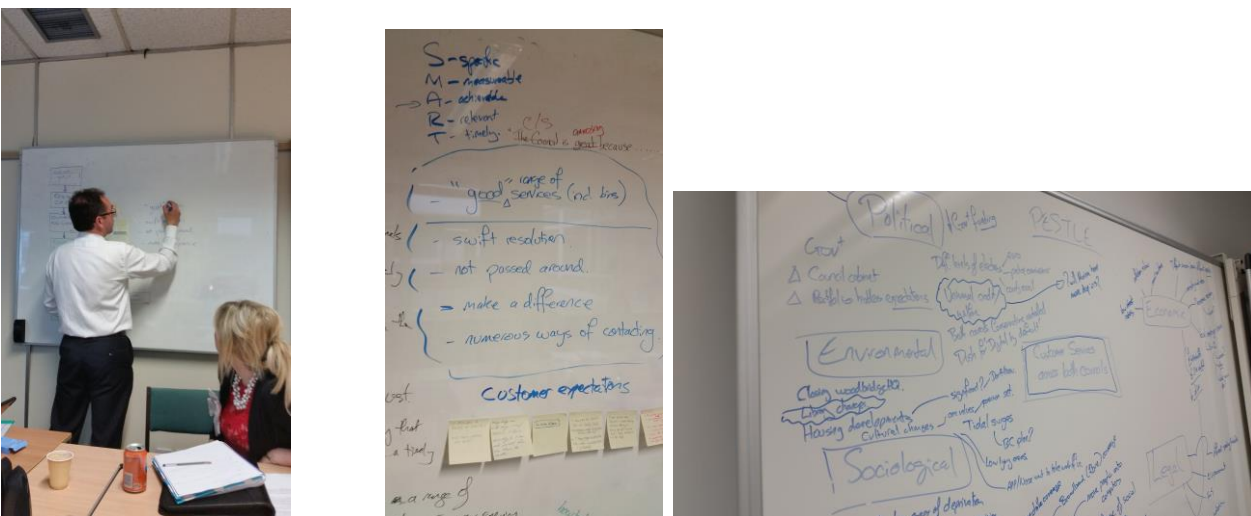
<b>Supporting Officer:</b>	Darren Knight Head of Customer Service Telephone 01502 523301 darren.knight@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2012/2015 Access & Customer Care Strategy has been completed with the establishment of the customer service centre and partnership working with Suffolk Libraries, to enable a joined up approach for the customer through area based working.
- 1.2 Over the last six months a new strategy has been drafted. The approach taken to develop a new draft strategy has involved the following process:
  - 1.2.1 Facilitated strategic discussions with Cabinet Members and Strategic Management Team on the purpose of customer service; 'What is it the council wants customer service to do and be like?'
  - 1.2.2 PESTLE (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental) analysis completed.
  - 1.2.3 Extended SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis completed.
  - 1.2.4 Best practice identified from other organisations; five places have been visited over the last six months including Manchester City Council and Essex Water.
  - 1.2.5 Staff engagement events undertaken to identify; what works well, what does not work so well and why, how we can improve services to customers and how we can become more efficient.



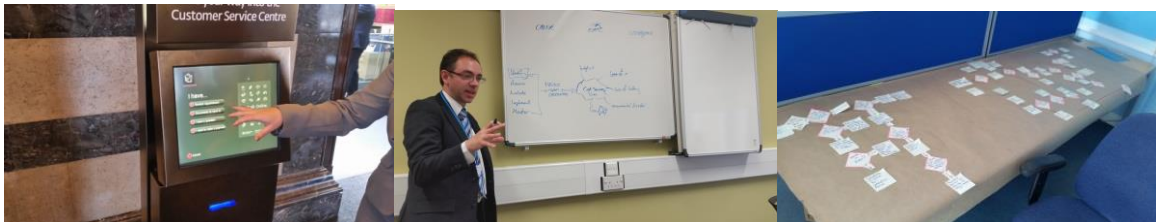
Photographs from one of the staff events



Photographs from the PESTLE and extended SWOT analysis

## 2 WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL THE STRATEGY MAKE?

- 2.1 We want to achieve the best services we can with the resources that we have available. Providing customers with easy access to services and information is a key way of helping to achieve this.
- 2.2 Customer access means different things to different people; some prefer face to face contact, where other customers would prefer costs are minimised and use more cost effective ways of contact via the website for example.
- 2.3 We aim for customers to be able to access services and information when it is convenient for them. This can be achieved by maximising the advancements in technology; by offering 24 hour/7 days a week electronic services, and making this a preferred choice.
- 2.4 By implementing the new strategy it will have the following benefits for both our customers and WDC, including:
  - 2.4.1 Increase in the number of customer enquiries is being resolved at the first point of contact to enable resources to be freed up across the council, rather than their enquiry being passed on.
  - 2.4.2 Transactional focused website to enable customers to do more business with the council online, and making this a preferred choice for customers.
  - 2.4.3 Cashable and non-cashable savings identified each year by reviewing and changing the way services are delivered.
  - 2.4.4 Staff empowered to help customers help themselves; an enabling approach to customer service.
  - 2.4.5 Learning will be identified and changes made following customer feedback e.g. learning from complaints



- 2.5 Appendix A is the draft Access & Customer Care Strategy; 'Journey to Excellence'
- 2.6 Appendix B is a 'Postcard from the Future'. This is a high level description of the council's future state for customer service. Its purpose is to creatively illustrate a vision and to help keep the team focused on the objectives.

## 3 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Demonstrating value for money is a key driver outlined within the strategy. The strategy will adopt the approach taken by The National Audit Office (NAO) to assess the value for money of government spending i.e. the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes:
  - 3.1.1 Economy: minimising the cost of resources used or required (inputs) – spending less;
  - 3.1.2 Efficiency: the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them – spending well; and
  - 3.1.3 Effectiveness: the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes) – spending wisely.

## 4 CONSULTATION

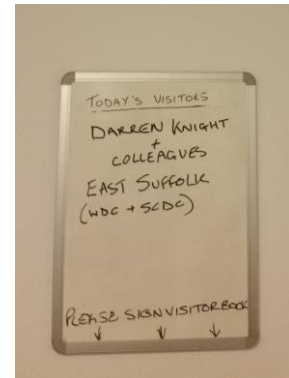
- 4.1 The strategy has been devised following facilitated strategic discussions with Cabinet Members for Customer Service and Strategic Management Team.
- 4.2 Corporate Management Team and the Customer Services Team have also been consulted on the draft strategy and many of their ideas have also been incorporated.
- 4.3 Customer consultation will occur when changes are made that may affect them on a project by project basis.

## 5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Not having a clearly defined purpose and strategy for customer service will mean that delivering effective customer service is not seen as a priority and opportunities for efficiencies and improving services will not be realised.

## 6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that WDC approves the strategy for the following reasons:
  - 6.1.1 Delivering effective services to customers is a priority for WDC, and having a strategy raises the profile of customer service across the organisation and sets out a clear direction of priorities to inform decision making for improvement projects and investment decisions.
  - 6.1.2 WDC operates in a continuing challenging financial environment and implementation of the strategy will generate cashable and non cashable savings over its duration.



### RECOMMENDATION

That the draft Access & Customer Service Strategy for 2015/2019 be approved

### APPENDICES

<b>Appendix A</b>	Draft Access & Customer Care Strategy 2015/2019
<b>Appendix B</b>	Postcard from the Future

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

None