

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 MAY 2014

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF INFORMATION, CUSTOMER AND
PARKING SERVICES

CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report:

- To provide an outline of the steps to define the Council's Customer Service Strategy for 2014 – 2020.
- To present proposals for member involvement for comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY:

That:

(A)	The approach to define the Council's Customer Service Strategy for 2014-2020 be noted and endorsed; and
(B)	The Executive be advised of any recommendations regarding the proposed Member briefing and workshop.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council's current strategy for customer service was approved in August 2008.

1.2 The Council needs to update this strategy to drive its approach to service provision and delivery over the next 5 years.

2.0 Report

2.1 Customer Service Strategy 2008 – 2012

2.1.1 The Council's last Customer Service Strategy delivered:

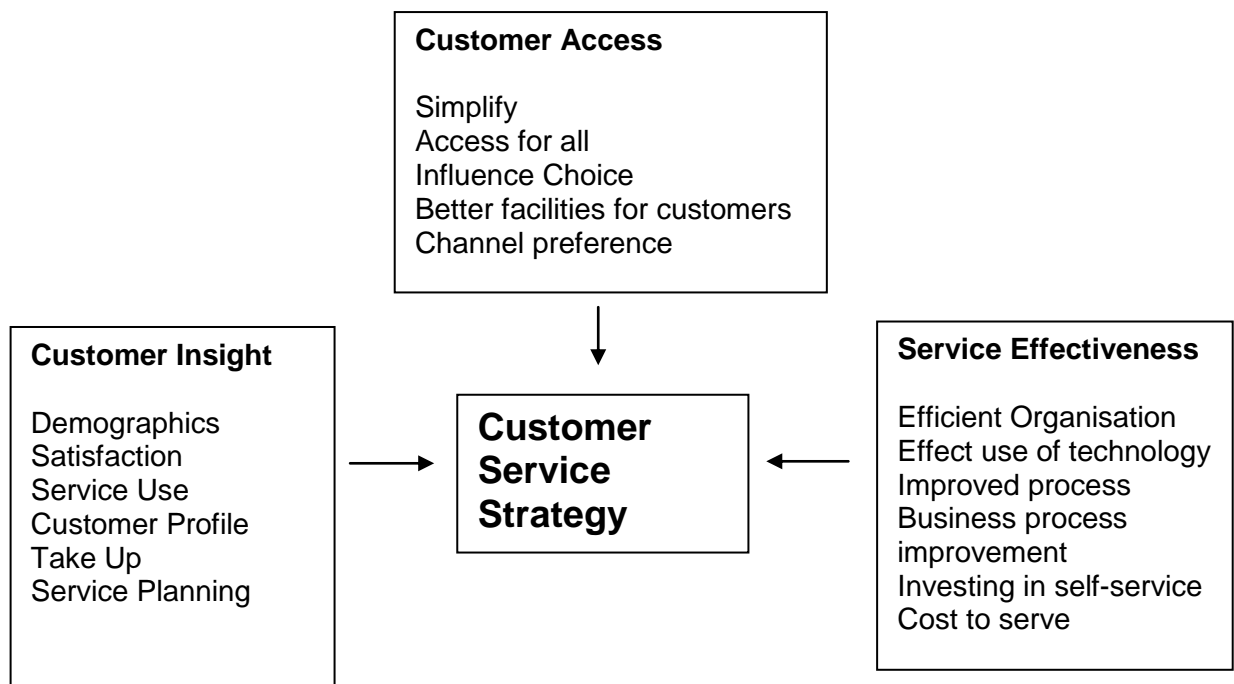
- New Customer Service Centres, modern and accessible
- A consistent and efficient corporate complaints system
- Clear and understandable customer service standards

- Streamlined customer enquiry handling teams
- Simplified access channels for customers
- A user centred website design
- A smaller, less complex and more usable website
- Enhanced on-line planning services
- Unit costing and service improvement
- Customer profiling to support service enhancements and investment. E.g. Hertford Theatre.

2.1.2 The customer service strategy was also used as part of the Council's 'Changing the Way We Work' programme. Process mapping, customer journey mapping and unit costing were all utilised within the business process improvement work to assist in reducing the costs of services and promoting new ways of delivering services.

2.2 A New Strategy

2.2.1 The themes and aims of the old strategy remain relevant and apposite to the council's new strategy.



The Council needs to understand the changes amongst its communities that have impacted service delivery over the last ten years, identify the key issues now and also look ahead to predict the pressures in the next 10 years in order to pro-actively plan changes to the services we provide and the way we deliver them.

2.2.2 In order for the Council to plan its strategy for service delivery (the what, when, where and how), a strategic planning process is

proposed whereby the evidence from our communities including demographic changes, existing Council policies and environmental factors (political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental) are set out in terms of key trends. These then need to be considered against the impact they have on the Council now and the impact they are likely to have in the future. These key pressures and impacts will determine the issues that the Council will need to address within its Customer Service Strategy.

2.2.3 The Customer Service Strategy will set out the key issues identified and set out the Council's strategic goals and result areas. The goals and result areas will shape decisions regarding the services we provide and how we provide them.

2.3 The Process

2.3.1 **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** sets out the strategic planning process and timeline.

2.3.2 The key factors impacting the Council in the past, the present and the future will be identified through research and pre-workshop questionnaire.

2.3.3 Workshops will then be run with staff, members and the senior management team to identify the issues, identify the critical issues and then look at how these impact our service delivery priorities. These priorities will be reflected in a strategic goal, immediate objectives and the key result areas for the next 5 years.

2.3.4 The member workshop will consist of a briefing of the external factors followed by a group activity to explore the issues that these present the Council and its services in the future.

2.3.5 A key benefit of this approach will be to enhance the knowledge of everyone in:

- the changes to our communities
- the pressures and issues these changes place on the Council
- the critical issues
- the priority of issues

2.4 Post Strategy

2.4.1 The Customer Service Strategy will be used in an Action Planning

Process across all services. This will be service based, each reviewing the service it offers and how it is offered against the critical issues described in the strategy. Each service will then consider the strategic goals agreed by the council to meet these challenges and the key result areas that have been agreed. The resulting actions will form a key part of the service planning process.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

(i) Minutes of the Executive on 5th August 2008

<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeed=119&MeetingId=528&DF=05%2f08%2f2008&Ver=2>

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