Officer Response to the Neighbourhood Themed Review, *Customer Services*

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<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Accept, Amend or Reject the recommendation</th>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 1:</strong> The Committee recommends that the new Leader of the Council retains a Portfolio Lead Member explicitly responsible for customer care.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Cllr Ali, Cabinet Member for Transformation and Commercial Operations, has Customer Service as a key area within his portfolio. Both Cllr Ali and the Leader have explicit priorities around benchmarking current customer service and developing explicit customer care standards across the Council.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 2:</strong> Directorates should develop their own KPIs incorporating the GovMetrics data to ensure continual improvement in customer service across the Council is effectively measured. These KPIs should be included in performance reporting that is sent to scrutiny, as well as the Council’s overall performance.</td>
<td>Amend</td>
<td>Corporate KPIs for Customer Service are reported on a quarterly basis. GovMetrics has been implemented for all calls to the Contact Centre and kiosks installed in Registrars and all four Library Pluses.GovMetrics is also on our website (see below). Feedback from these is reported at PLMs and will be presented to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee. In line with the work above, corporate customer service standards will be set as part of a customer strategy being developed this year. This will enable services to refine their KPIs to measure customer service. Suggested amendment; Directorates should develop their own KPIs to ensure continual improvement in customer service across the Council is effectively measured. These KPIs should be included in performance reporting that is sent to scrutiny, as well as the Council’s overall performance.</td>
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**Recommendation 3:** That mystery shopping exercises are carried out, where the budget is available, on a regular basis; and that Council contractors are requested to contribute, so the cost is reduced.

Accept

The Neighbourhoods and Commercial Services directorate, which includes significant frontline services including Neighbourhoods Teams, Customer Contact Centre and Libraries, is currently undertaking research, including mystery shopping and investigation into escalated complaints, to identify and deliver improvements to our customer’s experiences of interacting with these service. The learnings from this will inform the development of a wider corporate mystery shopping programme.

**Recommendation 4:** The staff directory and staff structure chart should be updated on a more frequent basis than at present and a named manager should be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of this information.

Amend

Staff can amend the staff directory via the intranet and the new intranet will make the staff directory easier to update and more accessible. As a part of the roll out of the new intranet staff will be shown how to keep this accurate.

As a result it is suggested that the wording be amended to:

Staff should be actively encouraged to ensure that their staff directory entry is up to date and routine comms will be developed to encourage staff to update and amend this.

**Recommendation 5:** Consider if a digital helpdesk should be established, if this can be achieved within existing budgets, to help residents solve problems themselves by using digital tools.

Accept

Our strategy is to make our digital services so good that they are intuitive, easy to use and don’t therefore require a digital helpdesk. People will then just prefer to use them. We are looking to improve the user journey on our website and, as part of our digital strategy review and coming up with the right projects which will further encourage our customers to get online and enjoy the experience.

We do recognise that we need to help our residents and listen to their feedback. We already deploy the following approaches which we believe
together meet the aims of the digital helpdesk idea proposed:

- **Proactively ask for feedback**: We use an industry standard tool called GovMetrics to ask for feedback across our website. This allows us to take a quick check on how people feel using the site and also allows users to post questions about specific issues they are facing which we then respond to. We also use advanced analytics to see how users navigate our site and use that data to drive improvements.
- **Web chat**: We deploy web chat to targeted sections of our site which allows users to text chat directly with customer services advisors to get help and advice whilst online.
- **Assisted digital**: We recognise that not every finds it easy to go online to access services and we have recently published our Assisted Digital strategy (approved by Cabinet earlier in the year) which sets out our plan to improve accessibility across the Borough. We are particularly proud of our Digital Champions Network – local volunteers helping their community improve their digital skills.

**Recommendation 6**: The Council should counter any misconception that in promoting greater use of My Account, access to sensitive data will be compromised. The message needs to be reinforced that resident’s data will be protected and only shared with their consent.

| Accept | The Council takes its responsibility for the protection of personal data seriously. My Account is a secure system and personal data is only used in accordance with providing residents services in line with their requests. Digital and ICT will work to ensure that this communicated clearly during the sign up process and more prominently on the website. We also seek consent to store data as per industry standards. |
| Recommendation 7: All staff should have “customer service” as a core competency included in their job description and specification. | Accept | The council uses generic role profiles, which set out the core accountabilities that apply to every role in the organisation. These role profiles already include specific accountabilities related to customer contact and service delivery. Where new role profiles are developed in the future, they will continue to place a strong emphasis on customer service, including compliance with the requirements of any new customer care strategy or standards. |
| Recommendation 8: If a budget can be found, Mary Gober International—or a similar training company—should be asked to provide a training session at the Council, which all officers across the Council should be encouraged to attend. | Accept | The Council has begun a tender process for a training programme, initially focused on staff who have specific customer service roles such as those in the Contact Centre and Libraries. Dependent on costs a training programme will be offered either on a face basis where services can fund this to face, or on an online module basis. |