

This Report will be made public on 1 June 2020



Report Number: **OS/20/03**

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 9 June 2020
Director: Tim Madden, Director of Transformation and Transition
Ewan Green, Director of Place

SUBJECT: Customer Access Strategy

SUMMARY: A central part of the Council's transformation programme is the relationship with the customer. The Customer Access Strategy seeks to set out the Council's future approach to that relationship enhancing new technology and the benefits of the digital age whilst also ensuring those most in need are not excluded. This is the draft strategy which sets out this approach and the move to channel shift and will form the basis of how the relationship on the future.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Overview and Scrutiny is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:-

- (a) This is an important element of the Council's transformation programme and will help shape the relationship between the Council and its customers in the future. Views are sought from the committee to inform discussions when the strategy goes to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Overview and Scrutiny is asked to:

1. Note and consider the report OS/20/03.
2. Express its views so this can be fed back to the portfolio holder and considered prior to being presented to Cabinet for approval.

1. Background to strategy

- 1.1 The Council started its transformation programme in April 2018. An update to the programme was presented to Cabinet at its meeting of 19 February 2020. The report can be found at <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s32622/Transformation%20report%20-%20TM%20v2.pdf>
- 1.2 The report covered the objectives of the transformation programme and the underlying principles which supported it. The programme itself covers a number of key themes including the use of new technology, a change in the behaviours of the organisation, a cultural shift as to how the Council operates and an organisational restructure. At the heart of this is the relationship between the Council and the customer.
- 1.3 The draft Customer Access Strategy attached at Appendix A sets out the Council's proposed future relationship with customers and how it interacts with them. This approach adopts a number of the key principles set out in the transformation programme and also sets out the key channels through which customers access the Council for services.
- 1.4 The strategy itself looks at the respective channels where customers access the council and the merits and costs of those respective channel. Underpinning the strategy is the use of technology to support ease of access for the customer. In particular, the forthcoming introduction of the 'My Account' system will personalise and make accessing services easier for many of our customers.
- 1.5 The strategy sets out an action plan for the medium term with key milestones and deadlines to ensure that continual improvement is achieved. It also references the need to ensure all channels are available for those unable to utilise those other channels.
- 1.6 The strategy is due to be presented to Cabinet in July and the views of this committee are sought prior to it being considered then.

2 LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

2.1 Legal Officer's Comments (TM)

There are no legal implications arising out of this report

2.2 Finance Officer's Comments (TM)

There are no financial implications arising out of this report

2.3 Diversity and Equalities Implications (TM)

The equalities and diversity implications of this strategy have been carefully considered, as it ensures the traditional access channels will still be available for those customers who are unable to utilise the online channels.

3. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councilors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

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Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Customer Access Strategy