



## TOURISM CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

9 March 2023

<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

Wirral Council is committed to providing exceptional customer service. This strategy sets out how that will be achieved over the next four years. The Customer Experience Strategy is one of a suite of five strategies that shape our new operating model and deliver on our improvement plan.

This project will support the delivery of all five of the Wirral plan themes.

One of the key underpinning principles of the Wirral Plan is “Relationships -Working with residents, partners, businesses and communities for a better Wirral”. The Customer Experience Strategy will set out how we engage with all our customers to improve those relationships.

This strategy enables the authority to move away from a view that customer service is the responsibility of a single team or department, but instead recognises that it is a cross cutting theme that spans the whole organisation and links intrinsically with Wirral’s wider plans. It enables customer experience to become part of our core vision and values of ‘being customer focussed’ that each and every council officer subscribes too.

This is a key decision as the work associated with the Customer Experience affects all wards.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to approve:

1. The Customer Experience Strategy as set out in appendix one of this report
2. The Customer Charter as set out in appendix two of this report

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The development of a Customer Experience Strategy is a key element of the Wirral Improvement Plan.
- 1.2 The Customer Charter provides a concise summary of how the Council's core values are reflected in interactions with its customers.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The Wirral Improvement Plan stipulated the development of a Customer Experience Strategy. No other options are therefore suggested.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 As part of implementing its Improvement Plan, the Council is reviewing and refreshing its core suite of Plans and Strategies. The Wirral Plan is the Council's primary document in its policy framework. Supporting delivery of the Wirral Plan are a suite of partnership strategies in relation to the five Wirral Plan themes. This Customer Experience Strategy is one of five strategies that support Council improvement in delivering a cost-effective operating model that supports our front-line service delivery. The other strategies include the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Asset Strategy, Digital Strategy and People Strategy.
- 3.2 Following the external assurance review in September 2021, the Council has further developed its change programme to provide a systematic approach to modernising the organisation to a defined set of design principles. The customer experience strategy will form an integral component of a new operating model and act as a catalyst for an ambitious transformation in the Council's approach to customers.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 As part of the Wirral Improvement Plan the Customer Experience Strategy will support the Council in achieving financial stability.

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report albeit it the customer experience strategy should lead to an improvement in the experience of Council customers and reduce the scope for recourse to the complaints process and onward reference to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 The Customer Experience Strategy will be delivered within existing Council budgets and resources.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 Without this Customer Experience Strategy, the Customer Charter and the associated employee learning development, the Council will not increase its capacity to be 'Customer Focussed'.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Engagement across directorates took place between March 2022 and April 2022 led by the Strategy Development Group (SDG). Recognising the different perspectives that services will have on Customer Experience, each Directorate identified a senior 'Customer Experience Champion' who was able to challenge existing ways of working to inform and drive improvements. This also included Officers from Wirral Intelligence and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Cross departmental representatives were invited to help shape the development of the Customer Experience strategy with comments and suggestions incorporated into the strategy. Innovative online collaboration tools were utilised to ensure maximise the opportunity to engage.

- 8.2 The strategy itself identifies a series of key points to engage and consult to ensure success (see appendix one, page 11 'How we will deliver the strategy').

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. The implications of this proposal are positive in terms of equality impact.

- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment for this strategy has been completed and can be found here <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-january-2024>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 By improving the efficiency of its customer interactions there will be a decrease in the amount of avoidable contact and as such the need to physically re-visit referral locations / site visits. This will decrease the wider carbon footprint of our frontline services.

- 10.2 Increasing and enhancing the Council's digital offer will reduce the need for customers to physically attend appointments, minimising their carbon footprint. Overall, the move towards more digital services will have a positive impact on the Council's carbon emissions and that of residents. However, digital based services still have an impact on carbon emissions from data storage, therefore services will be designed to minimise the carbon emissions, e.g. by reducing data retention time.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Embedding customer experience as part of our core vision and encouraging values of 'being customer focussed' will encourage community involvement and create a positive environment to build on local investment into the community.

**REPORT AUTHOR: Fergus Adams**  
Senior Manager Engagement  
telephone: 07833 437 652  
email: fergusadams@wirral.gov.uk

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Customer Experience Strategy  
Appendix 2 Customer Charter

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- **Wirral Plan 2021-2016**
- **Wirral Improvement Plan**

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions: - (a) for customer and community contact services, including various offices and meeting points, customer contact centres and advice and transaction services

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee ('Wirral Improvement Plan')</b>	<b>27 June 2022</b>