
Agenda Item: Customer Service Standards

Meeting Date: Monday, 3 February 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to introduce Customer Service Standards to be adopted and published by Witney Town Council.

Background

A set of Customer Services Standards was adopted internally for the Town Council at the beginning of 2023 through the auspices of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

The Standards were basic, comparable to other Local Authorities and outlined timelines for officers to adhere to in facilitating resident enquiries via telephone, email, post, and visits. Timelines for complaints are in a separate policy and are treated differently to regular correspondence.

Current Situation

The Town Council is aspiring to achieve a silver award in the NALC Local Council Award Scheme (Full Council 9 December 2024, Minute No. 709(5)), and therefore must be able to prove, *'evidence of customer service in how the Council handles correspondence with the public.'*

Officers reviewed the statistics for the Standards which showed excellent overall compliance with the metrics which were available via current software reporting. The Personnel Sub-Committee considered the review with a revised set of standards at its meeting on 21 January 2025 (PSC minute no. S106 refers) and agreed they were reasonable and transparent. The Committee recommended that the Customer Service Standards (attached as **Appendix A**) should be adopted by the Council.

The Standards would be reported on twice yearly and reviewed every two years.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – customer service standards have a positive equality impact by ensuring that all customers, regardless of their differences, have fair access to services, are treated respectfully, and are supported in ways that accommodate their specific needs.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from this report
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from this report
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no direct impact from this report

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Customer Service Standards are widely adopted by organisations and provide clear guidelines for residents on what to expect from services. These standards should be viewed as a transparent tool to help staff understand their responsibilities and performance expectations. Additionally, they can be used as a benchmark to measure and improve service quality.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Customer Service Standards foster society benefits such as trust, inclusivity, cultural development, and ethical practices.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Adoption of the Customer Service Standards for Witney Town Council per the recommendation of the Personnel Sub-Committee.