

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 17 December 2019

Subject: Customer Services Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Customer Portfolio Holder be noted

1 The Council's new Customer Service Strategy was presented by Susan Lewis, Customer Services Manager, to Cabinet on 18 November 2019 and was approved. Final design work on the document is now underway to launch the new strategy in the New Year. It is a two-phased approach by initially fixing the basics internally before an external rollout of the strategy's delivery.

2 The integration of Planning and Community Services into the Corporate Contact team is complete and the effect of this is showing an improvement in Customer Service as more calls are being resolved at the first point of contact. I am hoping that this will translate into an improved outturn in the third quarter's performance on the key indicator on resolution of enquiries at the first point of contact.

3 The Council are now members of the Institute of Customer Service which is the industry-leading body that supports organisation in the delivery of customer service excellence. Its members come from all sectors ranging from utilities, government, leisure, banking and retail and include John Lewis and First Direct. There are customer satisfaction surveys included in the membership that enable the Council to truly benchmark with other organisations. The Council will work with the Institute to work on how to get a holistic measure of customer satisfaction and how to drive service improvements out of this feedback and a range of other data insight work the Customer team are embarking on.

4 The Councils Electoral Services team have been dedicated to delivering the General Election for the Epping Forest constituency in recent weeks. I am sure Members would like to join me in thanking the team and other officers in meeting the tight timescales for this particular election.

5 I am pleased to highlight a recent digital service improvement within the Benefits team. Claimants and landlords can now view their claims and report changes to their circumstances on-line supporting their current ability to claim their Benefits claims on-line.

6. The Council is spear-heading a new Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) for Waltham Abbey to support residents, particularly those in need and in receipt of Benefits. It mirrors and expands upon the MAC that exists in at the Job Centre in Loughton. Organisations involved range from EFDC Housing, Benefits, Revenues, Community and Digital teams to the DWP, MIND and Peabody. Overall it is anticipated that

around a dozen services will be available for residents to access in one place. The Waltham Abbey MAC is expected to start in the first few months of 2020 in the Council's Museum on alternative Thursdays initially. It will be trailed by a publicity campaign after Christmas.

7 Member's ability to access Council e-mails from their personal phones and devices is now available. The Council's Customer and ICT teams will be contacting Members in January to roll this facility out to those who would like to take advantage of this.