CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

Context – an overview

The Customer Experience Strategy has been developed taking into consideration several key strategies that support its delivery; Together 24 Strategy, the Corporate Plan, Digital Vision and Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion. In addition, a service review has been carried out in customer services and as part of the strategy development, we have also taken on board the changing expectations of customers over the last three years, cost of living challenges and significant advances in technology. This strategy demonstrates the council's continued commitment to delivering the best outcomes for our customers living and working in the district.

Future proofing:

The Customer Experience Strategy will be a living document and will be reviewed annually to ensure that the deliverables are still the same or have changed due to changes in how we work, how we use technology or because of legislation. A comprehensive review will take place every 4 years in line with the corporate plan.

An example of an annual change could be that we know that due to changes in Universal Credit, visitor number to the public service hub may increase. This means enquiries could take longer and be more complex.

Artificial intelligence technology is moving at a fast pace and today's innovations could be seen as outdated within the next 12 months.

The Councils Together 24 transformation programme is about changing the way the Council provides interaction services to its customers. This is aligned with our digital vision, which means that we will require different ICT capabilities to maximise opportunities within the service provision. As the volume of more complex customers increases; a strategy for the management of those customers, needs to be agreed.

Communications aims

This communications plan is to inform and promote the customer experience strategy and the actions associated with this. We need to ensure stakeholders are well informed to:

- Support engagement and provide continuous support.
- Tailor communications through a range of channels to ensure the information is received as we adopt a more digital approach.
- Explain the need for change and the benefits of the new technologies used.
- To champion the continuous need for change and ensure it is sustained.
- Recognise and celebrate the success of the strategy.

To communicate effectively with all stakeholders as we need to ensure all stakeholders and service areas are aware of any changes, the reasons for the changes and to reduce the impact of disruption to services whilst the work is ongoing.

The objectives

The objective of this communication plan is to provide a proactive approach to communication by:

- The breakdown of key stakeholders to make sure they are being addressed and communicated with effectively with the relevant information, from the right channel, at the right time.
- To outline the various communications channels to be used.
- To include two-way communication mechanisms.
- A plan to mitigate emergent issues and how our communication channels can support this.
- To alleviate reactive communication that may lead to gaps in information.
- To be clear and concise with a consistent approach.

Communication Risks

By understanding the communication risks, we can develop the communications plan to support in mitigating these risks.

Communication can be misinterpreted by stakeholders leading to confusion and misunderstanding, this can be caused by using unambiguous language, differing levels of knowledge and expertise.

Information overload, stakeholders can become overwhelmed making it difficult to absorb and understand the key message, which can result in important information being overlooked. If stakeholders do not feel engaged or involved, they may become disinterested or resistant to the implementation, this can hinder adoption and implementation efforts.

Not providing the opportunity for feedback can then be difficult to gauge stakeholder understanding, address issues and rectify misconceptions, which can lead to ineffective communication and missed opportunities.

Giving an inconsistent message can cause conflicting information, which erodes trust and slows down the implementation and acceptance of the new strategy.

Reputational risk – if we don't answer our customers in the right way as set out in our strategy - there is a potential for this to become an issue for the Council's reputation.

Target audiences

This table gives a high-level view of the project's stakeholders and the key messages this plan will communicate to them.

Stakeholder Group	Key communication messages
Members	Set out what the plan/strategy will do for members, highlighting the benefits and encourage their buy in. Segment relevant members to discuss further detail. Keep up to date on the progress of the project. Celebrate the successful implementation. Receive honest feedback from customers approaching them to review/check that we say we want to achieve is working in practice.
Quality Monitoring Board	Update the QMB on progress within the CES action plan to ensure deliverables are on target. QMB to guide how the action plan is communicated to members, staff and customers
Customer Service team	To deliver clear and concise communication relevant to the team. Create two-way communication, to build trust and a platform for feedback. Communicate aims of the strategy to encourage engagement and mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities. Communicate benefit.
Wider Management Team	Raise awareness of the strategy and our approach to customers, explain the need for change and getting their support in order that we can then communicate wider across the council.
WLDC Officers	Raise awareness of the strategy and our approach to customers, explain the need for change and getting their support.
Together24 Programme Board	To update the board regularly.
External customers	Raise awareness of the changes Encourage two-way communications and feedback where possible. Develop customer influence panel

Stakeholder Group	Key communication messages
Partners Department for Work and Pensions – Gainsborough Job Centre Lincolnshire County Council Volunteer Center Services Citizens Advice	Share key messages of the way we deliver services in case this impacts their service delivery. Explain the changes we are implementing to get their buy in and share best practice

Key Messages

To promote the benefits of the quality, right first-time interactions with customers regardless of the channel they use to contact the council.

- West Lindsey District Council is committed to delivering the best outcomes for our customers living and working in the district.

- We put our customers at the centre of everything we do, reflecting customer feedback in the design and delivery of services.

- We will ensure that we have effective engagement with all of our customers which will help us fully understand their needs.

- Aim to provide a consistent and high quality of service wherever and whenever our customers interact with us.

- Ensure services are flexible and can adapt to the changing needs of our customers, now and in the future.

- Develop a digital approach promoting and supporting self-help wherever possible, whilst retaining traditional access channels.

- We will deliver a seamless service and ensure we take into consideration Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

- Co-design service delivery with our customers, staff and partners, providing a unified and joined up customer experience.

- Providing value for money services.

- Changes mean we are able to deal effectively with the growing number of customers, with more complex demands requiring longer appointment times, whilst minimising impact on resources.

- We have a range of flexible contact channels and availability 24/7 via digital communication to allow customers to do business with the council at a time to suit them.

- West Lindsey District Council is a modern, fit for purpose and forward-looking Council in terms of improving our customer contact and experience with us.

Channels
A range of channels can be used to reach our customers.

Internal communications
- Minerva
- Team meetings
- Weekly bulletins
- Wider Management Team
- Together24 Board meetings
- Members Newsletter
- Committee Briefings

External Communications
- Website
- Social media
- Parish Council ebrief
- Press releases to the media (if needed)
- Committee reports and media coverage
- Attend events/markets/meetings
- CX Influence Panel (CXIP)

Partner Communications
- Internal meetings/updates

Actions / Timetable

To be finalised along with the action plan