



**Corporate Policy and
Resources**

23 May 2024

Launch of Customer Experience Strategy

Report by:	Director of Commercial & Operational Services
Contact Officer:	Lyn Marlow Customer Strategy and Services Manager lyn.marlow@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To adopt the Customer Experience Strategy which set outs our ambitions and commitment to provide the best possible experience for our customer whoever they are and however they contact us.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. Committee approve the adoption of the Customer Experience Strategy**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: There are no legal implications

Financial : FIN/20/25/SSC

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Staffing : There are no staffing implications

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

We have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and a further Assessment will be carried out adhering to the new EIA paperwork that has been issued. The Customer Experience Strategy will enable more of our customers to engage with the Council, that is part of its purpose.

Data Protection Implications: There are no known DP implications. The DP officer has been consulted on this Strategy

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: N/A

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: N/A

Health Implications: There are no Health Implications

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

N/A

Risk Assessment :

There are no obvious risks associated with this strategy, although it should be noted that workload is heavy for those responsible for implementing this strategy and our proposed action plan and timescales may need occasional amendments.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

x

No

1 Introduction - What is our customer experience strategy?

1.1 Customer experience is the sum total of a customer's perception of their interactions with West Lindsey District Council. It's the result of every contact they have, from seeing our bin crews out in the district, contacting our Customer Services Team, or contacting a range of officers and systems which support service delivery.

1.2 West Lindsey's Customer Experience Strategy proposes our approach to creating the best possible customer experience using the tools and resources we currently have available and, where relevant, exploiting new techniques and technologies.

1.3 Whilst the customer's perception of their journeys with us will vary from person to person depending on the extent of their interaction, who they speak to and what their general expectations are from us, there is a lot we can work towards to make their experience as consistent and smooth as possible. This is where the Customer Experience Strategy will start to change perceptions and experiences, whilst the Digital Strategy focuses on condensing the number of different technologies in place that currently support the wide variety of services we offer, all leading to an easier journey for customers.

1.4 Our Strategy strives to look at how we interact and support each other across different departments, as by recognising that our front-line services are also customers, we can work to ensure our interactions with you are productive and consistent.

2. Customer experience vs. customer service

2.1 It is easy to confuse customer experience and customer service, they both revolve around treating customers well when they interact with us. We need to be clear that the Customer Service Team are focused on a dealing with a specific set of scenarios and is owned by a single team at the Council. Customer experience is holistic and needs to cross all service areas and team borders because it's everyone's job. One of the biggest mistakes that any organisation can make is to believe that a customer experience strategy is only relevant for customer-centric roles.

2.2 The Customer Service team will play a key part in the overall customer experience with dedicated customer service job roles ensuring we are able to deal with customer requests and aim to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction.

2.3 How the customer experiences a whole range of touchpoints such as our payments systems, the training we give to our staff, our branded vehicles around the district and the feedback of those who use our services both externally and internally, is key to delivering this strategy.

3. So why is customer experience so important?

3.1 The customer's experience is increasingly recognised as a powerful means of creating a strong and resilient relationship with our customers who are willing to pay for quality additional services, provide good customer satisfaction ratings and be kinder when not happy about our services.

3.2 We are different to usual suppliers; our customers don't just deal with us on a transactional basis. Some of our services such as Home Choices deal with some very vulnerable people, whilst others such encounter people who may feel violated or angry.

3.3 This means because our customers may not have a choice, we should work harder to deliver better experiences, demonstrating that we offer value, choice, consistency in service delivery, transparency, and accountability.

4. The Customer Experience Strategy

4.1 For the purposes of this strategy, we define customer as Members, residents, businesses, and visitors. Furthermore, we recognise that we have internal customers and key stakeholders, who we also need to interact with appropriately.

4.2 The strategy recognises we need to strive to enable customers to interact with us on new platforms/channels, whilst recognising that some of our customers prefer a more traditional approach to contacting the Council and we will continue to offer those options.

4.3 Through the Action Plan (Appendix 1), we will strive to organise and resource services to speed up and, in some cases, automate most of our low level, high demand operations thereby freeing up time for officers to engage in quality interactions with vulnerable customers and cases of a more complex nature.

4.4 The strategy outlines our current demands (23/24), profiles our future customers based on emerging technologies and the State of the District report. It also proposes a Customer Services Champion for all service areas that will enable the service area and the Customer Services team to improve their knowledge of and expectations of our customers.

4.5 The work undertaken as part of Together 24 services reviews will continue to feed into this strategy ensuring customers are always considered and if needed the strategy will be realigned. Together 24 also develops opportunities for continuous improvement through engagement with our teams delivering services everyday across the organisation.

4.6 The strategy will be a living document, and in being so acknowledges that we live in a fast paced environment where we will challenge the status quo and be prepared to adapt the strategy when we see or receive evidence that

the direction of the strategy needs to be reviewed to reflect the changing needs of our community, the strategy will be reviewed annually as a minimum.

4.7 The Customer Experience Strategy action plan will be monitored by the Quality Monitoring Board from launch to 31 March 2025, during the intervening months we will work to place ongoing monitoring into the Voice of the Customer report which is provided to members via the members newsletter quarterly, with the annual Voice of the Customer report being presented to Governance and Audit Committee annually.

Attached to this report are:

Appendix 1 – Customer Experience Strategy May 2024

Appendix 2 – Communications Plan