

Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	23 January 2024
Subject:	Customer Care Policy
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager for Business Transformation & Customer Engagement
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendices 1-3

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

Review of the Customer Care Policy and Customer Standards of Mid Devon District Council (MDDC).

Recommendation(s):

To recommend to the Cabinet the content of the reviewed Customer Care Policy and Standards

1.0 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Customer Care Policy was last reviewed in [November 2021](#). The key requirements for providing a good customer service remain unchanged; however, the policy has been amended to ensure ease of understanding around customer vulnerability and MDDC's approach. A separate document created to establish expected Standards of Customer Service across the council is at Appendix 1.

- 1.2 The provision of good customer service is important for every employee of Mid Devon District Council to understand. It is not service specific and applies across all services and posts.
- 1.3 This report and the revised policy at Appendix 2 covers general customer service across the council and is not solely focussed on the Customer Services team who staff the contact centre and enquiries desk.
- 1.4 This policy and associated standards sets out the approach to customer service that customers can expect from us when using the contact method of their choice.
- 1.5 Appendix 1 shows the adopted standards.
- 1.6 Appendix 3 includes the Equalities Impact Assessment accompanying the revised policy. One of the aims of the policy is to ensure residents are not excluded or disadvantaged by our approach to customer service.

2.0 Customer Service and recent Officer/Member activities

- 2.1 MDDC is committed to frequently reviewing our service provision and Members are actively participating in various groups to shape how we improve services. Details of recent activities are included below.
- 2.2 The Single Equalities Scheme was approved by Cabinet on 4 April 2023. After the May 2023 elections, new Members have joined the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group to focus on continuing work to ensure effective access to council services. Included in this work has been a review of our Equalities action plan and a new Equality Impact Assessment form to accompany policy decisions, an example of which can be seen at Appendix 3.
- 2.3 The Community PDG currently has a working group looking at the impact of access to Phoenix House for vulnerable residents due to the reduced opening hours of Phoenix House. Outcomes of this group will be reported back to Community PDG via the Chair. Additionally at the Community PDG of [22 August 2023](#) a statement around Vulnerability was agreed and is published on the MDDC [website](#).
- 2.4 Care Leavers – With a focus on Corporate Parenting MDDC has recently implemented a discounted Leisure membership and Council Tax exemption for care leavers. This follows on from a previous decision to discount Leisure membership for Carers. All of which improves service access to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
- 2.5 The new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) self-service portal has now gone live with 24/7 access for requesting Clinical Waste collections. Assisted Waste collection requests will shortly follow. These services are also

available for customers to request in person or via the contact centre. This is a major project with a significant transition timeline. Whilst we are focussed on improving our digital access for customers, members should be reassured that we are not intending to limit access via other communication channels.

- 2.6 MDDC's Customer and Digital Services are currently transitioning the Customer Feedback system onto the new CRM platform and is expecting to deliver this early in 2024. As part of this migration, we are aiming to improve our monitoring of customer feedback to assist us with service and performance improvements.
- 2.7 Access to council services for non-digital residents. We continue to offer access to customers via telephone 9.00 until 5.00 Mon-Fri. Appointments can be made for face-to-face enquiries with Customer Services during morning opening hours. Afternoon appointments are also available upon request if customers are unable to attend during our published opening hours.
- 3.0 **Customer Care Policy**
- 3.1 Our Customer Care Standards will be available in our reception area at Phoenix House and published on our website. The standards will set out what customers can expect from us.

Financial Implications – None

Legal Implications – To ensure that all staff are aware of data protection requirements, along with their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Risk Assessment – None

Impact on Climate Change – None

Equalities Impact Assessment – An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed to accompany the reviewed policy as an example of the new EIA referred to in the covering report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan - The policy underpins the core values of Mid Devon District Council as stated in the Corporate Plan around People, Performance, Pride and Partnership.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 09 Jan 2024

Statutory Officer: Philip Langdon

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 15 Jan 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 09 Jan 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 03 Jan 2023

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement

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Background papers: Customer Care Standards