

Report To:	NORTH STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
Date:	16 October 2018
Executive Member / Reporting Officer:	Councillor Bill Fairfoull - Deputy Leader, Executive Member (Performance and Finance) Steven Pleasant – Chief Executive Sandra Stewart - Director - Governance & Pensions
Subject:	CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE ASSESSMENT 2018
Report Summary:	The purpose of this report is to advise and update Executive Cabinet members on the recent Customer Service Excellence Assessment and the recommendations to be noted by Centre for Assessment – Accredited Body for the assessment.
Recommendations:	That the Strategic Neighbourhood Forum note the award of the Customer Service Excellence standard, which has been achieved for the whole of the Council.
Links to Community Strategy:	The Customer Service Excellence standard links across all aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The standard is a tool that shows that the Council and its services put the customer at the heart of service delivery.
Policy Implications:	It is an essential component for the organisation to have external validation to view the way that we deliver our services and that we constantly review and continually strive to improve.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by Section 151 Officer)	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	It is important particularly as the Council addresses its significant budget reductions that we have external measures of performance and delivery of services to residents.
Risk Management:	High standards of customer care impacts significantly on the customer's perceptions of the Council and their satisfaction with our services.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer Julie Speakman Head of Executive Support. Telephone: 0161 342 2142 email: julie.speakman@tameside.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The aim of the Customer Service Excellence standard is to encourage, enable and reward organisations that are delivering services based on a genuine understanding of the needs and preferences of their customers and communities.
- 1.2 The foundation of this tool is that the Customer Service Excellence standard tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. Emphasis is also placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement methods.
- 1.3 There are five criteria within the standard that we are judged against. These are:-
 - a) Customer Insight
 - b) Culture of the Organisation
 - c) Information and Access
 - d) Delivery
 - e) Timeliness and Quality of Service
- 1.4 Once accredited with the standard the organisation is subject to annual review for the next two years followed by a full review after year three of the cycle.
- 1.5 Since the initial accreditation of the standard in 2009 whereby the Council was one of the first in the country to gain the accreditation as a whole council, we have gone from strength to strength in terms of the continued compliance and a summary of the achievements are outlined below:-
 - a) 2009 Full Assessment – 100% compliance and 2 areas of Compliance Plus.
 - b) 2012 Full Assessment – 100% compliance and 6 areas of Compliance Plus.
 - c) 2013 Surveillance – continued compliance and a further 1 area to Compliance Plus to add to the existing 6.
 - d) 2015 Full Assessment – 100% compliance and 8 areas of Compliance Plus
 - e) 2016 on site surveillance - continued compliance with a further 1 area to Compliance plus to add to existing 8.
 - f) 2017 off site surveillance – continued compliance with a further 1 area to Compliance plus to add to existing 9.

(Compliance plus is a discretionary element that can be awarded for parts of a criteria and recognises exceptional best practice.)

2. THE PROCESS FOR 2018 ACCREDITATION

- 2.1 The reaccreditation process for 2018 began some months ago, when service areas began preparing and collating written submissions of evidence to outline how we thought we would meet the standard. As it is full assessment any achievements in the past have been removed, in essence starting afresh, but at a higher benchmark to achieve.
- 2.2 With the information provided an overall council submission was developed and sent for an initial pre assessment known as a Desk-Top Review. The process allows the assessors to check remotely our evidence against the standard's criteria and provide us with some feedback on how far we faired against the standard requirements at that moment in time. This also aided us in planning the assessment site visit timetable.
- 2.3 The next and final stage of the process involved a 5 day onsite assessment. The onsite visits gave our lead assessor Andrew Mackey and his colleague Hugh Keachie the

opportunity to meet with over 120 people from elected members, staff, partners and customers to gain an understanding and demonstration of how we work together to place the customer at the heart of all our service provision. An outline of the visits that took place can be found at **Appendix A**.

3. OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The assessment was received very positively across the organisation and with our partners and customers. Final overall feedback provided at the end of the last day of visits was excellent, with extremely positive comments reported by the lead assessor including:-

“there was no doubt in our mind that you meet the standard with 100% compliance”

“for all visits there has been a wow factor to them”

“continued development and improvement across areas is so evident to see.... Such a range of significant improvement, not just tinkering round the edges”

“passion and engagement of staff is very high”

“the sense of doing more with less is very clear”

“strength of partnership working across the piece is a real feature this time”

- 3.2 The recommendation made by the lead assessor was that the Council should be awarded the standard with 100% compliance against all criteria, which is a phenomenal achievement.

- 3.3 On this occasion, the lead assessor Andrew confirmed that not only was he recommending the Council met the full requirements of the standard, but that the Council be awarded a minimum of ***ten*** new areas of Compliance Plus (a discretionary element that can be awarded for parts of a criteria and recognises exceptional best practice). This is a tremendous outcome and Andrew said ***“this is a remarkable achievement to be recommending 10 areas of compliance plus, each year it gets harder and harder for you as you are starting the assessment from a higher benchmark”***

Noted below are the criteria recommended for the Compliance Plus with some of the examples that were highlighted as best practice:-

- 1.1.3 We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customers groups based on recent and reliable information.**

The work showcased around Dementia Friends initiative and the joint work with Dementia Champions and the Dementia Action Alliance was notable in supporting this compliance.

The Supported Internship Programme, collaboration between Tameside Council, Active Tameside, Pure Innovations and Tameside College that provides a range of wrap around support for the young people in finding work placements/employment was also a standout feature with the assessor, both areas going over and above what the council as an organization had to do.

- 1.2.1 We have a strategy for engaging and involving customer using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.**

The way in which the council engages with customer groups was a particular stand out feature and more specifically the work of the Partnership Engagement Network that was established in the autumn of 2017, a multi-agency approach to provide the

public and our partners with an identified and structured method to influence the work of public services and to proactively feed in issues and ideas.

1.2.2 *We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our services and we advise customers of the results and action taken.*

There were many examples showcased as part of the assessment visit, however standout consultation areas included that of libraries regarding Open+, access to services out of hours, improvements to Hattersley Public Realm and the redevelopment of the Museum of the Manchester Regiment including the creation of Mini Museum Makers, which involved two local primary schools visiting Ashton Town Hall to see what could potentially be in the new museum and engaged them in coming up with ideas for content.

1.2.3 *We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.*

It was evident for this criterion there was a strong consistency in the application of how the council consults and engages with customers many examples shared including those topics noted in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

1.3.5 *We have made positive changes to services as a result of analyzing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.*

There was a general overall consensus that you could tangibly see and feel the differences made as a result of engaging and reviewing customer feedback. Ongoing “you said, we did” in services like Customer Services, Libraries, Museums and in the planning of new developments like Tameside Wellness Centre are a testament to this.

2.1.1 *There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.*

The assessors met a variety of people during the assessment days and reported that there is corporate commitment in the values of putting customers at the heart of service delivery. The Executive Leader was very clear in reiterating this, whilst the staff who took part in visits/meetings, you could tangibly feel their commitment to their customers. You could not help but recognize the work of Tameside Youth Council and their place in leading change in delivering services for children and young people, fighting the cause on many grounds, more recently notable for accessible, affordable travel.

2.1.6 *We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer-focused culture of our organisation.*

It was extremely evident through not only the written evidence, but the visits too that people were seen to go the “extra mile” and “over and above” in the delivery of services to the customer. This was a consistent strength felt across all areas.

3.4.1 *We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers.*

As noted earlier in the report, the strength of partnership working across the piece was a real strength on this assessment. It has always been something that the council has been recognized for over the years, none more so than this year. The work of the Care Together Integrated Care programme with Tameside & Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group and IC Foundation Trust, in addition to the Children’s Improvement Board and joint working to fight the recent moorland fires were held up as exemplars to this criterion.

3.4.3 *We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.*

Whilst again there were so many examples shared during the visits, key features in support of this area included the work to empower our neighbourhoods to deliver added value like Ridge Hill Big Local who have through working with the council taken over the lease of the boating lake and fishing at Stamford Park whilst encouraging residents from the local area to volunteer. In addition the work with Tameside Armed Forces Services who is the partner to Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in delivering the Armed Forces Covenant. The Armed Forces Covenant was signed by Tameside Council at Armed Forces Day 2012. More recently TASC was recently awarded the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme's Silver Award. This recognises the excellent progress the authority's Armed Forces Covenant Team has made in developing pathways and providing opportunities for service-personnel.

5.2.3 *We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organization whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.*

Work relating to the Partnership Engagement Network was a good example of best practice in this criterion. The joint arrangements for the delivery of support by the ICFT and Welfare Rights to the MacMillan Unit were also recognized as demonstrating unnecessary contact for customers. Work to support the veterans is also an area felt supported this and it was felt these areas of work was an enhanced "tell us once" scenario.

- 3.4 The recommendations have since been externally ratified by the Customer Service Excellence Panel at the Centre for Assessment, the accreditation body.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 Service areas will continue to ensure that excellence in customer service is intrinsic in future deliver models and through the Big Conversation the organisation will continue with its commitment to listen to customer's views and feedback. The CSE model will also continue to be used as a delivery tool for informing service development and improvement.
- 4.2 The outcome of the assessment is to be shared through our communication channels to communicate with our employees, elected members and partners and to widely publicise the outcome of the assessment, which has now been fully ratified.
- 4.3 The Council will be subject to a 12 month on site surveillance visit in the summer 2019 and this is currently scheduled to take place 25 and 26 July 2019.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 As set out on the front of the report.

APPENDIX A

Customer Service Excellence

On site surveillance Wednesday 25 – Friday 27 July 2018

Time Wednesday 25 Andrew	Topic
9.15am – 10.00am	Set up meeting and plan for the assessment Sharing of extra evidence
10.00am – 10.15am	Travel to Ashton
10.15am – 10.50am	Customer Services
10.50am – 11.00am	Travel to ICFT
11.00am – 11.45am	Integrated Care Foundation Trust Digital Health
11.45am – 12.00pm	Walk to Stamford Park
12.00pm – 12.30pm	Ridgehill Big Local Volunteer Programme
12.30pm – 1.20pm	Lunch
1.20pm – 1.30pm	Travel to Stalybridge Civic Hall
1.30pm – 2.10pm	Call Centre update
2.10pm – 2.15pm	Walk to Stalybridge Library
2.15pm - 2.45pm	Time for Rhyme Open +
2.45pm – 3.00pm	Travel to Tame Street
3.00pm – 3.30pm	Rights of Way Forum
3.30pm – 3.45pm	Travel to Dukinfield Town Hall

Time Wednesday 25 Andrew	Topic
3.45pm – 4.30pm	Operational Engagement
4.30pm – 5.00pm	Summary and confirmation of any extra evidence required from the day
5.30pm	Travel to Stalybridge
6.00pm – 6.45pm	Tameside Youth Council

Time	Topic
Thursday 26 - Andrew	
9.15am – 9.30am	Briefing of the day ahead
9.30am – 10.00am	Executive Leader – Cllr Brenda Warrington
10.00am – 10.15am	Travel to ICFT
10.15am – 11.00am	Macmillan Unit – Welfare Rights
11.00am – 11.15am	Travel to Portland Basin
11.15am – 12.00pm	Visit to Portland Basin Museum Little Hands Consultation
12.00pm – 1.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm – 1.15pm	Travel to Dukinfield Library
1.15pm – 1.45pm	Storymakers/Bookstart
1.45pm – 2.00pm	Travel to Dukinfield Town Hall
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board
3.00pm – 3.30pm	Dementia Friends
3.30pm – 4.15pm	Strategic Engagement
4.15pm – 4.30pm	Scam Awareness
4.30pm - 5.00pm	Chair of Scrutiny
5.00pm	Summary and confirmation of any extra evidence required from the day

Time	Topic
Thursday 26 - Hugh	
9.15am – 9.30am	Briefing of the day ahead
9.30am –10.15am	Tameside Registrars Services
10.15am – 10.45am	Communications
10.45am – 11.00am	Travel to Cooper Street/Furnace Street
11.00am – 11.45am	Balsam Control& Clean Up Coopers Ride Celebrating volunteers
11.45am – 12.00pm	Travel
12.00pm – 1.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm – 1.30pm	Travel to Hattersley
1.30pm – 2.15pm	Denton Wellness Centre
2.15pm – 2.45pm	Travel to Jubilee Gardens
2.45pm – 3.30pm	Supporting Internships
3.30pm – 3.45pm	Travel to Denton
3.45pm – 4.30pm	Shared Lives
4.30pm – 4.45pm	Travel to Dukinfield
5.00pm	Summary and confirmation of any extra evidence required from the day

Time	Topic
Friday 27 - Andrew	
9.15am – 9.30am	Briefing of the day ahead
9.30am - 9.45am	Travel to Carrbrook
9.45am – 10.30am	Moorland Fires
10.45am – 11.00am	Travel to Hattersley
11.00am – 11.45am	Hattersley & Mottram Public Realm
11.45pm – 12.00pm	Travel
12.00pm – 1.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm – 1.15pm	Travel to Juniper
1.15pm – 2.00pm	Juniper
2.00pm – 2.15pm	Travel to Droylsden
2.15pm - 3.00pm	Greater Manchester Pension Fund
3.00pm – 3.15pm	Travel To Dukinfield
3.15pm - 3.45pm	Assessor time catch up
3.45pm	Summary and feedback from assessment

Time	Topic
Friday 27 - Hugh	
9.15am – 9.30am	Briefing of the day ahead
9.30am – 9.45am	Travel to Denton
9.45am – 10.30am	Armed Forces Covenant
10.30am – 10.45am	Travel to Dukinfield Crematorium
10.45am – 11.30am	Bereavement Services
11.30am – 11.45am	Travel to Dukinfield Town Hall
11.45am	Break
12.00pm – 12.45pm	Round the World in 80 days - Trafficking intervention project with Looked After Children
12.45pm – 1.15pm	Lunch
1.15pm – 1.30pm	Travel
1.30pm – 2.15pm	Community Short Breaks
2.15pm – 2.30pm	Travel to Dukinfield
2.30pm – 3.15pm	People Plan - Staff Engagement
3.15pm – 3.45pm	Assessor time catch up
3.45pm	Summary and feedback from assessment