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Meeting: EAP Connected Communities

Date: Friday 19th April, 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG

The meeting will be available for the public to view live at the Democratic Services North Northants YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/c/DemocraticServicesNorthNorthantsCouncil

To members of the EAP Connected Communities

Councillor Lloyd Bunday (Chair), Councillor Valerie Anslow, Councillor Wendy Brackenbury, Councillor Bert Jackson, Councillor Ian Jelley and Councillor Richard Levell

Members of the Panel are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed on the agenda.

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Sanjit Sull, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council

Proper Officer 11th April 2024

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Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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Agenda Item 3



Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Connected Communities

At 2.00 pm on Wednesday 28th February, 2024 in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

Councillor Lloyd Bunday (Chair) Councillor Bert Jackson
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury Councillor John McGhee

26 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Elliott Prentice, Cllr Richard Levell, Cllr Ian Jelley and Cllr Valerie Anslow. It was noted that Cllr John McGhee was acting as substitute for Cllr Anslow.

27 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

28 Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2023

RESOLVED that:-

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29 Update to North Northamptonshire Council Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

Members received a report that sought feedback on a proposed revision of the North Northamptonshire Council Unacceptable Behaviour Policy ahead of its presentation to Executive.

It was heard that the existing policy had been drafted by Future Northants for implementation on vesting day, and was designed to support North Northamptonshire Council officers, members and customers during interactions. It was considered that an appropriate point had been reached for a review of the policy as the Council approached its third anniversary, in light of a broader understanding of the way the new authority operated and how customers accessed its services.

It was reported that a significant amount of time had been spent working with officers, services areas, Health & Wellbeing leads and Unions to ensure a broad range of input in updating the policy with a view to receiving approval to adopt it at the March meeting of the Executive.

It was considered that the existing policy did not go far enough in assessing the needs of individual customers, with work undertaken to better describe actions and engagements the Council could undertake when in contact with customers displaying behaviour deemed unacceptable. The revised policy offered a more consistent approach to support staff and was viewed alongside the internal staff alert register that captured risks arising from reported incidents of unacceptable customer behaviour.

Cllr John McGhee questioned the definition of persistent behaviour as well as who would determine the applicable penalties in cases identified. It was noted that this was outlined in the latter stages of the policy document with service leads and Assistant Directors being responsible for determining applicable penalties for unacceptable behaviour.

Cllr McGhee noted that persistent behaviour in seeking redress often stemmed from frustration with service received. This was noted, and the meeting heard that there would be no blanket approach to customer interactions. Contacts would be reviewed and there would not be implementation of indefinite removal of service for anyone showing unacceptable behaviour. It was further noted that only when contact became unreasonable, forceful or excessive or customers refused to accept decisions when due process had been followed would sanctions be imposed.

Cllr Bert Jackson queried training for staff regarding confrontational approaches from customers, with the meeting noting that conflict and resilience training was undertaken in Customer Services, with de-escalation a primary focus.

Cllr McGhee questioned whether there as a code of conduct for staff and who customers could appeal to if they were sanctioned for unacceptable behaviour. It was heard that appropriate procedures were in place for staff behaviour, managed by Human Resources but that the policy did not currently contain an appeals mechanism although this could be added to the document ahead of approval by Executive.

Members accepted the policy as a well-written document designed to address the very small number of instances of recordable unacceptable customer behaviour. It was heard that, once approved, training sessions for staff would be undertaken with the establishment of a centralised audit point for issuing and reviewing of any sanctions applied.

30 North Northamptonshire Council Complaints Remedy Policy

Members received a report that sought comments and feedback in relation to the North Northamptonshire Council Complaints Remedy Policy, which was designed to support services in assessing complaints at stage one, stage two and Ombudsman scale points.

The meeting heard that North Northamptonshire Council Complaints Handling Policy confirmed that complainants had statutory rights when raising a dispute around loss of service or maladministration. It was therefore considered prudent to adopt a Complaints Remedy Policy that would enable services to make more consistent decisions informed by Ombudsman guidance as to how best to address injustice arising from maladministration or loss of service arising from fault of the Council.

It was noted that the Panel's feedback would be factored into the final report presented to the March meeting of Executive for approval, prior to the policy being used to support services responding to such complaints by offering informed decision making and supporting best practice in line with Ombudsman guidance.

It was reported that under the current published complaints policy, a Stage One complaint would be reviewed by a service lead, service manager of Head of Service within 20-days. It was heard that this timescale would be altered to a statutory 10-days in line with case management responses. A Stage Two complaint, where a complainant as unhappy with the response provided at Stage One would be allocated to a different manager a level up from the original reviewer and would remain at 20-days for review. Complainants then had the option to escalate a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman once the Council's complaints procedure had been exhausted.

The Panel was advised that in circumstances where financial remedy was the correct course of action, this would be taken against benchmarking of the Ombudsman guidance at the earliest opportunity rather than elongating the complaint process. It was noted that having a policy in place could see the use of financial remedies decreasing as complaints were handled in a more timely and consistent manner.

Cllr John McGhee queried examples of improvements made to Council operations arising from complaints. It was suggested that unless an honest appraisal of failings was made then service improvements could not be undertaken.

It was heard that the policy before members was of critical importance in tracking service improvements being made by the Council, particularly the use of a case management system that would assist in putting emphasis on service areas to show where improvements were being made. The remedy policy would help the tracking of complaints and their ownership. Once approved, tool kits, guidance and templates would be provided to assist services with informed decision making.

It was noted that the Ombudsman had a statutory requirement for complaints to be properly logged throughout the process, inputting these via the case management system would result in better visibility and ensure learning was captured concisely resulting in work with services areas around commitments as part of an ongoing learning plan. It was further noted that Internal Audit were planning two audits to work on the case management system, to ensure the Council was doing what it should.

Members welcomed a well-drafted, easy to follow policy that accorded with the Council's Corporate Plan that had taken into account good practice at other local authorities during its preparation.

31 Executive Forward Plan

The Executive Forward Plan for 1st February 2024 to 31st May 2024 was noted.

32 Forward List of Items for the EAP

The forward list of items for the EAP was considered.

33 Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members and Officers for their	
attendance and closed the meeting.	

Chair Date

The meeting closed at 2.48 pm

Agenda Item 4



Connected Communities Executive Advisory Panel

19th April 2024

Report Title	Customer Service Operation Update
Lead Member	Cllr Lloyd Bunday – Executive Member for Finance and Transformation
Report Author	Simon Mills, Assistant Director Customer Experience

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	☐ Yes
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	☐ Yes ⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with?	Modern public services

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Customer Service Plan 2024-25

Appendix B – Team Charter

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report provides an update on the council's customer services operations following a period of transformational activity. The report takes stock of the impact of this activity on the day to day running of the customer service function and provides information on the current position of the service.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report aims to provide members with information about the council's customer services operations and the opportunity to provide comment and feedback.
- 2.2. Following Executive approval on 14th April 2022, North Northamptonshire Council procured a new, single customer relationship management (CRM) system called PlaceCube. Onboarding the five legacy systems commenced in April 2023 and is due to be completed in October 2024.

- 2.3. Following Executive approval on 19th May 2022, the Council procured a single cloud-based telephony system provided by 8x8. Migration from the existing five previous systems started in May 2023. The contact centre software rollout out to all of the council's customer service hubs completed in June 2023, providing one view of customer contact via this important communication channel.
- 2.4. In addition to technological and system implementations, the service has started to align and harmonise its way of working. Further changes will be implemented throughout this financial year and into 2025/26.
- 2.5. A team charter has been co-designed with the team that brings together consistent working principles.
- 2.6. A great deal of work has taken place to get to the current position. Members should note that although it has been possible to move towards single CRM and telephony solutions for customer services, there are still a number of areas with multiple back-office systems that need to be accessed when serving customers. It is natural that future benefits for both the customer and the council will be delivered in phases rather than at one single point. A lot of activity is taking place to streamline ways of working across the council and it is important that the technology is now in place to facilitate this future transformation.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive Advisory Panel:
 - (a) Note the progress that has been made to date in relation to customer services transformation.
 - (b) Consider the information presented in the report and the attached service plan in order to inform both a discussion now and the identification of future advisory opportunities.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations:
 - To provide the service with effective advice and scrutiny on the back of two significant transformation rollouts.

4. Report Background

Customer relationship management system (CRM)

- 4.1. Phase 1 of the PlaceCube CRM system rollout ran from October 2022 to April 2023 (onboarding of Kettering Haylock House based infrastructure, which is currently hosted by WNC). The following are the benefit realisations and lessons learnt:
 - What went well?
 - Strong stakeholder engagement: officer positivity and opportunities to shape training delivery materials.

- System ease of use, allowing to suit the needs of the organisation as per consultation with officers.
- Sharing of knowledge between service designer and business analysts, enabling a redesign of service request and ability to wireframe.
- Ability to record cases against customer records (something the previous systems in use were unable to do).
- Rapid development of key capabilities with new systems in the council, with improvements to agility acquired through experience.
- o Continuing to provide services whilst a new system is implemented.
- Delivery of a project within budget and on time.

What didn't go well?

- Following internal resource changes, supplier support was initially not able to meet the council's specific needs. This led to the project team having to design and self-learn the system at the same time – in short, they had to react very quickly to the situation.
- Due to supplier resource constraints, there was a delay in resolving issues whilst building the platform.
- Limitation on the availability of council resource/ However, as the council was part of West Northants Council (WNC) digital service at that time, it was able to access additional support. This did pose problems with allocation of resources across the shared service, with multiple project timelines and commitments to take into consideration.

What have we learnt?

- Resource focus In May 2023, the Digital service disaggregation was imminent (shared service with WNC), so resource needed to be ringfenced for future phases, including a service designer and low code officers.
- Adapting the approach Feedback from the project team that the 'show and tell' sessions could be perceived as going over the same content. These have been shaped differently, including development build specific sprints and tailored sessions on workstreams such as the waste service dashboard.
- <u>Earlier supplier engagement</u> Earlier engagement with the supplier at the start of future phases, ensuring accountability and support is in place. Weekly and monthly progress meetings planned in advance, with key stakeholders in attendance.
- 4.2. Phase 2a and 2b of the Placecube rollout ran from May 2023 to December 2023 (onboarding of Thrapston (June 2023) and Wellingborough December 2023) based infrastructures including waste services dashboards and integration). The following are the benefit realisations and lessons learnt:

What went well?

- Good team work; communication and flexibility to complete testing out of hours to meet deadlines.
- Quicker at identifying bug fixes for the supplier to resolve.
- Training materials and engagement with officers.
- o Rollout after three phases remains on budget.

- What didn't go well?
 - System issues, classed as bug fixes, taking time to get resolved by the supplier.
 - The case management system has been built in a certain way, which utilises its own branded forms. Using our own forms via Firmstep resulted in complex integrations, which caused a delay with testing and go live.
 - Other project streams coinciding around peak activity times.

What have we learnt?

- Adapting the approach To carry out impact assessments for all changes, even those perceived as minor, creating more opportunities for officer to assess the changes proposed.
- Adapting the approach Due to the complexities of the system build, ringfence more time for testing on future phases, where practical.

How is the system working and what are we looking at next?

- 4.3. Our customer relationship management (CRM) system is now live in four of the services six hubs including Thrapston Cedar Drive; Kettering Haylock House; Rushden Newton Road and Wellingborough Tithe Barn.
- 4.4. Officers operating within these hubs are recording all contact channel interactions onto the system (appointments; email; phone; reception and web forms). We also record if each instance of customer contact is avoidable. This helps us review service delivery in the future to help resolve customer queries quicker as well as self-serve on our website where possible.
- 4.5. Our in-house developers have set up datasource and reporting capability in the CRM system, allowing us to export data to support ongoing service liaison meetings. Our aim is to provide a service specific service summary report each month, detailing all the interactions that have taken place and helping all services better and more efficiently serve our customers.
- 4.6. Phase 3a of the Placecube rollout is in progress and due to be completed by June 2024 (onboarding of The Cube hub-based infrastructure). Phase 3b will commence shortly after and is due to complete in October 2024 (onboarding of the Kettering Bowling Green Road hub based infrastructure).

Cloud based telephony system (8x8)

4.7. The 8x8 Contact Centre solution rollout went live on 14th June 2023 as planned (onboarding of all six customer service hubs). Prior to the go live date, the main North Northamptonshire Council contact telephone number was ported (brought in off our legacy systems, into the 8x8 database) on 6 June 2023. The customer service managers were key in ensuring the ported number was tested and the customer journey met the design expectations. Throughout the project, there was regular senior officer oversight and involvement from service leads, ensuring that decision making was consistent and supported the engagement and training of colleagues, as well as opportunity to raise any concerns or knowledge gaps. The following are the benefit realisations and lessons learnt:

- What went well?
 - o Minor teething issues with IT equipment were quickly resolved.
 - Positive engagement and sharing of cloud based implementation good practice with Buckinghamshire Council. As well as regular meetings with the WNC telephony project team, ensuring shared service dependencies were identified and maintaining a good working relationship.
 - Positive engagement with staff and stakeholder by-in, good engagement with change champions and officers.
 - High attendance at the 8x8 supplier led contact centre training sessions.

What didn't go well?

- Training overlapped with testing, due to demand on resource from other competing projects and operational activities. This was mitigated by the test manager who made sure all test cases were correctly created and signed off by 8x8.
- There was a desire to attend training sessions as close to go live as possible, which also caused overlaps and potential changes to agreed processes, off the back of product testing.

What have we learnt?

 Adapting the approach - In collaboration with our suppler, identify capacity and availability on both sides, when planning training and go-live dates.

How is the system working and what are we looking at next?

- 4.8. Following the completion of the contact centre solution rollout, a programme board has been established to track changes to the interactive voice response (IVR), which is the technology behind our phone queues and agent groups. This is the customer facing interaction when a call comes through our 0300 126 3000 telephone line.
- 4.9. Having the service on one telephony platform has enabled us to train multiple officers in skillsets to offer stronger resilience on high demand lines. For example, our Wellingborough hub is now accepting between 1-1.5k calls extra per month, which has reduced the abandonment rate at the Kettering Bowling Green Road hub.
- 4.10. Being a cloud-based solution has enabled the team based at Haylock House the ability to work remotely, something the previous solution was unable to do.
- 4.11. We will be reducing the complexities of selecting a local area as we onboard the remaining hubs to the CRM, as well as working with services who are onboarding to a one system database i.e. revenues and benefits.
- 4.12. The structure and menu wording will also be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the customer journey better, that it is in plain English and easier to navigate.
- 4.13. The new income management system (IMS) went live in January 2024, which includes a one platform for automated telephone payments (ATP). As a result, we have been able to remove the multiple ATP options throughout the IVR and

present the ATP option at the front of the script. Customers also have the option to select a soft key at any point, to go directly to the ATP. This has made it easier for customers to make payments and prevent funds going to the incorrect legacy accounts.

Performance full year 2023/24

4.14.

Telephone Contact	
Calls Offered	390,644
Calls Accepted	305,225
% Accepted	80%
% Within SLA (<1min)	60%

Other Contact Channels	Customer Volumes
Face to Face	74,751
Emails	122,848
E-Forms	29,158
Total customer contact	531,982

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. Alongside the customer service transformational projects, work has gone into establishing how the team transition to one way of working and purpose.
- 5.2. The team have been involved with developing a team charter which benchmarks our ways of working against North Northants Councils values and behaviours.
- 5.3. This includes a learning and development programme, focusing on in person training events every quarter for every officer, with content that reflects the environment the team are working in. For example, we are producing a 'crisis management for call handlers' course for Q1. These sessions will also offer officers the opportunity to network and share best practice.
- 5.4. We have six customer service offices across North Northants:



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- 5.5. The team will have the opportunity to work from any of these locations, which will incorporate a consistent approach to hybrid working.
- 5.6. The customer service team leaders have been assigned specific project ownership, which will include a review of our current service processes and the identify the opportunities to align and optimise.
- 5.7. As part of the 8x8 purchase, a workforce management system was included called Verint. This integrates data from the contact centre system, which will allow us to forecast staffing based on call volumes, by officer skill set.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 6.1.1. The service has a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year. There are no resource or financial implications arising from this service update.
- 6.1.2. The case management system for complaints; MP and member enquires is currently going through the approval process and can be shared at a future Executive Advisory Panel.

6.2. Legal and Governance

6.2.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 6.3.1. This service update supports our Corporate Plan key commitments to provide Modern public services 'providing efficient; effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities'.
- Providing good quality and efficient services valued by our customers.
- Using our assets; skills; knowledge and technology effectively.

6.4. **Risk**

- 6.4.1. The CRM and telephony projects have specific risk registers in place to capture feedback and oversight via the project management teams.
- 6.4.2. There are no significant risks identified from the update contained in this report.

6.5. **Consultation**

- 6.5.1. The CRM and telephony project managers were engaged with, to ensure this report captured a true reflection of their respective projects.
- 6.5.2. This service update report required no further formal consultation.

6.6. Consideration by the Executive

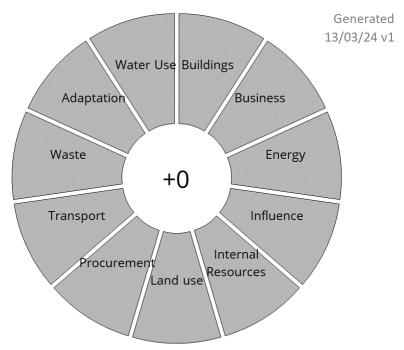
- 6.6.1. The report being presented to the Executive Advisory Panel, has not been presented to Executive. However, the Executive signed off the CRM business case on 14th April 2022 and the telephony business case on 19th May 2022.
- 6.6.2. This report was presented to and discussed at the recent Corporate Scrutiny Committee, on 9th April 2024.
- 6.6.3. The Executive Member responsible for the service has regular meetings with the Assistant Director Customer Experience, therefore is kept appraised of ongoing project work and service performance.

6.7. Equality Implications

6.7.1. There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

6.8. Climate Impact

- 6.8.1. The climate assessment has been completed, showing zero impact. The contents of this service report have no direct positive or negative dependencies on NNC's climate response.
- 6.8.2. The infographic shows the relative costs and benefits of the decision on 11 different categories with respect to the climate: Buildings, no effect. Business, no effect. Energy, no effect. Influence, no effect. Internal Resources, no effect. Land use, no effect. Procurement, no effect. Transport, no effect. Waste, no effect. Adaptation, no effect. Water Use, no effect.



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 9 mos away.

- 6.9. **Community Impact**
- 6.9.1. There are no community implications arising from this report.
- 6.10. Crime and Disorder Impact
- 6.10.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. Background Papers

7.1. None.



Customer Experience Service Plan

April 2024- March 2025



Council Vision

"A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life"



Vision for the service

"To be resolution focused and ensure that the customer experience is at the heart of everything we do; providing an experience that means our customers can see, thear and feel that we are living and breathing our NNC values"



Service Description and Key Facts

In 2022-23 we handled 630,000 customers interactions across North Northants

372,000 contacted us by phone

34,800 visited us in person

118,000 emailed us

32,000 contacted us using e-forms

2,500 complaints were received

1,500 MP enquiries were received

We are the face of the council for many services and this range is expanding as we strive to become the front door of the authority - the new customer experience strategy will take a look at the holistic view of all interactions between customers and the council.

We have customer service teams based in Corby; Kettering; Rushden; Thrapston; and Wellingborough.

We have a team that collates and coordinates replies to complaints and ombudsman requests made to the council, alongside a service for handling MP and Member enquiries.



Corporate Priorities

This service plan links in with our corporate priorities:





Service Plan Objectives

- Continue to develop the CRM system and analyse data on customer interactions, ensuring we have advisors where customers need them
- We will work collaboratively with our colleagues in Adult Social Care to map customer contact alongside the established local area partnership hubs (LAPS)
- Design, engage and implement a new Customer Experience Strategy
- ୍କ Review of all customer complaint related polices and update in line with the new କ୍ଷ୍ୱjoint Ombudsman code
- Design, engage and implement a new case management system for complaints, MP and Member enquires
- Work with our telephony supplier to exploit further efficiencies via the phone and web channels



Performance Indicators

The following performance indicators have been set for Customer Experience:

Corporate Plan - Key			
commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Target
Modern Public Services	MPS30	Total number of Stage 1 complaints received by NNC (excluding children's services complaints)	Tracking indicator only
Modern Public Services	MPS32	Total number of complaints escalated to stage 2	Tracking indicator only
Modern Public Services	MPS34a	% stage 1 complaints answered within SLA (10 Wdays or agreed extension)	90%
Modern Public Services	MPS34b	% stage 2 of complaints answered within SLA (20 Wdays or agreed extension)	90%
Modern Public Services	MPS35a	% of stage 1 complaints upheld (broken down by themes in MPI report/health check)	20%
Modern Public Services	MPS35b	% of stage 2 complaints upheld (broken down by themes in MPI report/health check)	20%
Modern Public Services		Number of cases decided on (completed) by ombudsman - broken down by upheld, not upheld and not progressed	Tracking indicator only
Modern Public Services Modern Public Services	MPS72	% stage 1 complaints where service improvement needs identified from the complaint	80%
Modern Public Services	MPS73	% stage 2 complaints where service improvement needs identified from the complaint	80%
Modern Public Services	MPS39	% of calls answered out of total calls received in customer services	90%
Modern Public Services		Number of customers helped by customer services - split by telephone/ face-to-face appointments / face-to-face drop in to reception / email and online forms	Tracking indicator only



Service projects

These are the projects in progress, that will continue into 2024-25:

- CRM system: A new, single system is being rolled out across customer services to deliver a single record of all customer contact; across all contact channels. We went live at Haylock House in April 2023; Thrapston in December 2023, with Corby due in Spring 2024 and Bowling Green Road in Autumn 2024.
- Telephony: The new corporate phone system went live in all contact centres in October 2023. A programme board is being set up to review the IVR routing, enabling us to track and make real time enhancements to the customer journey
 - Complaints CMS: Continuing our work with PlaceCube, we will be moving complaints, MP and Member enquires onto a centralised database, which will offer better visibility of contact and track adherence
- Blue Badge: Disaggregation from the current WNC/NNC system, by contract end date of March 2025. We will be exploring if PlaceCube is a suitable platform.
- Service redesign: As we continue to maximise the benefits from the above projects, we will look
 at how the team can be brought together and minimise siloed working



Service projects

These are the projects that we will start in 2024-25:

- Revising strategies and policies: We will review our Customer Experience Strategy
 and the council's Complaints Policy, reflecting the first three years of the Council and
 seeing how we can improve from lessons learnt.
- **Digital**: We will work with IT to exploit website improvements that expand customer self-service and free up capacity for us to help customers with more complex needs. This is refereed to as the omnichannel experience; giving customers a choice on how they access our services, in a way that suits them.
- Back to front: We will work with IT and services, to take on more of their work, so that
 we can deliver a better customer experience at the first point of contact as well as help
 the Council make savings overall.



Capital Budget

We have one project in progress, which is the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management, or CRM, system.

This is funded from a combination of existing budgets when it goes live, and part of the Business Rates Retention budget that was allocated to customer service improvements to sovereign authorities, that has transferred to North Northants Council.



Business Continuity and Health and Safety

- Service Business Continuity Plan- actions from the recent exercise are currently in review and being looked at a local and corporate level
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments- Two offices are due to have reception refits
 on the back of recent assessments, there are also ongoing actions allocated to the
 team to bring together and pull into one customer service one best way of

್ಷ್ operating



Strategies and Policies

These are the strategies and policies the service owns:

- Customer Experience Strategy: This sets out what our customers can expect from us, facts and figures about our service and the things we are doing to improve it.
- Complaints policy: This lets customers know how they can tell us about poor service, as well as excellent service, so that we can make things right and learn from complaints.
- Unacceptable behaviour policy: This policy is being developed to help customers and staff know what is not acceptable when customers contact us, so that we can deliver the best service.
- Staff alert register: This is an internal database that flags customers who may be of concern to all services and where staff need to be aware of issues when helping them.



Customer Services and Experience

Roles & responsibilities

The Customer Experience team is made up of six key roles

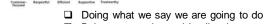
- □ Customer Service Administrator
- Customer Service Advisor
- □ CRM and Customer **Experience Digital Officer**
- ☐ Senior Customer Experience Officer
- □ Customer Service Team Leader
- □ Customer Delivery Manager

Page



- ☐ Give customers a choice on how they interact, building on our 24/7 provision
- ☐ Train and empower our team in first point of contact resolution and proactive remedies
- Ensure content we use across all contact channels is in plain English
- ☐ Provide an experience that means our customers can see, hear and feel that we are living and breathing our NNC values

Goals



- ☐ Being trustworthy and leading by example ☐ Setting a commitment and expectation and following it through
 - Building strong work relationships between services; strong communication and appreciation of pinch points







Ground rules

- ☐ All hubs will have two paid 10 minute breaks a day (am/pm) - based on full time equivalent
- ☐ All hubs will opertate a restricted access NNC flex system
- ☐ All colleagues will be rostered into the office a minimum of two days per week, based on full time equivalent, allowing for more collaboration and learning between colleagues

Ground rules

☐ All colleagues will have the opportunity to be rostered at a different hub, minimum of once per month

Values and behaviours

- ☐ All colleagues will have a minimum of one ME Time per month; an opportunity to catch up and invest in you
- All colleagues will have a bi-monthly performance reflection session with their line manager and review performance and aspirations

Fun

- Happy boards in each hub where colleagues can bring in photos/ write affirmations that inspire and empower them
- Opportunity to meet colleagues quarterly and share skills
 - Monthly newsletter celebrating colleagues work and home achievements

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Strengths and skills

- Able to relate; approachable; adaptable;
- ☐ Extensive knowledge base; ability to handle difficult situations
- □ Supportive and collaborative network; work well as a team; humor; communicate well together; strong team ethos
- Respectful; motivated; customer focused Flexible to meet customer needs; positive to change
- ☐ Able to support services proactively in some instances; share internal knowledge
- ☐ Good rapport between the different job roles

Weaknesses, learning opportunities and risks

- ☐ Sporadic training; 121's; lack of consistency
- ☐ Clearer job descriptions; where does our job fit in with other departments and NNC?
- ☐ Too many options on the IVR, how can we change this?
- ☐ Names of the Council and previous sovereign identities cause confusion
- ☐ Knowledge of how NNC operates; ability to respond to general enquires
- ☐ Communication with residents
- ☐ Team meetings; opportunities to share; visit other hubs and services; meet colleagues





Purpose

To be resolution

focused and ensure

that the customer

experience is at the

heart of everything we

do



Roles and responsibilities

Customer Service Administrator

Triaging of general enquiry calls ensuring first point of contact resolution where possible

Email and application processing

Cestomer Service Advisor

Customer facing receptions and face to face appointments

First point of contact call handling, using caring skills to help vulnerable residents access the right services

CRM and Customer Experience Digital Officer

Works closely with all roles within the service and across other services, identifying ways of improving the customer experience

Senior officers on digital projects undertaken by our service

Trained in interrogating and creating low code applications

Senior Customer Experience Officer and Customer Service Team Leader

First point of contact for all case management handling, including complaints; MP and Member Enquires

Training and support link with services, incorporating learnings and improving the ongoing service provision

Responsible for overseeing day to day activities of our service delivery, utilising creative, caring and development skills to support a happy and high performing team

Works with services to aid harmonisation and transformation, benefiting the entire customer experience

Customer Delivery Manager

Promoting a one team ethos within customer services and other services; championing a streamlined way of working

Involved with the shaping and implementation of the service strategy and engaging key stakeholders on its main principles

Overall responsibility for our hubs including direction, coordination, and development of staff.

Managing budgets and SLA's

Goals

- To give customers a choice on how they access our services, in a way that meets their needs
- To offer a 24/7 platform that enables customers to self serve, at a time and a place that suits them
- To automate and utilise technology in an appropriate way, that demonstrates value for money and provides a single access point into the council
- To train and empower our team in first contact resolution and proactive remedies, reducing the pressure on key services via ways of early intervention and joined up working with local partners
- To ensure content we use across all channels is in plain English (a famous giant once said: 'don't gobblefunk ground with words'
- Ensure that the customer experience is at the heart of everything we do
- Provide an experience that means our customers can see, hear and feel that we are living and breathing our NNC values





Purpose

To offer a consistent standard of service across all contact channels and locations within North Northants. To be resolution focused and ensure that the customer experience is at the heart of everything we do

- Resolution focused
- Solve our customers problems in a respectful and timely manner
- Face and ear of the Council
- ne team acting council wide, embodying our Values:

 Customer focused
 - Customer focused
 - Respectful
 - **Efficient**
 - Supportive
 - **Trustworthy**





Strengths and Skills

- ☐ Flexible to meet customer needs; positive to change
 - ☐ Able to relate; approachable; adaptable
- Customers are at the heart of everything we do
 Making use of available information (keeping it up to date) and challenge when its incorrect

Our values make us who we are:

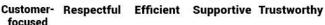












- Good rapport between the different job roles

 Respectful; motivated; customer focused
- Listening to the customer; non biased; level headed; non judegmental of personal circumstances and sound advice
- 3 Sharing skills and experiences with colleagues

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- ☐ Able to support services proactively; share internal knowledge
- Supportive and collaborative network; work well as a team; humour; communicate well together; strong team ethos

- ☐ Extensive knowledge base; ability to handle difficult situations
- ☐ Working closely with other teams, helping each other to be more efficient
- ☐ Sharing of learning and news ways of working on transformation projects
- ☐ Honesty; setting expectations I.e. lead times (transparency). Confidence in delivering advice and making sure we give the right advice, first time
 - ☐ Setting a commitment and expectation and following it through
- ☐ Building strong work relationships between services; strong communication and appreciation of pinch points
- ☐ Mindful of data handling; and communicating this to customers











Ground rules

- All staff will have two paid 10 minute breaks a day (am/pm) based on full time equivalent, giving a guaranteed
 rest break during a working day
- All hubs will operate a restricted access NNC flex system supporting our work and allowing us to benefit
- All colleagues will be rostered into the office a minimum of two days per week, based on full time equivalent, allowing for more collaboration and learning between colleagues
- All colleagues will have the opportunity to be rostered at a different hub, minimum of once per month
- All colleagues will have a minimum of one ME Time per month; an opportunity to catch up and invest in you
- All collleagues will have a bi-monthly performance reflection session with their line manager and review performance and aspirations
- To reduce confusion, we refer to our hubs by office name, not by the previous sovereign authority name. When engaging with customers, we refer to transfering calls/queries as 'to my colleague'
- Limit the use of 'department' and 'them'!
- In person training sessions, once a quarter, on subjects shaped by you





- Happy boards in each hub where colleagues can bring in photos/ write affirmations that inspire and empower them
- Fundraising how can we get involved with national fundraising initiatives, including Children in Need MacMillian Coffee morning; and Red Nose day?
- Opportunity to meet colleagues quarterly and share skills
- Monthly newsletter celebrating colleagues work and home achievements $^{\text{Page}}_{37}$





Our Values and Behaviours

Customer-focused

- Think 'One Team' and act Councilwide
- Take ownership

 Pand do the right

 thing
- დKeep customers up-to-date and informed
- Listen and respond to differing needs.

Respectful

- Embrace and live the Council's values
- Listen to and value the contributions of others
- Share ideas and feedback at all levels
- Promote diversity and inclusivity.

Efficient

- Challenge and innovate
- Be collaborative and share learning
- Be flexible, proactive and prioritise
- Seek learning opportunities.

Supportive

- Build an open and sustainable culture
- Promote achievement and celebrate success
- Be caring and empathetic
- Develop yourself and others.

Trustworthy

- Act with honesty and integrity
- Build effective relationships
- Do what you say you're going to do
- Be open and transparent.



Our values make us who we are:











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- Doing what we say we are going to do; taking ownership and holding each other to account
- Being trustworthy and leading by example
- Be the best that you can be
- Put the customer at the heart of everything we do
- Take pride in the work that we do deliver
- Be proud of the value that we add to our customers lives and NNC as an organisation





Weaknesses, learning opportunities and risks

- Sporadic training; 121's; lack of consistency
- Clearer job descriptions; where does our job fit in with other services across NNC?
- Too many options on the IVR, how can we change this?
- Names of the Council and previous sovereign identities cause confusion
- Knowledge of how NNC operates; ability to respond to general enquires
- യ്യ് Communication with residents
- 5. Team meetings; opportunities to share; visit other hubs and services; meet colleagues
 - Services having the opportunity to come and work alongside us
 - Office environments some positive; some negative, how can this be more consistent?

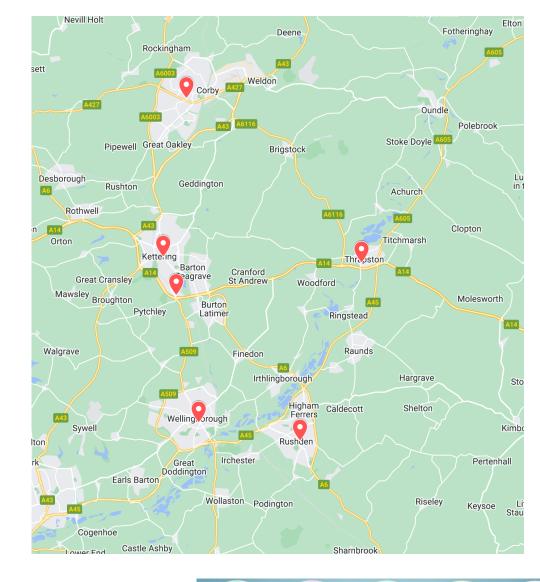




Our hub map

We are based at six hubs across North Northamptonshire

- Bowling Green Road, Kettering
- Cedar Drive, Thrapston
- ୍ଦି• Newton Road, Rushden
- Tithe Barn, Wellingborough
 - The Cube, Corby







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North Northamptonshire Council

1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 JULY 2024

Published by: Democratic Services

Leader of North Northamptonshire Council: Councillor Jason Smithers

INTRODUCTION

This is the North Northamptonshire Council's Forward Plan. It is published pursuant to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Its purpose is to provide the required 28 days notice of the Council's intention to take 'key decisions' and to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private. It gives advance notice of all the "key decisions" and "exempt decisions" which the Executive or another body or officer so authorised are likely to take over a four month period. The Plan is updated on a rolling monthly basis.

The Members of the Executive a	re:
Councillor Jason Smithers	Leader of North Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Helen Howell	Deputy Leader of North Northamptonshire Council Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Councillor Gill Mercer	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Scott Edwards	Children, Families, Education and Skills
Councillor Harriet Pentland	Climate and Green Environment
Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Finance and Transformation
C∰ncillor David Brackenbury	Growth and Regeneration
Councillor Matt Binley	Highways, Travel and Assets
Cauncillor Mark Rowley	Housing, Communities and Levelling-Up
Councillor David Howes	Rural Communities and Localism

The concept of a "key decision" is intended to capture the most important or significant decisions. "Key decisions" will normally be made at meetings open to the press and public. The press and public will only be excluded from such meetings as and when the Council's Monitoring Officer considers that this is necessary in order to avoid the public disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The authority has decided that a Key Decision is one which is likely:-

- (a) to result in the authority incurring expenditure of which is, or the making of savings which are, significant; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the authority."

The Council has decided that significant expenditure or savings are those amounting to above £500,000.

In determining the meaning of "significant" for these purposes North Northamptonshire Council will also have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000.

At times it may be necessary for the North Northamptonshire Council to give consideration to items where the public may be excluded from the meeting. Members of the public are excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. This includes exclusion from access to any pertinent documents. Details of the exemption categories can be found in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' section in the Council's Constitution. This plan provides advance notice of any items which may be held in private.

Paragraph 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 provides for members of the public to make representations to the Council on why an exempt item should be considered in public, rather than in private. Persons wishing to make such representations and/or obtain further details in respect of any issues referred to in the Plan should contact the undermentioned officer.

The Monitoring Officer may also include in the Forward Plan references to such other decisions, which are to be taken by the Council or any of its Committees or Sub-Committee or officers as they consider appropriate. These will be those decisions that are considered to be significant or sufficiently important and/or sensitive so that it is reasonable for a member of the public to expect it to be recorded and published.

All general questions or queries about the contents of this Forward Plan or about the arrangements for taking key decisions should be raised with David Pope, Democratic Services.

Please email: democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

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April 2024

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Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
Budget Forecast 2023-24 - Period 11 Page 46	To report any adjustments to the in-year budget	Executive	Yes	No		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme Update 2023-24	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
North Northamptonshire Council All Age Carers Strategy 2024-2029	To approve the NNC All Age Carers Strategy	Executive	Yes	No	Residents of North Northants have been consulted on the strategy.	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Adults, Health and Wellbeing Executive

					Consultation dates: 29 th January 2024 – 4 th March 2024		Director - Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS)
Future of Kettering Leisure Village - Options Review	To consider and approve the proposed Business Case regarding the future of KLV	Executive	Yes	No		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Deputy Leader & Sports, Leisure, Culture and Tourism Director of Public Health
Northamptonshire Serious Violence Duty Strategy 2023 to 2025	Endorse the Northamptonshire SVD Strategy 2023 and 2025	Executive	Yes	No	Consultation has taken place with the five specified authorities and other stakeholders in preparing the SVD Strategy.	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Housing, Communities and Levelling Up Director of Public Health
Knights Farm Overage Legal Agreement	To extend the Planning Longstop date under the Deed of Variation by one year to April 2025	Executive	Yes	Part exempt, paragraph 3		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy

Annual Inflationary Uplifts Contracted Adult Social Care Providers	To approve the annual uplifts	Executive	Yes	No	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Adults, Health and Wellbeing Executive Director - Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS)
Corporate Fuel Card Policy and Procurement of a Fuel Card Provider Page 6 48	Adoption of a Corporate Fuel Card Policy and Procurement of a Fuel Card Provider	Executive	Yes	No	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy
Commissioning for a Good Life Pseudo Framework Agreement for Individuals with a Learning Disability	Agreement to extend the current contract arrangements for Individuals with Learning Disabilities. Contract value in region of £36.3m per annum.	Executive	Yes	No	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Adults, Health and Wellbeing Executive Director - Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS)
Department for Transport Funding Allocation	Note additional funding allocated by the Department for Transport for 2024/25 and agree	Executive	Yes	No	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets

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	how the funding should be spent.					Executive Director - Place and Economy
Waste Management Three-Year Plan Update	To provide Executive with an update regarding the Three-Year Waste	Executive	Yes	No	18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets
	Management Plan					Executive
						Director - Place
						and Economy

May 2024

Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member			
Capital Programme Update 2023-24 Page 50	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance			
Capital Outturn Report 2023/24 - Period 12	To report on the Capital Budget on a quarterly basis	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance			
Asset Acquisition Policy	To consider adopting an NNC policy.	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive			

							Director - Place and Economy
Disposal of Land off Rothwell Road, South Desborough	To approve disposal of the land	Executive	Yes	Part exempt, paragraph 3	Public notification carried out under s.123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972	16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy
North Northamptonshire Housing Strategic Framework Page 6	To approve the North Northamptonshire Housing Strategic framework with a view to development of the housing strategy ahead of public consultation.	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Housing, Communities and Levelling Up Executive Director - Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS)

June 2024

Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
Budget Forecast 2023-24 - Period 12 Page 52	To report any adjustments to the in-year budget	Executive	Yes	No		13 th June 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme Update 2023-24	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		13 th June 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
NNC Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028	To seek the Executive's approval to adopt the proposed Homelessness and Rough	Executive	Yes	No	Initial consultation event held 21/9/22 The draft document will	13 th June 2024	Executive Member - Housing, Communities and Levelling Up

	Sleeping Strategy following statutory consultation and subsequent amendments				undergo a 6- week formal statutory consultation and additional proactive consultation with service users is planned		Assistant Director Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services
North Northamptonshire Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 Page 53	To seek the Executive's approval to adopt the Bus Service Improvement plant that supports improvements to bus services and measures to improve passenger experience	Executive	Yes	No	Local area partnerships and the Enhanced Partnership will be engaged in the update to the Bus Service Improvement Plan	13 th June 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy
Hackney Carriage De- zoning	To determine whether the Council should remove hackney carriage zones in North Northamptonshire following a	Executive	Yes	No	Consultation process was undertaken between 30/10/23 & 21/1/24	13 th June 2024	Executive Member - Growth and Regeneration Executive Director - Place and Economy

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	consultation process					
Carbon Management Plan Annual Report	To consider and note the annual report	Executive	Yes	No	13 th June 2024	Executive Member - Climate and Green Environment
						Executive Director - Place and Economy

July 2024							
Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
Capital Programme Update Page 55	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		11 th July 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance

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