

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
22ND SEPTEMBER 2009**Putting Customers First – A Customer Strategy for Wyre Forest District Council 2009 - 2012**

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Stronger Communities
CORPORATE PLAN AIM:	A well run and responsive Council
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Marcus Hart
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APPENDICES	Appendix 1 - Putting Customers First – A Customer Strategy for Wyre Forest District Council 2009 – 2012 Appendix 2 – Phone and Email Standards <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details).</i>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to adopt the revised Customer Service Strategy, renamed Putting Customers First – A Customer Strategy for Wyre Forest District Council 2009 – 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

- 2.1 The Putting Customers First – A Customer Strategy for Wyre Forest District Council 2009 – 2012 is adopted and implemented.
- 2.2 Cabinet approves the principles in the draft Worcestershire County Council ‘Our Customers’ Strategy and endorses the development and implementation of an overarching Customer Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2006, the Council's first Customer Service Strategy was adopted but this focussed largely on the work of the Worcestershire Hub. In accordance with the review date of that strategy, our Putting Customers First Strategy has been developed.
- 3.2 Following the recommendation outlined in the Transformation and Delivery Programme, the existing Customer Service Strategy has been re-written and focuses on improving access across all channels which will provide a better choice for customers and cost efficiencies for the Council.
- 3.3 The strategy has been reviewed and refreshed and now includes a corporate Customer Service Charter, basic phone and email standards for all employees as detailed in Appendix 2 and outlines the importance of customer service being at the heart of everything the Council does.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 In order for the Strategy to be effective, there will be an implementation plan involving all employees. This plan will involve launching the Customer Service Charter as detailed on page 14 of the strategy as well as the phone and email standards to every employee and will form part of the induction process.
- 4.2 The strategy commits to monitoring our performance and publishing our achievements and this will be carried out through Covalent and our business planning process.
- 4.3 Elements of the strategy such as the Charter and phone and email standards have been considered by the Putting Customers First Working Group and the Councils Corporate Management and Performance Management Working Group.
- 4.4 In order to develop the strategy the Putting Customers First Working Group will be formulating an improvement plan to improve service delivery for our customers as part of National Indicator 14 (NI14) – Reducing Avoidable Contact. For example where data indicates insufficient information on our website, action will be taken to make improvements accordingly.
- 4.5 The latest NI14 survey showed that approximately 3000 customers made contact with the Council in one week including by phone, in person and by email.
- 4.6 To underpin the Strategy, the Council is investing in dynamic and proactive communications using the Local Government Association (LGA) reputation campaign as a benchmark.
- 4.7 'Our Customers' Strategy is being developed by Worcestershire County Council, this is the overarching framework for customer service strategies across the County and includes the following 5 principles:
 - Access to services
 - Customer Focus
 - Technology as an enabler

- Understanding our Customers
- Value for money

4.8 The 'Our Customers' Strategy will be subject to a consultation process.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been carried out and no adverse equality issues impact on this strategy.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Failure to improve both access to services and building service delivery around the needs of the customer could reduce the overall satisfaction rating of the Council.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council the approval and implementation of the Putting Customers First – A Customer Strategy for Wyre Forest District Council 2009 – 2012.

9. CONSULTEES

9.1 CMT
Linda Collis – Director of Community and Partnership Services
Councillor Marcus Hart – Cabinet Member for Community and Partnership Services
Putting Customers First Working Group
Corporate Development and Performance Management Working Group

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None