



## Report to Customers and Communities Committee

8 May 2014

**Title:** Customer Service Excellence

**Report of:** Managing Director

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide committee with an overview of the plan to achieve Customer Service Excellence.

### Background

2. Customer Service Excellence (CSE) is a standard which was introduced by the government in order to ensure that services are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering. Fundamentally they expect organisations to put customers at the heart of service provision.
3. There are three main benefits to the organisation for working within the CSE framework: -
  - To provide an external validation of our approach to customer service across the company
  - To act as a driver for continuous improvement, allowing us to self-assess our approach to customer service and identify areas for development
  - To act as a skills development tool by identifying areas for continuous improvement and any associated skills or training that individuals or teams would benefit from to be able to deliver improved services
4. The company was first accredited with the CSE Standard in March 2011, and subsequently was subject to further visits for the following 2 years to ensure that we had continued to maintain this standard. In our last assessment the company was found to be fully compliant in all areas.
5. As our last full assessment was carried out over 3 years ago, we are now required to repeat this process to maintain our CSE status.
6. Achieving Customer Service Excellence was identified as a key action for the company in 2014/15.

### Summary

7. The framework covers 5 criteria associated with customer service as follows:

- Customer Insight (Customer profile, engagement and satisfaction)
  - Culture of the Organisation (Policies, culture, professionalism and attitude of employees)
  - Information and Access (Range and quality of information, access to services and working with partners)
  - Delivery (Service standards, outcomes and dealing with complaints)
  - Timeliness and Quality of Service (Standards and performance)
8. The assessment process involves providing a matrix and self- assessment of how we believe we meet the requirements of the standard followed by an onsite assessment. This will include the assessor speaking to officers and customers about the service we provide.
9. The dates set for the assessment process are as follows: -
- 8<sup>th</sup> October – Matrix of information to be provided to the assessor
  - 22<sup>nd</sup> October – Mock assessment on site
  - 18/19<sup>th</sup> November – Full onsite assessment

### **Next Steps**

10. In order to prepare for the assessment we will establish a working group of officers across the company to support the production of the matrix. This group will review each section and identify any evidence from their service area to support the submission and help identify any areas for action.
11. We will also establish a working group of customers to work with us, reviewing our evidence log and preparing for the assessment.

### **Link to values**

12. This report links to the following values: -
- Being a listening and learning organisation
  - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
  - Caring and respecting

### **Impact on tenants**

13. The aim of maintaining the company's accreditation of CSE is to ensure that we continue to provide excellent customer service to our tenants and leaseholders. The criteria within the assessment provides a clear framework for ensuring that we continue to provide timely and effective services.

### **Risk Management Implications**

14. Failure to focus on the customer has been identified as a strategic risk for the company. Maintaining a commitment to Customer Service Excellence and the framework associated with this ensures that we continue to work to ensure we provide good quality, timely services.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The Head of Corporate Services confirms a budget to meet the cost of undergoing the assessment of Customer Service Excellence. Any other costs arising during this process would be reported back to this committee.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

16. The first criteria of the framework is Customer Insight and expects organisations to have an understanding of who their customers are to be able to demonstrate that the services being provided meet their needs. This is part of our overall approach to collecting and reporting profile information.

### **Value for Money Implications**

17. There are no direct value for money implications arising from this report.

### **Health Implications**

18. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

### **Environmental Implications**

19. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

### **Consultation carried out**

20. The Involvement Service Improvement Group (SIG) oversee all involvement and customer service activity in the company. The SIG have endorsed the company's intention to undergo the reaccreditation of CSE and a number of the group have already expressed an interest to be part of a working group of customers to work with us during preparation for the assessment.

### **Recommendations**

21. The committee is recommended to: -
  - note the plan for undergoing reaccreditation of Customer Service Excellence;
  - receive a further report following the assessment in November.