

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Local Government Association Customer Experience Peer Challenge

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 13 November 2018

Cabinet Member: Cllr Tudor Evans OBE

CMT Member: Tracey Lee, Chief Executive

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Ref:

Key Decision: No

Part: I

Purpose of the report:

The Council commissioned the Local Government Association to carry out a Customer Experience Peer Challenge in Plymouth in July 2018. The Peer Challenge approach is set out in the feedback report attached at appendix I, and can be summarised as an improvement focused review carried out by a team of experienced elected Member, officer and partner peers.

In Plymouth, the team pioneered a new approach, which focused on reviewing the Council's approach and performance from the perspective of our customers. The team considered a number of key areas considered critical to all councils, including the Council's approach to leadership, priority setting, learning, capacity to deliver and the experience of the users of our services. As well as giving feedback on their findings, the peer team suggested some practical actions that the Council could take in the short term, and made a series of recommendations for consideration. These are summarised, along with the Council's responses at appendices II and III to this report.

The Peer Challenge report reconfirms the findings of the LGA's 2015 review, that Plymouth has a well-led and managed council. The team found that the Council has a real determination to place customers at the heart of all that it does and that staff and leadership alike are passionate, proud and committed to improving customer experience. They found that engagement with partners across the statutory, voluntary and business sectors was equally positive and committed to the city and its citizens, and the core message from all stakeholders, including most importantly customers, is that 'Plymouth is on the up' – an expression of pride about the city and its ambitions.

The Council's purpose in commissioning the peer challenge was to gain independent external insights into the ways in which it can further improve its leadership and management practice, service design, organisational learning and the outcomes it delivers for customers. The report contains a number of observations that inform the recommendations that are made, including the need for consistency across services, more proactive communications, better use of customer data and IT systems and a 'wider, deeper, cross Plymouth approach to the customer'.

The report and its recommendations will form an important element of the Council's ongoing improvement arrangements, managed by a Customer Experience Programme Board with Cabinet sponsorship and cross-party Member support. The Council's new Strategic Director of Customer

and Corporate Resources will play a key role alongside the political and managerial leadership of the Council in ensuring that the Council's ambitions in delivering for its customers are delivered.

Corporate Plan:

The Corporate Plan, adopted by the new administration in June 2018 clearly puts the customer at the heart of everything we do, and the Council's mission, to be a fairer city where everyone does their bit will underpin the work of the Customer Experience Programme Board. A number of Corporate Plan performance targets and indicators relating to customer experience now form part of the Council's quarterly performance management arrangements.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

Although there are no implications arising directly from this report, the Council's Customer Experience Programme will inform the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan, and decisions relating to human resources and IT. However, to deliver the programme will incur some element of cost but this will be contained within existing budgets.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

None relating directly to the recommendations in this report

Equality and Diversity:

No specific policy recommendations are made in this report that require an equality impact assessment, though it is likely that decisions made in the future relating to work undertaken in delivering the Customer Experience programme will require analysis under equalities legislation, which will be reported and published.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

That Cabinet:

1. Extends its thanks on behalf of the Council to the Peer Challenge team for their work
 2. Notes the content and recommendations of the LGA Customer Experience Peer Challenge Report of July 2018 at Appendix I
 3. Endorses the Council's response to the 'quick wins and practical actions', and the recommendations of the report at Appendices II and III
 4. Asks the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the report and the Council's response and to propose how it might contribute to the development and delivery of the Council's Customer Experience Programme.
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Alternative options considered and rejected:

The Peer Challenge is a voluntary process, and the Council is under no obligation to make commitments with respect to recommendations made in the report. The process does however represent best practice in the local government sector, and the recommendations represent the considered view of experienced and senior local government peer Members and officers.

Published work / information:

- Appendix 1 Customer Experience Peer Challenge: Feedback Report
- Appendix 2 Customer Experience Peer Challenge: Response to 'quick wins' and practical actions
- Appendix 3 Customer Experience Peer Challenge: Response to recommendations

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Sign off:

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Originating SMT Member													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes / No													