

# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROGRESS REPORT

CABINET



Date of meeting: 13 August 2019

Title of Report: **Customer Experience Progress Report**

Lead Member: Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)

Lead Strategic Director: Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services)

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Your Reference:

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

## **Purpose of Report**

The Local Government Association (LGA) pioneered a new approach to its Peer Challenge approach in Plymouth in July 2018. At the request of the Council, the independent review was conducted from the point of view of our customers. The review made nine recommendations and a number of suggestions for 'quick wins'; these were endorsed by the Cabinet in November 2018. This report sets out the progress made since then, and introduces the next phase of the Council's approach to improving customer experience through 'the way we work' programme.

## **Recommendations and Reasons**

1. To note positive progress made against the LGA Peer Challenge recommendations since the peer review report to Cabinet in November 2018
2. To note the work across the Council to improve customer experience as set out in Appendix I
3. To note the Cabinet working group key outputs document attached
4. To agree that the Customer Experience Programme will be renamed "The Way we Work" and to support the further development and delivery of enabling projects as described in the report

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

As it has been a year since the Peer Challenge took place it is appropriate to review progress against recommendations, set out the progress made, celebrate the contributions to customer experience across the Council and describe the wider Way we Work Programme.

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth 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. This will underpin the work we do to improve how we deliver services, as well as support communities to do their bit. Delivering a more digitally connected Plymouth will ensure as many people can benefit from new technologies such as 5G and Full Fibre and at the same time support those who are digitally excluded, this will ensure we maximise our limited resources for those most in need. The work will also focus on the way we work internally, promoting new ways of working and personal wellbeing, improving the organisation's health and safety culture, and provide the tools our people need to work smarter and more efficiently.

## Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The management of changes required to improve the customer experience and to have a financially sustainable Council are all being overseen by the Way We Work Programme. Any resourcing/financial implications to deliver our ambitions over the next three years will be included in the MTFP 2019-2023, and where required will require a separate business case.

## Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

There are no implications arising directly from the report but will where required support the administration's commitment to carbon neutrality.

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

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

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 Way we Work programme will require analysis under equalities legislation, which will be reported and published.

## Appendices

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Appendix I – Customer Experience							
B	Cabinet Working Group agreed outputs							
C	Customer Service Strategy 2015-18							

**Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Andy Ralphs											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 08/08/2019											
Cabinet Member approval: Approved by Jon Taylor by phone Date approved: 08/08/2019											

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In July 2018 the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted a Customer Experience Peer Challenge for the Council looking at all aspects of the services we deliver and how they are received by customers. The 'quick wins' and practical actions arising from the review were agreed by Cabinet in November 2018, and since then the Corporate Management Team, Cabinet Working Group and the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee have provided support to develop the Customer Experience Programme "The Way we Work"

This report sets out the progress made since November 2018 and sets out each project that will deliver the Way we Work Programme. This will deliver a set of improvements to meet the recommendations from the Peer Challenge and at the same time deliver a financially sustainable Council. Delivering the required changes through a single programme will reduce the cost to deliver services, will set out the "ask and offer" with our customers and staff, promote digital as our channel of choice and ensure we have a consistent approach to customer service across the Council.

## PEER CHALLENGE RECOMMENDATIONS & PROGRESS

Since the peer challenge report was presented to Cabinet in November 2018, steady progress has been made in addressing the recommendations. Below is a summary of progress made, and in some cases have resulted in a number of actions being taken, and/or are being considered as part of the Way We Work Programme.

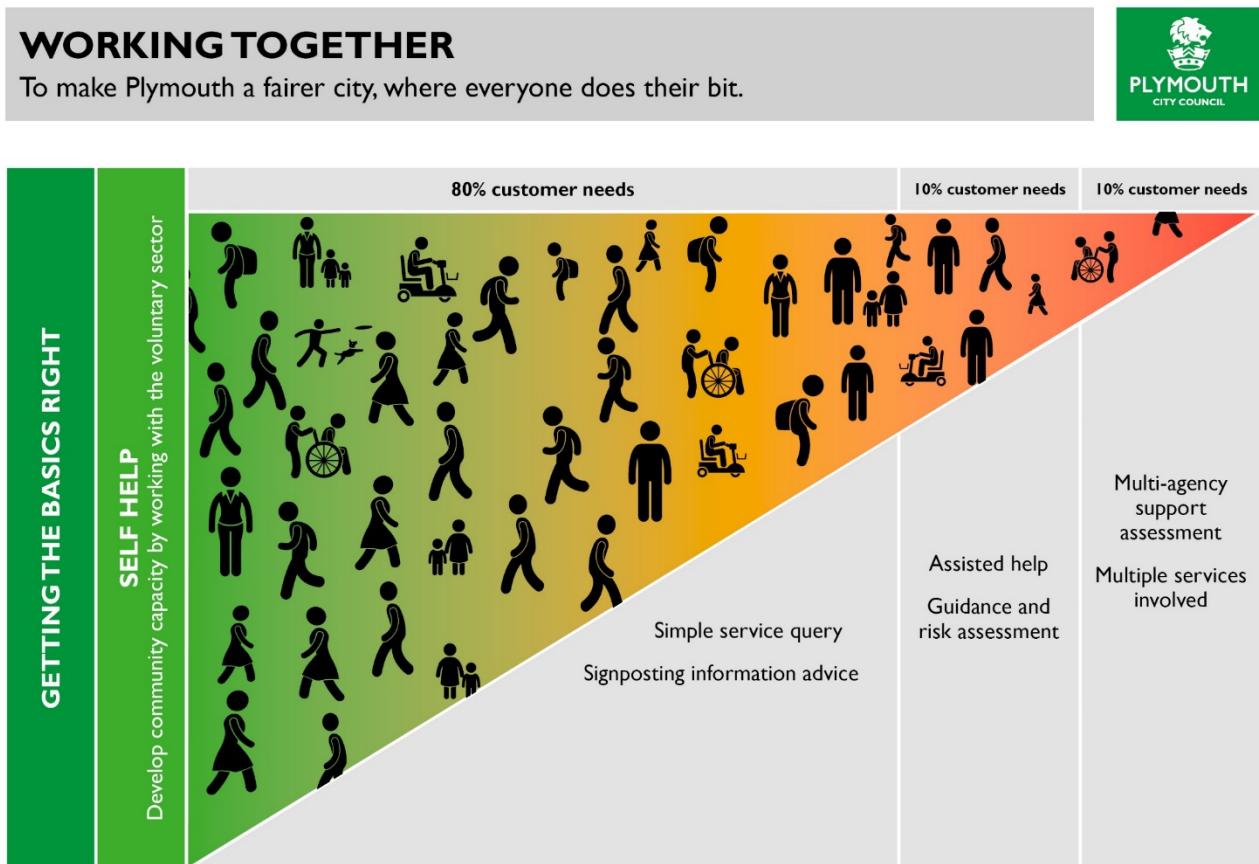
Peer Challenge recommendation	Latest status
<p>Undertake a workforce capacity and capability review based upon customer experience and as part of this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint the new Strategic Director and focus on strategic leadership capacity – completed</li> <li>• Ensure that departments and service areas refocus on placing customers at the heart of a linear, consistent and coherent cross council approach.</li> <li>• Harness the Council's workforce to act as volunteers, ambassadors and advocates for both the council and customers</li> <li>• Capture staff ideas and potentially disruptive innovative solutions for improved customer experience</li> </ul>	<p>Andy Ralphs was appointed as Strategic Director in November 2018</p> <p>The 'End to End' reviews will change the way we work and have started with the Street Scene and Waste service areas</p> <p>The Workforce Modernisation element of the "Way we work" programme will deliver on this recommendation. Staff suggestions were captured earlier this year and have been acted on. The 'End to End' reviews will also further engage staff in the delivery of changes.</p>
<p>Introduce a Plymouth City Council Definition of 'customer' and commence a consistent narrative around customer experience</p>	<p>Customers have been defined as people who live, work in or visit the city and a narrative for the Way We Work programme is now underway.</p>
<p>Establish organisation-wide customer profiles, based on the wealth of data already held, and use these profiles to inform service re-design from the customer perspective</p>	<p>The single view of customer project is currently working to connect customer data between our Council Tax system and the local land and property gazetteer, building on the work done previously with elections data. Over time this work will consolidate many of the customer databases currently held separately to allow us to create customer insight.</p>

Implement a Council and city-wide digital strategy with high level strategic sponsorship	The digital programme is developing a 'digital roadmap' and priorities for the City and Council covering: digital inclusion, digital services, digital infrastructure and using smart devices to help monitor assets and people across the city, allowing better targeting of services and investment. £3m has been already awarded by the government for the roll out of full fibre to over 200 public sector assets across the city and delivery of this will begin in 2020. Plymouth has also been announced as an early adopter for 5G and we will be meeting and working with network providers to ensure we maximise the benefits it provides to our customers.
Consider the value, timing and effectiveness of undertaking a 'health check' for the Council's communications function and overall approach to ensure that it enables the effective delivery of the council's overall strategic intentions in respect of customers	The Council is currently working with colleagues from Westminster City Council to review our communications and stakeholder management, resourcing and approach.
Review both the structural and functional alignment of core services, for example housing delivery, homelessness and demand, and integrate key services to move the 'first stop shop' towards a true 'one stop shop'	The 'End to End' reviews will map customer experiences and recommend alignment of organisations, assets and processes where necessary. We will also consider how best to deliver services provided by the first stop shop in the review of our 'front doors', as well as updating our plan for Libraries in early 2020.
Develop a corporate consultation and engagement strategy which is appropriately resourced	This work will be developed by the Community Empowerment Programme as described in the "Way we Work Programme" and resources will be allocated as and when required.
Undertake a comprehensive brand audit and review your brand hierarchy	This work is currently underway as part of the 'health check described above.
Define and communicate the psychological contract between the Council and its customers, businesses and residents – what are the exact asks and offers?	In March 2019 Directors and members of the Cabinet visited Wigan, where the Council has developed a programme which clearly articulates what the Council expects customers and staff to do, and in return what the Council will do, it is known as the "Wigan Deal". This work will be picked up in the Community Empowerment & Workforce Modernisation Programme.

## The Way We Work Programme

Given the importance and complexity of change we have spent time developing The Way We Work Programme with Directors, managers, a Programme Board, a Cabinet Working Group and have taken feedback from the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We have engaged a number of staff reference groups and departmental management teams, to get their views on how we may approach change moving forwards. This is not a 'reset' but a continuation of the journey the Council has been on over a number of years. The Peer Challenge is just one of many drivers that require us to look at our services. Customers and members provide regular insight into the challenges customers and communities face and we recognise we still have room for improvement. We also have to consider that the Council's budget has reduced by over £110m over 9 years, will a further £20m to be found by 2023, so delivering the most optimum model will be crucial, but at the same time recognising we can't do everything we would like to.

Despite the challenges we should recognise that the Council has made significant progress on the more complex work we undertake, including the integration of Health and Social Care with the Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners, which has delivered significant financial and improvements to the customer experience. However this only represents a smaller proportion of overall contacts with the Council. Our focus will now include the more routine transactions illustrated in the diagram below. 80% of customer need being the more routine transactions compared with 20% where requirements are more complex.



To be able to achieve change we will have to undertake a series of End to End service reviews. These will identify where improvements for customers can be made and where the service could be better aligned with other services across the Council to create economies of scale and/or more consistent customer experience using our customer service and operating model principles. The review process

will break into two phases, with the first focused on identifying opportunities for improvement, and secondly a set of recommendations for change and where required a business case to proceed to implementation. Our first review is taking place in the Street Scene and Waste services.

There are also a number of enabling projects that support The Way we Work and these are described below.

### **Workforce Modernisation**

We are already in the process of replacing our Human Resources and Health and Safety systems, to make it simpler and easier for our staff to self-service, access e-learning and manage our workforce. Our new Human Resources Director Kim Brown joined us earlier in the month and will now lead this important programme of work. This work will drive improvements across Health, Safety and Wellbeing, define the culture and ways of working as well as support the wider organisational change that will be required.

### **Digital**

As a Council we have already made significant progress in this area: more than 13,000 customers access our online services per month. One area we will strengthen is our work around Digital Inclusion, ensuring those who can't access online services can do through other means, including our community and voluntary sectors. In March 2019 we were awarded £3m from the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport to support the roll out of Full Fibre infrastructure in the City. We are currently procuring a partner to work with us and we expect roll out to over 200 public sector buildings including GP Surgeries and Primary Schools in early 2020. We also have plans to extend this to Industrial Parks and Social Housing. This will give the market further opportunity to invest in Plymouth and stimulate competition amongst suppliers. This month we launched the new Plymouth Online Directory, which builds on the previous version of this site to provide access to public and voluntary information and services across the city, helping people to help themselves.

### **Procurement and Commissioning**

An important part of our operating model is to make sure we procure and commission services in the right way and getting the best value for our customers is key. We have started to review all our principle contracts and will act where possible to reduce cost and improve outcomes for all. Since January 2019 the work has focused on the following:

- Engagement on key procurements, including The Box Catering (£4.5m); Local Full Fibre Network (£3m); Food Provision (£4m); Agency Workers (£5m p.a.)
- Improved focus of resources to specific category areas of spend
- Active discussions on embedding the Construction Charter
- Provision of interim management support to the Service
- Adoption of a Modern Slavery Statement
- Improved visibility around contract procurement and management
- Review of fitness of the Council's supply chain in the event of a "no deal" Brexit

### **Accommodation**

This programme will cover the further consolidation opportunities that arise following the completion of technology allowing staff to work away from their office space. 'Smart working' will reduce the need for office space by increasing the 'people to desk' ratio. The accommodation programme will also look at the provision of facilities that customers can access our services through. This work will allow us to rationalise sites and provide services in communities targeted to the needs of the geography they serve.

## Community Empowerment

Communities are an extremely important asset. Earlier in the year we visited Wigan Council, to look at the Wigan Deal. This has been a huge success in Wigan with staff and customers and aligns well with our Corporate Plan “A City where everyone does their bit”. Whilst this work is still being finalised we have defined three outcomes to target:

- Identify things that people can do for themselves, which will give them tangible benefits to their lives / their environment / their experience, as well as support Council budget challenges
- Develop an understanding of how we best engage with, and support, people to do this. This will require us to consider different communities (which might be communities of interest, of practice or of geography), and the different assets that they have. Engaging with the wider voluntary and community sector, and building on much good practice already underway in Plymouth, will be key.
- Build and operationalise the tools to support this happening, and to measure the impact, and to feed into the next cycle



## Appendix I – Customer Experience Improvements

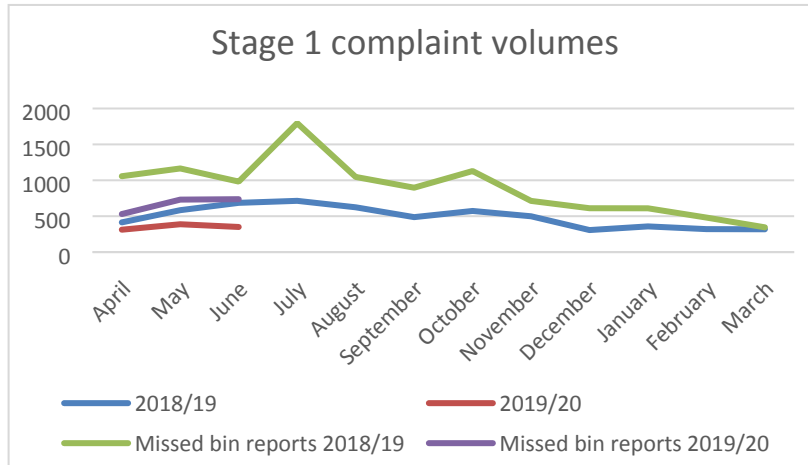
Although it takes time and thought to deliver sustainable change significant improvements are already underway. Below are some highlights and evidence across the organisation that have contributed to improvements in delivering the best customer experience we can.

### People Directorate

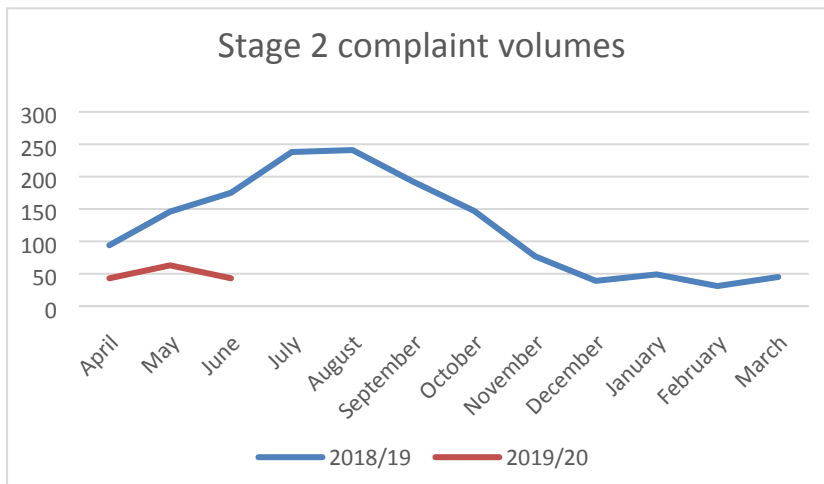
- We now have four Wellbeing Hubs up and running and have also just launched the Manadon Sports and Community Hub. The Wellbeing hubs, jointly developed with the Office of the Director of Public Health, provide a range of commissioned and statutory services as well as community led activity, locally on people's door steps. For example, in Four Greens Hub in Whitley there are podiatry and counselling services, a Children's Centre, time banking, a pop up library, befriending groups and more. The hubs expertise in knowing what is happening in each community and can link people together in a way which reduces social isolation and promotes self-help. We are working with the Wellbeing Hubs to build stronger and more resilient communities as well as offering a range of help to people in a timely way.
- The Promoting Independence Programme was developed by Strategic Cooperative Commissioning (SCC) and aims to support carers from across the domiciliary care sector in Plymouth to work with their service users to identify their aspirations and goals and what they can do to maintain their independence. This is truly embedding a person-centred care approach and improves the quality of life and also supports people to be engaged within their community, thereby helping to reduce the risk of loneliness and isolation.
- SCC have also ensured that monthly feedback is sought from members of the public who have accessed the Community Equipment Service. Feedback includes comments for service improvement. Some clients identified an issue with paying for calls to the service provider and as a direct consequence the provider, supported by Commissioners, changed to a free phone number.  
Between December 2018 and March 2019 the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative has trained another 75 staff in dementia awareness to ensure that customers with dementia feel included and are able to get the help they need. We are also rolling out Motor Neurone Disease Awareness for staff in Community Connections, Customer Services and adult social care.
- Community Health, Wellbeing and SEND support services have been working on new services including the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service and health visiting. These were designed involving children, young people and parents. Children, young people and parents were then involved throughout the procurement process and will remain involved in feeding back on how the new services feel in practice. Improvements have included the removal of the use of the word "referral", replaced by "request for involvement", to move away from the culture of moving children and young people around the system, from provider to provider. This builds on the partnership working between the Council, University Hospitals Plymouth and Livewell Southwest to design and implement Access, a single point of contact for parents of children with additional needs.

## Place Directorate

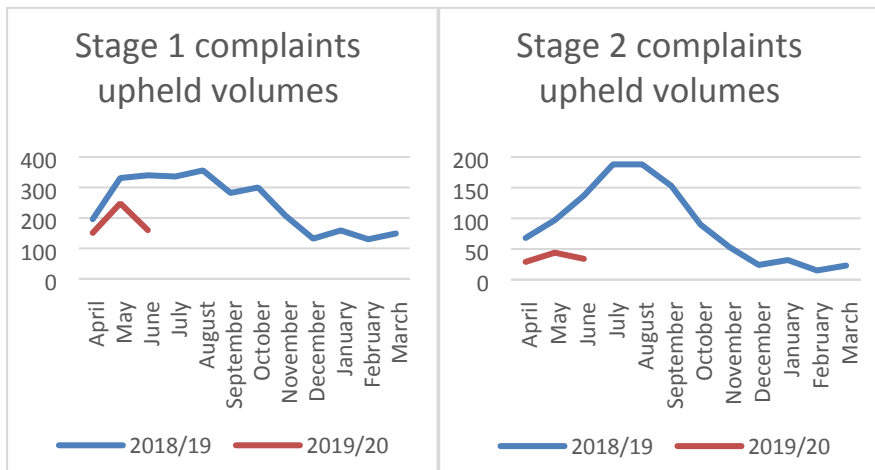
- In Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SP&I), the City Change Fund project has pioneered a genuinely citizen led decision making approach for how funds for community infrastructure are distributed. By embracing crowdfunding technology, the Council pledges the 'neighbourhood portion' of the Community Infrastructure Levy towards projects that are led and supported by the citizens of Plymouth. Using crowdfunding ensures maximum impact by generating significant match funding, stimulating the local community and voluntary sectors, and minimising the administrative costs for the Council. The use of a digital platform has increased the visibility and success of projects that receive funding and has engaged thousands of residents in local projects.
- SP&I have also introduced a new Public Access system for planning application searches, this new system is now a lot faster and with improvements making it very customer friendly. You can now search any applications in any area of the city from the last 7 days back to 1974. The new search functions offer the customer more freedom on what they want to be informed about. In addition there is an online weekly list and notifications on applications both sent by emails to those who want to know about applications around the city or just in their street.
- The volume of complaints received about Street Services saw a decreasing trend across 2018/19 as did the volume of missed bins being reported. The first few months of 2019/20 have seen lower volumes than last year across complaints and missed bins but have seen an in-year increase. A trend can be seen in both years in the volumes for both processes increasing in May, this is primarily due to the start of garden waste collection. The peak of missed bin reports in 2018/19 relates to the spate of vehicle fires at that time.



The same trends have occurred in relation to complaints escalated to stage 2 (for review by a senior manager). The decrease has been significant due to the work that has been undertaken in increasing the understanding of the stage 2 process with investigating officers as well as improving the validation of complaints being escalated before investigations are carried out.



Trends also decreased in the volumes of complaints upheld. The introduction of new technology has supported the investigation process, particularly in relation to complaints about missed bins.



- In the latest audit round (February and March), 94.2% of audits relating to litter and detritus were graded as in an acceptable condition. This is higher than the national average of 89.6% and is an improvement on the previous audit round (90.9%). Work to enable the service to respond to unacceptable gradings more efficiently through the online portal (Firmstep) has now been established. Trials to understand the best method to tackle weeds were completed in January 2019 and we have been undertaking a focused work programme to tackle weeds in the city since mid-February 2019. A consistent weeding schedule is now in place.
- The Street Services information management project is changing customer experience for the better. By centralising and automating the way the services are planned, provided and monitored, real information is now available encompassing crews, staff and residents pertaining to
  - Its collection of waste
  - Its maintenance of streets, parks and associated assets such as green spaces or play equipment.

Waste information provided by the crews is now published to the website, for example why bins haven't been collected (eg Street Blocked) or when the next collection is due. The service is about to start a pilot to manage side waste and fly-tipping, starting with education of householders and supported by the recycling and enforcement teams.

Resident reporting of street cleansing activities eg Graffiti, is automatically directed to the team responsible for the activity as an electronic job, complete with photos. Shortly all jobs will be

handled this way, (dog fouling, public bins etc) allowing the teams to be better utilised and providing real feedback to the resident or planned and completed services.

### Customer and Corporate Services Directorate

- As part of our customer approach we ask customers to provide feedback on services that we provide in the Contact Centre, Face to Face and Online. Over 80 Local Authorities take part using the GovMetric satisfaction index. We were ranked in the Top 10 seven times in the last twelve months, peaking at fourth in April 2019 for our Contact Centre. We were also in the Top 10 four times in the last twelve months for our online services, peaking at seventh in September 2018, and more recently ranked ninth in April 2019.
- We continue to deliver better than the national average performance for Housing Benefit assessment times, for both New Claims and Change of Circumstances.
- The national Registrations Services Annual report rated Plymouth 'GOOD' which acknowledged we have been one of the most improved Local Authorities in the region, with a continued trend of improvement.
- Over 200 services are now available on-line and we have seen over 70% uptake with our customers.
- Library membership continues to rise bucking the national trend. Lunch at the library "Feeding tummies and minds" will now be held at all libraries across the city every Wednesday throughout the summer holidays, and our central library will open once again on Xmas Day.
- The Service Centre continue to focus performance across 11 teams on a weekly basis. We have been working closely with Adult Social Care to develop strategies to tackle Social Care debt. This has involved an initiative to temporary expand the Deputyship team so we can allocate more cases with those customers who lack mental capacity. This ensures customers receive the right support; secures ongoing service charges; repays existing debt; prevents further debt accruing and minimises any risk of financial abuse.

### Chief Executive's Office

- Electoral Services, in the Chief Executive's Office, have simplified the process by which residents can register to vote. Customer responses via the internet now account for 93% of our applications to register as a result of the easy and convenient process as well as the reminders going out via text and email rather than just relying on post as has been the case in the past. At the same time as achieving this level of digital adoption the service is also using Customer Services to allow customers who can't or won't go online to register over the phone.
- A good casework process/experience has a direct positive impact for our residents/councillors serving our residents. With this in mind the Chief Exec support team continue to work closely with colleagues across the council to improve upon the quality and timely manner in which councillor enquiries and casework are responded to. The Councillor enquiry form has been improved meaning that enquiries can be logged easily and swiftly. For some service areas we are logging on service specific request forms, this ensures that the enquiry is directed straight to the service area avoiding the need for any duplication of effort. We listened to our members, and we are now responding to them on the same email thread so that councillors can easily track responses and updates against a particular case. Where required the team are providing councillors with a letter containing the response to their enquiry so that they can easily

respond directly to their residents with a swift informative response. The cross departmental working group meet regularly. DELT and the Firmstep team are working collaboratively to produce a more streamlined reporting process which will include the ability to produce 'hotspotting' maps and bespoke reports on demand. We are also working towards an improved dashboard so that councillors can view progress against all open cases.

### Office of the Director of Public Health

- In response to concerns about 'rogue traders' and in order to provide support for consumers and Plymouth businesses, Trading Standards run the Buy with Confidence (BWC) Trader Approval Scheme [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/). The scheme provides consumers with a list of local businesses which have given their commitment to trading fairly. Good businesses benefit from being able to state 'Trading Standards Approved'. Every business listed has undergone a series of detailed checks by Trading Standards professionals before being approved as a member of the scheme. We currently have over 135 members in a whole variety of trades. Our Customer Services and Trading Standards teams are now able to recommend reliable businesses to our customers and it is featured on the Plymouth Online Directory. Recent developments of the scheme include systems around preventing modern slavery. The intention is to promote BWC as an ethical business approval scheme where customers can be reassured that businesses are not engaging in modern slavery. It's also designed to increase reporting of Modern Slavery by educating our members on how to spot the signs and what to do if they're suspicious. This project has received support from the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner.

- To support the Public Health drive to encourage customers to switch from smoking tobacco to e-cigarettes, our Trading Standards team undertook a project with three priorities:
  - to raise awareness of the new laws that were introduced to regulate the products
  - ensure only compliant products were sold
  - give confidence to the public regarding e-cigarettes

It achieved this in several ways: by training an officer as a specialist in this area of the law; educating both the public and business by contacting the local press and posting on social media; visiting retailers and online sellers of e-liquids to inform them of the changes to the law; and, once the law had taken effect, inspecting premises and seizing non-compliant goods. Its work has been featured in a national showcase of best practice examples of Trading Standards. A key element has been to ensure that customers have outlets in Plymouth where they know they can purchase safe, legal products from a reliable supplier. The team therefore recently signed up Flavour Vapour, a Plymouth-based business, to its Buy with Confidence Trader Approval Scheme. <http://plymouthnewsroom.co.uk/businesses-plymouth-accredited-top-quality-service> Smoking cessation services can now signpost customers to an approved, local supplier.

- Plymouth is one of the 140 Trading Standards Authorities signed up to a partnership agreement with the National Trading Standards Scams Team. Our commitment, as part of the partnership agreement, is that we contact all the Plymouth residents who are known to have been victims of scams in an attempt to stop them becoming repeat victims and to offer them any help and support they may need. Since the project started a few years ago the team has contacted over 500 Plymouth victims and discovered a detriment of more than £750,000. The average age of the victims in Plymouth is 74.

We also undertake targeted awareness-raising events in order to prevent residents from becoming victim to scams. Last year the team carried out over 45 such events and spoke to hundreds of people.

In order to improve the support we offer to victims we have made numerous links with other voluntary and statutory agencies who we can refer customers to for help. This includes recent

joint work undertaken with financial institutions in the City. There is now a holistic approach to helping people so visits include an assessment of the victim's overall financial situation and whether they are entitled to Government support that they are not aware of. Closer links have been established with the Police to share intelligence and we now follow up on Action Fraud reports concerning Plymouth residents.

- We provide business advice for our licensed premises. Our service is very cost effective for the business compared to other companies and the applicants are happy in the knowledge that they are being given the correct advice and their application is completed accurately and not delayed.
- As much as possible, there are electronic methods of applying for and renewing licences via our webpage, and also our taxi drivers are now able to change their address, change operator, also report any convictions and accidents they may have had.  
We have produced driver handbooks for the taxi drivers so that the main information that they require when they become a new driver is in a handy sized booklet that they can keep in their car or with their records. The booklet is also available on our webpages and contains a frequently asked questions section so they easily find answers to commonly asked questions. We have also produced taxi licensing business size cards to promote our online services and some drivers also use these to encourage their customers to report any poor customer service that are reported to them such as drivers that are refusing wheelchair passengers without reasonable excuse.
- The Evening and Night Time Economy Group (ENTE) which is part of the Safer Plymouth (Community Safety Partnership) were presented with the Purple Flag award in June 2019. The ENTE group is a multi-agency group including the Licensing and Public Health Team and all agencies contributed to the application. The Purple flag award is awarded to areas that are recognised as providing a vibrant and diverse mixture of entertainment and culture, whilst promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and residents.  
The assessors were very impressed that all taxi drivers operating in the city had undergone safeguarding training and as a result of this and a number of other criteria such as the taxi marshals and the Safe Bus, Plymouth were also presented with the Wellbeing Award. This award is presented to Cities which are safe and welcoming, with all sectors playing their part in delivering high standards of customer care.  
We were also runners up for two other awards and we were the first new area to be put forward by the panel as a finalist in the new Jim Ratchford award in outstanding contribution to safety and diversity within the Night time Economy.  
We are hopeful that this will encourage visitors and students to the area as it will give confidence that it is a safe place to live, work and enjoy their leisure time. It also supports businesses and we are working on producing promotional material to help them promote the award across the city.
- Within the Bereavement Service, we have developed a wider range of memorialisation products; our customers can see these products at the Crematoria, and also online, following the launch of our new memorialisation website. We have also changed the timings of ceremonies, making longer slots to build in spare time in response to concerns from funeral directors and noticed by our staff that the time after the service occasionally felt rushed.