

Title of proposed EIA	Customer Service Programme Phase 2 - continued implementation of the Customer Service Strategy to improve the customer experience
Reference No	EQUA1000
EA is in support of	Amended Policy
Review Frequency	Annually
Date of first review	18/12/2023
Directorate	Digital and Customer Services
Division	Customer Services
Service Area	Customer Service Programme
Responsible Officer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nikki Spencer
Quality Control Officer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheraz Yaqub
Accountable Officer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Geraldine M Collins
Purpose of proposal	Approval for Phase 2 of the Customer Service Programme - user needs led programme to improve the customer experience for all our users
Data sources	Survey(s); Consultation Results; Interviews; relevant reports/strategies; Statistical Database (please specify); relevant research
Please include any other sources of data	
ASSESS THE IMPACT AGAINST THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS	
Protected characteristic: Age	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community
Age details:	Implementation of the Strategy will continue to aim to deliver a best-in-class relationship with our customers offering an improved, consistent and cost-effective end-to-end experience when accessing services, information or advice from the Council, including those who are most

vulnerable ensuring simple and accessible points of contact reducing the effort to needed to use our services. The drive for channel shift continues, encouraging customers to self-serve, releasing the traditional methods such as telephone and face2face to provide focussed support for our most vulnerable users, who may rely on these channels.

The Customer Service Programme has already established a Customer Panel of core citizens members based on the 2022 ONS Census data; and work to continuously improve the panel in terms of diversity, purpose and role; and to establish a wider cohort of member will continue during Phase 2 to ensure the group is truly representative and reflective of Birmingham's diverse community.

In order to ensure any programme engagement was reflective of Birmingham's diverse community, participation was based on the ONS 2022 Census data and all user research conducted by the programme to date has been rigorous in the application of the sampling mix.

Protected characteristic: Disability

Disability details:

Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community

The implementation of the Strategy may impact some customers with disability with the channel shift to self-serve; however the vision of the Strategy is clear and will endeavour to ensure a high quality, consistent and efficient approach to the customer journey across all channels by ensuring customers access the right information at the right time and content is accurate and update regardless of the channel.

The Customer Service Programme has already established a Customer Panel of core citizens members based on the 2022 ONS Census data; and work to continuously improve the

panel in terms of diversity, purpose and role; and to establish a wider cohort of member will continue during Phase 2 to ensure the group is truly representative and reflective of Birmingham's diverse community.

In order to ensure any programme engagement was reflective of Birmingham's diverse community, participation was based on the ONS 2022 Census data and all user research conducted by the programme to date has been rigorous in the application of the sampling mix.

Protected characteristic: Sex

Gender details:

Not Applicable

This protected characteristic is not directly impacted by delivery of the Customer Service Strategy other than to ensure all customers are engaged and the engagement is reflective of Birmingham's diverse community based on the ONS 2022 Census data and all user research conducted by the programme to date has been rigorous in the application of the sampling mix.

The Customer Service Programme has already established a Customer Panel of core citizens members based on the 2022 ONS Census data; and work to continuously improve the panel in terms of diversity, purpose and role; and to establish a wider cohort of member will continue during Phase 2 to ensure the group is truly representative and reflective of Birmingham's diverse community.

Protected characteristics: Gender Reassignment

Not Applicable

Gender reassignment details:

This protected characteristic is not direct impacted by delivery of the Customer Service Strategy other than to ensure all customers are engaged and the engagement is reflective of Birmingham's diverse community based on the ONS 2022 Census data and all user research conducted by the programme to date has been rigorous in the application of the sampling mix.

The Customer Service Programme has already established a Customer Panel of core citizens members based on the 2022 ONS Census data; and work to continuously improve the panel in terms of diversity, purpose and role; and to establish a wider cohort of member will continue during Phase 2 to ensure the group is truly representative and reflective of Birmingham's diverse community.

Protected characteristics: Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage and civil partnership details:

Not Applicable

This protected characteristic is not direct impacted by delivery of the Customer Service Strategy other than offering an improved, consistent and cost-effective end-to-end experience for our customers when accessing services, information or advice from the Council, including those who are most vulnerable ensuring simple and accessible points of contact reducing the effort to needed to use our services. The drive for channel shift continues, encouraging customers to self-serve, releasing the traditional methods such as telephone and face2face to provide focussed support for our most vulnerable users, who may rely on these channels.

Protected characteristics: Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy and maternity details:

Not Applicable

This protected characteristic is not direct impacted by

delivery of the Customer Service Strategy other than offering an improved, consistent and cost-effective end-to-end experience for our customers when accessing services, information or advice from the Council, including those who are most vulnerable ensuring simple and accessible points of contact reducing the effort to needed to use our services. The drive for channel shift continues, encouraging customers to self-serve, releasing the traditional methods such as telephone and face2face to provide focussed support for our most vulnerable users, who may rely on these channels, in turn improving the well-being of our customers.

Protected characteristics: Race

Race details:

Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community

Although this protected characteristic is directly impacted by the implementation of the Customer Strategy; the delivery approach is focused on user needs and putting people at the heart of everything we do. The common themes feedback by our customers in the User Research Discovery work conducted by the programme confirm people want to be treated with empathy regardless of race (or any protected characteristic) and phase 2 of the programme will continue to embed the principles of Our Customer Charter through the Culture Change workstream to ensure all staff provide as a minimum a basic level of customer care to all our users and to demonstrate the impact of poor customer service on our users.

The programme ensures all engagement is reflective of Birmingham's diverse community based on the ONS 2022 Census data and all user research conducted by the programme to date has been rigorous in the application of the sampling mix.

The Customer Service Programme has already established a Customer Panel of core citizens members based on the 2022

	ONS Census data; and work to continuously improve the panel in terms of diversity, purpose and role; and to establish a wider cohort of member will continue during Phase 2 to ensure the group is truly representative and reflective of Birmingham's diverse community.
Protected characteristics: Religion or Beliefs	Not Applicable
Religion or beliefs details:	This protected characteristic is not direct impacted by delivery of the Customer Service Strategy other than offering an improved, consistent and cost-effective end-to-end experience for our customers when accessing services, information or advice from the Council, including those who are most vulnerable ensuring simple and accessible points of contact reducing the effort needed to use our services.
Protected characteristics: Sexual Orientation	Not Applicable
Sexual orientation details:	This protected characteristic is not direct impacted by delivery of the Customer Service Strategy other than offering an improved, consistent and cost-effective end-to-end experience for our customers when accessing services, information or advice from the Council, including those who are most vulnerable ensuring simple and accessible points of contact reducing the effort needed to use our services.
Socio-economic impacts	N/A
Please indicate any actions arising from completing this screening exercise.	N/A
Please indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended	YES
What data has been collected to facilitate the assessment of this policy/proposal?	Complaints, CSAT, Contact Centre, gov.uk analytics, online

	Fire and Send data, Brum Account, Service requests, call volumes, transactions, Top 50 Services and Top 50 Transactions (based volume) and GovMetric data
Consultation analysis	There is a lack of communication when interacting with council services; and a lack of follow-up from the council to inform people what is happening. Decisions aren't made transparently; and customers don't know why things happen with poorly designed services creating distrust. Whilst there were some examples of good service, people recounted numerous examples where they felt they weren't treated in the way they expect.
Adverse impact on any people with protected characteristics.	N/A
Could the policy/proposal be modified to reduce or eliminate any adverse impact?	N/A
How will the effect(s) of this policy/proposal on equality be monitored?	Through existing customer feedback channels, CSAT data - measuring the volumes of complaints for services that have undergone improvements; and customer satisfaction feedback data. The establishment of the Customer Panel is also a forum that will hold the programme and services to account.
What data is required in the future?	Monitoring of the baselined data sources i.e Complaints, CSAT, Contact Centre, gov.uk analytics, online Fire and Send data, Brum Account, Service requests, call volumes, transactions, Top 50 Services and Top 50 Transactions (based volume) and GovMetric data
Are there any adverse impacts on any particular group(s)	No
If yes, please explain your reasons for going ahead.	

Initial equality impact assessment of your proposal

Consulted People or Groups

Informed People or Groups

Summary and evidence of findings from your EIA

From our Discovery in March-22 to understand the current customer experience by targeting high demand services accessed digitally and offline, the programme identified **118** recommendations/opportunities to improve the customer experience in Housing Repairs (13), Waste (13), Highways (10) and Bereavement Services (28); with a further **52** for Housing Management identified during our Discovery with Housing.

About our customers:

- People are proud of Birmingham
- There are mixed views of the council
- Trust in the council (and Government as a whole) is low
- There is an awareness that the council is stretched
- There is some discontent around political and contractual structures within the council

Common themes from our user research:

- Most people commented on a lack of communication when interacting with council services
- Decisions aren't made transparently, there is a lack of understanding about why things happen
- There is an expectation that the council should be proactive – some things shouldn't need customer interaction
- People should be treated empathetically

Submit to the Quality Control Officer for reviewing?

No

Quality Control Officer comments

happy with this and approved

Decision by Quality Control Officer

Proceed for final approval

Submit draft to Accountable Officer?

Yes

Decision by Accountable Officer

Approve

Date approved / rejected by the Accountable Officer

20/10/2022

Reasons for approval or rejection

Happy to approve

Please print and save a PDF copy for your records

Yes

Content Type: Item

Version: 41.0

Created at 19/10/2022 12:06 PM by ☐ Nikki Spencer

Last modified at 20/10/2022 10:42 AM by Workflow on behalf of ☐ Geraldine M Collins

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