



Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 March 2021 at
10 am on Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)

Present:

Cllr Karen Vincent (Chair)

Cllr Penny Carpenter (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Dan Roper
Cllr Colin Foulger	Cllr Rhodri Oliver
Cllr Terry Jermy	Cllr Margaret Stone
Cllr Ian Mackie	Cllr Sandra Squire
Cllr Brian Long	Cllr John Ward

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew for Cllr Chris Jones
Cllr Tony White for Cllr Nigel Dixon

Also Present:

Michelle Carter	Head of Customer Service and Development
Geoff Connell	Director of IMT & Chief Digital Officer
Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Helen Edwards	Director of Governance
Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services
Ceri Sumner	Director, Community, Information and Learning

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nigel Dixon (Cllr Tony White substituting) and Cllr Chris Jones (Cllr Steve Morphew substituting).

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.2 The Chair updated the Committee that the customer strategy workshop held in January 2021 had informed agenda item 7, "NCC Customer Experience Strategy 2021 to 2026". An informal briefing session for Members of the Committee had been held on 1 March 2021 by the Director of Governance on the County Council Constitution related to agenda item 8, "Proposed Amendments to the Council Constitution".

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 No interests were declared.

4 Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business discussed.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 No public questions were received.

6. Local Member Issues/Questions

6.1 No local Member questions were received.

7. NCC Customer Experience Strategy 2021 to 2026

7.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out Norfolk County Council's (NCC) Customer Experience Strategy developed to reflect and support delivery of the council's overarching priorities and target outcomes outlined in 'Together for Norfolk', Norfolk County Council's business plan for 2019-2025.

7.1.2 Cllr Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships, introduced the report to the Committee:

- The strategy had been devised to ensure customer service met the expectations of local people, with the use of technology helping services to be available at any time while recognising that some people would prefer or need to visit sites or call or write to have information sent to them.
- The strategy had been developed from the information gathered from two customer surveys and was focussed on ensuring a customer centric approach to delivering services.
- The strategy was designed to be easy to deliver and read and to be as easy as possible for people to seek help.
- An impact assessment had been carried out as part of development of the strategy.
- The service was at the forefront of the pandemic approach and Cllr Dewsbury thanked the service and all other services who had helped people during the pandemic.

7.1.3 The Head of Customer Service and Development gave a brief overview of the report to the Committee:

- The Head of Customer Service and Development thanked committee members for their input at the workshop in January 2021 which had been valuable in shaping the final strategy proposal.
- The key areas of focus included continued, but not exclusive, focus on

growth of the digital channel.

- Over the past 12 months there had been an emphasis on joined up working across the system and early help services to help support vulnerable people with low level needs, and there was an ambition to continue to build on this.

7.2

The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was noted that the armed forces covenant was not mentioned in the charter. The Head of Customer Service and Development clarified that the charter was a general statement of standards across all services. It did not specify customer cohorts as doing so could make the charter long and cumbersome. There was a separate service in place for people in the armed forces to contact.
- Officers confirmed the survey of 300 customers referenced in the report was of customers who had contacted the council by phone and was conducted over the phone, not online.
- Officers were asked what had been done to support digitally excluded people who had been unable to access forms and information at sites which had been closed during the pandemic. The approach within the strategy of “digital by design and not by default” was noted as important. The Head of Customer Service and Development confirmed that officers provided paper copies of forms to people who needed them while sites had been closed.
- A Member discussed that the Norfolk County Council website was hard to navigate for residents with disabilities and learning disabilities and asked if there were plans to make this more accessible. the Director, Community, Information and Learning, replied that during the pandemic easy read versions of documents had been made available where possible. The web team were working more closely with the equality and diversity team and tested the website for accessibility which now met the accessibility standards. This work would continue.
- It was noted that some people chose not to engage into digital and telephone communication, and this should be taken into consideration. The Head of Customer Service and Development confirmed that the approach being taken was to provide a multi-access model, recognising that some people did not have access to or chose not to use digital communication.
- The Chair queried the take up of laptops to children; the Director of IMT & Chief Digital Officer reported that through the “Every Child Online” campaign, 5276 laptops had been provided to children in Norfolk and this met 100% of the requirements from headteachers and the Norfolk Assistance Scheme.
- The NHS were funding initiatives including a video care-phone trial with 200 digitally disadvantaged older people to enable them keep in contact with carers and friends, for example in care homes.
- The digital health hub had been providing people with help to understand digital information around health, as people were now more likely to be expected to have digital conversations with health professionals.
- A Cancer Connect Initiative was being developed, which would involve devices being given to 60 people with cancer and support being provided to them via libraries starting in April 2021 when the library service reopened.
- The work of customer service team now incorporated the test and trace

process; Norfolk's test and trace had been rated as among the top in the country by the Nuffield trust.

- The Chair thanked officers and their teams for all their hard work.

7.3 The Committee:

1. **REVIEWED** and **AGREED** the proposed Customer Experience Strategy, as set out in section 2 of the report.
2. **REVIEWED** and **AGREED** the Customer Charter as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

8. Proposed Amendments to the Council Constitution

8.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out proposed amendments to Norfolk County Council's Constitution, as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report, which if agreed would be recommended to Council on 19 April 2021 along with proposed amendments previously agreed by the Committee at its meeting in January 2021.

8.1.2 The Director of Governance introduced the report to the Committee:

- There was a recommendation for the Committee to delegate minor amendments to the constitution to be taken forward in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee.
- The existing code of conduct had been deleted and replaced with the Local Government Association model code of conduct with minor changes, agreed by Standards Committee in January 2021.

8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- Members felt that the changes to the constitution were easy to follow.
- The Chair thanked the Director of Governance and team for carrying out the review and for the clear presentation of the changes set out in the report.

8.3 The Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. To **AGREE** the amendments proposed for recommendation to Council on 19 April 2021, as set out in para 1.3 of the report.
2. To **AGREE** that the Director of Governance may make minor amendments for proposal to Council, should the need for any arise after the meeting of this Committee, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee.

9. Forward Workplan

9.1 The Committee received and reviewed the forward work plan for the period July - November 2021.

9.2 The Chair, recognising there may be new Members after the May 2021 election, requested a training session after May 2021 covering the work of the Committee and the work schedule for the year ahead.

9.3 The Committee **AGREED** the forward workplan.

The meeting concluded at 10.46am

Chair