

Overview and Scrutiny Review Matrix

Review Topic: Customer Journey – inside and outside office hours, including out of hours emergency response.

Timescale
Start: Apr 2022
Finish: Mar 2023*

Review Rationale:

West Berkshire Council strives to deliver the best possible customer experience regardless of the channel chosen to contact us and when they contact the Council.

On two occasions in the past year, elected members have highlighted issues relating to contacting relevant officers and the subsequent escalation process, which has led to OSMC seeking a review of both the Customer Services contact centre and the Emergency Out of Hours Service.

Some considerations of this review may be:

- a. How do residents prefer to interact with the council?
- b. What do residents expect and value when they interact with the Council as customers?
- c. What is the experience of disabled residents when they contact the Council?
- d. How can both Members and Officers understand and improve understanding of the customer's wants and needs?
- e. What Council Services are provided out of hours and how are they provided?
- f. How has our relationship with customers been impacted by the pandemic and subsequent new work styles?
- g. How can we effectively link an improved customer journey with benefits to communities on the ground?
- h. How can we use our customer service channels to improve community capacity, capability and participation?
- i. Is customer experience consistent across all available channels?
- j. Is there an organisation-wide commitment to good customer experience?
- k. What best practice or learning can we gather from other local authorities?

Terms of Reference:

The Task and Finish Group will:

- **Part 1:** Out of Hours Emergency Contact Centre and Response

Consider whether the Council's Out of Hours service offers an effective and consistent customer experience

This element of the review will be undertaken by:

- Reviewing how customers can contact the council out of hours
- Reviewing the Service areas deemed to require an out of hours response and how this is or could be provided
- Reviewing the on call duty rota arrangements (including budgets) across the Council including those with authority to act on the councils behalf.
- Reviewing how the Emergency Duty Officers escalate an emergency situation out of hours along with key stakeholders.

- **Part 2:** Office hours customer contacts

Review the customer experience, and how the Council's systems and customer service channels work, to understand if they are effective and delivering a positive and efficient service.

This element of the review will be undertaken by:

- Holding facilitated meetings with the 5 highest contact volume departments or service areas to understand how enquiries are followed from initial point of contact in Customer Services to other areas of the Council.
- Members will review performance reports for Customer Services, complaints reports, Residents Survey results and other data available in order to analyse effectiveness.
- Mystery shopping activities will be undertaken (subject to budget availability) for a sample of standard queries / scenarios and for different user groups, including disabled users.
- West Berkshire Council Members, external partners and local representative groups will be surveyed to understand their customer journey experiences and to uncover any relevant issues / concerns that have been communicated to them by residents / service users. Survey responses may be followed up with interviews where necessary to explore issues in more depth.

- **Part 3:** Office hours customer contacts

Consider whether systems and processes can be improved to enhance customer experience, whilst considering cost implications

This element of the review will be undertaken by having regard to the conclusions of part two and:

- Members will review details of customer experience approaches from other local authority areas. (This information will be collated by the Service Lead - Customer Engagement and Transformation and the Performance, Risk and Consultation Manager.)

- **Part 4:**

Highlight areas of good practice and make recommendations as to how improvements might be made

Members will collate their findings which will then form the basis of a report to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Review Membership:

Councillor Adrian Abbs**
Councillor Carolyne Culver
Councillor Biyi Oloko

Chairman: Councillor James Cole

Vice-Chairman: N/A

Scrutiny Officer: Gordon Oliver

Information Required:

Contact centre call volume and answering data
Website visit data
Service level performance data
Interviews with officers from service areas within the scope of the review

Documents/Evidence:

Residents Survey outcome report (2020 and 2021)
Quarterly reporting for relevant service areas
SLA for out of hours service and scope for re-tendering

Witnesses: *(Who/Why?)*

Emergency Planning Manager
Performance, Research and Consultation Manager
Managers of services with highest number of customer contacts
Elected Members
External partners
Local representative groups

Measures Available

Suite of contact centre and website data including survey results, as outlined above

Desired Outcomes:

A report with a clear set of recommendations for potential improvements to improve the customer journey.

* An extension was agreed by OSMC in September 2022

** Cllr Adrian Abbs replaced Cllr Lee Dillon in August 2022