

Agenda Item	8
Report No	RDB-19-23

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** Redesign Board

**Date:** 5 December 2023

**Report Title:** Customer Charter - Update

**Report By:** Interim Depute Chief Executive

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the My Council Programme, work has been ongoing to develop a Customer Contact Strategy. A core part of this Strategy is a Customer Charter, which sets out what customers can expect from us as an organisation; our commitment to our customers; and in turn, what the public can do to assist us.
- 1.2 Work has been ongoing to develop the Charter by engaging with staff and customer groups e.g. tenant group and youth work group. There was direct engagement with Members around the Council meeting on 14 September 2023. Several sessions are planned for the coming months with teaching staff, young leaders and Community Council representatives. The Charter is being adjusted as this engagement progresses.
- 1.3 The engagement programme is also assisting in informing the overall development of the Customer Contact Strategy with staff engagement in particular forming part of the implementation phase. This is helping to build understanding of the purpose of the Charter and the broader My Council programme with the aim to transform our approach to customer contact across the organisation.
- 1.4 The Redesign Board is being asked to consider and review the latest version of the Draft Charter and provide further comment and feedback as part of its development.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and provide feedback on the draft Customer Charter.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – the Charter is being developed within existing resources.
- 3.2 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – the engagement process includes seeking feedback from a range of internal and external stakeholders which includes representative groups.
- 3.3 Risk – the Charter could raise expectations from the public that is not mirrored in the way staff across the organisation operate. Engagement with staff is helping to inform

and support the implementation of the Charter and improve and embed understanding of the importance of customer contact and the wider My Council programme.

- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever, Legal, Risk, Health and Safety, Gaelic – no identified implications.

Designation: Interim Depute Chief Executive

Date: 20-11-23

Author: Customer Contact Project Team

Appendix 1: Draft Customer Charter

# (Under Development) Customer Charter

## Highland Council: You are important to us

**We are committed to providing a consistently excellent customer experience by putting our customers at the centre of everything we do. Our charter sets out our commitment to you.**

### **We will play our part by:**

- ✓ Actioning and responding to your request, the first time you contact us whenever this is possible, and ensuring you know what happens next and by when.
- ✓ We will offer a variety of ways to access our services that reflect how customers like to contact us.
- ✓ Providing a quicker and easier online experience.
- ✓ Taking your information and looking after it.
- ✓ Aiming to find a satisfactory solution and having a 'can-do' attitude within our available resources.
- ✓ Avoiding jargon and making things understandable.
- ✓ Responding to your contact within our published timescales\*.

\*Timescales may be service specific, please see [here](#) for details.

### **To help us, we would like you to play your part by:**

- ✓ Accessing our services by the available routes or methods as published by us.
- ✓ Acknowledging we may need to pass on your request (to other Council staff or services) so we can deal with it.
- ✓ Recognising that we will not be able to meet every need.
- ✓ Being aware of our financial constraints.
- ✓ Providing us with the information that we need to help you, including answering questions and providing further information if required.
- ✓ Asking us to explain things you are not sure of.
- ✓ Keeping any appointments that you have with us and notifying us if you are unable to attend.

### **We will be respectful by:**

- ✓ Treating you politely, fairly and respectfully, with equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do.
- ✓ Being, helpful and open with you.
- ✓ Listening to you and your needs.
- ✓ Explaining decisions and outcomes clearly.
- ✓ Respecting your rights to privacy and confidentiality.
- ✓ Ensuring our information is in a format that can be easily accessed and understood.

### **To help us, we would like you to:**

- ✓ Treat us politely, respectfully, in line with our [Customer Relationship Policy](#).
- ✓ Respect that we have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, whatever the circumstances or environment of the contact with the council:
  - The safety and well-being of our staff is a priority, and they have the right to do their jobs without being abused.
  - We understand on occasion you may disagree with a decision. However, if our staff are treated in an abusive or violent way, we take a zero-tolerance approach towards this behaviour.
  - If you are aggressive, abusive, or behave violently towards a member of our staff we will take action, and this may include involving the Police.

### **We will constantly try to improve by:**

- ✓ Encouraging you to give feedback on our services, using the Council's website, phoneline(s), response forms, or through a member of staff.
- ✓ Putting you at the centre when we design services to make sure they meet customer needs.
- ✓ Publishing our performance to show how we're doing.
- ✓ Handling any complaints with professionalism and learning lessons if [we fall short of our standards](#).

### **To help us, we would like you to:**

- ✓ Offer us ideas to help us improve what we do.
- ✓ Let us know if we fall short of our standards and you wish to [complain by using our complaints form](#).
- ✓ Let us know if you have received outstanding service using our [compliments form](#).