



# Renfrewshire Council

**To:** Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board

**Report by:** Head of Customer and Business Services

**Report relates to:** Renfrewshire Customer Strategy 2017-2022

## Overview of the policy being impact assessed:

Renfrewshire Council is committed to improving the service it provides to local people, by looking at innovative technology and developing services that are based upon the needs of our customers.

This strategy will outline the Council's approach to achieving this commitment, involving our customers and making a difference to the service we provide for the benefit of our customers.

In addition to understanding and developing the relationship we have with our customers, there are four key areas that will be tackled through this Customer Strategy; Service Fulfilment, Access to Services, Communication and Developing Digital Skills.

For each of these themes, the focus will be on ensuring that end to end processes and service delivery teams across the Council engage with our customers to make improvements in what we do and, importantly, how we do it. This is not a strategy for Customer Service Teams alone; this is a Customer Strategy for the whole Council.

## Summary of evidence used to consider equality and human right impacts:

In developing this strategy, we first looked at how our customers contact us and their journey to service fulfilment; this insight was gathered in conjunction with a local design agency that carried out customer focus groups and more in-depth interviews. The agency identified local equality led community groups via our community planning partnership's DEAR group. This allowed them to ensure that the experiences of a wide range of people from specific equality groups had their voices heard (the full consultation details are available as an annex to the strategy). From this work, we were told that our staff are professional, friendly, courteous and knowledgeable however, our processes are complex, difficult for our customers to navigate and sometimes overly bureaucratic.

Personas were used as part of developing our understanding of customer needs. This was a useful tool to model service use from a representative variety of angles. The personas used reflected many protected characteristics, particularly those we had identified through consultation, as experiencing more challenges in accessing our services, as reflected in our impacts section.

In addition to this work, we also conducted further consultation with over 130 people at various forums and events with the use of a number of engagement methods such as an online survey and staff focus groups. We ensured that we offered these consultation opportunities in a variety of accessible formats, to ensure as wide a range of people as possible could respond. Key themes have been identified at the strategy development stage. The aim of the consultation methods was to understand our customers and the challenges they face when accessing our services in order to deliver the simplest, most effective services that meet their needs by embracing the digital world they live in. By undertaking consultation with staff we identified the challenges they face, what works well and what could be improved for our customers.

As part of developing the strategy, we also analysed data of who use council services, to ensure we were familiar with the demographic breakdown of our customers. We also have a Renfrewshire wide strategic needs assessment, which supported us in understanding the equality profiles of our actual and potential customers.

## Main equality and human right impacts identified and mitigating actions:

Analysis of our customers and populations shows us that we need to understand customer demand, recognise customer needs and then design services that provide a joined up experience that delivers on realistic expectations. We have recognised challenges some of our customers face and ensure that appropriate support is in place for them:

**Digital access and participation** relating to the following protected characteristics: age, Black and Minority Ethnic, disability and socio-economic

- Mitigating actions: implementing Digital Participation Strategy and wide user testing of council website accessibility

**Interpreting and translation** relating to: Black and Minority Ethnic and disability

- Mitigating actions: the use of Google Translate and interpreting services

- Area for monitoring and improvement: access to British Sign Language interpreting
- Area for monitoring and improvement: access to other communication support

**Cultural competence** relating to: socio-economic, Black and Minority Ethnic and disability

- Mitigating actions: stigma training pilot delivered to council staff and further work being developed as a result of its evaluation. This area of work is also reflected in our council wide equality outcomes and will be developed further

**Jargon and official language** relating to: socio-economic, Black and Minority Ethnic and disability

- Mitigating actions: work carried out by Snook consultancy with our customers and their recommendations taken forward by Customer Strategy

### **Changes to the services which will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment:**

The Council recognises that we are living in a world of digital disruption, with an ever growing population of customers looking to communicate, interact and access services through digital channels so we will focus on developing the way we deliver services to meet this need. We will accelerate this, and will look to involve our digitally native customers in this process.

We also recognise, that not all our customers are able to access digital services, and nor are they comfortable using online services. For these customers and those with more complex needs we will continue to develop services linked through our traditional telephone and face to face channels.

### **Conclusion:**

As a result of the assessment we are developing a more customer centric service design framework that will allow services to be designed in partnership with customers and communities, leading to a positive customer experience. Placing the Customer at the heart of everything we do will result in a Council that is seen as being there for its customers. We have made a start on this as we developed this Strategy and this early engagement and consultation has given us early insight into what is important to the people of Renfrewshire. This is an equalities informed approach and ensures that we are taking an inclusive, representative and accessible approach. In order to achieve this we will:

- Ensure the right information is available from services across the Council to help us understand our customers better
- Be more future focussed on understanding how our customer needs will change over the next 5 years through better use of the data available to us and our partners
- Consult our customers when we are going to make a change, and maintain that relationship to understand how well we are doing
- Continue to develop the support networks that are available for our customers to ensure they get what they want from our services
- Recognise the challenges some of our customers face and ensure that appropriate support is in place for them
- Ensure our customers are involved in service design through the introduction of a Customer Centric Service Design framework, developed with the involvement of customers.

We will measure the progress against a number of indicators which will form a scorecard that can be used to assess the impact of each objective in the strategy, and can monitor performance over the duration of the strategy.