

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cabinet</b> 11 April 2022</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from the Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brent Customer Promise and Commitment</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One  Appendix 1: Brent's New Customer Promise and Commitment
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Thomas Cattermole, Director of Customer Access 07918 3600030 <a href="mailto:Thomas.Cattermole@brent.gov.uk">Thomas.Cattermole@brent.gov.uk</a>  Angela Collins, Senior Transformation Officer 020 8937 2897 <a href="mailto:Angela.Collins@brent.gov.uk">Angela.Collins@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report outlines the proposed new Customer Promise for Brent, which sets expectations for all interactions between the Council, our residents and customers.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and agree the proposal for a new Brent Customer Promise and Commitment.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to note that implementation of the new customer promise, the pillars that underpin it and what residents can expect from us as a council, will

be monitored and reported corporately on a quarterly basis.

- 2.3 Cabinet is asked to support the new Brent Customer Promise following formal agreement as the corporate standard, which all service areas and departments will follow.

### **3.0 The Proposal**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the new Brent customer promise and commitment, as set out in *appendix 1*, be championed by Cabinet across the council. The four pillars that underpin the promise and the associated performance indicators will be reported to CMT on a quarterly basis.

The four pillars:

1. We commit to resolving your enquiries quickly and keeping you informed if we cannot solve them straight away.
2. We commit to listening to you, valuing you and understanding your needs.
3. We commit to making our services accessible and easy to use.
4. We commit to being helpful and honest with you.

We also set out what residents can do to help us deliver the new promise:

1. Work with us to get the information we need to help you.
2. Let us know if you have any specific needs.
3. Treat Council staff courteously and with respect.
4. Ask us if you are unsure.
5. Tell us if you have been having problems so that we can resolve them together.

- 3.2 It is proposed that all Brent Council Services and Departments use this new promise as their standard, that it is embedded as part of the procurement process, and that all published Council emails have an auto reply setting out what customers can expect.

What we expect from residents:

1. Work with us to get the information we need to help you.
2. Let us know if you have any specific needs.
3. Treat Council staff courteously and with respect.
4. Ask us if you are unsure.
5. Tell us if you have been having problems so that we can resolve them together.

### **4.0 Detail**

- 4.1 Based on the feedback from staff and customers/residents, we suggest that the new Customer Promise be based on four key pillars, which outlines what customers and residents can expect from us. It is also proposed that we outline how they can help us to deliver this promise. It is then broken down into

sections, describing what the pillars mean and what customers can expect (See *Appendix 1*).

- 4.2 In addition to the introduction of the four pillars, we believe that it would be beneficial for all published email addresses to have an auto response email outlining response times for the relevant enquiry. We want to propose standard response times across the council, and if a department is unable to meet this, they need to be upfront in explaining why, alongside providing realistic timeframes. Ultimately, we want each department to be transparent about expected response times for each enquiry they typically receive. This more nuanced communication with customers should help manage their expectations, in turn reducing failure demand.
- 4.3 To bring the new Customer Promise in line with the digital age, it is suggested that we introduce a standardised procedure for social media enquiries. Currently, social media is not mentioned in the Customer Promise, but residents are increasingly using it as a communication tool. We suggest that social media enquiries be handled like any other, with the enquiry being channelled into the relevant department. This will mean that residents are not prioritised because they contacted us via social media, protecting those who are digitally excluded.
- 4.4 It is important that all departments sign up to the new promise, as staff are integral to its delivery. The new promise has been built upon the direct feedback of staff and it is supported by residents, boosting the promises' credibility.
- 4.5 Once agreed, the pillars that underpin the promise and the associated performance indicators will be reported to CMT on a quarterly basis.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.

## **7.0 Equality Implications**

- 7.1 The new customer promise will ensure that all residents are treated equally, regardless of how they contact the council. The gaps that the new customer promise has addressed provides a positive benefit to achieving equality in the borough.

## **8.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 8.1 The lead member has been engaged throughout the process and is in full support.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

9.1 There are no HR or property implications.

**Report sign off:**

***Peter Gadsdon***

Strategic Director of Customer and Digital  
Services.