

Customer Focus Working Group

Wednesday, 8th September, 2021

CUSTOMER FOCUS WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson); and
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Bunting and Hutchinson.

In attendance: Mrs. R. Crozier, Customer Focus Programme Director;
Ms. K. Kennedy, Continuous Improvement Project
Manager (Customer Hub);
Mr. C. Quinn, Customer Services Manager;
Mr. P. O'Brien, Digital Portfolio Manager (Solutions);
Mr. P. Patterson, Digital Development Architect;
Mr. G. McErlane, Digital Development Architect;
Mr. A. McMullan, Democratic Services Assistant; and
Ms K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Working Group noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting and

Resolved – that Councillor Flynn be elected to serve as Chairperson to the Customer Focus Working Group until 31st May, 2022.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th May were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Feedback on the App and Photograph Testing

The Customer Focus Programme Director advised the Working Group that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain feedback on the latest version of the Members' App, which now included the ability to include a photograph with reports, as well as reflect on the blueprint and look at the next steps.

The Digital Development Architect reminded the Working Group that the beta version of the Members' App had been released on 1st August with focused testing sessions held on 17th and 19th August, however, due to summer holidays, testing had been limited. As a result, a 1-page process document had been produced and circulated to the Members, with some further feedback obtained as a result.

The Working Group was presented with the process document whilst a test case was submitted to the App by way of a demonstration. The Digital Development Architect confirmed that there were 2 ways in which to submit a request, either via the main menu or via a quick create button. He added that once a request was categorised, with further details added and then saved, the option to add a photograph would become available. He stated that there was an in-built 30-minute delay between the 2 steps to enable a picture to be uploaded before it was submitted to the Customer Hub. He confirmed that a queuing system was in place for all requests, whether received via the Members' App or via email.

The Members discussed their experience of using the system, with some feeling that the response times were too long and had led to frustration from both Councillors and the public. Others stated that, while they had not used the App extensively, they were pleased with the user experience and response times. A Member suggested that it might take time for these new processes to become established with Elected Members who were used to other methods of communication.

The Customer Focus Programme Director welcomed the feedback which had been provided and reassured the Working Group that staffing resources had stabilised with a full compliment of staff now fully trained. She added that meetings had taken place between the Customer Focus team and relevant departments and services to ensure that requests were being dealt with in a timely manner.

She also advised that the Customer Hub was designed to add value to communications between Councillors, the public, and the Council, rather than replace exiting relationships. She made reference to feedback that had requested that phone numbers were added to the Members' App to enable direct contact to be made with relevant staff, and stated that further improvements would be made to ensure that the systems were assisting Councillors with their constituency work.

The Customer Services Manager encouraged the Members to contact staff whenever they, or their constituents, experienced problems with the Hub. He advised of imminent changes to the telephony system for customers which would improve their experience, and confirmed that requests were being monitored to ensure that they were being dealt with as efficiently as possible. He also explained that the data from cases was beginning to be used to help teams build up a picture of consistent problems.

Discussion took place regarding the format of certain screens on Apple Phones in comparison to Android phones, and difficulties which had been experienced in closing screens as a result. The Digital Services Team undertook to actively review this issue.

The Chairperson underlined that the Customer Hub's implementation was a process that needed to be worked through with further versions and testing to be welcomed and the Working Group noted the progress that had been made to date.

Phase 2 App Launch schedule for all Elected Members

The Continuous Improvement Project Manager presented the proposed schedule for the roll-out of the latest version of the Members' App, as follows:

- 8th-22nd September; Further testing by the Customer Focus Working Group
- By 23rd September; Feedback to be provided to Digital Services
- End of September; Training video development
- October; Roll out to all Elected Members
- October; Party Group Briefings

The Customer Focus Programme Director advised that this followed the same process as was used during the initial launch, but welcomed suggestions from the Members should they feel that this could be improved upon. She also underlined the importance of feedback on the App to enable the needs of Elected Members to be met.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

Review of the Blueprint

The Continuous Improvement Project Manager presented the Working Group with the Blueprint that had been developed following the initial service design sessions, and asked that the Members review the 3 areas (Information, Issue Management and Resolution, and Insight and Intelligence) in order to highlight any gaps and/or priority areas.

It was agreed that the Information needs remained relevant, and that providing information from other agencies, their responsibilities and relevant contacts should be a key area of focus. Discussion took place regarding how this could be delivered, whether through the Members' Portal or via the App. The Continuous Improvement Project Manager suggested that a specific session on this may be useful in order to explore the most suitable way for this information to be provided, with various solutions to be set out by Digital Services.

With regards to Issue Management and Resolution, she advised that this had been the key focus of the App. The Working Group confirmed that it was content with what had been developed within this section of the programme.

The Working Group was advised that the Insights and Intelligence workstream was in its initial stages, but would continue to progress as data became available and services were educated further about how it could be used for planning and analysis. The Members agreed that this remained an important area of focus.

Next Steps

The Customer Focus Programme Director thanked the Working Group for the feedback that had been provided and asked that any further comments be provided by 23rd September to facilitate the roll out of the next version of the Members' App in early October.

She also advised that dates would soon be issued for Party Group Briefings which would form the next step in the continuing conversation about how the Customer Hub could best serve the needs and priorities of Elected Members, after which a further session would be arranged to define the next steps more clearly, and discuss functionality, accessibility and useability across the various products.

Noted.

Chairperson