AGENDA ITEM NO 10
REPORT NO 81/11

ANGUS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE – 1 FEBRUARY 2011

CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT: This report seeks approval for the adoption and implementation of the Customer Services Strategy and action plan.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee approve the Customer Services Strategy and action plan attached to this report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to report 248/09 of this committee on 17 March 2009 which approved the development of an Angus Council Customer Services Strategy building on, and bringing together existing strategies, such as:

- The national Customer First 3 year programme and associated Modernising Government Fund (MGF3) which ended on 31 March 2009;
- the ACCESS Angus review in September 2007 which recommended that a new customer services function be created with responsibility for Customer First agenda, both local and national, customer care and ACCESS Angus; and
- the outcome of the efficiency diagnostic study, where customer services was identified as one of the themes suitable for progression (committee report 115/09 refers).

2.2 The development of the Customer Services Strategy also provided an opportunity to develop a revised framework, with appropriate governance arrangements, to ensure the delivery of the strategy through a customer services programme. The Customer Services Programme Board was established in August 2009. It is chaired by the Director of Social Work & Health, with representation from each department of the council.

2.3 The Customer Services Programme Board drafted the strategy and it was presented to officers of the council at the corporate plan development day on 30 September 2010. It was also discussed with a cross-party group of elected members on 13 December 2010.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The Customer Services Strategy builds on the many aspects of good customer service that have been developed in Angus Council over the years. It provides an overarching framework bringing together existing, developing and planned elements of customer service in Angus.

3.2 Customers have greater expectation of customer service in that they expect to be able to access services when, where and how it suits them. However, enhancing customer service at a time when budgets are being significantly reduced will be a challenge for the council, and its partners, in the years ahead.

3.3 The aim of the strategy is to target resources to ensure that service delivery meets the identified needs of our citizens and, with the increasing focus on modernising and transforming public services, we will also continue to look at ways of reviewing internal efficiency and working with partners to deliver more effective services.

3.4 The purpose of the strategy is to define our key work streams; prioritise the work; and set out the action plan needed to achieve them. The four work streams are:
1. Communication and Engagement
2. Transforming Our Business Processes
3. Contact with Customers
4. Customer Care

3.5 The strategy provides the direction and approach to customer service over the next four years. The objectives, priorities and actions of the Customer Services Strategy apply to all services within the council. The responsibility for delivering the actions identified in the Customer Services Strategy lies with all colleagues in the council, and the council will not meet its aims unless staff understand and support our priorities. Therefore, the strategy must be extensively publicised within the council to ensure its objectives and priorities are adopted and implemented. These will also inform and influence service, operational, team and individual plans.

3.6 It is a working document and to date it has been used to inform the work of the Customer Services Programme Board which is why some of the timescales pre-date the meeting of this committee.

3.7 The success of the strategy in meeting its objectives will be monitored by the Customer Services Programme Board which reports to the Performance Review Group on a quarterly basis. A report on performance will be submitted to Strategic Policy Committee on an annual basis.

3.8 The Committee is asked to approve the Customer Services Strategy attached to this report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any aspects of implementation of the Strategy which have additional or significant financial implications for the Council will be the subject of separate reports.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

7. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

7.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the single outcome agreement for Angus:

- A good quality of life is enjoyed by all in Angus

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Law and Administration and all other Directors have been consulted in the preparation of this report

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The development and implementation of the Customer Services Strategy will ensure that we provide high quality, cost effective and customer centred services.

DAVID SAVERS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

SW/RP/CP