



## **Customer Service Strategy – July 2021**

### **Customer Strategy**

Our promise to residents of Leighton-Linslade is:

- To be fair in the way we deliver our services and to treat all members of the community as individuals
- To keep you informed about the services we provide and to deliver that information in a clear, transparent, timely and accessible manner
- To deliver services in a way that gives good value for money
- To listen to you and actively seek your views about our services
- To use your feedback to shape our services
- To address any issues relating to land, premises and services for which we are responsible as quickly as operationally possible
- If your question, issue or complaint relates to something we are not responsible for, to try to signpost you to another organisation which can help you.

### **Providing Information**

The Town Council recognises the ever-increasing requirement for people to be able to access information quickly, easily and at a time convenient for them. Our Community Engagement Strategy sets out all the communications methods we use to make information available – from noticeboards to electronic signs to social media.

Our aim is to provide as much information as possible via our websites so that residents can access it at their own convenience (“self service”). Not only is this more convenient for many, but it helps meet environmental ambitions by reducing reliance on print and the necessity to make journeys to visit us.

The main Town Council website contains a vast range of information including:

- Council and committee meeting agendas, reports and minutes
- Annual budgets, year end accounts, contracts and procurement information
- Policies and procedures
- Venue hire information
- Information on our play areas, parks and sporting facilities
- Community event information

- Publications such as our Five Year Plan, latest annual report, town centre shopping directory, Trails information and bi-monthly community newsletter
- Councillor contact details
- Press releases and consultations
- Information about allotments
- Information about cemetery services
- Information about grants, awards and volunteering
- Links to the market website and the Teenage Advice Centre website
- How to contact us (includes a contact us form direct from the website)
- How to follow us on social media

Social media provides a very effective mechanism to distribute information and seek feedback, reaching a much wider audience than might be possible with any other communication medium. The Town Council continues to increase its investment into social media as a highly accessible way in which to reach residents.

We recognise that there is often uncertainty about which Council provides which services. Our website aims to clarify which services the Town Council is responsible for and which services are the responsibility of the local authority, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Residents should contact CBC direct on matters which are their statutory responsibility including for example: adult social care, education, waste management, housing, benefits, highways (roads, public transport and parking), planning, children's services.

## **Customer Standards**

When you contact us, we will:

- Be polite, respectful and listen to your enquiry
- Aim to direct you immediately to the correct point of contact
- Communicate with you in plain English

Email enquiries (general)

- Emails to the general "info@" address (this includes submission forms from the website) will receive an initial auto-acknowledgement of receipt
- We will aim to provide a first response within 2 working days
- Let you know when a reply can be expected if it will take longer to deal with your enquiry

Email enquiries to specific Town Council staff or departments

- We will aim to provide a first response within 5 working days (subject to annual leave, sickness absence etc) and will let you know if it will take longer to deal with your enquiry

## Telephone calls

- We aim to answer 95% of all calls received during normal office hours, usually within less than 90 seconds (Monday-Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm)
- Provide you with an option to leave us a voicemail if we cannot answer your call or you are calling outside of operational hours
- To return any voicemails within 24 working hours

## Visiting us

- Our office is usually open to the public from 9:30am – 3:30pm Monday to Friday (subject to staffing and excluding Bank Holidays)
- We aim to see you within 5 minutes of you arriving and deal with your enquiry as soon as possible
- If you need to see a specific person and they are not available, we will offer appointments
- We can provide a private interview room if you need to discuss a sensitive or confidential issue
- We may be able to offer an appointment outside these hours by prior arrangement
- We are within easy walking distance of town centre car parks, the taxi rank and town centre bus stops

## Staff training

All Town Council staff are expected to meet six core competencies: Customer Focus, Communication, Problem Solving, Team Working, Personal Effectiveness and Professional and Technical Development. Behavioural standards are reviewed annually as part of the appraisal process and training is given on an ongoing basis.

## Other relevant policies

The following documents can be accessed on the Policies page of our website:

Customer Engagement Strategy – how we aim to communicate with residents

Annual Report – what the Council is responsible for and what it has done over the last year

Annual budget – what the Council spends its money on

Accessibility statement – how we provide information in an accessible format

General Privacy Notice – how we manage personal data when people contact us

Complaints Procedure – how to make a complaint and how it will be dealt with

*This policy does not apply to contact to or from Town Councillors.*