Customer Experience Strategy Update

Committee of the Whole

March 4, 2025

Introduction

This presentation supports Report CS2025-003 and provides an update on the City's Customer Experience Commitment and Customer Experience Strategy.

Today's presentation includes:

- Background and development of the Customer Experience Strategy.
- An overview of the Customer Experience Strategy supporting pillars.
- Updates to the Corporate Customer Service Standards.
- The implementation roadmap for these initiatives.

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Background

- February 6, 2024 – Committee of the Whole Meeting: Introduction of Report CS2024-001, marking the initial development of the City's Customer Experience Strategy (CES).

- Early CES Approach: Initially focused on broad goals of accessibility, transparency, and engagement in customer service interactions.

- Refined Framework: Shifted towards a structured model with clear governance, accountability, and service expectations.

- Three Key Components:
  - Customer Experience Commitment Council Policy
  - Customer Experience Strategy
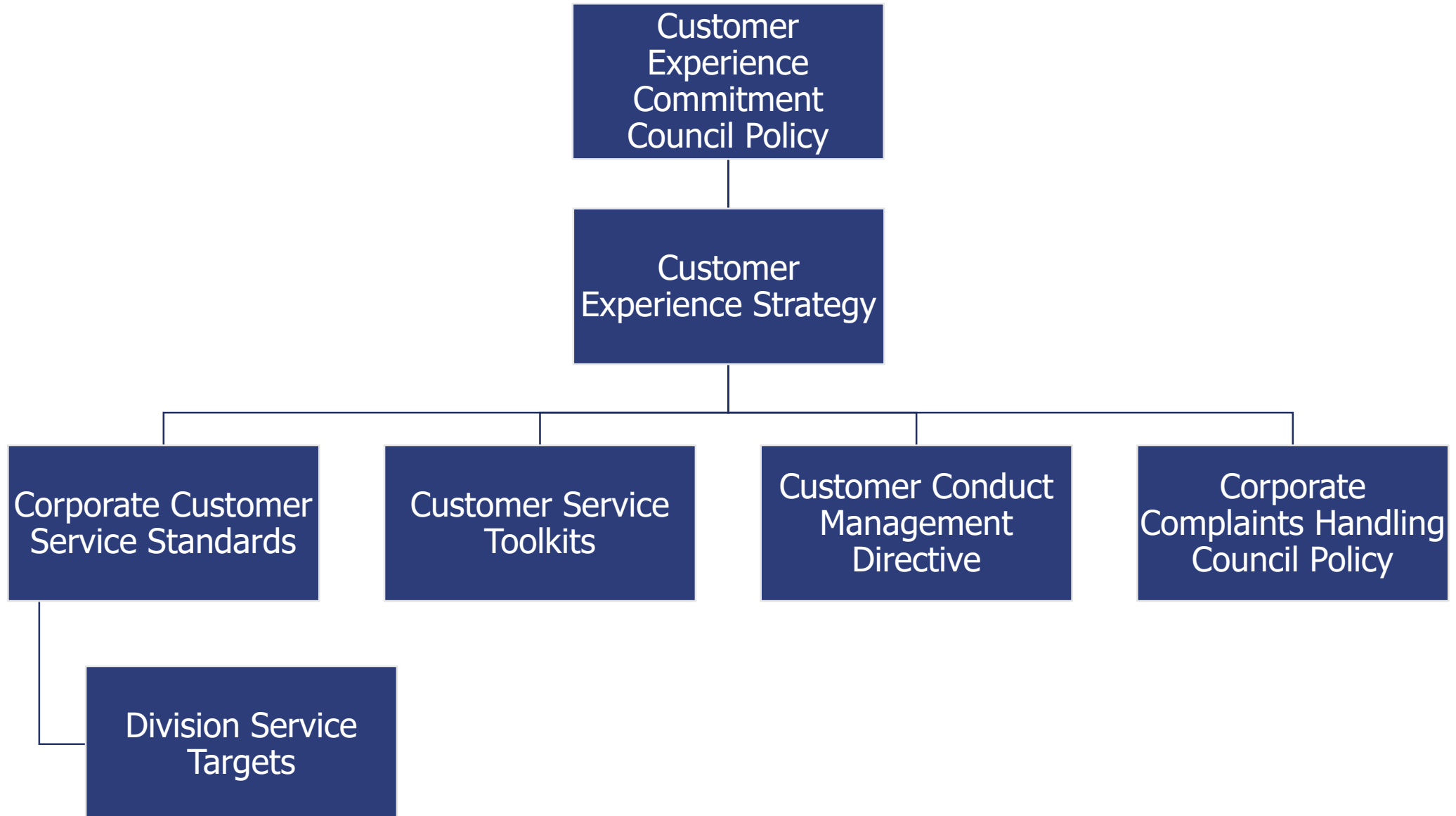 - Supporting directives

Background

- The City's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan identified the establishment and execution of Corporate Customer Service Standards as one of the City's top 10 strategic priorities.

- In June 2016, the outline for the Corporate Customer Service Standards was presented, with the following key objectives:
  - Provide exceptional customer service and implement a consistent service standard.
  - Enhance communications and improve accessibility to government services.
  - Promote service excellence by adopting best municipal practices.
  - Review operational efficiencies to ensure high quality service delivery.

- In January 2017, Report CS2017-002 formally introduced the Corporate Customer Service Standards, which were implemented in January 2018.

Background

- Since their inception, the Corporate Customer Service Standards (CSS) have not been updated, making this revision essential to ensure they remain relevant, adaptable, and aligned with the City's commitment to service excellence and responsive municipal service delivery.

- This update builds on the CSS foundation but expands to a broader Customer Experience Strategy (CES) that focuses on long-term service goals.

- The CES addresses key challenges identified through internal review and stakeholder engagement, ensuring a modernized, structured approach to customer service delivery.

Customer Experience Framework


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                    │    Commitment       │
                    │   Council Policy    │
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  │  Service   │ │  Toolkits  │ │ Management │ │  Handling  │
  │ Standards  │ │            │ │ Directive  │ │  Council   │
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Customer Experience Framework

Customer Experience Commitment Council Policy (In Development)

Purpose: The overarching statement of the City's commitment to service excellence.

Objective: Establishes clear service expectations and reinforces a structured approach to improving customer experience.

Key Elements:

- Defines the City's service commitment to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Guides all customer service initiatives, ensuring a consistent and transparent service model.
- Supports governance, accountability, and continuous improvement in customer interactions.

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Customer Experience Framework

Customer Experience Strategy (In Development)

Purpose: A framework designed to align City services with community needs by enhancing interactions and fostering positive relationships.

Objective: Establishes a structured, accountable, and transparent approach to customer experience improvements.

Key Elements:

- Defines corporate service expectations and fosters a customer-centric culture.
- Integrates customer feedback into service improvements and decision-making.
- Strengthens governance, accountability, and operational efficiencies.
- Leverages technology and innovation to enhance service delivery.

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Corporate Customer Service Standards

Purpose: Establishes clear service expectations, standardized response times, and defined escalation pathways to ensure consistent and efficient service delivery.

Objective: Promotes accountability, consistency, and accessibility across all Divisions by providing a structured approach to customer interactions.

Key Elements:

- Defines professional and respectful interactions between staff and customers.
- Establishes timelines for acknowledging and addressing customer inquiries and service requests.
- Provides clear steps to ensure unresolved requests are addressed.

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Customer Service Toolkits (In Development)

Purpose: Provides staff with structured resources to ensure consistent, accessible, and high-quality customer interactions.

Objective: Supports staff by offering standardized tools and best practices for delivering professional customer service.

Key Elements:

- Established guidelines for voicemail, email, and in-person communication.
- Resources for handling inquiries, managing service requests, and responding to customer inquiries or requests.
- Standardized tools to enhance efficiency and ensure consistency across all service channels.

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Customer Conduct Management Directive

Purpose: Establishes expectations for maintaining respectful, professional, and safe interactions between staff and the public.

Objective: Defines processes for addressing unreasonable or inappropriate customer behaviour.

Key Elements:

- Provides clear guidelines for managing interactions and responding to difficult situations.
- Establishes a structured approach for identifying, documenting, and addressing inappropriate conduct.

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Corporate Complaints Handling Council Policy

Purpose: Provides a standardized approach to managing complaints from the public in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner.

Objective: Ensures all complaints are documented, addressed in a timely manner, and used to improve service delivery.

Key Elements:

- Ensures complaints are handled in a structured, objective, and consistent manner.
- Defines clear timelines for acknowledgment, updates, and resolution of complaints.

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Rationale for CSS Updates

- The 2025 Corporate Customer Service Standards (CSS) update aligns with evolving municipal service expectations.

- This revision enhances operational efficiencies, providing a governance framework that allows for improvement of customer interactions and service transparency.

- The CSS establishes clear service expectations, refines escalation pathways, and promotes measurable service benchmarks across all City Divisions.

- A key focus is improving accessibility, responsiveness, and proactive communication to ensure residents, businesses, and stakeholders receive timely and effective support.

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Development of the New CES Pillars

- A cross-departmental Corporate Customer Service Standards Working Group was established to guide CSS updates, consisting of representatives from all City Departments to ensure comprehensive input and alignment with municipal service priorities.

- The working group conducted an in-depth assessment of existing service standards, identifying gaps in responsiveness, accessibility, and operational efficiency.

- As a result of this review, the CSS framework was modernized, shifting certain elements into specialized directives to allow for more dynamic updates as service expectations evolve.

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Work Completed to Update CSS

- The process of updating the CSS was driven by the need to modernize service expectations, address operational challenges, and ensure alignment with the broader CES.

- This revision built upon the foundations of the 2017 CSS while integrating refinements based on operational feedback and emerging best practices.

- The Corporate Customer Service Standards Working Group played a central role in evaluating service gaps, identifying necessary improvements, and ensuring that the updated standards support a consistent and responsive customer experience across all City Divisions.

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Work Completed to Update CSS

Key updates include:

- **Division Service Targets (DST):** Providing service flexibility across Divisions while maintaining consistency.

- **Clear Escalation Pathways:** Strengthening issue resolution and ensuring timely responses.

- **Standardized Response Times:** Promoting transparency and setting clear expectations for service delivery.

- **Refinements Based on Stakeholder Engagement:** Integrating feedback from all City Departments and public input to ensure the standards remain relevant, actionable, and effective for City operations.

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Implementation Roadmap

Q1 2025:

- Implement 2025 Corporate Customer Service Standards.
- Begin work on developing Customer Service Toolkits.

Q2 – Q4 2025:

- Revise Customer Conduct Management Directive.
- Update Corporate Complaints Handling Policy.
- Investigation and review of current Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.

Q1 2026:

- Establish Customer Experience Commitment Council Policy.
- Define Division Service Targets (DST) for improved service consistency.
- Fully integrate CES principles city-wide.

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CRM System Review

Challenges Identified:

- Limited adoption across City Divisions.
- Inefficient tracking and resolution of service requests.
- Lack of real-time data insights for improvements.

Q2 2025 Review:

- Assess system limitations and stakeholder needs.
- Identify opportunities for improved usability and tracking.

Future Considerations (2026 Budget):

- Enhance or replace CRM system for better functionality.
- Improve integration with other service platforms.

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Questions

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