

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council **Customer Experience Strategy**

April 2023 – April 2026

Created by The Head of Customer Service and Transformation
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Oadby & Wigston | Our borough -
the place to be

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Forewords

Samia Haq – Leader of the Council

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do and this strategy sets out how we want to deliver an outstanding service and customer experience for each and every one of them.

The way we plan to deliver an excellent customer experience comes as a result of detailed consultation with our communities who have helped to shape this strategy by sharing their views in what is a rapidly evolving world.

We are dedicated to finding the right balance between digital, online and face-to-face customer service – taking on board the feedback you shared with us through that consultation process. We are also determined to ensure we meet the demands of our customers in a way that takes into account our financial position and therefore delivers value for money.

Critically, we want to ensure that those that are most isolated and hard-to-reach in our borough feel engaged with their council and able to access the many services we offer.



Anne Court – Chief Executive



Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is an ambitious council. We're ambitious for our residents, our local businesses, our visitors and our staff. We want our customers to have the best possible experience when they contact us, and we want to make the most of the opportunities that digital technology provides to help us do this.

The pace of digital change is fast and getting faster. This is true in our everyday lives, and in the way the council works. As a result, the expectations of our residents and businesses around how they find information or interact with us has changed.

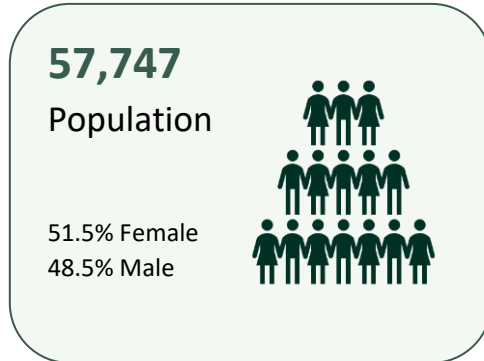
Now more than ever, we must develop more cost-effective ways for our customers to contact us. We need to manage demand for our services, supporting our customers to self-help wherever possible by embracing technological solutions when they can, this will enable the Council to provide more tailored/value added services for those who need it.

In order to provide the best customer experience, we need to understand what you, our customers want from us, and use this information to design our services. This Customer Experience Strategy is a way for us to set out our plans to deliver our services, ensuring we meet the needs of all our customer groups.

This strategy has been informed through consultation with residents, businesses, partners and staff. We will review the strategy yearly to make sure it stays current, and that we act on feedback and learning to keep improving the way we provide our services to you.

Our Borough, Our Customers

Our customers are anyone who needs or chooses to interact with us. This includes residents, businesses, visitors, partners and community groups.

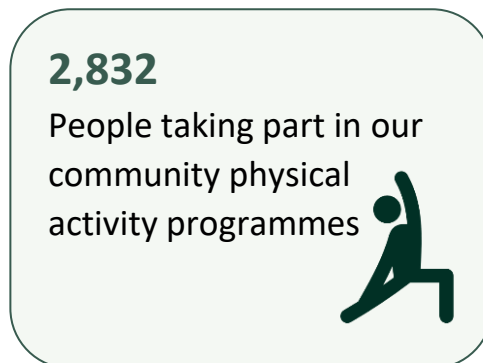


Ethnicity breakdown

Ethnicity	Oadby & Wigston
White British	70.6%
White-non-British	2.5%
Asian	22.3%
Black	1.2%
Mixed	2.1%
Other ethnic group	1.4%

Age Breakdown

Age Breakdown	
0 to 17	11,878
18 to 64	33,564
65+	12,305



Our Services

As a council our core purpose is to deliver services to our customers. A significant part of this is enabling them to report and request services and access information, as well as dealing with any enquiries which they might have.

Key facts and figures for 2022

53,820

Calls answered by our Customer Service Team



2.5 million

Bins emptied



786

Environmental Health service requests actioned



535

Planning applications processed



12,952

Online forms completed



481

Taxi licences issued (vehicle & driver)



3,170

Day to day housing repairs carried out



688

New Housing Benefits claims processed



The customer experience journey so far

Over the past three years we have worked hard to build a customer-focused culture that puts the customer at the heart of everything we do. Over the next three years we want to embed this further to make customer experience part of the council’s DNA.

We recognise that real change does not happen overnight, so this strategy will help drive this forward and assist us with continuous improvement.

Customer Experience Improvement Timeline



Our Performance

The results from our customer satisfaction surveys in 2022 show that our customers rate our services highly. We will continue to seek feedback, listen to our customers to make further improvements and increase feedback participation.

98% satisfaction rating for our Customer Service team



94% satisfaction rating for our waste collection service



100% satisfaction rating for all our physical activity programmes



95% satisfaction rating for our Housing Letting service



100% satisfaction rating for our Selective Licensing team



100% satisfaction rating for our Responsive Repairs service



Improving our Planning satisfaction rating from 62% in March to **96%** in December



81% satisfaction for our Parks & Green Spaces



Why do we need a strategy?

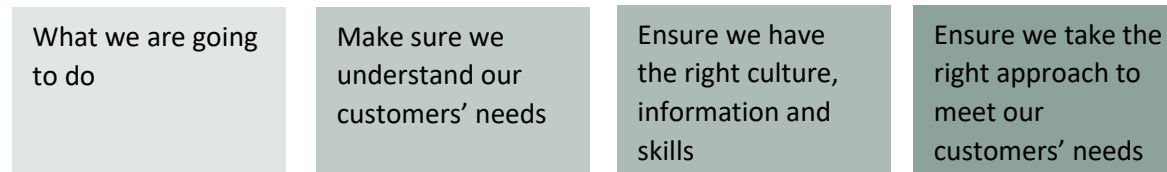
This strategy sets out our vision to achieve the best possible experience for our customers, whoever they are (residents, businesses, partners) and whenever they deal with us.

The pace of digital change is fast and getting faster. This is true in our daily lives, and in the way the council works. As a result, the expectations of our residents and businesses around how they find information, or interact with the Council, has changed.

Research shows that customers increasingly want service that is fast, personalised, proactive and connected. In order to meet new expectations, we need to understand what you, our customers want from us, and design our services in a way that works for you.

We need to drive a new way of working and transform how we deliver our services focused on understanding and examining customers' experience, expectations and choices, our systems and processes and the individual behaviour of our staff.

This Customer Experience Strategy is a way for us to set out :



We want to develop more cost-effective ways for our customers to contact us. We need to manage demand for our services, supporting our customers to self-help wherever possible by embracing digital solutions when they can and thereby enabling the council to provide more tailored/ value added services for those who need it.

We are driven to find to the correct balance between encouraging and advancing our digital customer service offer while also ensuring those that are unable to contact us in this way have direct access to the support they need. We want to establish a well-balanced, high-quality digital, phone and face-to-face customer service offer.

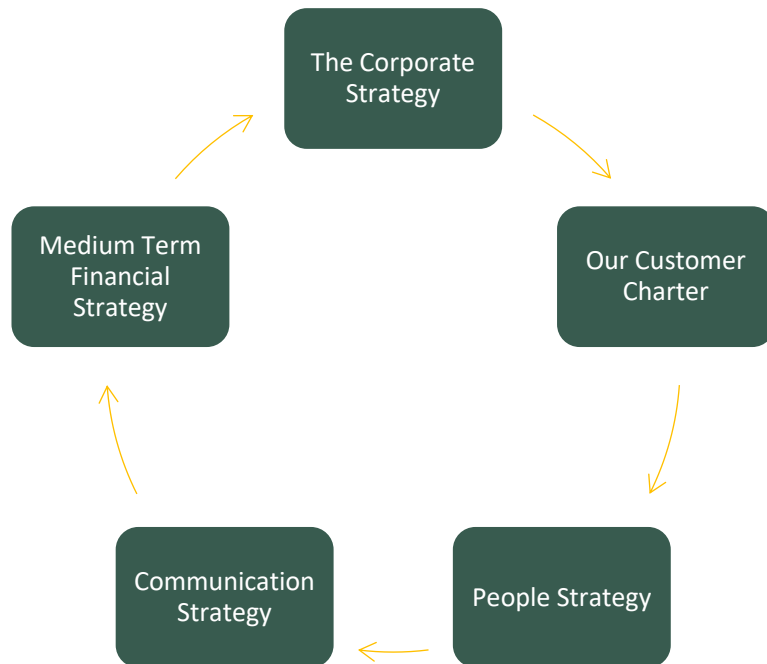
This strategy will ensure that provides responsive, high quality and continually improving standards of customer service across the Council, informed by customer engagement and feedback.

We will use customer insight data to drive improvement, learn from our mistakes and better understand our customer expectations and needs.

Golden thread

The purpose in the Council’s vision is to ‘Provide a sustainable council by listening, being engaged, and putting our customers first enabling us to focus on local needs and priorities’. This is at the core of everything we do and is the golden thread for this strategy.

This strategy also links closely to:



Our Customer Charter Promise and Principles

One of the strategic objectives in the Councils Vision is 'To ensure that we provide high quality ,value for money services that meet the need of residents, businesses and visitors' and we aim to deliver this through our Customer Charter Promise.

Our Customer Charter Promise

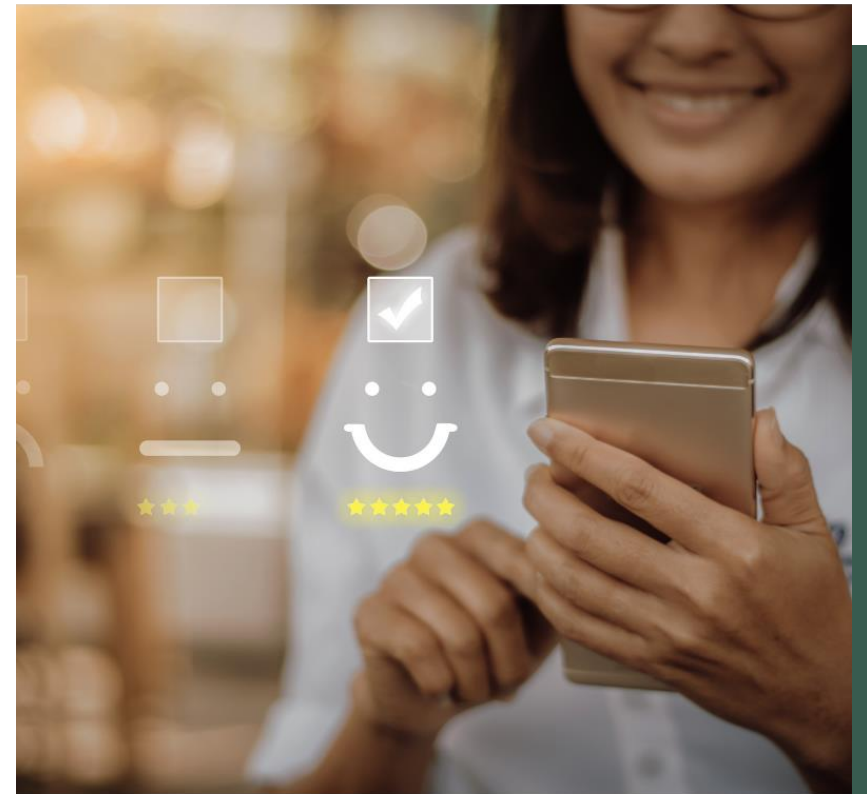
We will:

- Be professional and treat all customers fairly
- Deliver the service within an appropriate timescale
- Ensure our staff are knowledgeable
- Ensure all our staff are trained in Customer Care
- Ensure our staff are polite and friendly
- Ask our customers for feedback
- Use this feedback to help shape the services we deliver
- As an organisation we have chosen to adopt a set of principles to work to, which will make sure we provide the best possible customer experience.

Our Principles

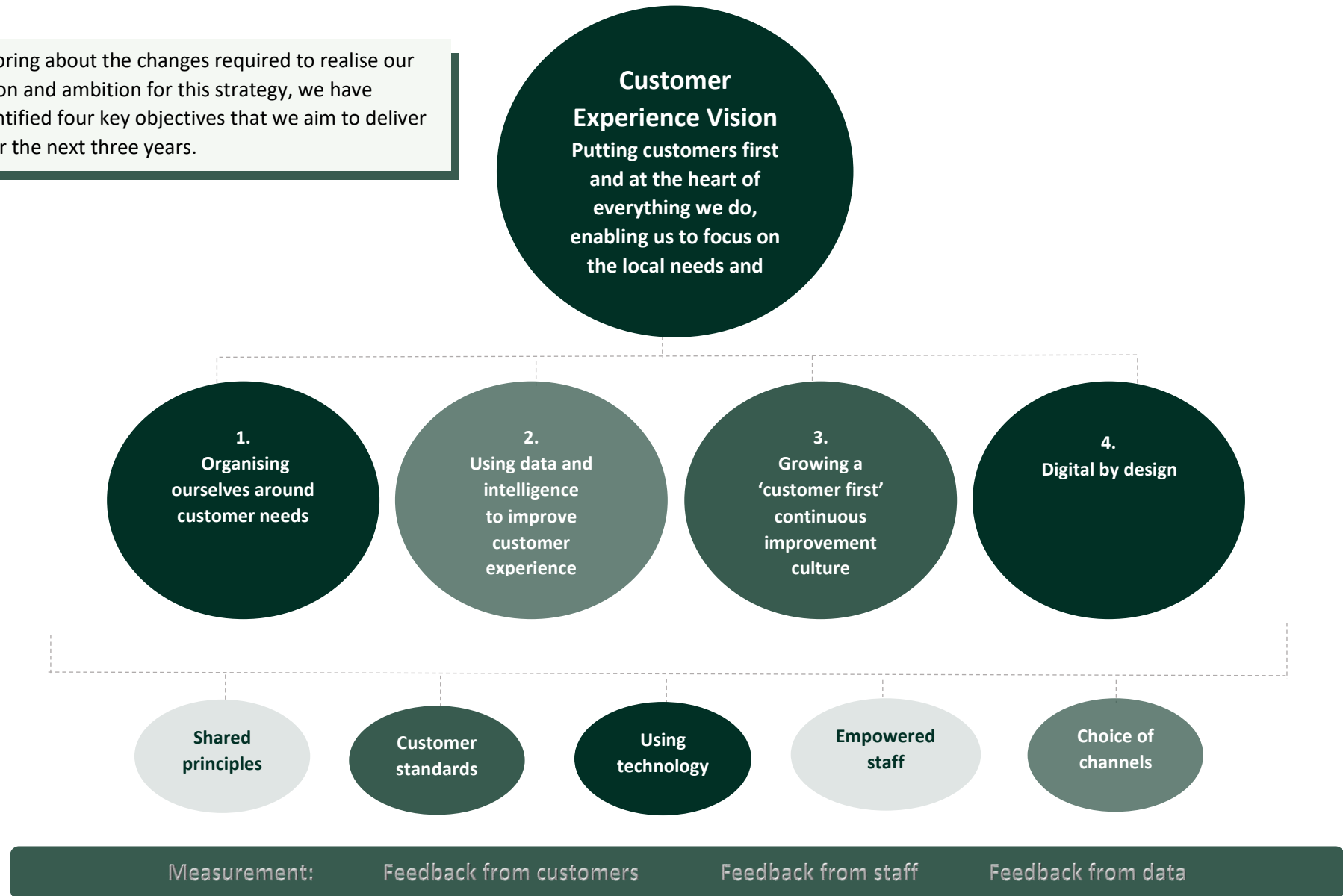
We will:

- Always put the customer at the heart of everything we do
- Make our digital channels so good that you prefer to use them
- Continuously seek feedback and evidence to improve how we do things
- Create a culture that listens to what you want, and takes the time to understand what you need
- Continue to recognise that some customers need support to contact us digitally, and maintain alternative ways of contacting us for our most vulnerable customers
- Support our staff to provide the best possible experience to you, and invest in their training and understanding of good customer service



Our Framework for Success

To bring about the changes required to realise our vision and ambition for this strategy, we have identified four key objectives that we aim to deliver over the next three years.



Our engagement with you

Since the Covid 19 pandemic the Customer Services team has dealt with 100% of their enquiries via the phone or email. Many of these customers would previously have met face-to-face with a Customer Service Adviser. It is not viable for us to return to the way things were previously as the model is costly and can lack efficiency. In the majority of cases we can deliver the same outcomes to meet our customers’ needs without meeting them in person, we do acknowledge however, that some customers miss the face-to-face contact.

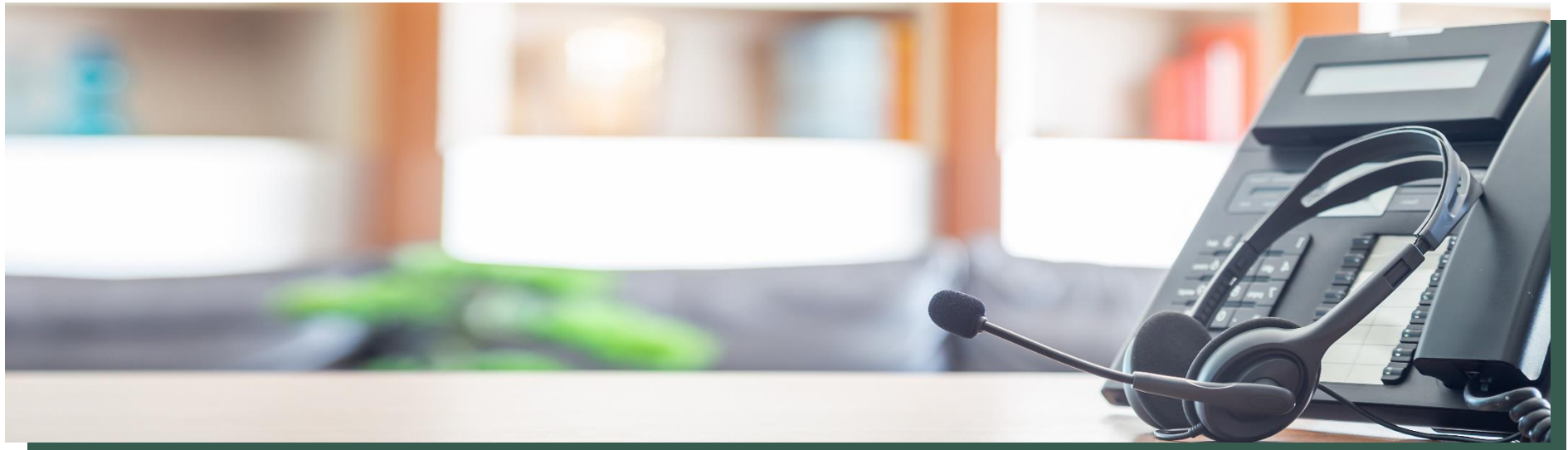
In November 2022 we carried out a consultation to see what customers thought of our current customer service offer and what improvements they thought we should prioritise to improve the customer experience. We advertised the consultation in a variety of ways, on our website, on social media, via our community WhatsApp groups, via our email subscription service, via our customer service telephone line, via our paper leaflet “Our Borough” delivered to every household in the borough and via an article published in the Leicester Mercury. To ensure we reached as many customer groups as possible and to hear customer voices that would not participate in the consultation through digital means, we went out into the community and met with customers face to face in residents forums, in community groups, in the local college, in the community café Hub club and in pop up events in each of our three town centres. We also put paper surveys in our sheltered accommodation schemes and met with our Tenants Forum.

We wanted to know what improvements we should prioritise, and this is what you told us...

“You Said”	“We Will”
<p>You want to see an increase in face-to-face service</p> <p>This is the preferred method of contact for some customer groups, they find this the easiest and best way to contact us</p>	<p>Introduce appointment hubs in Oadby, South Wigston and Wigston town centres. Customer will be able to call and book a face to face appointment with a relevant officer in their chosen location</p> <p>In addition we will introduce a reception point at our new council offices, at Brocks Hill County Park so that customers can pop in to hand in a form, get basic advice and information</p>

“You Said”	“We Will”
You want us to improve our website, increasing online forms and make it easier to search for information	Invest in resourcing improvements, increase the self-service options, improve navigation and searching and review pages to ensure they are up to date and relevant

“You Said”	“We Will”
You think it is a good idea for us to consider increasing our digital channels	Explore introducing virtual appointments so customers could connect face to face virtually via a smartphone, tablet or computer Explore webchat to see if this is a viable digital channel for our customers to use



Delivering our strategy

Strategic Objective One

Organising ourselves around customer needs

We will organise ourselves around customer needs by:

- Expanding the current range of access channels offered by Customer Services by introducing face-to-face appointment hubs and a reception point at our new council offices
- Improving customer engagement and communication
- Increasing first point of contact resolution
- Simplifying our telephone contact

Strategic Objective Two

Using data and intelligence to improve customer experience

We will use data and intelligence to improve customer experience by:

- Increasing analysis of customer activities
- Using data to simplify and improve services and access to services
- Using intelligence to target services at the right people
- Ensuring data quality



Strategic Objective Three

Growing a
'customer first'
continuous
improvement
culture

We will continue to grow a 'customer first' continuous improvement culture across the organisation by:

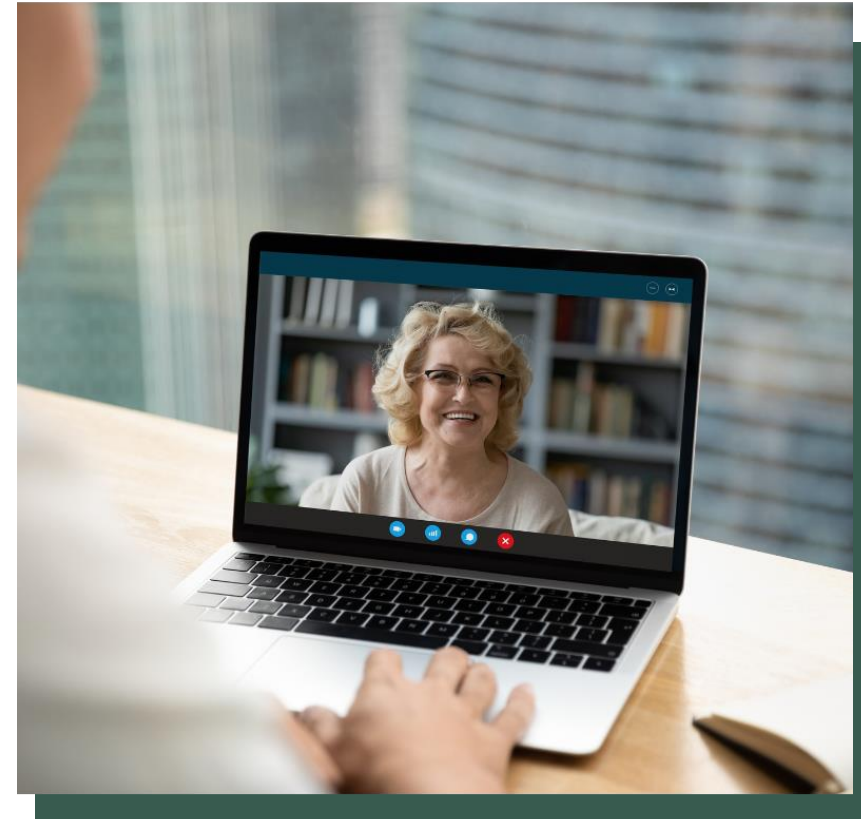
- Enhancing staff training
- Reporting on performance and customer satisfaction
- Learning from complaints and customer feedback
- Continued commitment to achieving professional accreditation (the Customer Service Excellence Award)

Strategic Objective 4

Digital by design

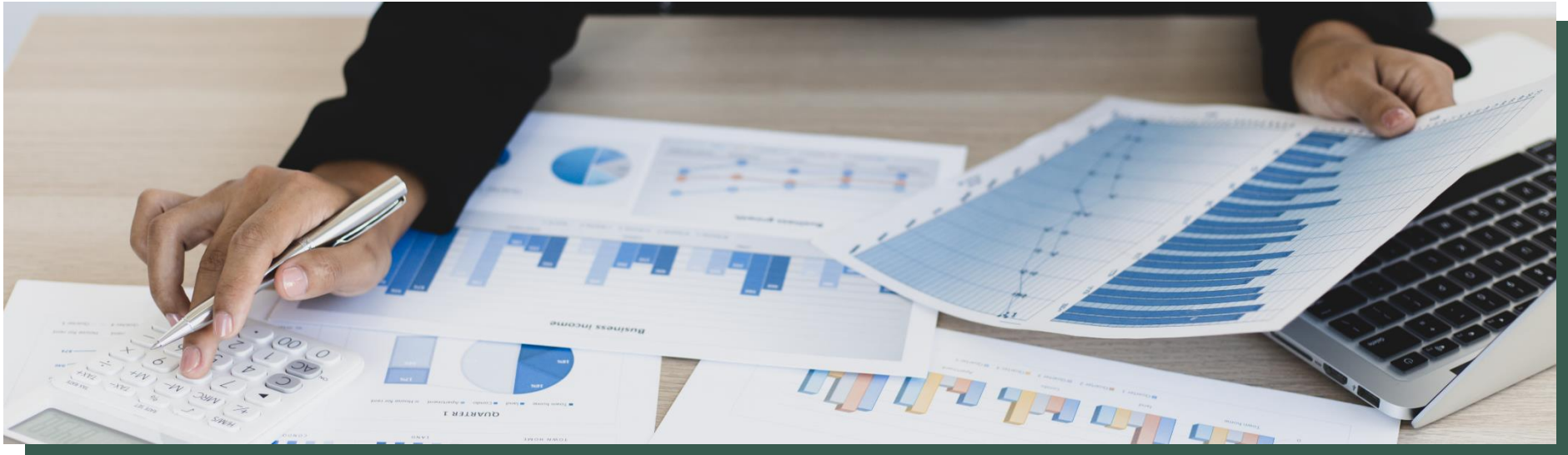
We will continue to be digital by design by:

- Improving our website to increase self-service options
- Increasing our online forms offer
- Exploring other digital channels such as virtual appointments, webchat and other AI options
- Improving digital inclusion –



An action plan has been developed alongside this strategy and shows the full details of the actions, targets and timescales involved to ensure delivery.

Monitoring and measuring performance



As a Council we are committed to delivering a high standard of service to all our customers and to improving the services we provide. To ensure our services are of good quality and provide value for money, we constantly monitor performance and use this to identify areas where further improvements are needed.

Each of our service areas have service standards and targets that they are measured against. This helps our customers see what levels of service they can expect from us and allows us to monitor and improve our performance.

Performance management is an important part of our culture. Monthly performance review meetings are held to monitor, manage and continuously improve our performance.

In addition customer satisfaction surveys are also carried out across the Council to help us hear how our customers view the service we provide.

The frequency of the surveys vary depending on the nature of the service, for example high customer contact service areas, like the Customer Service team carry out daily surveys, where as other areas, for example Planning carry out their surveys at the end of each month for recently processed applications. Other service areas may just carry out quarterly or yearly surveys, regardless of the frequency all survey results are analysed by our Customer Service Improvement Team. They help Managers use the feedback and data to draw up an action plan to drive any improvements identified. Regularly survey review meetings take place to ensure actions are being carried out and improvements are realised.

Complaints, compliments and comments are also monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis. Reviewing complaints is invaluable in allowing us to identify any specific strengths and weaknesses within service areas, measure customer satisfaction and most importantly use feedback to improve customer focus and deliver better services.

To ensure we deliver on the priorities set in our Strategic Objectives as agreed in the Corporate Plan, Continuous Improvement and Statutory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set. Each target is reviewed monthly and graded using the Red/Amber/Green status. Results are reported into our Service Delivery Committee on a quarterly basis.



Measuring our success

Adopting this strategy will lead to better outcomes for our customers. We will refresh this strategy regularly, to ensure that our objectives remain current, relevant and valid and to check we are measuring the right things.

To measure our success, we will use a mix of methods - gathering feedback from you and from our staff, and analysing the information we collect.

Feedback from customers



- Customer surveys
- Feedback from community groups
- Engagement with focus groups
- Customer satisfaction results
- Feedback from compliments, comments and complaints

Feedback from staff



- Focus groups
- Mini surveys
- Feedback from one-to-ones and appraisals
- Managers' feedback sessions
- Frontline team group sessions

Feedback using data



- Web analytics
- Analysis of themes and trends
- Contact volumes by access channel
- Volume of complaints, comments and compliments
- Performance measurement of KPIs and Service Standards