

# **Customer Access Strategy**

**2022-2024**



## Empowering our residents and businesses



“We must ensure all of our services are accessible to all of our residents, and providing extra support for those that need it to access those services is imperative.”

Cllr. Emma Crane, portfolio holder for Digital & Communications

In this Customer Access Strategy, we describe how we are achieving our vision to provide services that are easy to use and designed with the customer at the forefront. In it, we describe how we are transforming our services for residents of Rugby and how we are using technology to simplify the process of communicating with and responding to residents. Using our services should be a great experience for our customers, and they should be able to do so on any device they choose, through a variety of channels, 24 / 7.

We are committed to developing new delivery methods that can meet both the demands and efficiencies required by our customers. Our goal is to use the feedback from our customers to shape our services in a positive way. It is important to us that our customers value our services. To provide seamless services to our customers, we must provide all the resources they need in one place. Our services will be:

- Accessible to all
- Built around our customers' needs
- Agile
- Provide outstanding value for money

As we achieve this, we do not compromise on our commitment to understanding our customers. By utilising digital channels, our service delivery will be as efficient as possible while increasing the customer's accessibility. The more equipped customers are to self serve, the more we provide support for those who are less confident doing so or do not have access to technology, reserving the most expensive methods of support for the most vulnerable customers.

Our service delivery must be aimed at simplifying how customers access our services, understanding what drives them to use our services, giving them control over those services, and listening to and responding to their feedback. By listening to our customer needs, we can identify and implement process improvements, increasing efficiency and reducing reactive work.

## Where are we now?

Our customers have a wide variety of methods to access our services:

Telephone



Email



Online form



Rugby Mobile App



In person



“Each and every customer is our priority and we must move forward looking to achieve excellence with every single contact we make.”

Cllr. Emma Crane, portfolio holder for Digital & Communications

In 2021/2022 there were over 100,000 enquiries dealt with through our customer services centre, of which 76% were over the telephone. Whilst we have vision and the capability to review those customer enquiries when they first come in, we have no embedded method to track those queries from start to finish and then request feedback about the experience the customer had. It is absolutely vital that we embed a culture within the Council of reacting to customer needs, and identifying improvements in our processes throughout the Council.

During 2021 we moved across to the Digital Place Customer Contact Management system so that all our customer enquiries and processes could be centralised on first contact. Integrated into the Digital Place platform, this provides us with a unique opportunity to put all of our data into one single place as the system develops and provide the smoothest possible journey for our customers.

We are currently in the process of upgrading our corporate and customer service centre telephony system to bring it up to date, and provide the functionality to deliver the excellent customer service our residents and businesses expect.

This strategy sets out how we will create the foundation and ethos where our services are designed with the customer as our absolute priority, and the needs of our residents, businesses and workforce are not limited by the resources we have in place or the requirements of those that access our services.

### What does this mean for Rugby residents?

- The needs of our customers are our number one priority
- We will embed a culture of listening and adapting to customer needs
- Services are available when they are needed
- There are no barriers to access

## Summary

Rugby Borough Council recognise that our residents and businesses should expect to access services in the way they want and when they want to. What services we provide should be clear to all of our customers and stakeholders, and they should be valued by all. Ensuring that anyone who uses those services feels empowered to feed back about their experience and how the service reacts to that feedback is imperative, bringing not only satisfaction to the customer but pride in the Council that controls their Borough.

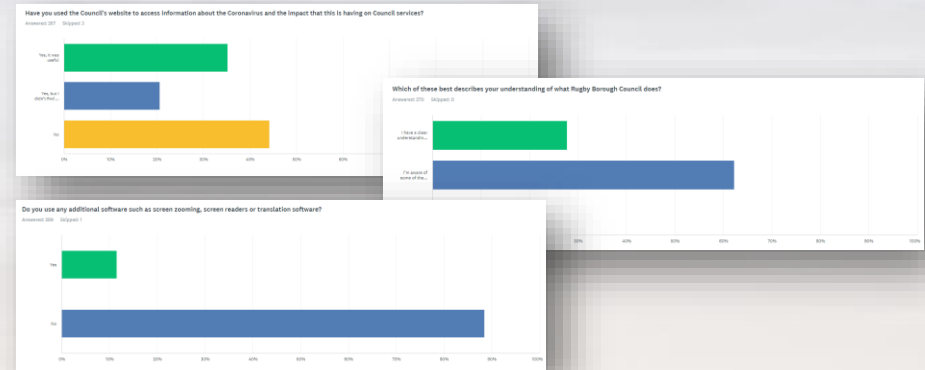
Council services will be delivered efficiently, and the customer kept up to date as their service progresses. Customers should be able to select how they are kept up to date and to expect regular updates on their query.

Whenever we deliver a paid for service, it should be both of good value and valued.

Access to services by our customers is a fundamental part of the Council and the ambitions and principals within this strategy should reach every member of our workforce.

## Valuing feedback

An outstanding Customer Experience means listening to our customers. This theme is interwoven within the Corporate Strategy, and in a variety of more specific strategies. Ensuring this feedback is put to best use is crucial to customer access.



## 4 Themes for Success

This strategy contains 4 key themes which link all of our corporate and departmental strands together. It provides an approach to how we plan, design and implement services and how we ensure value, efficiency and outstanding standards in everything we do.

Importantly it embeds our corporate values within 4 ambitions and principles of how we will approach our work.

# 4 Themes to Success

The Customer Access Vision

1

**Outstanding  
Customer  
experience**

The best, no  
matter who  
you are

2

**Productivity**

The right tool  
for the right  
job

3

**Revenue  
generation**

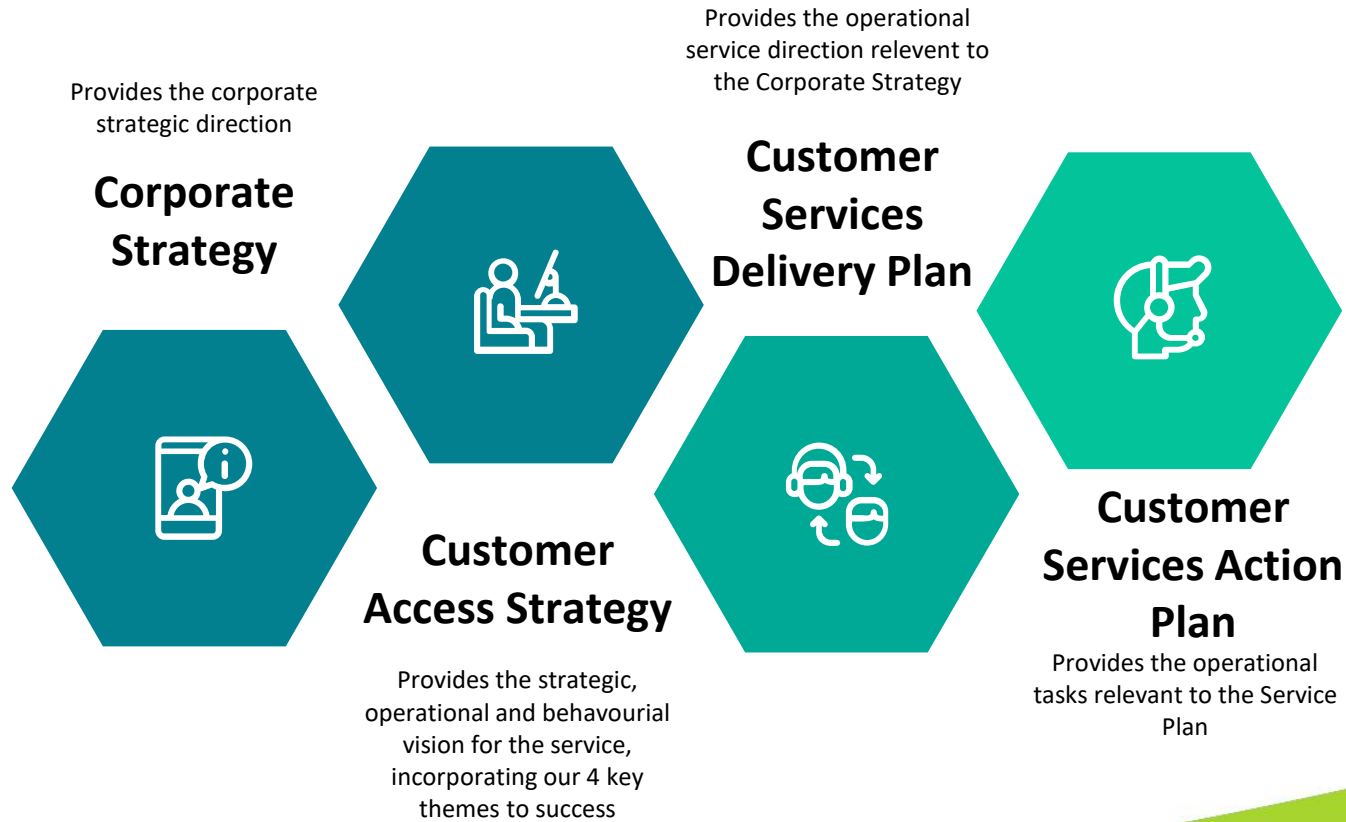
Trusted and  
convenient  
payment for  
trusted and  
convenient  
services

4

**Value**

Cost effective  
and impactful

# The Direction





## Ambition

Outstanding customer experience

In a 2021 local survey, nearly 35% of respondents said they have experienced difficulty accessing services they needed during the pandemic. An outstanding customer experience begins with being able to access the service required quickly and easily. In the same survey, over 90% of respondents said they would value notification updates about the progress of their enquiries. We will respond to this desire by incorporating more regular updates on their case or query.

1

## Principle



The best, no matter who you are

There should be no barriers to anyone in accessing our services and getting the very best experience when they do so. Customers should expect to receive a prompt response. Services should be available around the clock wherever practicable, and customers should feel valued, connected and empowered throughout.



## Action Plan Themes

Ensure all barriers to access are removed, making certain that however and whenever a customer accesses our services, the journey is of the same outstanding standard.

Review and incorporate new methods of contact in response to customer need and technology developments. Customers should feel that they are able to access services how they want, and be kept up to date in the method they would prefer.

Every method of access should use the same process to ensure our excellent standard is maintained for every customer. These processes will be regularly reviewed and adjusted whenever an improvement is identified.

Customers should feel empowered to feed back every time they access our services, and this feedback is valued.

## What this might look like

Reduce customer travel time and environmental impact by providing services remotely.



### Climate

### Economy



Provide face to face, remote and self service access in a variety of languages and accessible formats to remove barriers and reduce digital exclusion.

Introduce a business specific self service portal which integrates into our customer service centre system and processes



### Health & Community

### Organisation



Processes are designed and reviewed constantly both by ourselves and the customer to ensure the right officer deals with the right service in the most efficient and effective method to serve the customer best.



## Ambition

Productivity

Over 100,000 customer enquiries were raised in 2021. When a customer requires a service, it is imperative that the service is delivered as efficiently and as swiftly as possible. Ensuring that the right tasks are attributed to the right person, and that person has the facilities available to them to deliver the required outcome is central to this.

2

## Principle



The right tool for the right job

Systems and processes should be regularly reviewed and challenged to ensure that we have the tools in place to fulfil the needs of our residents, businesses and stakeholders.



## Action Plan Themes

Regular reviews and challenge of all customer journeys should be undertaken. Residents, businesses and stakeholders have a reasonable expectation that any service they access has good governance, audit and is processed efficiently.

We as a Council should have systems in place which fit around our business needs and the needs of our customers. There should be no reduction in service availability or functionality because we are held back by the tools we have to undertake those services.

Services should feel empowered to effectively deliver their service, and be able to introduce changes and transformations as processes are reviewed.

## What this might look like

Regular system and process reviews should also take into account a Climate Impact Assessment



### Climate

### Economy



We will upskill our Customer Contact Centre to ensure user experience is considered, tailored to meet local needs



### Health & Community

Provide our elected members with a case management system to assist with engagement and resolution of resident issues.

### Organisation







## Ambition

Revenue generation

In 2020/2021, Rugby Borough Council generated over £11 million in revenue in addition to Council Tax and Business rates. By making the generation of that revenue as efficient as possible, it will allow us to contribute to meeting our financial targets. By making the Council the preferred service provider in the Borough for revenue generating services, we are satisfying an identified need as well as establishing us as a trusted supplier.

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## Principle



Trusted and convenient payment for trusted and convenient services

Whenever a customer is paying for a service, they should be able to pay through different devices, effectively and conveniently. The revenue generating services we provide should be trusted and valued as part of the service offering within the Borough.



## Action Plan Themes

Services provided by Rugby Borough Council should be the preferred option for all stakeholders.

The services should be of outstanding quality, and we should be recognised as a trusted supplier.

Customers should be aware of the variety of services available to them, and perceive them as excellent value.

Customers purchasing services have a reasonable expectation to pay for the service in the method they prefer. Whether that is instantly on mobile, over the phone via the customer contact centre or setting up a direct debit.

Payment methods should be reliable and secure.

## What this might look like

Use our influence to attribute value to climate savings and encourage customers to consider climate when making purchases.



### Climate

### Economy



Ensure our local businesses find our traded services their preferred option by advertising the value and ease of access to those services.

Our communities will be empowered to pay the Council for their services in the method they prefer.



### Health & Community

### Organisation



Direct Debit payment options will be rolled out across traded services such as garden waste.



## Ambition

Value

Every customer journey and facility accessed should be of outstanding value to the taxpayer whilst not sacrificing the level of service provided. With an ever increasing demand, it is vital each service is provided in the most cost efficient and accessible way.

4

## Principle

Cost effective and impactful



Providing an outstanding customer experience, putting the right tools in place and attributing the right tasks to the right people will make the services our customers access of best value. Using external suppliers where these principles are not compromised should be an option.



## Action Plan Themes

Services should be monitored and reviewed to ensure that Rugby taxpayers are getting value for money.

We'll look closely at how we deal with those more challenging queries or complaints and assess how early intervention can help to resolve issues sooner or to prevent issues arising in the first place.

Value of Council services is not only about financial cost. There are a great many benefits which come from service delivery such as mental wellbeing, physical health and supporting local economy which should be integrated into the value which is monitored.

Residents and businesses should be able to perceive the value of the services provided by the Council, whether paid for directly or part of the offering funded through existing budgets.

## What this might look like

Move our digital services which are on site to the cloud to reduce their environmental impact and increase the opportunities for self service.



## Climate

## Economy



Provide new resident information and publicly available interactive maps for recreation facilities and green spaces.

Ensure the Voluntary and Community Sector are incorporated into the services we can offer to local residents and businesses, providing signposting and engagement where required.

## Health & Community



## Organisation



Introduce digital dashboards to ensure we can evaluate cost per contact for our services and prioritise high cost services for review.