

Customer Access & Service Strategy

2013 - 2016

1. Introduction and background

The council's first Customer & Access Strategy was developed in 2009 and centered around four key themes

- 1.1 Developing our knowledge of our customers, so that we can identify appropriate solutions
- 1.2 Being proactive in delivering services
- 1.3 The accessibility of services
- 1.4 Delivering exceptional services

Over the last few years, the Council has embarked on a significant programme of transformation in each of these areas. This has included:

- Undertaking a review of our telephony systems and deploying a system that not only saves the council money, but enables the council to more effectively monitor customer experience
- Extending the use of our customer relationship management system (CRM) to other service areas within the council.
- Extending the range of services on offer to our customers by the introduction of licensing, environmental, planning, housing & Tell use once services in our One Stop Shop.
- Improving our written communication through the use of plain English and the training of back office staff
- Developing and introducing clear service standards across all council services
- Fundamental review of the council's complaints process, ensuring management & tracking via the council's CRM system
- Promotion of council and other partner services through an outbound campaign and through effective signposting within the Contact Centre.
- Improvements to the council's website
- The use of "mystery shopping" and review of avoidable contacts on a yearly basis to improve our processes.
- The development of the "Here to Help" programme, which was rolled out to all staff and has been incorporated into staff induction.
- The undertaking of a complete review of our existing Customer Relationship Management system to meet future demands of any new strategy.

2. Why have a Strategy and how does it fit with other strategies?

The Customer Access Strategy will help to ensure that the Council's resources and those of the various services will be focused on achieving common objectives, to benefit both the

organisation and the customers we serve. Close links to the Council's IT strategy, ensures that the benefits of technology are introduced appropriately to maximise efficiency and enhance the customer experience

The Strategy has been developed through the Council's "Team Burnley" Corporate Officer Group, which includes representatives from a wide range of Service Units within the Council as well as from input by members.

The Customer Access Service Strategy has also been informed by the plans of Service Units within the Council, the corporate developments required by the Council and the need to deliver services to customers at a time of reduced resources.

3. Strategy timeline

This Strategy covers a three-year period and will be used to inform service managers' annual service plans. The plan will link in with other planning processes, such as the development of the Council's Strategic Plan, Capital Programme, Organisational Development Strategy, IT Strategy and annual budget setting.

4. Aims of the Strategy

The main aims of the Strategy are as follows:

- To provide vision and key actions for how services will support and deliver the Council's aims over a three-year period.
- To inform the medium to long-term investment that the Council requires in meeting customer demand.
- To identify how the council can maintain and/or change services to continue to support efficiency savings for the Council and continue to meet customer demands.
- To ensure that services have the flexibility to meet the challenges of future service provision
- To inform Service Plans for those customer driven services.
- To inform the Workforce Development Plan for Services Units

5. Where are we now?

As stated in the introduction to this Strategy, the Council has embarked on a major programme of transformation to Customer Access and Service.

This has seen major changes to the way the Council operates, the rationalisation of counter services, improved utilisation of the One Stop Shop, refocus on the customer and re-evaluation of the IT needed to support change.

We have:

- re-evaluated and procured a new Customer Relationship management system, reducing costs, enabling improved functionality and transferred all existing services within the space of 4 months
- We have made plans for the major changes to our Revenues and Benefits service due to the introduction of Council Tax Support & will continue to monitor progress

We are currently working on:

- the development of a new website, revisiting all of our existing information and developing new forms that are consistent in format and easy to understand
- We are creating a self-service solution for all of the existing processes within our CRM
- Enabling the ability to book leisure facilities on line

The significant financial challenges on resources to local government over the next three years will place challenges on the council's ability to meet the varying demands of its diverse customer base. Clearly this strategy has to look at achieving the most with less over that period of time.

6. Vision – where do we want to be in three years' time?

The council will understand customer demand and be working with partners to ensure services deliver what is needed. By the end of 2016, Burnley Council will have made digitally accessible its entire range of customer facing services. This will improve and streamline service provision to residents and deliver efficiency savings.

7. Achieving the vision

As stated earlier, the Council needs to build on its existing transformation programme to fulfill the vision outlined in Section 3 of the Strategy.

In order to achieve this, the following objectives for change have been identified.

7.1 Develop our knowledge of our customers, so that we can more effectively meet their needs

- Improved tracking within our new Customer Relationship Management system & Internet Site, will enable us to understand the customer experience and “hot spots” for issues
- Focus on creating a single view of our customers
- Review of the impact of Council Tax support to understand future demands
- Evaluate barriers to digital inclusion and develop an approach to improve accessibility
- Share our customer view with partner organisations to determine opportunities for joint working ensuring conformance to DPA principles
- Develop reporting to improve understanding of customer groups and their locations and use of services

7.2 Be proactive and flexible in delivering services to minimise cost to serve

- Develop options & deliver solutions for mobile working within services to improve lag time between officer action and system update, to speed up customer response and avoid duplicate calls.
- Explore the rationalisation of core systems to improve the council's single view of customer and reduce expensive licensing costs on current systems
- Develop a business case for the deployment of kiosk services in leisure.
- Provide more services in partnership with other organisations, in particular through increased shared service provision

7.3 Increase the digital take up of services to reduce costs and focus more costly pathways on those with greatest need.

- Develop digital capabilities in house, so we can respond quickly to changes in service
- Develop a new web site which has a clear focus on digital services
- Ensure availability and accessibility of services 24x7
- Adopt a consistent approach to the council's digital offering, to assist new users
- Create digital services for business customers through specific web page and transactional items
- Develop and deliver a marketing campaign to promote digital services, including identifying areas of the town with free Wi-Fi access
- Members to become ambassadors of the service through self-use

7.4 Continue to offer quality services

- External evaluation of services through mystery shopping
- Evaluate service offering through self-assessment using the customer service Excellence Standard.
- Ensure resilience to service delivery with well thought out business continuity planning
- Maintain the focus to reduce repeat contacts

Customer Services Access Strategy 2013-16 Action Plan

	Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
Develop our knowledge of our customers, so that we can more effectively meet their needs			
1.	Review the impacts of Council Tax Support & estimate demands for 2014/15	Joanne Preston	September 2013
2.	Develop baseline for understanding current take up of digital services	Corporate IT Group	September 2013
3.	Develop effective reporting from the CRM to highlight hot spot areas for current service take up, extending to customer profiling	Corporate IT Group	March 2014
4.	Utilise improved customer information to launch mutually beneficial programmes with partner organisations	Heads of Service	March 2015
Be proactive and flexible in delivering services to minimise cost to serve			
5.	Identify areas of opportunity for mobile working and develop business cases to support modification of service	Service Managers	March 2015
6.	Review software applications with a focus on cost & assess feasibility to move to alternative cheaper alternatives.	Heads of Service	March 2014
7.	Assess and develop business case were appropriate for the use of kiosk services to reduce costs	G Vinton	March 2014
8.	Evaluate shared services option that improve customer experience and reduce costs	Heads of Service	March 2016
Increase the digital take up of services to reduce costs and focus more costly pathways on those with greatest need			
9.	Develop digital capabilities within the workforce to ensure changes to customer service can be delivered quickly and effectively	Sharon Hargraves	October 2013
10.	New website development including access to on-line services 24x7	Sharon Hargraves	May 2013
11.	Consistent approach to form development for digital services	Leanne Burrows	May 2013

12.	Creation of digital offering for commercial customers	Kate Ingram	July 2013
13.	Development and delivery of marketing campaign to promote digital offering, looking at options to incentivise take up and publicising current free Wi-Fi access in the town	Mike Waite	September 2013
14.	Development and promotion of members using self-serve for service requests	Tom Forshaw	July 2013
Continue to offer quality services			
15.	Monitor yearly service delivery through mystery shopping	Rob Dobson	October 2013 October 2014 October 2015 October 2016
16.	Use the Customer Service Standard to target areas for assessment and improvement	Sharon Hargraves / Team Burnley	Ongoing programme through to 2016
17.	Maintain effective BC plans to ensure resilience around service delivery	HOS	Ongoing
18.	Focus on the reducing repeat contacts by improving processes and systems	Joanne Preston	Ongoing