

# DRAFT Walsall Council Customer Experience Strategy 2021 – 2026



**We want to do things right, first time, every time, and make services accessible, to help reduce inequalities and maximise potential for our customers.**

The council's Corporate Plan is the golden thread which runs through everything we do. Our corporate values highlight how the Council works with local communities/ customers and influences choice and behaviours through Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency and Ethical working (PLATE). The Council's values and behaviours are central to everything the Council delivers through a culture of continuous improvement. We strive to increase performance, efficiency and champion the design of services to meet the needs of our customers. The Council is committed to creating an environment that provides opportunities for all residents and communities to fulfil their potential and deliver resilient communities.

Our Customers get in touch with us in many ways depending on their needs and the service they use. As a council we are committed to providing services which are easy to use, simple and effective and where we can't help we want to direct you to someone who can. We will also aim to provide tailored support where needed and understand sometimes this means we may need to provide services in a different way. In the last few years, people prefer to access our services on their mobile phone or computer as this is quicker and more convenient. By improving our online and digital service offer, we can deliver more Resilient Communities. This means supporting residents to become more self-sufficient by allowing them to access services via new 24/7 digital self-serve pathways, whilst also recognising the need to support our most vulnerable residents, through a trusted network of community and voluntary sector partners.

**We want services in the council to:**

- Understand what customers want and deliver an excellent customer service experience
- Be fair, resilient, and create value for all the diverse communities we serve
- Learn from best practice and when things need to improve make changes quickly
- Create a culture which puts customers first and central within all of our services
- Be flexible and make reasonable adjustments for some of our service users

**Our customers want us to:**

- Listen to the request they make and understand them as people
- To deal with inquiries quickly and efficiently
- To keep us updated on enquiries
- To make processes easy to understand and services accessible either online or through other channels

**As a customer we need you to:**

- Treat us with respect and politeness
- Provide us with any information we ask for
- Work with us on issues we may need to resolve together

**Did you know that it costs the council:**



**£17**  
for each face to face transaction



**£14**  
to deal with a letter



**£4**  
to deal with an email



**£5**  
for each telephone call



**£1**  
for each online transaction



**10p**  
for a website visit

The council deals with a large number of customer enquiries each year. Broken down into different channels, on average there are:

|              |     |                 |     |
|--------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| Face to face | TBC | Telephone Calls | TBC |
| Post         | TBC | Website form    | TBC |
| Emails       | TBC | Website Visits  | TBC |

**Who are our customers?**



The council deals with a wide range of people across Walsall, and our customers include everyone living, working, volunteering, investing, studying, running a business.

**Our customers contact us for many different reasons, including to:**

- Get information from us, or give us information
- Report issues
- Apply for, book or arrange services
- Make payments or buy our services
- Access specific help and support

**Our Customer Promise - we want to be GREAT**



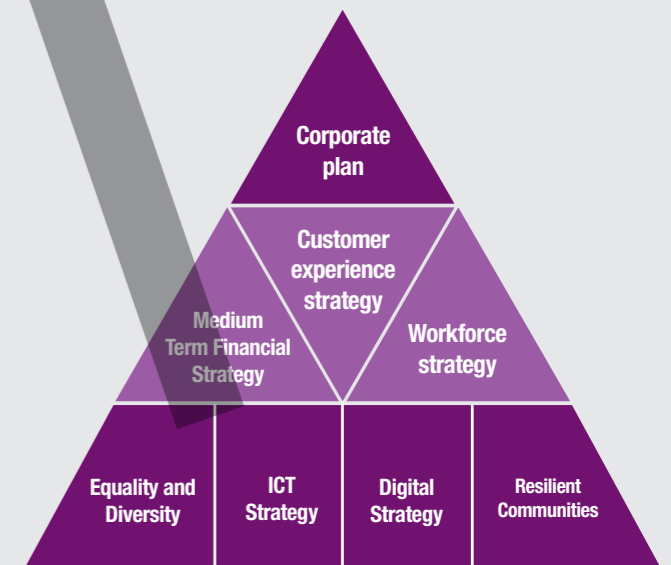
- **G**et things done quickly
- **R**ealistic in what we can and can't do
- **E**xcellent customer service first time every time
- **A**lign the way we work with customers, partners and internal services
- **T**reat everyone with respect and courtesy

**Key facts and figures**

Walsall is a diverse borough. We serve around 120,000 households. We have an estimated population of 286,700 (ONS 2020 Mid-Year Estimates), comprised of approximately 21.7% children 0-15 (62,300), 60.8% working-aged 16-64 (174,300), and 17.5% 65 years & over (50,100), giving a dependency ratio of 0.64 dependents to every 1 working age adult. The population is expected to increase to more than 300,000 by 2030 and to more than 320,000 by 2040. The biggest increases are expected in the older age groups, with over 65s expected to make up around 20% of the population by 2040.

According to the 2011 Census, White British people make up 76.9% of Walsall's population. With 23.1% of the population from minority ethnic groups, Walsall is more ethnically diverse than the national average, with Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi being the largest minority ethnic groups.

**Where does this Customer Strategy fit?**



**In 6 months of 2021 we received over:**



**25000 online webforms**, with the contact us form, free school meals and people ordering bigger bins being the most used.

Our call center received over **8900 calls**

We receive xx visits to our website in a year with the most frequent pages visited being xx

As our population grows, there is increasing demand for the type and volume of council services. With this in mind we have pressures with the way we spend. We can manage this demand better at a lower cost if we improve the quality of our services, improve customer experiences by being innovative and working differently and make it very easy for them to access services themselves using digital channels where possible.

## Quotes from customers and staff about how to improve customer services



### Resident/Customer feedback



#### Our Public Survey Showed we need to:

- Enable customers to make informed choices and decisions about the services they receive – **52% Strongly agree**
- Provide consistent high quality customer experience across all services – **46% Strongly agree**
- Deliver value for money services – **47% Strongly agree**
- Involve customers in the design of services – **37% Strongly Agree**
- Be a resilient and transparent council – **52% Strongly Agree**

#### Feedback from the Telephone Survey Showed we need to offer:

- More joined up services
- Digital self-service
- Website accuracy
- Meaningful telephone contact
- Regular updates for customers

#### Key Feedback from Young People suggest they need:

- “Fast/ efficient responses”
- Quality of the service and support...
- To have a named contact person
- Advisers that listen and understand what is needed

#### Customers said it's important that:

- Information provided by the council is accurate and up to date – **81%**
- Self-serve and online options are available – **53%**
- It is easy to contact / access the council – **68%**
- Council services work in a joined up manner – **57%**
- The customer experience is consistently high quality across all council services – **58%**
- You have the option to speak to someone face to face – **46%**
- Requirements and needs are understood at the first point of contact – **55%**
- The council is clear about what can and can't be done – **71%**
- Queries are managed efficiently and effectively by connecting you to the right person – **62%**

#### Feedback from our Easy Read Survey showed disabled or vulnerable customers need:

- Access to face to face advice
- More local based services
- Accessible consultation
- Realistic alternative formats
- To build a trusted relationships as past negative experiences will shape how people approach us




#### If we do this right we will improve:

- Service user outcomes and customer experience
- Employee satisfaction and commitment
- Service efficiency and performance
- Resilience in Partnership arrangements and engagement

#### We will measure this by:

- Capturing regular feedback and learning from it
- Making our feedback methods so everyone has the opportunity to take part
- Setting performance measures and developing an action plan which helps us to improve customer experience for all.

## What are we going to do?

| Our Outcomes  | What does mean for customers   | How will we do the job?  |
|---|--|--|
|  <p><b>Excellent customer experience for all</b></p>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers understand what they can expect from us</li> <li>• We are easy to deal with</li> <li>• Aim to get it right first time, every time</li> <li>• Easy to understand policies and processes which are clear and encourage self-service</li> <li>• Staff focused on providing good service and outcomes for customers</li> <li>• End to end services designed from the customer perspective</li> <li>• Improve customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Improve the council's reputation as a Proud and resilient organisation</li> <li>• Increased investment/ commercial opportunities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve customer processes and provide increased personalisation for customers.</li> <li>• Create an organisational development programme that supports staff to consistently place customers at the heart of all decision-making.</li> <li>• Review all letters, and advice leaflets, to ensure that they meet accessibility standards, and are offered in alternative formats.</li> <li>• Publish our Service Standards and introduce corporate performance measures to monitor compliance.</li> <li>• Use Connected Working change methodology to implement a customer-centric performance framework across the Council.</li> </ul>   |
|  <p><b>Increase digital contact from customers</b></p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is easy to find on the council's website and is up to date</li> <li>• Customers can apply for services, inform us of changes, request information and pay quickly and safely online</li> <li>• Services are designed so customers can use their own devices</li> <li>• Customers can complete most tasks digitally from start to finish, without having to contact the council directly</li> <li>• Help those who need it to get online and get the help they need</li> <li>• Customers and staff are involved in the design of digital public services</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update our website to ensure that it is 100% compliant with new accessibility standards.</li> <li>• Develop a self-serve digital pathway for all customer demands.</li> <li>• Provide consistent online forms, that are concise, easy to understand, and collect all the relevant information at the first point of contact.</li> <li>• Deploy chatbot and social media technology to help support customers to self-serve through new digital channels.</li> <li>• Work with community and voluntary sector partners, and our suppliers offering added social value, to help increase digital skills amongst residents.</li> </ul>   |
|  <p><b>Act on service user feedback to deliver improved services</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to our customers and learn how to make things Great for all</li> <li>• Consultation will be accessible and everyone will have the opportunity to take part</li> <li>• Customer engagement will become more independent and be able to have the right to make choices</li> <li>• Customer feedback will help improve council services by influencing the way we do things</li> <li>• Keep customers well informed about our services, and any changes or issues which may affect them</li> <li>• Work with our partners in Walsall so we can join up services where needed</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop customer satisfaction measures across all customer touchpoints.</li> <li>• Gain regular feedback from paying customers, to help increase our insight in markets and drive innovation, to help support delivery of the Council's commercial ambitions.</li> <li>• Introduce regular mystery shopping, and a customer panel, to support future service development.</li> <li>• Deliver a programme of community engagement that facilitates dialogue about key issues with a diverse range of people .</li> <li>• Work towards developing a council-wide view of individual customer debts and develop a breathing space policy to give residents in debt the time they need to get the advice needed.</li> <li>• Review the Corporate Complaints policy, and embed a new digital process for managing complaints, with associated performance measures.</li> </ul> |