

NKDC  
'Our Customer'  
Strategy  
2016 -2019

FINAL :Version 2.2 – August 2016

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<b>STRATEGY APPROVAL</b>				
Name	Organisation	Role	Approval	Date
CMT	NKDC	Executive	Approved	20 July 2016
Executive Board	NKDC	Adoption Recommendation	Approved	6 October 2016

# Foreword

The world is changing rapidly when it comes to technology, and with that we recognise that customers want to engage with different services at a time and using a method that is convenient to them. High quality customer service is still important to customers, as is being able to share feedback on their experience with the confidence that it will be listened to and that it could help shape how we deliver services.

Over the next 3 years and beyond, we want to demonstrate our commitment to our customers. We will empower them to access our services in the way they want to; enabling those who want to 'self-serve' to do so using digital technology while still supporting those who still prefer to use more traditional methods.

This strategy not only focuses on 'how' our customer will interact with us, but on understanding 'why' and what more we can do to shape our service based on customer experience as well as recognising that good customer service is a skill which is integral to all transactions with the council.



**Cllr Marion Brighton OBE**  
**Leader of the Council**

*Marion Brighton*

## **1. Vision**

**Easily accessible services for all customers, while achieving efficiency and value for money**

## **2. Customer Statement**

North Kesteven District Council recognises that a positive customer experience is an essential ingredient to the successful delivery of Services across the District. To ensure that customer access not only meets the needs of the varying customers that use council services, but continues to enable the Council to develop and improve, it has put in place a vision for the future and a strategy to evolve its offer over that time

## **3. Introduction**

North Kesteven District Council has an ambition to provide high quality and value for money services to all our customers. The channels through which these services are delivered (be that via telephone, online, in person, or via other means) are a critical part of public service provision, and it is vital that they are offered and managed in an effective and efficient way.

This strategy is North Kesteven District Council's plan for how we will meet the needs of our customers through various channels, ensuring that we encourage customers to use the most modern, convenient, value for money methods when it is suitable for their enquiry and ensuring more 'traditional' methods are available when they are needed. The principles within this strategy are the drivers which have led to its development.

Additionally, the strategy ensures that we continue to deliver services and interact with customers in line with the Council's Vision as set out in the NK Plan. Moreover, it will create a critical link between the NK Plan, Central Government initiatives, Lincolnshire wide initiatives and the potential of emerging Information technology that can support the journey for our customers.

As a result, it will be subject to review during its period of operation.

The 'Our Customer' strategy is supported by a development plan which will be refreshed on an annual basis ensuring that the delivery of this strategy continues to be effective, achievable and appropriate.

This strategy is for everyone, including elected Members, the Chief Executive, Directors, Heads of Service and other senior managers who have responsibility for the overall delivery of services to our customers. However, its impact affects a much wider audience, including the council's employees, partners, stakeholders and of course our customers.

A single page diagrammatic summary of the 'Our Customer' Strategy is shown in the next page

# 'OUR CUSTOMER' STRATEGY 2016-2019 : Single Page Summary

**VISION:** Services that customers can access easily, using the method and time that suits their needs while ensuring it is effective and efficient for the Council.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

CHOICE

VALUE FOR MONEY

EFFICIENT

ENGAGEMENT

IMPROVED EXPERIENCE

INNOVATIVE

SERVICE STANDARDS

UNDERSTANDING & INSIGHT

## THEMES

Channel Shift & omni-channel services

Listening to and learning from our customers

Central & secure collection and sharing of customer data across the council

Renewing Service Delivery - Supporting the changing business needs of each service

## DELIVERY PROGRAMMES

Self Service

Customer Profile

Website

Telephony

Face to Face

Social and new media

Feedback, Analytics & Performance Framework

Single View of the customer

Training & Development



No customer is disadvantaged

Variety of channels for each service

Partnership working

Transformation

Reduced paper

Value for Money & Process Efficiencies

Continuous Improvement

### SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

Completion at first point of contact

Reduced administrative burden

Professional Customer Service

Use of proven technology

Digital by Preference

Monitor, review & enhance

Delivery Plan and Project Methodology

Monitoring & Review

### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Roles and Responsibilities

Alignment with other strategies

## 5. Vision for our customers in the future

North Kesteven District is changing and it is important that the Council reshapes its services to meet the expectations of our citizens and customers in the future. The introduction of technology continues to affect all of our lives and is not only changing how our customers interact but also how the Council works. Our approach to customers need to reflect that change in order to be a modern council that responds to its customers wants and needs.

Our vision is therefore:

**Easily accessible services for all customers, while achieving efficiency and value for money**

This strategy outlines the vision and direction of how the Council can meet this vision over the next three years and how giving customers a choice of channels can also make financial and efficiency savings for the organisation.

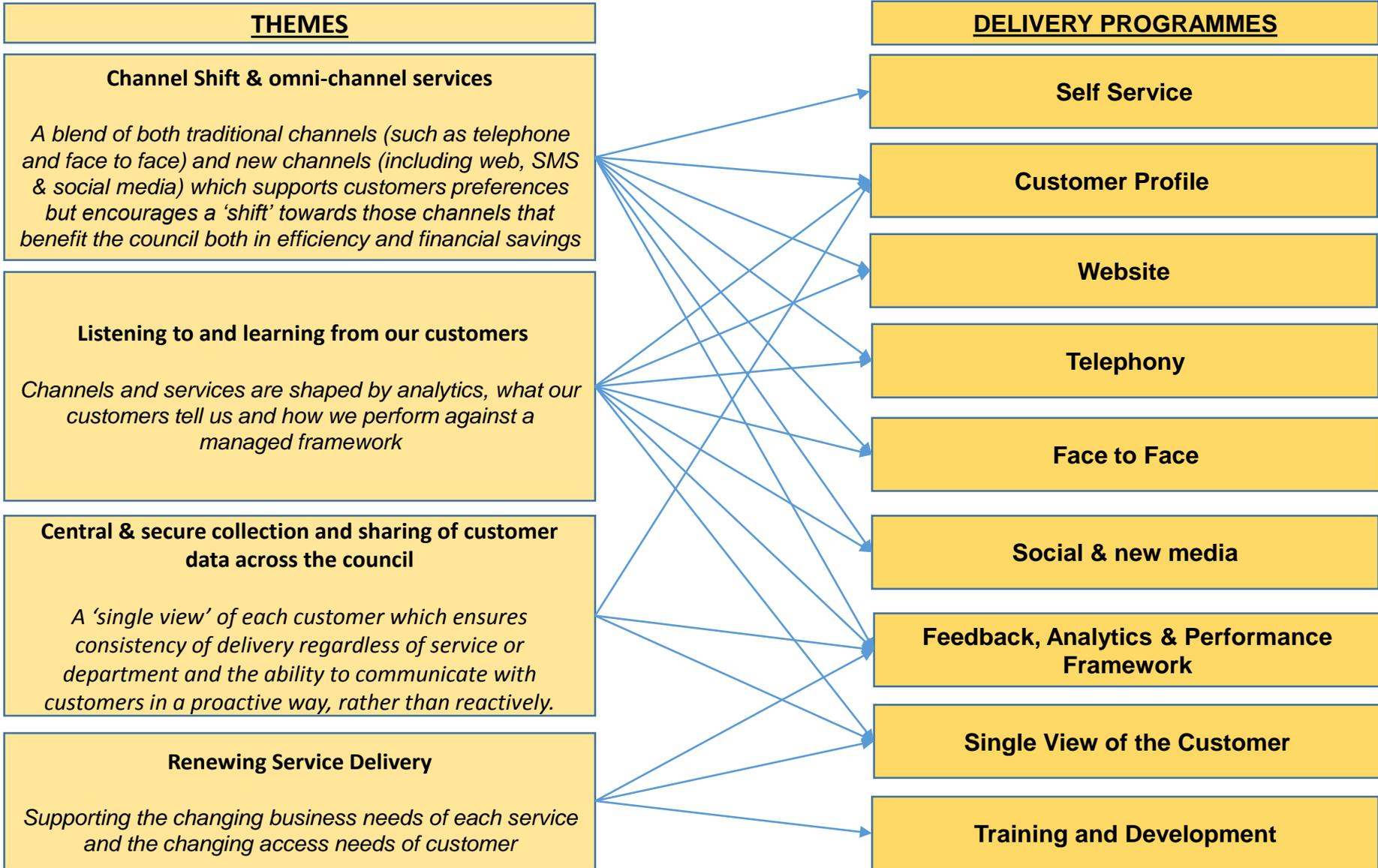
The key outcomes that the Council expects from the delivery of the strategy are set out on the right of this page

<b><u>STRATEGIC OUTCOMES</u></b>
<b>CHOICE:</b> Access to our services and communication to our customers is available through a range of appropriate and cost effective channels, designed to meet the needs of our customers
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY :</b> As well as savings both financial and in efficiency, for the council through greater usage of our digital channels
<b>EFFICIENT:</b> minimised ‘hand offs’ and interactions for customers; trying to get it “right first time”
<b>ENGAGEMENT:</b> of all customers in what the council does
<b>IMPROVED EXPERIENCE:</b> for the customer and for officers when communicating
<b>INNOVATIVE:</b> NKDC is a modern, forward thinking organisation in its approach to customer access & engagement
<b>SERVICE STANDARDS:</b> Clear expectations set within the business in relation to standards of customer service and managed expectations for the customers
<b>UNDERSTANDING &amp; INSIGHT:</b> The council has a clear picture of who its customers are as well as what they want and need from its services

## 6. Strategic Blueprint : Themes for delivery

To support the delivery of the vision, the strategy has identified four core themes which will be underpinned by a series of programmes and supporting projects.

These themes along with the core delivery programmes are set out below



## 5.1 Strategic Blueprint : Delivery Programmes

The nine core delivery programmes with the 'Our Customer' Strategy are described below. The 'Our Customer' Strategy 2016-19 is a live document and as such the delivery programmes are not necessarily fixed for the duration of the strategy. A high level view of constituent projects and activities within each delivery programme along with a high level Gantt chart may be found on the next page.

### **Self Service**

Review of self service options on the website - aiming to make them fully transactional where possible. Additionally, look for more opportunity to connect the customer to our services without the need for human intervention for non-complex events such as payments. Further to this, working with partners to identify opportunity for customers to self serve for district services at different locations.

### **Customer Profile**

Develop a rich customer insight, understanding segmentation, demographics, characteristics including variability by areas within the district. This enables the authority to interact with customers in a consistent way across services and supports proactive communications rather than only being able to be reactive.

### **Website**

Launch of the new corporate website followed by monthly reviews of content and layout to ensure relevance and maximised transactions

### **Telephony**

Review of calls in to the business to ensure best experience for the customer – both internal and external. To include methodology and technology reviews

### **Face to Face**

Review of all face to face presence across the district to ensure positive customer experience and value for money – as well as exploring the introduction of more self service opportunities and identifying ways of working in an improved way with partners

### **Social & new media**

Exploration of new ways of engaging and communicating with our customers to ensure we meet customers preferences and identify potential savings; financially and in efficiencies

### **Feedback, Analytics & Performance Framework**

Improving how we capture feedback & analytics and utilising it to continue to shape and improve service delivery. This would include the creation of a customer related 'Performance Framework' across all channels.

### **Single View of the customer**

Work towards a single 'master' location for customer details so that the customer gets the same experience regardless of what area of the council they are contacting and we have a joined up approach to our interactions with them.

### **Training & Development**

To identify the training and development needs for colleagues across the Council and Elected Members in terms of use of customer service. This is a cross-cutting programme that will have tiers of training dependent on individual need. Overall co-ordination will sit with Learning & Development

## 5.2 Delivery Programme: Projects & Gantt

The initial high level delivery programme is set out below. The delivery programme will evolve over the course of the strategy. The will include the identification of new projects and key activities within programmes. The delivery plan will also evolve and be influenced by other key related strategies including the ICT Strategy, Transformation Programme, Communications Strategy, Information Governance Strategy, and the Our People Strategy. Financial investments will at all times align with both the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the contract and procurement regulations as set out in the Council's constitution.

PROGRAMME	KEY PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES	OWNER	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SELF SERVICE	Review and allign current offer													
	Identify & implement new opportunities													
	Ongoing maintenance to meet customer need													
CUSTOMER PROFILE	Explore existing insight data & identify further opportunites													
	Segment customers based on what we have learned													
	Apply segmentation to ongoing work													
	Review customer profiles based on up to date data													
WEBSITE	Soft launch new website													
	User Experience testing													
	Hard launch with promotion to public													
	Create & implement programme of ongoing management													
TELEPHONY	Ensure current technology meets business need													
	Develop technology on offer													
	Review each service delivered throught the call centre													
	6 monthly reviews													
FACE TO FACE	Review current offer													
SOCIAL AND NEW MEDIA	Create a matrix management approach to social media													
	Investigate new channel options													
	Implement approved channels													
FEEDBACK AND ANALYTICS	Review current feedback opportunities													
	Develop & implement new offer													
	Investigate new ways of obtaining data & analytics													
	Use feedback and analytics to shape service delivery													
SINGLE VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER	Investigate supporting technology													
	Create & implement process													
	Review annually													
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT	Investigate accreditation opportunities													
	Work with HR to create training plan													
	Implement													

Each project will have its own detailed plan and appropriate cost, resource, time and quality parameters.

**4. Principles underpinning the Strategy**

The way in which a lot of customers want to access Council services is changing.

However there are some customers who still use the more traditional channels, either because of the complexity of their enquiry, the sensitive nature of their enquiry they prefer traditional methods or are not aware that the digital offer exists.

It is important that customers can access services through their preferred method, and that the digital offerings are good enough that channel shift happened naturally as both customers preferences and the population changes. It is also essential we balance customer preference with both financial and efficiency savings and that this strategy relates closely to objectives defined in the NK Plan.

The vision of service delivery to the community, upon which this strategy is based, will be subject to continual review to ensure its relevance to the needs of the citizen, and other stakeholders. As such, this strategy will be subject to the same level of scrutiny to ensure that alignment is maintained.

The key policy decisions made with regard to the delivery of Our Customer's experience are set out opposite

PRINCIPLES
Ensure no customer is disadvantaged when attempting to access council services
Ensure that all services can be accessed through a variety of (appropriate) channels wherever possible
Reduce the administrative burden to the back office departments by integrating where possible our online services directly into the back office system to reduce the amount of manual intervention required.
Look for opportunities to provide joint services with partner organisations
Transform our services to ensure best value & experience for the customer across the organisation
Reduce the number of letters and paper based communication in line with customer preference to create savings and efficiencies.
To handle all enquiries in a consistent, efficient and professional way by offering high levels of customer service at all times
Aim to complete customer enquiries at the first point of contact to limit 'hand-offs' and passing the customer around the organisation
Monitor, review & enhance our service and channel offering using customer data, insight and feedback
Promote the councils preferred digital channels over more traditional
There will be selective use of proven technology – balancing the benefits of innovation with the risks of pioneering.
Solutions must offer value for money & process efficiencies
The use of Continuous Improvement, Lean and Systems Thinking will incorporated into the development of new customer journeys

## 7. Governance and Delivery Structures

This section of the strategy pulls together the key aspects of governance and delivery structures covering : Corporate Commitment, Roles and Responsibilities, Delivery Components, Monitoring, Review and Development of the strategy, and links to other corporate strategies. These are set out below and on the next page

### Corporate Commitment

A real partnership between all those who interact & engage with customers

Understanding who our customers are and their experience of our services will be an integral part of the Council's business planning process

There will continue to be a strategic view of the way technology is applied across the organisation for the benefits of the customer

The delivery of customer service will offer, and will be seen to offer, value for money

There is a commitment to develop the right insight & customer service skills for all colleagues and elected members

### Monitoring, Review, and Development

As a result of continued service improvements, the Council's transformation programme, the Shared Service agenda, future national and regional initiatives; coupled with the rapid pace of change for technological improvements, it is recognised that the needs of our customers and how we need to engage with them will change over time. This Strategy is therefore considered to be a 'living document' and we anticipate it will be refined over its lifetime.

However, notwithstanding those developments, the strategy will be reviewed on at least an annual basis, with a resulting Development Plan being produced for that year.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Governance arrangements for the 'Our Customer' strategy are shared across a number of functions within the Council.

**Head of Corporate and Customer Services** - ultimately responsible for the 'Our Customer' Strategy, its monitoring, delivery and review, including assessing the impact of service development and wider regional, national and Lincolnshire-wide initiatives on this strategy.

**Customer Engagement Manager** - responsible for ongoing negotiation with service users and stakeholders in terms of service developments which will have an impact on this strategy, the day to day management and delivery of specific strategic initiatives, and for the long term development & support of the customer experience across the council

**ICT Steering Board** – responsible for monitoring the delivery of the ICT Strategy; the governance of ICT within the Council; and, the evaluation and recommendation of all technology developments.

**Member Accessible Service Champion** – executive member with special responsibility for Accessible Services

**Communities & Economy overview & scrutiny** – a panel of elected members who assist the council and executive board with development of future policies and strategies within their remit of customer engagement.

**Officer Decision Panel / Corporate Management Team** – responsible for the final approval of significant customer access & engagement developments and budgetary arrangements in the procurement of these developments.

**Executive Board** – responsible for the final approval of the 'Our Customer' strategy.

## 7. Governance and Delivery Structures cont'd

### Delivery Components

**Projects** - It is vital to ensure that projects carried out in individual services areas recognise that the customer experience is likely to be affected and the outcomes for the customer need to be recognised throughout. Projects identified in the Customer Development Plan that focus on the overall customer experience of the council as a whole will be considered "Corporate Projects".

**Budget & Resources** – Much of the insight we need to deliver this strategy is at our finger tips, but it is the analysis and delivery of the findings that will be key to ensuring we deliver a high quality customer experience. Technological & digital solutions for the customer journey are being developed and made available at an ever-increasing rate. We must keep abreast of this in order to meet the changing desires of our residents in how they wish to interact with us. We also need to recognise the personal skills required to manage this changing environment. Customer have an ever increasing expectation when receiving positive experiences of customer service and it is becoming ever easier for them to share negative experiences in public forums. Investment will continue to be necessary if we are to maintain a leading edge strategy – with the caveat that digital engagement can lead to savings in the longer term.

### Links with other corporate strategies

<b>NK Plan 2016-19</b> <b>Corporate Delivery Plans</b> <b>Community Plan</b>	Provides the strategic direction for the development of ICT and enabling technology needed to assist the Council in achieving its Priorities and Plans
<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b> <b>Capital Strategy / Asset Management Plan</b>	Provides the budgetary input to enable customer related developments in the next three years
<b>Our People Strategy</b> <b>Workforce Development Plan</b> <b>Employee Development Interviews</b>	Identifies the skills, knowledge and training required by employees and members; and provides input to customer insight and service focused training plans.
<b>Transformation Programme</b>	Identifies the programme of transformation and continuous improvement which will complement Customer Strategy and development plans.
<b>ICT Strategy</b> <b>Communications Strategy</b>	Sets out the complimentary and aligned strategic direction for ICT & Communications respectively, recognising the likely strong ICT & Communications elements in customer related service developments
<b>Information Governance Framework</b>	Provides direction on Information Management requirements, and supporting technology.