

Corporate & Customer Services

# 'Our Customer'

## North Kesteven District Council Customer Strategy

2020/21 – 2022/23



**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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# Vision

“To be a Council which puts the customer at the heart of the business, ensuring clear communication, sound insight and easily accessible services for all customers are the bedrock of our customer relationship, while achieving efficiency and value for money.”

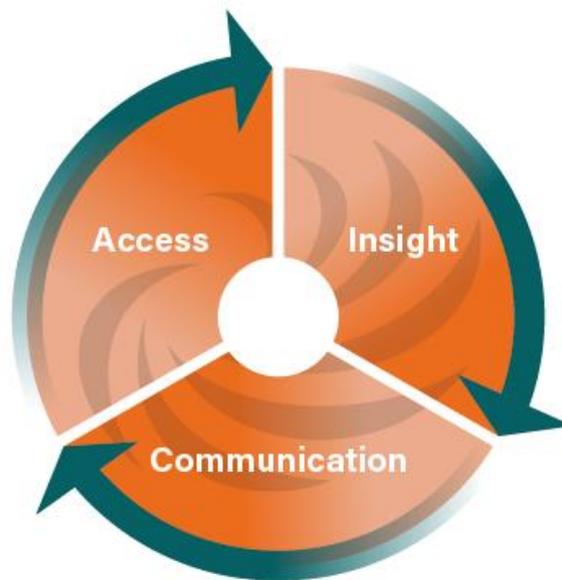
# Introduction

North Kesteven District Council has defined its purpose:

**“A prosperous, sustainable and carbon conscious future for NK, delivering effective & efficient public services that meet local needs and priorities.”**

A positive customer experience is an essential ingredient to the successful delivery of these effective and efficient public services and to achieve this we recognise that it is about more than just focusing on how customers can access those services – it must be accompanied by clear communication and sound customer insight; and each of those elements must operate in unison to achieve the best outcome for our customers.

## NKDC’s Customer Culture – Key themes

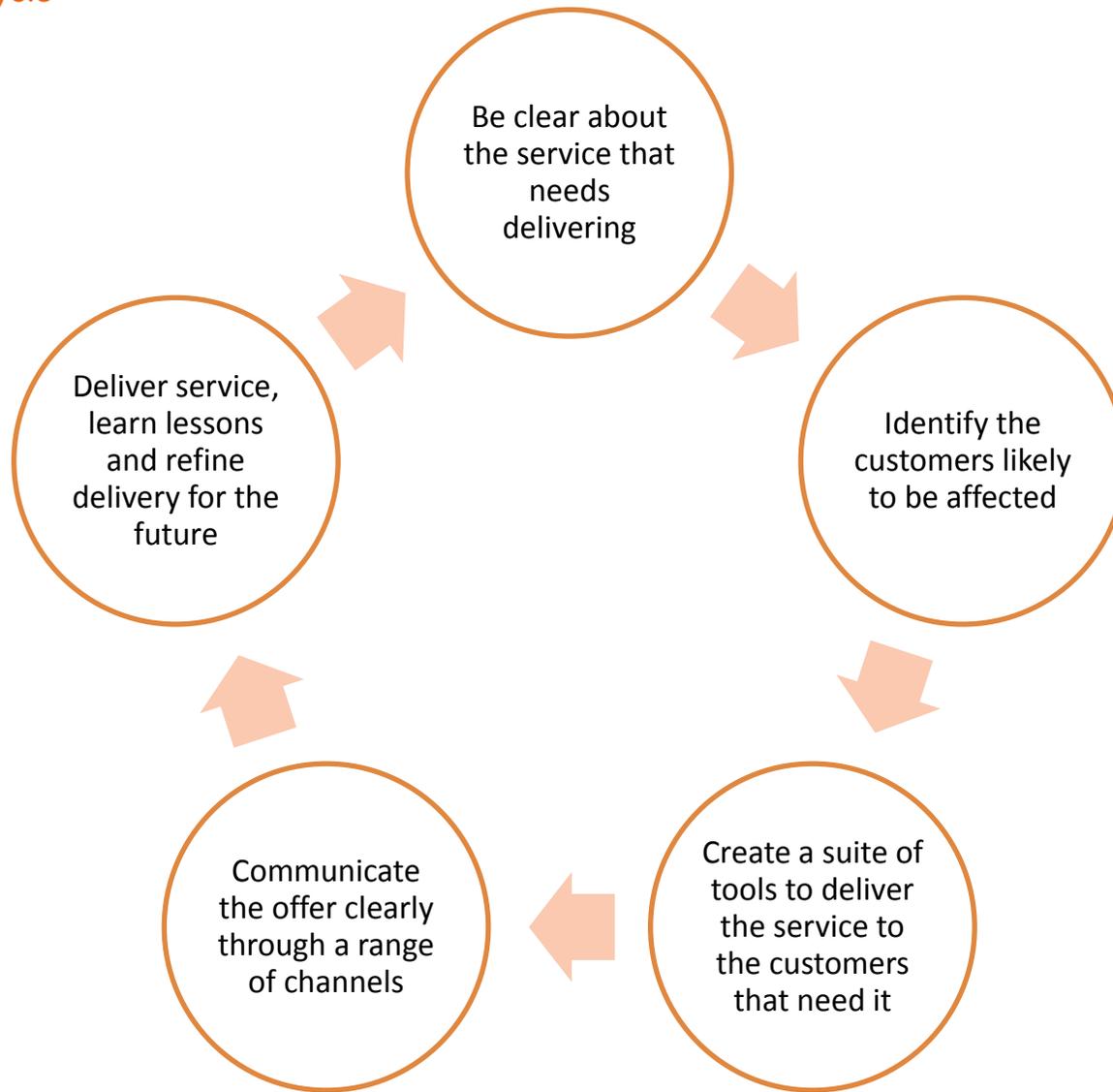


# Aim

The aim of aligning these three themes in one strategy is to achieve a single, organisational approach to our customers. Our objectives and desired outcomes are to

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support officers and members to understand the importance of the three themes and to embrace them as part of their service delivery</li><li>• Provide officers and members with a ‘toolbox’ approach to maximise customer interactions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide a consistent experience for customers; meeting their needs regardless of how they choose to reach us</li><li>• maximise uptake from our customers across the three themes</li><li>• make best use of resources</li></ul>
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# Customer Engagement Lifecycle



## Customer Culture

North Kesteven District Council's purpose is to deliver effective & efficient public services. The recipients of and those effected by these services – our customers – must always be our focus as we seek to improve. This culture is driven by our Corporate Management Team and our Elected Members and is embraced by all our colleagues. It is, and must continue to be, an integral theme in the development of policies and strategies across the organisation as well as day-to-day service delivery.

The importance of colleagues is recognised through the 'Our People' Strategy and our Customer Culture is clearly linked to this important strategy. To support the growth of this culture we will ensure customer focus is identified through recruitment & selection and all staff will be trained on maximising interactions with all our customers. Ultimately our aim is to enhance customer engagement and the customer experience across all service areas and functions of the Council.

### Insight

Our customers could be residents, visitors, businesses or partners.

In order to deliver the highest quality services to our customers we need to know who our customers are; recognising their similarities and their differences to ensure equity for all. This knowledge will help us gain an understanding of our customers' wants and needs; including those customers from seldom heard and disadvantaged groups.

The use of national data gathering tools and statistics will help us with this, as well as feedback given to us directly from our service users. Consultation and engagement forms the basis of delivering and developing our services to meet the needs of all of our communities. It is an ongoing development and it is important that we engage with people who are to be affected by our services, policies and decisions. By getting involved at the beginning of a process provides people with a real opportunity to put forward their opinions, ideas and experiences in a way that can influence decision-making and provide a genuine opportunity for people to have their say.

Consultation and engagement is a key area where customer insight should be used. Customer insight is a tool that enables organisations to redesign services which can save money and improve customer satisfaction. We can develop customer insight by analysing a number of datasets, for example, demographic data, survey information, mapping tools, etc. By having a comprehensive understanding of our customers, based on insight, we are more likely to engage with them using the correct communication methods and also encourage a wider range of residents to become involved in consultation events.

We seek to improve customer experience and satisfaction levels within the Council and need to understand our customers, based on their needs and preferences, which leads to higher satisfaction rates, lower costs and the removal of barriers. By using insight and developing our understanding about who uses a service, we can tailor that service to specific needs and deliver it more effectively. By reviewing who is using a particular service, we can also use customer insight to reach non-users. This should result in residents receiving services appropriate to their needs with an increased trust and satisfaction that the Council is delivering value for money for its customers.

We will learn from the insight we gain and the feedback we received and ensure that we share that learning with our customers and evidence how we improve our services as a result.

Customer satisfaction will be a key measure of success, with the goal of satisfaction increasing over time as we apply our learning. We seek to give the best level of service delivery, ensuring timeliness, quality of information and customer service and easy access. We will use this insight to map our customers' journeys; and make improvements to the customer experience.

We will always try to get things right for our customers but understand that sometimes we might not achieve that. We will not shy away from complaints – we will investigate them thoroughly and identify lessons that can be learnt and used to influence future service delivery

All customer consultation and feedback will be treated as confidential and analysis will be anonymised to ensure compliance with GDPR.

#### Communication

High quality communication, be it reactive or proactive, is important to the Council's Customer Culture. We will seek to communicate with our customers by their preferred method wherever possible and feasible and look for new and dynamic ways to get important messages out; ensuring it is relevant, accurate and timely.

Our communications will be clear and inclusive, using plain English and avoiding jargon. They will be conducted in the most impactful yet cost-effective way possible and can be made available in other languages or in audio format where needed.

Where possible we will work with partners to ensure our communications can reach a wider audience, and when appropriate and in the interests of our customers we will share relevant messages from our partners.

Engaging the wider community in initiatives beyond the direct services we deliver will also be a key feature of our Customer Culture in order that people gain a broader awareness, appreciation and understanding of the place: the area, its assets and what is available and accessible locally.

## Access

We recognise that our customers may want to access our services in different ways, depending on circumstances, the nature of their needs and their personal preferences.

We aim to get our customers to the right person, first time and reduce the number of unnecessary hand-offs. Where this isn't possible, we will capture enough information at the first point of contact and share that with the right person within the organisation quickly and efficiently. We will explain to our customer what will happen next and give timescales where possible.

Customers' experiences while accessing our services will both influence and be influenced by insight & feedback in an ongoing programme of learning and service improvement.

Where possible and appropriate we will work with partners in a joined up way to allow customers to access our services in ways that are convenient to them

We will manage our customers' expectations in relation to all aspects of our services and we will monitor our performance in order to ensure we meet them.

We will look at customer experiences of other organisations to help shape and influence our service delivery and horizon scan to ensure that we understand what other opportunities there might be to improve customer experience now and in the future.

If a customer has a bad experience or encounters unnecessary delays we will work hard to rectify the situation as quickly as possible.

## Conclusion

This strategy will be delivered through an action plan which highlights the strategy's aims and objectives across the three principles:

- Support & Engagement,
- Digital and
- Traditional

Ownership and delivery will be managed by the Customer Engagement Manager, Communication Manager and Corporate Information Manager, working together, both 'vertically' with the Council's NK Plan and 'horizontally' with services across the organisation and their individual service plans





**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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