



# Customer Access Strategy

March 17



## Introduction

Our vision and commitment for customer services is 'to provide solutions that engage, empower and enable our customers to lead a better life'. This strategy outlines our direction over the next two years for each service channel, by ensuring excellent access to services for our customers. We will align this strategy with our Digital Direction Statement, ensuring customer's gain the information and services on line where appropriate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Where customers visit or telephone us we will do all we can to ensure their query is dealt with at the first point of contact in line with our current customer service standards and 'act on contact' principles.

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## Principles of the Strategy:

- Develop end to end digital transactions to encourage use and ease of access to online services allowing in person and telephone queries to be focussed on vulnerable customers or those with complex needs or cases.
- Ensure customer contact data is up to date on the relevant system at all times whether contact is made by us or by the customer, ensuring a single point of contact ( for instance mobile phone number and email address) for each customer.
- Develop a single customer data set ensuring data is shared securely across systems so customers only have to give their details once.
- Develop processes and initiatives that use customer data to encourage positive customer behaviour change and promote self-serve, aligning with the NHS 'Make Every Contact Count' (MECC) initiative (an approach to behaviour change that uses numerous day to day interactions between organisations and people to support people in making positive changes to their health and well-being).
- 'Act on contact': Resolve customer queries at first point of contact wherever possible.
- Actively seek, analyse and use customer insight and demographic data (including the Indices of Deprivation), segmentation tools (Mosaic), contact data and feedback from staff and customers to manage demand and continuously improve our services and access for customers.
- Ensure that we fulfil our Equality and Diversity duties and fulfil our Equality objectives in line with the Strategic Plan.
- Work with partners to ensure customer journeys are simplified and access to data and systems are shared by default (where appropriate) to enable improved joined up processes.



## Customer Access Channels



IN PERSON



WEB & ONLINE SERVICES



TELEPHONY & SMS TEXT



CORRESPONDENCE – POST & EMAIL



SOCIAL MEDIA



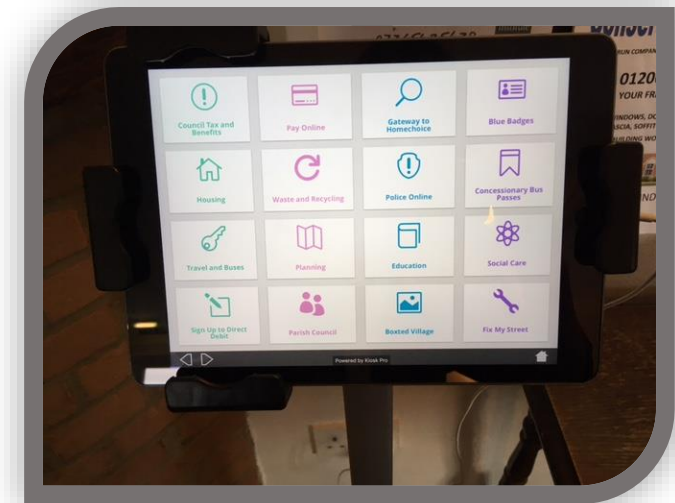


## In Person – including assisted digital access

- 1.1 Improve digital access, assisted self-serve and preventative work solutions for customers in the Libraries and Community Hubs and in all customer facing areas of the Council to ensure that pro-active in-person support is available from all partners to vulnerable customers and those with complex cases. This involves the following:
- Improving digital access for transactions that need little support
  - Providing a skilled resource to carry out assisted self-serve and develop customers' digital skills
  - Providing multi-agency support services to support vulnerable customers and those in crisis or with complex needs
  - Ensuring preventative work is undertaken by improving referrals to appropriate agencies at the appropriate trigger point in the customer journey.
- 1.2 Develop data sharing and ICT systems integrations to improve customer journeys at Libraries and Community Hubs and for customers at home, according to priorities identified by the developing Community Hubs partnerships. These include:
- Developing digital platforms and tools that allow 24/7 access for customers
  - Allowing customers to 'tell us once' in the Libraries and Community Hubs through shared data/systems development
  - Improving Wi-Fi connectivity in all Council public spaces
  - Encouraging up front interventions through the use of shared data/systems
  - Investigating joint back office systems and data sharing with partners to make customer journey planning easier and improve processes.



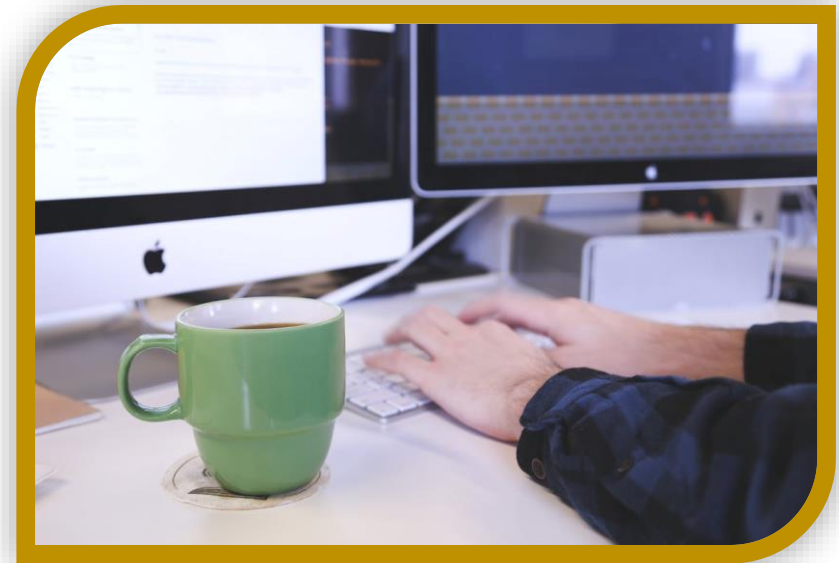
- 1.3 Develop smaller multi-agency community hubs or 'spokes' based on the Library and Community Hub model in appropriate areas throughout the borough. The priorities identified by the Community Hub partnership are divided into four themes:
- **Physical building spokes:** Identify potential hubs in areas of need using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and other customer insight and develop or integrate assets to develop multi agency hubs with a digital focus and based on preventative and early intervention in-person support models.
  - **Virtual access spoke:** Place digital devices in areas of high customer footfall (Leisure World, Doctors surgeries, supermarkets, other partners' locations) which provide access to both CBC and partners services. Link this to the current 'Go Online' work and digital surgeries to provide a network of volunteer Digital Champions able to assist customers to self-serve.
  - **Community capacity building spoke:** Build on the work of 'Go Online' develop the capacity of the community to set up and run digital skills 'surgeries' and support sessions to enhance digital access and build customers digital skills.
  - **Mobile spoke:** Work with Essex County Council's mobile library service to provide integrated peripatetic support for customers from Community Hub partners (for instance Go Online and Citizens Advice support).
- 1.4 Undertake regular customer surveys and relevant insight and engagement exercises, including the analysis of customer contact data to ensure customer satisfaction, improve services and refine business processes.
- 1.5 Investigate and apply for sources of funding for projects linked to 1.2 and 1.3 above, to be the leader in innovation in in person and digital access in the country.





## Web and Online Services

- 2.1 Integrate customer journeys across the council optimising use of all systems and re-engineering or building new processes to ensure end to end digital services for customers, and the most efficient and effective use of resources.
- 2.2 Redesign the Colchester.gov.uk website and online processes to develop an online offer that uses the knowledge of the customer to personalise services and improve access.
- 2.3 Review the current website and content and redesign the web on our Enterprise system using an 'Agile' project management approach maximising Staff, Member and Customer insight and undertaking user testing in each new area.
- 2.4 Work with the commercial areas of the Council to develop improved web and online services (including developing better websites for our commercial entities outside Colchester.gov.uk) to enhance customers' digital access, improving the commercial offer and increasing efficiency.
- 2.5 Develop feedback mechanisms and user testing as part of the Colchester.gov.uk redesign and at regular intervals on all websites as business as usual and use the results to improve services, alongside insight tools such as Google Analytics and online surveys.







## Telephony and SMS text

- 3.1 Ensure where appropriate staff record and/or update customers email addresses and mobile phone numbers with each customer contact in relevant systems, to capture customer data to promote and enable digital engagement and positive behaviour change.
- 3.2 Continue to improve and streamline our use of IVRs (Interactive Voice/Touchtone Recognition) to route callers appropriately to the right person or digital or automated information and transaction.
- 3.3 Develop processes and integrations that allow ease of access to automated telephone transactions.
- 3.4 Develop our use of Enterprise systems to allow for better workflow and improved access to customer data.
- 3.5 Continue to improve our use of 'Act on contact' in the call centre, by improving processes and training, to provide skilled staff that have access to the resources they need to resolve complex queries relating to Benefits, Council Tax and Housing at first point of contact. This will enable savings in process cost, efficient work-flow and enhanced customer satisfaction.
- 3.6 Maintain corporate customer service performance standards and ensure staff are aware of these standards.
- 3.7 Optimise our corporate Mitel telephony solution. Ensure that we make best use of Mitel functionality across the whole organisation, sharing good practice and experience across front line and back office services.
- 3.8 Continue to develop our current use of text messaging to 'nudge' customers to take an action (e.g. make a payment) or provide updates or information.
- 3.9 Develop Call Centre telephony services to become 'best in breed' services that are recognised as good practice through an accreditation process.





## Correspondence – post and email

- 4.1 Reduce our print and postage in line with the objectives of our Digital Challenge transformation programme.
- 4.2 Reduce incoming emails, by building electronic forms and processes that capture all required information and is accessible through the website 24/7.
- 4.3 Develop and expand our use of SMS to enable savings in print and postage in all areas.

## Social media

- 5.1 Develop our use of the Microsoft social engagement tool in Microsoft Dynamics to understand our customer's needs, opinions and sentiments alongside the use of other customer insight methods. Use the tool to ensure our responses are relevant and appropriate and our proactive communication is based on our understanding and engagement with customers on social media.
- 5.2 Develop two pilot projects to test the use of MS Dynamics in gaining insight from social media, focussing on how we improve our engagement using the insight to test the costs and benefits of using the tool. The pilots will involve testing the tool with a council service that regularly uses social media (Leisure World) and applied to a time limited campaign (Help us Help you – local campaign based on Drinkaware's work to reduce alcohol misuse and harm).
- 5.3 Evaluation of the pilot phase will include an examination of the potential resource needed to extend the use of this new form of engagement to other areas of council business. This will include an assessment of staff and Member training and engagement needed to ensure we engage with social media in a way that benefits both the Council and customers. The potential benefits and risks to the Council's reputation of embedding social media into mainstream business activity will also be considered. A plan for the future direction of social media will emerge from this work.





# Digital Challenge

## Digital Direction Statement 2016 – 2020

This statement brings together the work planned throughout the council to achieve our digital aspirations.

The 'digital revolution' is transforming the way we behave in our daily lives; as employees, elected members, residents, businesses and visitors. Our ambition is to invest in infrastructure and technology that delivers a leading digital experience for all. Through the continued transformation of our services, we will improve our efficiency and effectiveness to provide full access to council services for all.

### By 2020 we will have:

<p><u>Customers and Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put technology at the forefront of everything we do</li> <li>Delivered access via a 'Best in Class' online presence</li> <li>Captured our customers email addresses and mobile phone numbers and ensure we update with each contact to promote and enable digital engagement</li> <li>Used our data and insight to ensure all customer journeys are via an end to end digital processes</li> <li>Embedded a network of support creating a fully <b>digital community hub</b> providing digital skills training to residents and community groups.</li> <li>Ensured that all of our services are mobile by default and accessible anytime and anywhere</li> <li>Engaged in a timely manner via the latest social media platforms which support community collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Place and Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided ultrafast and reliable broadband for businesses within the borough.</li> <li>Developed a Digital Strategy aimed at making the Borough the best connected place in the UK residents and business alike</li> <li>Become known as <b>the Ultra Ready location for inward investment in the UK.</b></li> <li>Will have built upon existing infrastructure and sustained regeneration.</li> <li>Supported and encouraged businesses to work digitally and invest in local employment skills, training and professional development.</li> <li>Positioned CBC as a key commercial partner of choice.</li> <li>Will have been one of the first places in the UK to get 5G.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Partnerships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked collaboratively with businesses for smarter use of customer data and insight.</li> <li>Fostered a culture of best practice and joint commercial ventures based on digital technologies.</li> <li>Sought out and forged commercial ventures.</li> <li>Become the <b>partner of choice</b> for local businesses investing in the community.</li> <li>Retained our position as a major employer in the borough.</li> <li>Delivered a strong online community for partnerships which positions CBC as a <b>thought leader</b> in public sector collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Workforce and Elected Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximised the use of technology across the organisation</li> <li>Ensured all employees and Councillors are fully integrated into the Digital workflow.</li> <li>Equipped managers with the latest tools for communicating with a mobile workforce.</li> <li><b>Removed the need for paper documents.</b></li> <li>Embedded a culture of self-service through automated processes.</li> <li>Provided skills for life training for staff and elected members.</li> </ul>

