

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.

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. The corporate plan sets out our 5 EPICC priorities (Economic Growth, People, Internal Focus, Children and Communities) which continue to be our focus and are underpinned by 10 resident focused outcomes. 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.

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
- Up skill and invest in our staff to meet our Customers changing needs

Our Customers want us to:

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

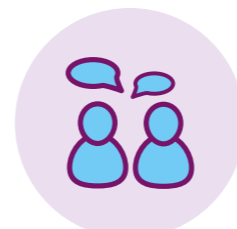
As a Customer we need you to:

- Feedback to us about your Customer experience
- 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



Our customers get in touch with us in many ways depending on their needs and preferences. As a Council we are committed to providing services which are easy to use, simple, effective, and where we can't help, we want to direct you to someone who can. We aim to provide tailored support where needed and understand that sometimes this means we need to provide services in a different way. In the last few years, people have preferred to access our services on their mobile phone or computer as this is quicker and has proven to be more valuable. By improving our online and digital service offer we can help even more people and 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. We recognise that some residents will not be able to use digital channels without support so we will work with our voluntary sector partners to provide the right face to face support where needed.

Did you know that it costs the Council:



£17
for each face to face transaction



£14
to deal with a letter



£12
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:

- Over 60,000** pre Covid face to face transactions
- 46,000** new mail received
- Approx **160,000** calls received into our call center
- Approx **50,000** website forms completed
- 7,099,233** page views on our website

Who are our Customers?



The Council works 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



Get things done quickly

Respect our customers and the communities we serve

Excellent customer service, first time, every time

Align the way we work with customers, partners and internal services

Tell people about our services and be clear about what we don't do.

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.

As our population grows and people live longer, there is increasing need for many Council services, which places additional pressure on our finances. We can help this investment go further if we improve the quality of our digital access points and support residents to switch from more expensive channels such as face to face and telephone to self-serve options via our website wherever possible.

Where does this Customer Strategy fit?



Quotes from Customers and staff about how to improve Customer services

We need improved systems, better quality and consistency from staff

We are Customers like everyone else and just want to be helped

Ensure we say what we do and positively improve public perception of the Council

Take ownership of the issue from the first point of contact and work with internal services and our partners

Provide the services that Customers want. Act upon consultation responses and involve Customers in service design

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

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

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

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>Excellent Customer experience for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers understand what they can expect from us • We are easy to deal with • Aim to get it right first time, every time • Easy to understand policies and processes which are clear and encourage self-service • Staff focused on providing good service and outcomes for Customers • End to end services designed from the Customer perspective • Improve Customer satisfaction • Improve the Council's reputation as a Proud and resilient organisation • Increased investment/ commercial opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve Customer processes and provide increased personalisation for Customers by 2023 • Create an organisational development programme that supports staff to consistently place Customers at the heart of all decision-making by 2022 • Review letters and advice leaflets where possible, to ensure that they meet accessibility standards, and are offered in alternative formats • Publish our Service Standards and introduce corporate performance measures to monitor compliance • Use the ADKAR change method which is focused on our staff so we achieve 5 outcomes: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement
 <p>Increase digital contact from Customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is easy to find on the Council's website and is up to date • Customers can apply for services, inform us of changes, request information and pay quickly and safely online • Services are designed so Customers can use their own devices • Customers can complete most tasks digitally from start to finish, without having to contact the Council directly • Help those who need it to get online and get the help they need • Customers and staff are involved in the design of digital public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update our website to ensure that it is 100% compliant with new accessibility standards by 2022 • Develop a digital access route for all high volume customer needs by 2023 • Provide consistent online forms, that are concise, easy to understand, and collect all the relevant information at the first point of contact by 2022 • Deploy chatbot and social media technology to help support Customers to self-serve through new digital channels by 2023 • Work with community and voluntary sector partners, and our suppliers offering added social value, to help increase digital skills amongst residents • Public information points in libraries, community centres and in public spaces by 2024
 <p>Act on service user feedback to improve service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to our Customers and learn how to make things Great for all • Consultation will be accessible and everyone will have the opportunity to take part • Customer engagement will become more independent and be able to have the right to make choices • Develop some customer service led performance measures • Customer feedback will help improve Council services and influencing the way we view things • Keep Customers well informed about our services, and any changes or issues which may affect them • Work with our partners in Walsall so we can join up services where needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Customer satisfaction measures across all Customer touchpoints by 2022 • Gain regular feedback from Customers, to help increase our insight in markets and drive innovation, to help support delivery of the Council's commercial ambitions • Introduce regular mystery shopping, and a Customer panel, to support future service development • Deliver a programme of community engagements that facilitates dialogue about key issues with a diverse range of people by 2022 • 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 by 2023 • Review the Corporate Complaints procedure, and embed a new digital process for managing complaints, with associated performance measures by 2022 • Promote and develop library services and the voluntary and community network to be able to offer support with accessing digital services to local residents by 2022

Our Corporate Priorities feed into our Outcomes

- E**conomic
- P**eople
- I**nternal Focus
- C**hildren
- C**ommunities