We would like to welcome the Peer Review Team to Telford & Wrekin Council

Customer and Digital Services are an essential part of delivering our commitment to ‘Protect, Care and Invest to create a better borough’. In October 2020, we refreshed our Council Plan and priorities, with a clear focus on ensuring that ‘our customer experience is the best possible’. This has driven the development of a new Customer Strategy (January 2021) and an updated draft Digital Strategy.

We want the experience our customers have to be outstanding. We believe the best way to achieve this is through an ‘Everything Speaks’ culture where we deliver consistent standards of service Council-wide, pay attention to detail, continue get the basics right and live our co-operative values [link](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20268/co-operative_council/779/our_vision_priorities_and_values).

We also want to continually evolve and modernise our services. We are committed to ensuring that there is an online option for every service, and that this is so easy and reliable that it becomes customers preferred way to do business with us.

Our updated Digital Strategy extends beyond how we interact with customers, and provides a wider foundation for our ambitious plans for Telford & Wrekin. We want to embrace the opportunities that have opened up through the step-change in the use of technology during the Covid pandemic, whilst improving digital access to ensure that no-one gets left behind.

**OUR VISION IS TO:** Create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all, encouraging take-up of services and information online.

This peer review is a timely opportunity to reflect on our progress to date, what we do well, but also how we can improve in future. Our position statement provides a starting point for this. As well as headline data on our contacts, performance and customer feedback, we have given an overview of our current approach and our plans to move forward on our journey to excellence covering four key areas:

- Embedding an ‘Everything Speaks’ culture and driving continuous improvement of our services
- Inviting, listening to and acting on feedback from customers
- Keeping customers informed
- Creating a better borough through digital innovation, connectivity for all and encouraging take-up of services and information online

We look forward to your challenge, ideas and suggestions.

Councillor Richard Overton – Deputy Leader Member for Community Safety, Enforcement and Customer Services

Councillor Shaun Davies – Council Leader

Councillor Richard Overton – Deputy Leader Member for Community Safety, Enforcement and Customer Services

David Sidaway – Chief Executive

Listening to our customers

Our vision is to...
Our Leadership Team

Fliss Mercer – Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services
Jan Jennings – Assistant Director: Communications & External Affairs
Lee Higgins – Customer Relationships & Welfare Services Service Delivery Manager
Kirsty King – ICT Service Delivery Manager

Our Customer Contacts

Percentage of contacts by channel

Email: 50.3%
Phone: 37.2%
Self Service: 12.5%

Breakdown of other contact centres

Email and web chat volumes

Emails: 118.0K
Web Chats: 57.2K

Digital communications

Email and web chat volumes

About this data

Financial Case Management and Revenues Recovery were established in 19/20; the Financial Case Management call centre under Discretionary Awards complaints and positive feedback data for 19/20 to the 28th February 2021.
Our Journey to Excellence - Embedding an ‘Everything Speaks’ Culture and Driving Continuous Improvement of Services

We have:

• Developed a new Customer Strategy & Contract with the involvement of the Senior Management Team (SMT), Leadership Forum, Employee Panel, Cabinet and customers – see Our Customer Strategy - Customer Contract and Customer Strategy - Telford & Wrekin Council
• Well established contact centres to improve the customer experience, including the main Corporate Contact Centre (CCC - 16 services), Family Connect (multi-agency Children’s and Adult Services hub) and Planning/Building Control
• Extended services and opening hours in the CCC to respond to Covid and flooding, including a community support and rapid testing helpline and outbound calling to 1 in 5 households
• Offered face to face information and advice through First Points at various locations, including a Business & Planning First Point N.B. through successful channel shift and use of technology such as scan stations, First Point appointments had already reduced by 95% pre-Covid
• Redesigned and refurbished reception areas
• Put in place a new performance management framework including:
  • Monthly managing the business dashboard to SMT and Cabinet, including customer service and digital Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
  • More detailed monthly performance reports on the CCC to the lead Cabinet member and Executive Director/Director;
  • Quarterly reports to Directors on complaints/positive feedback;
  • Annual customer insight report to SMT, Cabinet and Audit Committee (published on the Council’s Website).
• Increased evidence-based decision making, supported by extensive use of Power BI to present business intelligence in an interactive format (see Neighbourhood Services case study)
• Delivered a range of customer services training through our online learning platform
• Produced customer service guidance for staff with a one page service specific summary for staff without email
• Raised staff awareness through:
  • Sharing and recognising positive feedback and Chief Executive commendations
  • Discussions at Leadership Forum and Directorate management teams
  • Staff emails from the Chief Executive & Intranet Intelligence-led Service Delivery – Neighbourhood Services

We have used Power BI to analyse data on bin condition to deliver more efficient routing, bin emptying and replacement schedules.

We are also using Power BI to better target enforcement patrols and priorities for our Community Action Teams (CATs), moving from a reactive to more proactive service targeting known hotspots.

Debt Advice Outreach – Revenues

We have successfully run outreach surgeries with the Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) and our enforcement agents to provide advice to customers to address outstanding debts. To date, we have targeted two areas (Brookside and Donnington), resulting in people who have never previously engaged with us seeking help, putting in place repayment plans and accessing benefits.

Moving forward – we plan to:

• Report on progress in delivering the Customer Strategy annually
• Migrate more services’ enquiries into the CCC, promoting digital first where possible and roll out contact centre technology such as intelligent voice recognition to other contact centres
• Review future First Point strategy post Covid – shift towards targeted outreach as part of our place-shaping programme (see Debt Advice Outreach case study)
• Put in place arrangements with key partners to take enquiries on each other’s behalf
• Develop a new branding, signage and style guide
• Further develop the ‘managing the business’ dashboard to cover more services and channels and publish performance headlines online
• Provide Directors with a sample of customer journeys and re-introduce back to the floor days
• Review and roll out new customer service training to all frontline staff
• Include a customer service category in the new staff awards (October 2021)
Our Performance

Percentage of calls answered within 10 minutes

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Calls that met quality standards

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Stage 1 corporate complaints responded to within 15 days

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Our Children’s Services are rated as Outstanding by Ofsted

About this data

This data refers to the main contact centre only. We also monitor the performance of other contact centres e.g. Family Connect, Planning etc.

Complaints and Cabinet and Leader data for 2019/20 is to the 28th February.
Our Journey to Excellence - Inviting, listening to and acting on feedback from customers

We have:

- Carried out a Residents Survey (Summer 2020) with 5,437 responses - see Cabinet Report Template - Feb 2013 (telford.gov.uk) for examples of how we’re acting on what people told us
- Consulted customers, employees, and other stakeholders on the draft Customer Strategy and Contract (October 2020) - see Cabinet Report Template - Feb 2013 (telford.gov.uk)
- Recruited 124 volunteer mystery customers to give us another perspective on our customer experience.
- Completed 36 customer insight reviews, a mix of in-depth reviews, snapshot reviews (first impression assessments of visiting key Council buildings) and web-page reviews
- Started to capture more instant feedback from customers, using tools such as automated feedback at the end of every call to the Corporate Contact Centre, QR codes and the Net Promoter Score (see case study)
- Invited 2,466 people to join a new Community Panel
- Monitored and published complaints and positive feedback received from customers, including lessons learned (see Complaints and complaints annual reports - Telford & Wrekin Council)
- Engaged with a range of local groups about our services, including the Young People’s Forum, the Interfaith Council, Carers Forum and Making it Real Board (see case study)
- Asked customers to act as user testers to help develop new services, for example the new chat-bot and the virtual house
- Introduced an ‘Everything Speaks’ system for Cabinet members to report issues of concern to SMT for action
- Set up regular meetings with town and parish councils to seek their feedback on Council Services
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-- Net Promoter Score – Leisure
As a commercial service, Leisure use the Net Promoter Score (NPS), a customer experience measure used worldwide. A sample of customers are contacted after visiting our Centres and asked how likely they are to recommend the service to a friend on a scale of 0-10. The NPS is calculated by subtracting the % of people scoring 0-6 from the % of people scoring 9-10, and provides an internal benchmark and comparison with industry norms. 60% of Leisure Services customers scored the service 9 or 10, giving a net promoter score of 48, well above the industry average of 31. Using the NPS enables any customer concerns to be promptly responded to, for example reallocating cleaning resource to address a clear trend in NPS feedback about the cleanliness of one of the Leisure Centre’s changing facilities.

-- Making it Real Board – Adult Social Care
The Making it Real Board is made up of 7 people who use Adult Services. As ‘experts by experience’ the board informs, questions and challenges our developments and practice to co-produce services. Hear from members of the Making it Real Board [link]

Moving forward – we plan to:

- Deliver a Council-wide engagement plan for 2021/22 – prioritising:
  - Engagement in areas of the Borough where the percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions is relatively low;
  - Increase user testing before launching new services,
  - Capture feedback from visitors to the Borough to support recovery of the visitor economy.
- Launch the new Community Panel – a flexible approach and a wider range of ways to get involved
- Modernise engagement with customers through a new mobile platform
- Carry out additional targeted recruitment of both Community Panel members and mystery customer volunteers to ensure these are as representative of the community as possible
- Continue our programme of customer insight reviews
- Expand the use of service improvement tools to increase employee involvement.
- Update the current Parish Charter with a new Parish Partnership Agreement in consultation with Town and Parish Councils.
Customer Feedback

82% satisfied with the Borough as a place to live
91% satisfied with the Council during Covid
75% felt well informed by the Council during Covid

On a scale of 1-10, 90% of mystery customers scored the customer service they received 8 or higher
4.14 Average Trip Advisor review for Council facilities 4.14 with two Travellers Choice awards
83% agreed with the vision and aims of the Customer Strategy

"There has been impressive delivery by the council (during Covid), both independently and with and through others, and it is making a difference" - LGA Response and Recovery Peer Review

"I was expecting modern and clean facilities and these were delivered" - Mystery Customer (snapshot review)

"You have gone above and beyond what I expected and been exceptional. I thought I would have to wait in a long queue" - Compliment received about the Customer Contact Centre's web-chat service

Outstanding
Our Children's and Shared Lives Services are both rated as Outstanding

82% of residents affected by flooding found it easy to contact the Council

"Lovely warm welcome and a smile with a bright 'sorry for your wait' but I wasn't waiting at all" - Mystery Customer (snapshot review)

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Our Journey to Excellence - Keeping customers informed

We have:

- Grown a strong following on social media - 33k on Facebook - 23k on Twitter
- Built our digital communications audience through regular e-news updates to 80k subscribers (36-39% open rate)
- Introduced a weekly e-newsletter from the Council Leader and regular Facebook live sessions with the Leader.
- Started a ‘You Said, We did…’ communications campaign to let customers know how we’re using their feedback to improve services
- Delivered targeted communication campaigns to increase take-up of services (see ‘As Featured by Martin Lewis’ case study)
- Invested in additional film making, animation, design, digital marketing and social media skills, to take the digital first approach to communications
- Redesigned the Council’s Website home-page
- Completed reviews of the majority of web-pages in line with new accessibility requirements and created a new web-page with accessibility information for all our facilities
- Developed Live Well Telford - an online community directory providing information and advice for all ages with more than 1,500 listings
- Written to every household in the Borough three times during the Covid pandemic about the services and support available
- Targeted our communications to increase take-up of public health services during the pandemic (see Community Champions case study)
- Sent a personal welcome letter from the Council Leader to everyone moving into the Borough.
- Distributed Your Voice publication to every household three times a year, using a mix of hard copy and digital.
- Published more information about how we’re doing on the Council’s website
- Start a new digital take-up campaign
- Review opportunities to consolidate our websites and complete accessibility reviews
- Review our platform and content management solution for our main website
- Send out a ward newsletter (1 ward per week on a rolling programme) to highlight services and developments at a local level.
- Develop a Telford and Wrekin TV channel to engage with local residents
- Establish a studio base in Telford Town Centre for film making
Creating a Better Borough through Digital Innovation, Connectivity for All and Encouraging Take-up of Services and Information Online

We have:
• Updated our Digital Strategy covering customers, communities, workforce and place

Digital Customer:
• Over 100 services available online with rapid development of new online services during the pandemic, everything from housing advice to music lessons (see WhatsApp for Families and Job Box case studies)
• Used Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to personalise and connect online services into back office systems (see Personal Touch case study)
• Created a my Telford account for customers to view and track their requests and get local information based on their address – 36% of adults in the Borough now have an account
• Developed a new my Telford test app for mobile devices featuring the most used online services

Digital Communities:
• Trialled a new app to help adults with learning disabilities to live independently and prepare for work as part of a LGA Digital Innovation Pilot
• Opened a new Independent Living Centre where customers can try assistive technology before they buy or visit our Virtual House (see case study)
• Enabled free access to PCs (95,892 hours of usage in 2019/20), run Telford Online ICT drop-in sessions and targeted ICT support for job-seekers at libraries
• Gone virtual with a range of community events and live-streamed activities from Council Meetings to fitness classes (see virtual VE day case study)
• Provided free public WiFi in a wide range of Council and community buildings

Digital Place:
• Engaged 150 businesses in Tech Telford, promoting knowledge sharing across digital and tech businesses
• Rolled out superfast broadband coverage to 98.5% of the Borough, exceeding national targets

Digital Workforce:
• Enabled effective and collaborative remote working through the roll out of Office 365, laptops, Microsoft Teams, soft-phones and other devices to support mobile working (see Enforcement on the Go case study)
• Held multi-disciplinary virtual meetings across health and care domains

WhatsApp for Families – Children’s Services
Family meetings are now being delivered virtually, including via WhatsApp, which has helped keep children and families connected. Our successes include A & A, young children taken into care at the start of the first lockdown. Their foster carer put on different virtual activities that A & A’s parents were able to join in with online, and with some gentle encouragement and guidance, the family’s confidence grew leading to a smooth transition when face to face contact visits restarted in the summer.

Personal Touch – Benefits
We have developed an online form for housing benefit checks which enables customers to easily upload photos/scanned documents, sent as attachments via a personalised email and test message. The form automatically indexes into our document management system. Completed forms have been returned within 20 minutes of being issued with 25% of forms back within 3 days - which is roughly the time it would take customers to receive a posted form, which used to take 7-8 days to be returned.

Job Box – Employment & Skills
Our employment support programme, Job Box, moved its services to an online offer with a refreshed website www.telfordjobbox.co.uk Customers can now book their own appointments online and access self-help videos on topics such as CV writing and preparing for interviews. This new approach has helped 1,452 residents, with a 46% increase in Website users.

CASE STUDY
WhatsApp for Families – Children’s Services

CASE STUDY
Personal Touch – Benefits

CASE STUDY
Job Box – Employment & Skills

CASE STUDY
Moving Job Box online

CASE STUDY
Virtual House – biT (Property Team) and Adult Social Care

Take a tour of the virtual house at https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=qHk7tNdXbcB developed by our in-house Property Team and Adult Social Care. Customers are able to see room by room how >100 items of assistive technology could benefit them to live more independently.

Virtual VE day – Events and Communications Teams

We were determined to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of WW2 in Europe, putting on an ambitious schedule to bring our community together virtually, ranging from a flight for heroes by pilot Bob to virtual singalongs with schools and care homes. This event had a reach of 1.5 million with 450k impressions. Enjoy one of our 2020 highlights at www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjbXPs13srA

Laptops for Learning & Kindle Kindness – Education, Libraries and Adult Social Care

To help children without a device at home to take part in online learning during lockdown, we provided 726 devices to children across the Borough through our Laptops for Learning campaign. We also gave out 260 kindles to care homes, the Woman and Children’s Unit and young carers. The Kindle Kindness campaign helped reduce isolation by keeping people in touch and giving access to our online library resources. We were overwhelmed by the public support for these campaigns – in total, we received donations of £38k and 231 devices (which were traded in or refurbished). Our My Options service has also provided adults with learning disabilities with iPads, enabling them to take part in virtual activities and stepping into work sessions.

Enforcement on the Go – Public Protection

We have equipped our Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers with new mobile devices which enable them to log and issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) whilst out and about. Once the FPN is created, automatic payment reminders are sent by email at the appropriate time.

Moving forward – we plan to:

- Make more services and enquiry types available online, based on a gap analysis carried out
- Launch 2 new apps - my Telford Loyalty Card (TLC) app which will give customers access to information and offers on their local High Street and a myLeisure app (these will form a complimentary suite of apps along with the my Telford app, which will also be developed further)
- Consider whether some customer types should be moved to online only access
- Review and bring together an enhanced Telford Online digital upskilling offer and extend to outreach locations
- Pilot new options for customers without devices or access to the Internet e.g. virtual hubs and devices on prescription
- Move to an integrated health & social care record to enable professionals to access information to deliver safe and seamless care
- Implement GovRoam which enables staff to access networks at partner buildings
- Set up a ‘Digital First’ staff group to champion digital transformation
- Create a supply chain app to build business partnerships
- Build a new Skills and Enterprise Hub focusing on maths and digital skills as part of the Council-led Station Quarter development in Telford Town Centre
- Deploy new ‘smart street’ technology, such as smart street lighting, bin sensors and real-time transport information displays
- Progress delivery of full fibre capable of supporting 5G (Telford & Weken has been announced as one of the early areas expected to benefit from the UK Gigabit programme)

CASE STUDY

Showcasing assistive technology in our virtual house

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To help children without a device at home to take part in online learning during lockdown, we provided 726 devices to children across the Borough through our Laptops for Learning campaign. We also gave out 260 kindles to care homes, the Woman and Children’s Unit and young carers. The Kindle Kindness campaign helped reduce isolation by keeping people in touch and giving access to our online library resources. We were overwhelmed by the public support for these campaigns – in total, we received donations of £38k and 231 devices (which were traded in or refurbished). Our My Options service has also provided adults with learning disabilities with iPads, enabling them to take part in virtual activities and stepping into work sessions.

Enforcement on the Go – Public Protection

We have equipped our Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers with new mobile devices which enable them to log and issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) whilst out and about. Once the FPN is created, automatic payment reminders are sent by email at the appropriate time.

Moving forward – we plan to:

- Make more services and enquiry types available online, based on a gap analysis carried out
- Launch 2 new apps - my Telford Loyalty Card (TLC) app which will give customers access to information and offers on their local High Street and a myLeisure app (these will form a complimentary suite of apps along with the my Telford app, which will also be developed further)
- Consider whether some customer types should be moved to online only access
- Review and bring together an enhanced Telford Online digital upskilling offer and extend to outreach locations
- Pilot new options for customers without devices or access to the Internet e.g. virtual hubs and devices on prescription
- Move to an integrated health & social care record to enable professionals to access information to deliver safe and seamless care
- Implement GovRoam which enables staff to access networks at partner buildings
- Set up a ‘Digital First’ staff group to champion digital transformation
- Create a supply chain app to build business partnerships
- Build a new Skills and Enterprise Hub focusing on maths and digital skills as part of the Council-led Station Quarter development in Telford Town Centre
- Deploy new ‘smart street’ technology, such as smart street lighting, bin sensors and real-time transport information displays
- Progress delivery of full fibre capable of supporting 5G (Telford & Weken has been announced as one of the early areas expected to benefit from the UK Gigabit programme)