



# EVERY CUSTOMER EVERY TIME

**“Everybody matters”**

**A Customer Experience Strategy for Bromsgrove District and  
Redditch Borough Councils**

**2011 - 2014**



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)



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## 1. Foreword

Welcome to the customer experience strategy for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils.

This is the first joint customer strategy and marks an important step in our aim to share services whilst maintaining local identity and political control.

We recognise that the needs of individuals vary but customers; wherever they live or do their business, have the same expectations in respect of customer services and access to services. As Councils have no tangible 'product' and customers have no choice about which council they can go to, our reputation rests on the quality of our service provision which is why the provision of excellent customer service is so important to us. By working together we can also ensure value for money.

This strategy builds on the good work already done in both Councils to improve customer service and access to services in recent years. It sets out our vision for customer service delivery and how we will make a real difference to the customer service provision.

Councillor Geoff Denaro  
Portfolio holder, Bromsgrove District  
Council



Councillor Michael Braley  
Portfolio holder, Redditch Borough  
Council



## 2. Introduction

Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough councils began sharing the services they provide to residents, and the management team that operates both authorities, during 2008/09. We have now started a radical 3 year transformation programme to review all our services and look to share provision when opportunities arise.

Our vision for high quality customer services is driven by the need to improve the experience customers have when contacting us, or doing business with us. We want to give our customers confidence that we can be relied upon to provide the best quality service within available resources. We want to ensure value for money, whilst also aiming to get more right first time. We want to ensure that customers do not have to contact us several times to get the service they have requested which will also save taxpayers money.

Considerable work had already been done in both Councils. In Bromsgrove through the Customer First Programme, and in Redditch, the Customer Access Strategy, and we have seen many achievements in the development of customer service provision. This strategy will build on these achievements. The work that has been done in Bromsgrove to map customer journeys and identify improvements to service delivery through the service action plans will continue and will, by joined up business planning, spread across both authorities. In Redditch work such as in respect of Customer Service Excellence in Housing and the improvement plans in Benefits support the actions in this strategy.

In developing a joint strategy it is necessary to accept the differences within the two Councils, in respect of customer base and culture, and work with them for the benefit of the customer, taking both organisations forward on a journey to excellence.

Whilst many of the national drivers for such a strategy have been removed by the coalition Government this does not remove our desire to ensure we have a strong commitment to driving customer service provision locally.

The shift of power from Westminster to local people will give communities and individuals a bigger voice. The Structural Reform Plan also includes proposals for giving residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and veto excessive council tax increases. 'New Localism' – the name the Government has given this new way of thinking and working - also suggests an increased focus on community engagement, through techniques like participatory budgeting and neighbourhood budgets. We recognise that services built around customer needs are a priority in the current political and economic climate and, more importantly, an expectation of customers and tax payers. Transformation of service delivery using the 'systems thinking approach' will help to ensure that we achieve this priority.

This strategy sits alongside our other local strategies, such as the Council Plan, Equality and Diversity Strategy, Workforce Development, and our Climate Change Strategy and the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement, which makes the link between national, regional and local policy. It also fits with the Total Place agenda, which looks at how we can work with other partners to drive through efficiencies and take a holistic approach to public service provision.

At both Bromsgrove at Redditch we have strong local priorities.

Bromsgrove District Council Priorities	Redditch Borough Council Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic Development.</li><li>• Town Centre.</li><li>• Value for Money</li><li>• One Community.</li><li>• Housing.</li><li>• Climate Change.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An enterprising community.</li><li>• Safe.</li><li>• Clean and green.</li><li>• A well managed organisation</li></ul>

This Strategy and all related objectives have synergy with the priorities of both authorities and specifically help to ensure we provide **Value for Money** and have a **Well Managed Organisation**

A robust service business planning framework exists and customer service delivery forms an integral part of the development plans of each service.

Finally, we work closely with Worcestershire County Council, though the Worcestershire Hub Partnership to deliver joined up customer access. This partnership, made up of all the districts and the county council has successfully developed face to face, telephone and online access points for customers to gain easy, one stop access to services. This strategy sits alongside the Worcestershire Hub 'Our Customers' Strategy and the countywide Self Service Strategy.

This document not only sets out our vision but also how we aim to make this happen. This will only be a part of the journey and as customer needs change, and service delivery develops to meet those changing needs, this strategy will also change. Therefore it will be reviewed annually in line with our timetable for business planning and budget setting.

Consultation with staff has taken place via our staff Customer Focus Group, as well as with senior managers and members. The strategy takes into account the results of the Hub customer survey, conducted in Dec 2009 and the View Point survey conducted early in 2010. Feedback has been received from the Ethnic and Diversity Forum (Bromsgrove) and the Community Forum in Redditch.

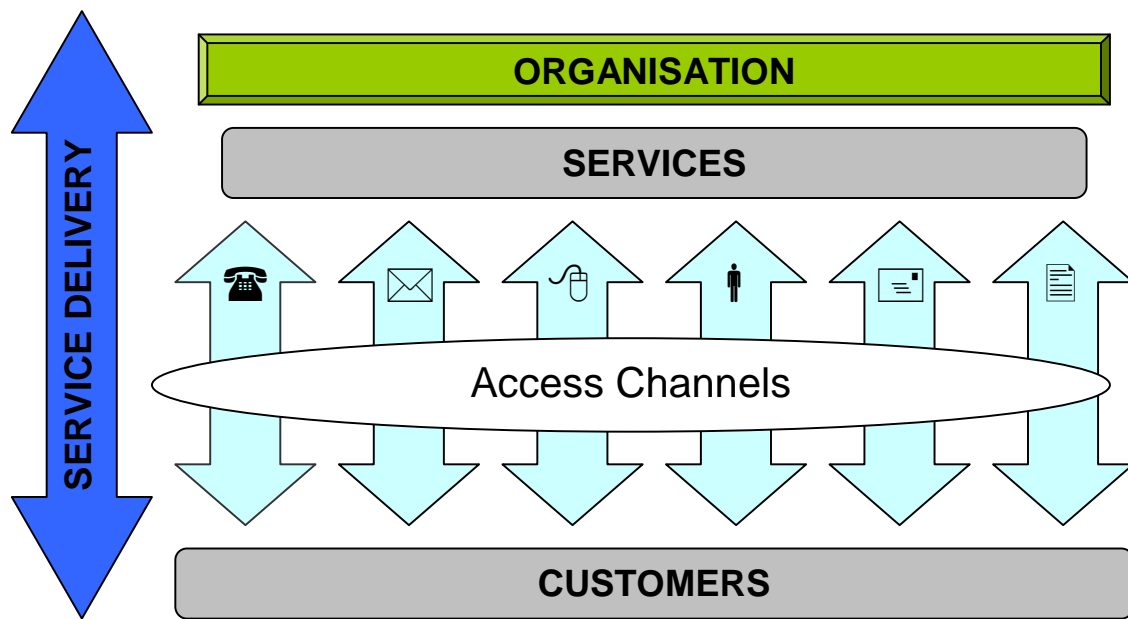
### 3. Current Position

Both authorities had Customer Access Strategies in place which have steered the work to improve customer service over recent years. These have resulted in many improvements such as:-

- ✓ More services are now available through the Hub Customer Service Centres in both Bromsgrove and Redditch.
- ✓ Clear standards of service are in place for all services.
- ✓ Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council's are now signed up to the county wide interpreting and translation service which enables customers for whom English is not a first language to receive translation and interpretation support. It is hoped that providing the same service across the County, which manages requests on a case by case basis rather than just translating leaflets on mass, that people who live and work in different parts of the County will receive the same service Countywide.
- ✓ The Housing Service in Redditch was awarded the Charter Mark, which recognises excellent customer service, for the 5<sup>th</sup> year running.
- ✓ The benefits team in Redditch has recently introduced visiting officers who go to people's homes to assist with benefits applications.
- ✓ Redditch Borough Council introduced the Community Forum and this is now a thriving group of partners, stakeholders, and residents, who meet regularly to discuss the equality and diversity issues that relate to our services and the way they are delivered to minority groups.
- ✓ Customer First training was delivered to all staff in Bromsgrove and backed up with useful guidance in respect of handling customer feedback.
- ✓ The websites for both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils were re-launched, using a countywide template to make navigation consistent and information easier to find. We worked with the RNIB and a local visually impaired support group to ensure the site meets the specific needs of people with sight problems. We have also reduced the number of contact addresses and 'phone numbers published on the website to make it easier for customers to contact us. We also increased the number of online services available, for example online benefits applications in Redditch.
- ✓ Customer Feedback is being used to inform changes to service delivery and reported regularly to members and customers, and we invested in a system to ensure we can properly track and report on this feedback.
- ✓ Customer service based improvements are a key part in every service's business planning.
- ✓ Redditch Matters magazine has been launched to ensure residents are kept informed of council and community developments.
- ✓ Customers now have a say in the way that the Council spends their money with a budget jury made up of people from across the Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough.
- ✓ Customer service behaviour and objectives now form part of the annual personal development review for each member of staff.



#### 4. What do we mean by 'access to services?'



However customers make contact with us, whether it is by telephone, email, the internet, in person, or via other means, we want them to find that access is quick and easy. However, the geographical nature of the district of Bromsgrove and Redditch Borough means that access may be limited to a smaller number of channels and customers will, by necessity, be forced to use particular means of contacting us.

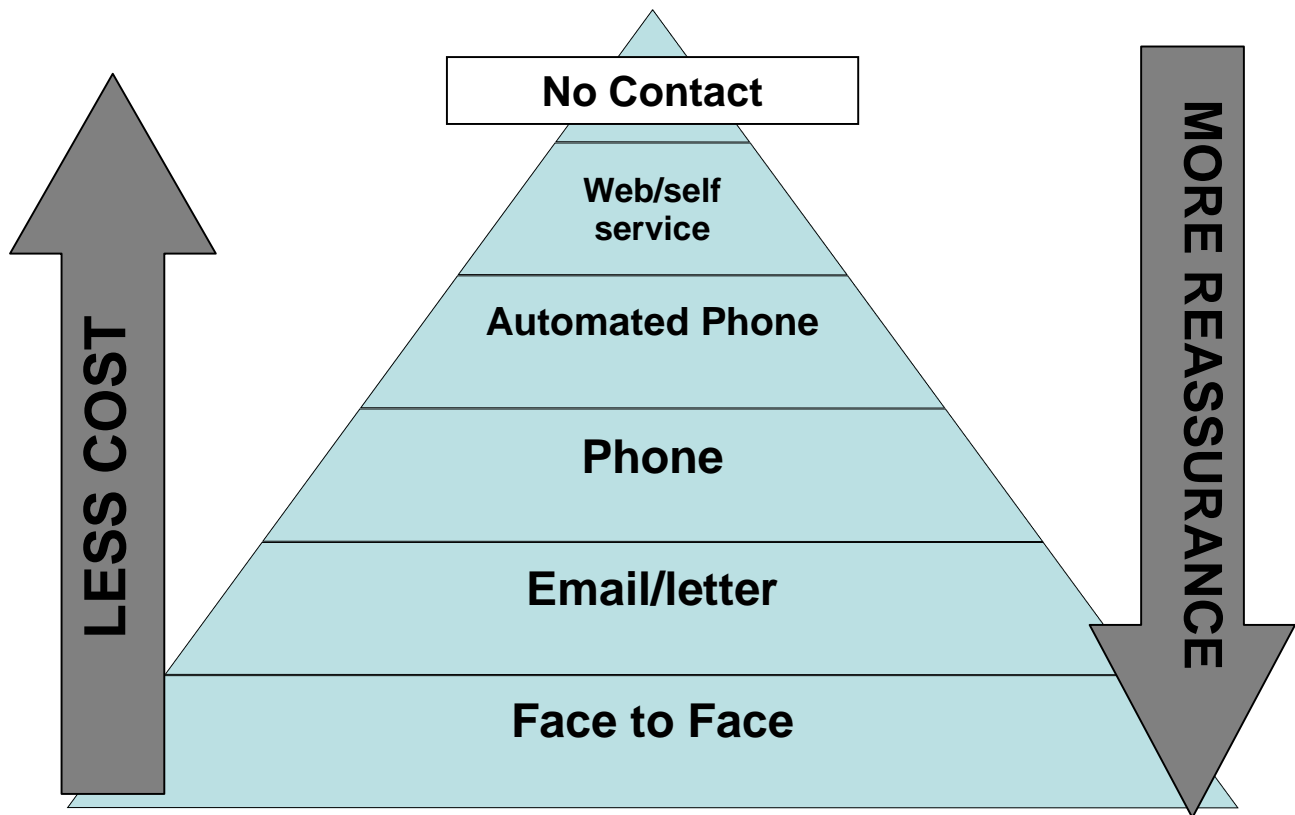
A recent survey of 1,185 residents of Worcestershire, carried out in December 2009 indicated that nearly 40% of residents contact us by telephone and 30% through face to face contact at one of the Customer Service Centres or One Stop Shops. 24% of people who completed the survey said they made contact online, via the internet or email.

83% of people said they used the internet at home and over half of all the people asked said they would consider using the internet to access council services. The survey also told us that people who tried to do their business online were also more likely to have to contact us more than once to resolve their enquiry. 43% of all responders who had to get in touch with us more than once did so because their enquiry was not resolved, and a further 38% were trying to find out what progress had been made in respect of their issue.

This suggests that we have some work to do to improve the online contact channels as this could provide better access for those people who cannot use some of the other methods of contacting us. We also need to get more right first time and get better at telling customers what is happening, or when they can expect action, in respect of matters they raise with us.

We also have contacts with many people who are instigated by us, or through everyday activities, for example at the Leisure or Community Centres, or contact with Shopmobility, or Dial a Ride amongst many others, and it is equally important to us that these contacts are positive for our customers.

There is a generally accepted model for the effectiveness of the major channels of contact available which is shown below.



What this model shows is that as we move up the triangle the costs gets lower for the organisation. However, for some types of contact a greater level of human contact is necessary, particularly where greater reassurance is needed. It is therefore vital to understand the types of contacts and the level of reassurance that a customer is likely to require when designing services for customers.



## 5. Our Vision

This strategy applies to **all** our customers, whether they live, work or visit Bromsgrove or Redditch. It applies to businesses, partners, other agencies and our internal customers (employees). The strategy is driven by a clear vision which links directly with our corporate priorities.

### **Our vision is to:-**

- **make it easy to access services, joining up with other organisations where possible;**
- **provide a high quality customer experience for all customers who make contact with us, regardless of when or how they make contact;**
- **ensure customers get the information and advice they need in a way that suits their needs and is easy to understand.**

In practical terms this means that for all services and activities we will:

- Always put the customer first by:
  - Treating them as individuals.
  - Listening to them.
  - Taking ownership of problems.
  - Doing the little things – ensuring attention to detail, and going the extra mile, because we know it makes a difference.
- Work with other organisations to provide joined up services.
- Listen to and act on feedback and tell customers what we've done.
- Ensure customers get a quick response, and action or information on progress, so that they don't have to keep chasing us.
- Keep everyone informed.
- Communicate in plain language, which is easy to understand and removes the need for customers to contact us for explanations.
- Get the basics right.
- Develop our online services to provide easier access for those who can do their business with us online, and ensure it meets customer's needs.
- Use our service reviews to tailor services to our customers needs.
- Look for more efficient ways of doing things to make savings wherever possible to deliver value for money services.
- Get more right first time.

The ultimate aim of this strategy is to have people, systems, and processes in place which make it easy for customers to contact the Council by using a variety of access points. To ensure everyone gets the same excellent level of service and to have questions and issues dealt with at the first point of contact as often as possible.

**We aim to exceed expectations and delight our customers.**

## 6. Understanding our customers

Both Councils undertake a great deal of work to consult with our customers. We also gather a lot of data about customers which is held on various systems.

We use customer feedback, such as complaints and compliments to tell us how well we are doing and where we could do better and customer satisfaction surveys are used by many departments to gain direct feedback from service users.

We need to further develop our knowledge of customers and their needs, so that we can tailor our services appropriately. There is a growing need to use 'customer insight' to enable us to target services, communications and inform service developments. Whilst customer insight data can be bought in, it is how we use it that will affect the success of its use.

We will further exploit the potential of customer insight tools, to inform on lifestyle profiling which if used in conjunction with other information we already hold about customers, will help to provide a coherent view of our customers.

We will also continue to actively engage customers in decision making through dialogue where major changes in service provision are likely.

## 7. How will we know we are getting it right?

The judges of the success of this strategy will be the users of the services, - people who contact us for whatever reason.

Greater satisfaction with the Council and the individual services will be a key indicator of success.

Other measureable outcomes will be:

- More things done right first time.
- Increased take up of the cheaper access channels, such as online or automatic payment methods.
- Excellence in customer service provision recognised by achieving the Customer Services Excellence accreditation.
- Resolution of enquiries at the first point of contact.
- The removal of avoidable contact.
- Joined up services or co-location of public services, so that customers can access a wider range of services in one place.
- Removal of unnecessary red tape.
- Customer focused staff.
- Confident, decisive and supportive managers.
- Greater customer and staff involvement in the design of service delivery.
- Reduced costs and better value for money.

Satisfaction surveys, Worcestershire Viewpoint (residents' panel) results, Customer feedback through complaints and compliments, and reduced avoidable contact will be used to measure success. We will also use the Customer Service Excellence Accreditation to assess our progress.

## 8. Delivering value for money and making savings

This is obviously a major priority.

Technology needs to be exploited to provide greater ability to self serve and allow customers to do their business with us at a time that suits them, from the comfort of their own home or workplace. For the 17% of residents who do not have access to the internet at home we need to ensure that other mechanisms exist and this may mean extending public internet in Council offices, or finding other alternatives such as mobile phone technology, kiosks, or digital TV.

We will actively encourage the use of contact-less and self service channels for payments, which are expensive to handle face to face.

We will work with our partners across Worcestershire to ensure we provide joined up services. We will also develop other partnerships, where it is appropriate to do so, to bring services together and reduce costs.

Our approach to reviewing how we deliver services will enable us to assess what customers really need and remove unnecessary and costly steps in the process. This will also reduce 'avoidable' contact – contact that could have been prevented if we had done things differently. This not only reduces costs but also significantly improves the service to customers.

## 9. Responding to the challenge

This strategy is built around 4 key themes which enable us to focus on how we meet the challenge of delivering the best quality services that meet the needs of individuals for the lowest possible costs.

**Customer experience** - going back to basics to ensure that the customer's experience of contacting us is always positive – even when we can't give the answer the customer wants.

**Transform** – reviewing, and changing, service delivery based on what customers actually want and need and building the processes around the customer rather than to meet organisational needs.

**Understanding the customer (including internal customers or partners)** – through feedback, complaints, compliments, surveys, forums, and using customer insight tools such as Mosaic and the information held on our own systems.

**Our Staff** – ensuring all our staff are truly customer focused, and share the values and behaviours necessary to ensure we exceed our standards and our customer's expectations.

By implementing this Strategy we will make a significant contribution to the delivery of both Council's priorities specifically ensuring we provide **Value for Money** (Bromsgrove District Council) and have a **Well Managed Organisation** (Redditch Borough Council). We will also ensure that the needs of all our customers are met and that we meet our pledges in respect of **equality and diversity**.

**EVERY CUSTOMER – EVERY TIME**  
“Everybody matters”

## THEME 1 – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Good customer service is an entitlement, not a privilege. By going back to basics to ensure that the customer's experience of contacting us is always positive, even when we can't give the answer the customer wants, we will ensure that we exceed our standards and delight our customers. We know that customers expect a high level of customer service and we must never lose sight of the fact that we are here for the customers benefit.

We believe:	We will:	Key actions needed to deliver the objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ That every customer should receive a high quality service every time.</li> <li>✓ That every customer should be treated with respect.</li> <li>✓ That customers should know we are genuine.</li> <li>✓ That customers should understand the information we provide them with.</li> <li>✓ That customers should know who is dealing with their issues and have confidence that something will be done.</li> <li>✓ That customers have the right to feedback to us their</li> </ul>	<p>Aim high – OK is not good enough and excellence will be our standard.</p> <p>We will go the extra mile and take pride in our work, setting goals to strive to achieve excellent results.</p> <p>Treat everyone as we would like to be treated whether customers, colleagues, staff or Members.</p> <p>Treat people as individuals.</p> <p>Be consistent and fair.</p> <p>Mean what we say and do what we say we will.</p> <p>Let customers know if we cannot meet the timescales originally agreed, or set out in our Customer Service Pledges</p> <p>If we cannot meet a customers needs we will be up front about this because even though we can't give the answer a customer wants we do care about their issue.</p> <p>Use Plain English, and present information in a way that is easy for all to understand</p> <p>Ensure staff use the website in their every day</p>	<p><b>1.1 Revise and relaunch our customer service standards (Customer Experience Pledges)</b></p> <p><b>1.2 Review our Customer journey mapping and ensure all actions are completed.</b></p> <p><b>1.3 Review recruitment procedures to ensure customer focus is at the heart of successful candidates.</b></p> <p><b>1.4 Develop staff 'protocols' to ensure all staff are clear of the behaviour expected of everyone when dealing with customers.</b></p> <p><b>1.5 Develop and implement a customer focused training plan</b></p> <p><b>1.6 Develop and launch a staff customer service guide.</b></p> <p><b>1.7 Implement Plain English Training</b></p> <p><b>1.8 Review all information/letters/web pages to ensure they are easy to understand, are empathetic, and remove the need for clarification.</b></p> <p><b>1.9 Develop and conduct a customer satisfaction survey</b></p> <p><b>1.10 Develop peer review and mystery shopping mechanisms.</b></p>

<p>experiences and that we should use this information to shape future improvements.</p> <p>✓ That we should evaluate our customer service performance</p>	<p>work to ensure that it is fit for purpose</p> <p>Give our names when we have contact with customers</p> <p>Take ownership, not pass the buck and never blame others when things don't go to plan.</p> <p>If we have made a mistake we will be open and honest and work with the customer to establish a satisfactory outcome</p> <p>Improve our customer feedback process to ensure that customers who find it necessary to complain can do so easily and receive a quality response – even if we can't change the outcome.</p> <p>Work towards Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.</p>	<p><b>1.11 Achieve Customer Service Excellence accreditation.</b></p> <p><b>1.12 Reduce avoidable contact</b></p> <p><b>1.13 Get more 'Right First Time'</b></p> <p><b>1.14 Tailor our marketing, promotional and communication materials to suit the needs of all our customers.</b></p> <p><b>1.15 Work with minority groups where appropriate to improve access to services.</b></p> <p><b>1.16 Use customer complaints as a force for good, identifying service improvement opportunities.</b></p>
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## THEME 2 – TRANSFORMATION

By reviewing, and changing, service delivery based on what customers actually want and need and building the processes we use around the customer rather than to meet organisational needs, we will drive out waste, reduce preventable contact and make savings. Customers will see changes to the way we do things as we roll out our three year programme of transformation. This is coupled with a move to sharing services wherever possible to maximise resilience within the teams, provide a more cost effective service and ensure a consistently high standard of service for customers of both authorities.

Wherever possible we need to work with other organisations to develop joint service provision and make it easier for our customers to do business with all public services. We know that customers see local government as a single organisation so we already provide joint access to County Council and District council services. We also need to explore how we could extend this to include other public services through co-location or joint service delivery.

Many services already have good working relationships with other organisations in the course of delivering services and these will continue to be developed and maximized for the benefit of customers.

We believe:	We will:	Key actions needed to deliver the objective
<p>✓ Services should be customer focused and easy to access across a range of access channels.</p> <p>✓ In getting the best possible value out of our resources.</p> <p>✓ In eliminating wasteful duplications or inefficient process.</p> <p>✓ In reducing preventable contact, where customers have to contact us a number of times to get something done, or to chase progress.</p> <p>✓ That technology should support and enhance customer access and service delivery.</p> <p>✓ That by working with others we can make better use of resources and expertise.</p> <p>✓ That partnerships are fundamental to delivering excellent joined-up services.</p>	<p>Review our service delivery and processes to shape them around the customers needs, using systems thinking methodology, which assesses customer demand and plans for 'perfect' service delivery.</p> <p>Ensure that when planning new processes we cut out non value work.</p> <p>Work with other organisations to develop joined up service delivery and make it easier for customers to access public services</p> <p>Ensure that wherever possible customers can access services online, over the phone and face to face.</p> <p>Provide a one stop service and reduce the number of times customers have to make contact with us to get something done.</p> <p>Develop a way of enabling customers to tell us about change of personal details once rather than numerous times.</p> <p>Develop our web service to enable more to be done through self service.</p> <p>Encourage customers to use self service where it is possible to do so.</p>	<p><b>2.1 Review key frontline services using the systems thinking methodology and put the customer at the heart of changes to the end to end process.</b></p> <p><b>2.2 Increase resolution at first point of contact, where ever and with whomever that contact might be.</b></p> <p><b>2.3 Develop a 'Tell us once' mechanism for customer changes of address and other details.</b></p> <p><b>2.4 Implement Shared Services where it is appropriate, cost effective and beneficial to service delivery.</b></p> <p><b>2.5 Work with partners to join up service provision and provide more cost effective services.</b></p> <p><b>2.6 Work with our local government partners across Worcestershire to develop self service.</b></p> <p><b>2.7 Review and revise web content to ensure it is relevant and fit for purpose.</b></p> <p><b>2.8 Continue to develop our online service to ensure that those who want to, can access information and services via the web.</b></p> <p><b>2.8 Maintain public internet access at our Customer Service Centres.</b></p> <p><b>2.9 Provide mediated web access and customer awareness training to encourage take up of self service.</b></p> <p><b>2.10 Maintain one phone number for council services (with limited number of 'specialist' phone numbers to allow 'menu-less' access to telephone services).</b></p>

		<p><b>2.11 Ensure customer service features in action plans in all services, as part of our business planning process.</b></p> <p><b>2.12 Review face to face service to ensure resources are most effectively used.</b></p> <p><b>2.13 Use previously developed customer service initiatives where appropriate across any new shared services.</b></p>
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### THEME 3 – UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

In order that we communicate properly with customers, fully understand customer needs and shape our services in a way that best suits the majority we need to use all of the feedback we gather. We currently receive feedback via Members, complaints, compliments, surveys and forums and we need to use this ‘intelligence’ to help shape service improvements. By actively engaging with customers, staff, Members and partners and joining up all the information we hold we will be able to develop a wider view with which to inform the service transformations and service improvement plans. This will enable us to build service delivery around the needs of customers rather than around the organisational structure.

Customer insight information is valuable to help us to target communications appropriately and cost effectively. We need to use the information we receive through customer insight tools to inform the redesign of services and mainstream its use within the decision making process for all policy and procedural changes.

<b>We believe:</b>	<b>We will:</b>	<b>Key actions needed to deliver the objective</b>
<p>✓ That customers have the right to tell us if they are unhappy with the service we have provided.</p> <p>✓ That our customers concerns are our concerns – we should know what they are and act on them if it is possible to do so.</p>	<p>Ensure our customer feedback process is easy to understand and that complaints are dealt with at the highest possible level</p> <p>Publicise the ways in which residents and business can engage with us.</p> <p>Consult with customers</p> <p>Conduct customer satisfaction surveys</p>	<p><b>3.1 Relaunch our Customer Feedback policy.</b></p> <p><b>3.2 Implement computer software to ensure all complaints are captured and followed up.</b></p> <p><b>3.3 Develop a method of monitoring web content to ensure it meets customers needs</b></p> <p><b>3.4 Provided guidance on how to get involved at the Council.</b></p>



<p>✓ That customers should know how to get involved with the Council.</p> <p>✓ Customers should have a say in how/where savings are made.</p> <p>✓ That we should ask you what you thought of the service we provided.</p> <p>✓ That our own staff are also a valuable source of information</p>	<p>and follow up calls to make sure customers received the information or service they needed.</p> <p>Consult with staff about internal service provision.</p> <p>Look at best practice in other organisations and identify projects where better customer knowledge would help us to engage and consult better.</p> <p>Use customer insight data to inform and target publicity campaigns.</p> <p>Implement automated feedback technology.</p>	<p><b>3.5 Provide the public with the opportunity to get involved in our budget setting via the annual Budget Jury and on-line budget consultation</b></p> <p><b>3.6 Continue to consult with customers through public forums and customer satisfaction surveys</b></p> <p><b>3.7 Conduct Staff/internal customer surveys</b></p> <p><b>3.8 Implement a joint staff customer focus forum, to act as champions of customer service throughout the organisations.</b></p> <p><b>3.9 Maintain and develop individual service satisfaction surveys</b></p> <p><b>3.10 Implement a ‘follow up calls’ regime where by staff contact a sample of customers to ensure that a recent request for service has been properly dealt with.</b></p> <p><b>3.11 Implement GovMetric to capture real time customer feedback on their experience.</b></p> <p><b>3.12 Develop a joint Consultation Strategy? Is this planned?</b></p> <p><b>3.13 Use customer insight to inform decision making and communications</b></p> <p><b>3.14 Include Customer Impact assessment in decision making process.</b></p> <p><b>3.15 Improve the quality of data held about customers on our customer relationship management system.</b></p> <p><b>3.16 Carry out service consultation with users (and non users where appropriate) and use the results to inform service improvement.</b></p>
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## THEME 4 - OUR STAFF

Great customer service starts with our staff and they are key to ensuring we are a truly customer focused organisation. It is vital that all staff understand the value of great service and share the values and behaviours necessary to ensure we exceed our standards and our customer's expectations. Excellent examples should be celebrated and shared for others to learn from. Poor performance will be addressed and opportunities to develop will be provided. Many of our staff have little contact with external customers but this does not mean they don't have customers. The role of these staff is to support the front line services, who are therefore their customers and this strategy applies equally to all.

We believe:	We will:	Key actions needed to deliver the objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ That all staff should be 'customer obsessed'.</li> <li>✓ Staff should be praised for good service and helped to improve if they sometimes fall short of our expectations.</li> <li>✓ That all staff should be sensitive to individual customer needs.</li> <li>✓ That only people who are committed to provided excellent customer service should join the team.</li> </ul>	<p>Make sure that all staff understand their role within the organisation and that the role of the Council is to provide customer service.</p> <p>Use customer feedback and our own observations of staff behaviour to evaluate performance and address issues through our performance development framework</p> <p>Make sure that every member of staff sees others points of view, is sensitive to people's feelings and acknowledge the customers concerns.</p> <p>Ensure our recruitment policies are clear about expected behaviours.</p> <p>Ensure that sufficient and appropriate training is in place</p>	<p><b>4.1 Performance development will include customer service development for all staff.</b></p> <p><b>4.2 Our Corporate Training Plans will include customer service training, to help staff deal with specific areas and general customer awareness.</b></p> <p><b>4.3 Core skills will be developed for all staff which will include customer service skills.</b></p> <p><b>4.4 Core Skills for managers will be developed which will include skills for managing a customer focused service and staff performance issues</b></p> <p><b>4.5 Maintain the Corporate Management Team (CMT) Back to the Floor initiative and develop this to encourage all managers to spend at least one half day per year working with a different team.</b></p>

<p>✓ That managers should ensure that their team provides the expected level of service.</p> <p>✓ Staff should understand who their customer is.</p>	<p>Ensure excellent service is recognised and poor performance addressed.</p> <p>Ensure that all teams, regardless of their function consider how they serve their customers whoever they may be.</p> <p>Remove blockages and challenge issues which create barriers to providing excellent service.</p> <p>Lead change positively throughout the organisations</p> <p>Create pride in the organisations and our achievements</p>	<p><b>4.6 Develop our Induction Packs and training to ensure customer focus is a key part of our instruction to new starters</b></p> <p><b>4.7 Maintain CMT Walk the Wards initiative</b></p> <p><b>4.8 Staff Awards (BAFTAs / Redditch Staff Awards scheme)</b></p> <p><b>4.9 Utilise Staff Ideas Schemes to capture staff ideas and suggestions</b></p> <p><b>4.10 Develop home working where appropriate to support staff in undertaking their duties.</b></p> <p><b>4.11 Develop the staff intranet to ensure that all staff have access to appropriate information.</b></p>
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### Our Customer Service Pledge

Our customers are important to us and we aim to provide high quality services, exceed customer expectations and delight our customers. We will treat you as individuals, listen carefully to you, be sensitive to your needs, and take ownership of problems so that you can be confident that someone is dealing with your issue.

#### What customers can expect from us...

We will:-

- be friendly, polite, helpful, attentive and considerate at all times;
- provide accurate and clear information;
- use plain English and avoid jargon or technical terms;
- be open and honest about what we can and cannot deliver;
- get back to you when we say we will, and advise you of our progress when we are taking longer than anticipated to address an issue.

We always aim to get it right first time, every time so that you don't have to keep contacting us about the same issue.

If the first person you have contact with cannot help you and they have to pass on your enquiry to someone else they will tell you who will be dealing with it.

If your enquiry cannot be dealt with at the time you contact us we will make sure you know what is happening and when you can expect to receive further contact from us.

Some services have to work to different standards because of laws that set out how they must operate and details these are available online or from the relevant service. Otherwise the following timescales will apply when you contact us.

We will always make our services, offices and information as accessible as possible to all our customers.

**Whilst our focus is on quality, we also aim to provide a quality response within an acceptable period. As a guide these are the timeframes we aim to work within:-**

#### Emails

When you **email** us we aim to respond to all customer enquiries requiring a response within **2 days** of the day it was received by us. In most cases this will be a full response but if the issue will take longer to investigate or resolve we will tell you when you can expect a full response.

If the officer you have emailed is out of the office you will be advised when that officer will be available and who to contact in the meantime if your enquiry is urgent.

#### Letters

We aim respond to all customer enquiries made by **letter** within **7 working days** of the date it is received by us. In most cases this will be a full response but if the issue will take longer to investigate or resolve before we can get back to you we will tell you when we intend to get a full response out to you.

#### In person

If you visit one of our customer service centres in **person**, we aim to see you within **5 minutes of your arrival to find out the nature of your enquiry**. If you need to see a customer service advisor we will then see you as soon possible and wherever possible within 15 minutes. We will advise you of

approximate waiting times if it will be longer than 15 minutes and advise you of alternative options if appropriate.

If the person you see cannot help you they will tell you who can and provide you with facilities to speak to them if they are within our organisation or pass on contact details if this is more suitable. If you need assistance with English a telephone interpreter can be provided at this time.

If it is appropriate for you to have an appointment with a specialist officer we will make the necessary arrangements for you to see them at the time that is most convenient to you (within normal office hours). If you need assistance with English an interpreter, or a British Sign Language interpreter (subject to availability) will be arranged for the appointment.

If you have an appointment with a member of staff they will see you on time.

### **Telephone**

If you call the customer services centre one of our customer service advisors aims to answer telephone calls within **20 seconds (6 rings)** during opening times ([link to opening times](#)).

At times of peak demand we will advise you if you are in queue and will keep waiting times as short as possible.

Staff in all other offices aim to answer 100% of their 'phone calls within **20 seconds (6 rings)** between 9am and 5pm.

If you need assistance with English a telephone interpreter can be provided at this time.

If voicemail is activated you will be told when the member of staff is going to be available and given an alternative number to call in the event the enquiry is urgent. Staff will respond to voicemail messages within 1 working day of the date of the call, or within 1 working day of the date the message tells you they will return to the office.

### **Online**

We will ensure all the information on our website is accurate, up to date and makes sense to customers.

### **Complaints**

We will acknowledge all complaints made through our complaints procedure within 2 working days and carry out investigations to enable us to respond to you within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint. If this is not possible we will tell you exactly when you can expect a response from us.

### **Home visits**

If we have an appointment to visit you at home we will:

- ensure you understand the reason for the visit;
- let you know if we cannot keep the appointment, or if we are going to be delayed;
- ensure you and your home is treated with respect; and
- let you know what we will do next if follow up action is necessary.

**We value the diversity of our communities and want to ensure that everyone has fair access to our services. We are therefore committed to equality and diversity in the way we respond to your needs and in the way we provide our services. We will not discriminate unfairly or unlawfully on any grounds and in particular the grounds of race, gender (including gender identity), disability, age, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Different services may be offered, or services may be provided in a different way where it would be appropriate to do so (e.g. different services may be offered based on age or a service may be provided differently to include reasonable adjustments for disability).**

## Appendix 2

### Customer access points

#### Bromsgrove



##### Go online

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)



##### Telephone enquiries

01527 881288

Monday to Friday	09:00 - 17:00
Saturday	09:00 - 12:00 (Noon)
Sunday	Closed



##### Telephone Payments

01527 881474



##### In Person

Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre  
School Drive  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B60 1AY

Monday to Wednesday	09:00 - 17:00
Thursday	10:00 - 17:00
Friday	09:00 - 17:00
Saturday	09:00 - 12:00 (Noon)
Sunday	Closed

#### Redditch



##### Go online

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)



##### Telephone enquiries

01527 534123

Monday and Tuesday and Thursday	09:00 - 17:30
Wednesday	10:00 - 17:30
Friday	09:00 - 17:00
Saturday	09:00 - 12:00 (Noon)
Sunday	Closed



##### Telephone Payments

01527 534021.



##### In Person

Redditch Customer Service Centre  
Town Hall  
Walter Stranz Square  
Redditch  
B98 8AH

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday	09:00 - 17:30
Wednesday	10:00 - 17:30
Friday	09:00 - 17:00
Saturday	09:00 - 12:00 (Noon)
Sunday	Closed

Batchley One Stop Shop  
Batchley Shopping Centre,  
183 Batchley Rd  
Batchley  
Redditch  
B97 6JB

Monday, Tuesday and Friday	09:00 - 12:30
Wednesday and Thursday	13:30 - 17:30

Winyates One Stop Shop  
Unit 3 Winyates Centre,  
Redditch  
B98 0NR

Monday and Tuesday	13:30 - 17:00
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday	09:00 - 12:30

Woodrow One Stop Shop  
Woodrow Shopping Centre  
Studley Road  
Redditch  
B98 7RY

Monday and Tuesday	09:00 - 12:30
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday	13:30 – 17:00

Amanda de Warr  
Head of Customer Services

Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council's

December 2010