

Renfrewshire Council Customer Strategy

*Safer &
Stronger*

Healthier

Smarter

*Wealthier &
Fairer*

Greener

*Developing
our*



Renfrewshire
Council

‘We are determined to
make a difference’

1	Executive Summary	3
1.1	Introduction.....	3
1.2	Vision.....	4
1.3	What will we deliver - Providing Services to Customers.....	5
1.4	Why should we do this?	6
1.5	How will this support our Members?	6
1.6	How will this be achieved?	8
1.7	What does Success look like?	8
2	Providing Services to Customers	10
2.1	Where are we now?	10
	What are the current customer experiences?.....	10
2.2	Where do we want to be?	12
	Providing Services to Customers.....	12
2.3	The Benefits to Customers.....	14
3	Managing Service Delivery to Customers	16
3.1	Where are we now?	16
3.2	Where Do We Want To Be.....	19
	The Principles of Customer Management	19
3.3	Alignment with the Council Plan	21
4	How will we get there?	22
4.1	Understanding Customers	23
4.2	Simplify & Standardise	23
4.3	Channel Strategy and Development	24
4.4	Information and Performance Management	25
4.5	Communications	26
4.6	Workforce Planning & Deployment	26
4.7	What will be achieved by when	28
	Further Information	31

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Delivering services to customers is the council's core business. Whether it is front line service delivery or the supporting back office, everything must be geared towards delivering exceptional services to customers. Delivering consistent, high quality services to our customers is challenging. Our customer base is complex and diverse and the demands placed on the range of services required to meet their needs is significant. By "Simplifying and Standardising" the things that we do most often and adopting a pragmatic and best value approach to service delivery we can achieve significant success. By putting the customer first and designing services to genuinely meet their needs we can improve customer satisfaction, reduce the level of complaints we receive and reduce cost. Our aim is to deliver services as efficiently and effectively as possible ensuring resources are deployed where customers need them most.

The Council has already successfully implemented a customer services strategy which led to the creation of a Customer Services Unit, the award winning Customer Service Centre at Renfrewshire House in Paisley, and our multifunctional Customer Contact Centre. A new Customer Services Strategy now needs to focus on the wider council to improve the way that we manage and provide customer services across the whole organisation.

The Customer Services Unit currently manages over 400,000 contacts each year. This service is delivered by the Contact Centre who respond to over 250,000 contacts across 16 service areas and the Customer Service Centre at Renfrewshire House where staff provide a face-to-face service to over 150,000 customers each year across 17 services. Service is also taken out to local communities via the 7 Customer Service Points located in libraries, community centres and neighbourhood offices. In addition, the council website provides a wide range of information on council services and receives over 1m hits each year.

However, the specialised Customer Service staff working within the Customer Services Unit represents less than 2% of the staff involved in customer facing activity across the whole council.

The standards of customer service provided across the Council can be varied and there is some evidence of duplication in some areas. There are opportunities to improve our efficiency in the way that service is delivered to customers. The standardisation and simplification of processes and the development of integrated IT solutions are necessary in order to extend the first class customer service standards currently provided from within the Customer Services Unit across the whole council.

Principles of Customer Service

- *Customer Centric*
- *Secure and Easy Access*
- *Personalisation of Services*
- *Keeping it Simple*
- *Dealing with requests at first contact*
- *Joined with Partners*
- *Innovative use of Technology*
- *Value for Money*

Rationalisation and more efficient management of customer contact, aligned to the development of integrated cost effective customer contact channels, will lead to better managed, consistent standards of customer service and improved levels of customer satisfaction.

The key objectives of implementing streamlined, efficient, standard processes in conjunction with high quality customer care standards delivered by all staff will undoubtedly improve customer satisfaction with the services that the Council provides.

Consequently, the customer experience will be better, complaints will reduce, communication will improve and a genuine customer service ethos will be in evidence across the whole council.

The resources currently utilised across the council dealing with customer complaints will be able to be redeployed towards the delivery of high quality services improving the council's ability to meet customers' demand.

This strategy is ambitious. It will transform how the whole council manages and provides services to customers. The way that customers make contact with services will change significantly. The way that customer contact is managed will change for every service. This will have an impact on all customers and all staff across the whole organisation. This transformation will build on the existing "can do" culture within the Council but will require commitment and cooperation across all services to ensure that it is successfully implemented.

This Customer Strategy is set out in two strands:

- Services to Customers... looking at what customers want
- Managing Service Delivery to Customers... looking at how the services will be delivered

The customer strategy is aligned with the council plan and paragraph 3.3 outlines how this has been achieved

1.2 Vision

The Council's vision for Customer Service is clear and straightforward. It is about ***"Understanding our customers' needs and providing the best service at every opportunity"***

This vision embraces both the actual provision of services to customers (best service at every opportunity) and the way the Council will manage and organise itself to best provide such services (understanding customers' needs). The

Principles of Customer Management

- *Listen to customers and take action*
- *Manage Channel choice*
- *Encourage self service*
- *Our Brand = high quality service and consistency*
- *Operational Efficiency*
- *Standardised Processes*
- *Right First Time*
- *Developing Staff*
- *Investing in Technology*
- *Measuring Performance*
- *Partnership Working*
- *Everyone will play their part – not just front facing staff*

Customer Strategy is deliberately set out to distinguish between service provision and the management of service provision.

1.3 What will we deliver - Providing Services to Customers

The Strategy has been developed to deliver improved services to the largest possible number of customers and to make it much easier for them to conduct business with the council and other public service agencies.

The Vision for excellent customer service will be characterised by:

- Placing customers at the centre of service delivery, listening to their views and giving them the opportunity to influence future service delivery;
- Customers being able to access information and services quickly, easily and conveniently resulting in a reduction in queuing and unnecessary form filling;
- Consistent high quality services delivered by well-trained professional staff using common standards of customer care who take personal responsibility for delivering a service which is both responsive and pro-active;
- Personalised joined-up services facilitated by the National Citizen's Account which will enable all information about a customer to be linked and accessible from one service point providing a single view of the customer's interactions with the Council;
- Services supported by contact channels tailored to meet the needs of both the significant majority of residents that infrequently contact the Council and also the minority who require regular contact. The former will require on-line, telephone and automated technologies to transact with the Council 24/7 and the latter will require a more personal service usually by telephone or face to face;
- Standardised, consistent and simple service delivery from all customer facing staff for all high volume routine transactions such as enquiry handling, making a booking or appointment, paying a bill, applying for permission or informing the council of a change;
- Provision of easy to use, on-line self-service facilities for routine transactions such as payments, account balance enquiries, application forms etc;
- Services delivered in a secure environment protecting the privacy of customers;
- Services which will quickly and easily assess a Customer's entitlement to benefits, grants and other services;
- Adoption of the 'one and done' principle whereby delivering services will be 'right first time' at first point of contact and also support the 'tell us once' concept by disseminating information to all relevant parties;

Our Customers are.....

- *All Residents of Renfrewshire*
- *Everyone who uses our services*
- *Everyone who could use our services*
- *All Businesses*
- *All Visitors to Renfrewshire*

- Provision of smarter services to Customers by effectively deploying new technology such as Smartcard, Text Messaging, e-mail, automated telephony, video conferencing.

1.4 Why should we do this?

The implementation of the Customer Strategy will deliver significant benefits to the Customers and the Council including:

- Providing customers with a higher quality of service performance including quicker, right first time responses to service requests
- Customers will experience minimal delays and will no longer need to navigate around many different departments to complete multiple transactions;
- Customers will influence how services are provided by the council;
- Providing customers with choice on how and when they engage with services
- Improving the effectiveness of front-line services by providing accurate, joined-up information that enables a quicker response to customer service requests;
- Improving the efficiency of back-office services by streamlining processes to take advantage of new channels of service-delivery and eliminating duplication;
- Improving the utilisation of employee skills by matching the complexity of the transactions to the abilities of the staff;
- Minimising the need for employee support and reducing transaction costs through the implementation of the 'self-service' agenda and on-line payments services;
- Improving high-level decision making by providing better management information on usage of services and service user preferences;
- Improving inter-operability and data sharing between partner agencies in a secure way;
- Saving money by eliminating duplication or inefficiency in processes that are unnecessary and add no benefit to customers.

1.5 How will this support our Members?

Renfrewshire Council Members are at the real front-line of customer contact. They have daily interaction with customers dealing with their issues, concerns and requests for help. Delivery of this Strategy will provide our Council Members with quick and reliable access to information in a convenient, open and transparent way. This will improve Members ability to assist constituents with problems, increasing

customer satisfaction. The improvements to service delivery that the strategy will provide, will lead to a reduction in the level of complaints freeing up Members time. Performance information will be flexible and be readily available and be relevant to individual members' specific needs.

This access to information and the speedy resolution of enquires will ensure that our members feel well supported in dealing with their constituencies

1.6 How will this be achieved?

The implementation of the strategy is based around 6 workstreams as follows.



Each workstream is a consolidation of a number of individual projects, which will be implemented over a 5 year period. Managing these workstreams in an integrated way will ensure the inter dependencies between them will be identified and managed and the Council's vision of.....

“Understanding our customers’ needs and providing the best service at every opportunity”

.....will be realised by delivering the target and efficiency benefits. The implementation plan is detailed within a separate document held in the knowledge library.

1.7 What does Success look like?

Implementation of this strategy will deliver increased customer satisfaction with the services that the Council provides. It will reduce the cost of providing those services. It will also:

- Reduce level of complaints that the council receives when the services we provide have failed to meet customers’ expectations;

- Increase constituents satisfaction with the council generally because the council will be delivering better services and we will get things right first time;
- Improve communication because the right information will always be available to customers, staff and Members;
- Empower and support employees to provide 1st class customer service leading to improved morale and efficiency;
- Improve the decision making process relating to service delivery options because better information will be available to determine individual customer needs;
- Increase the potential for collaborative working and for extending shared service opportunities with partners and other local authorities.

By standardising and simplifying our processes and implementing leading edge technologies we will ensure that customers who have the capacity and ability to serve themselves will do so. This will mean that we will be able to organise our resources better to provide face to face services for those customers who really need services delivered in that way.

Customers will be accessing services by using the channel that is most suitable to meet their needs.

2 Providing Services to Customers

Customer Service Vision

“Understanding our customers’ needs and providing the best service at every opportunity”

2.1 Where are we now?

What are the current customer experiences?

Understanding what our customers think about the services we provide and what they expect in the future is critical to ensuring that delivery of the strategy meets their needs. Customer views from our council wide consultation channels including the Citizens Panel and analysis of complaints and comments have been examined and used to determine the priorities. In addition, throughout October and November 2008, focus groups were conducted to gain an understanding of how different customer groups perceive the services offered to them across a variety of issues. Key findings from this are as follows:

Phone is easy and convenient

Things are more likely to be done with face to face contact

Perception that on-line enquiries do not get priority

Different customer groups use different council services

- The majority of customers from technically able and financially independent groups preferred to contact the council by telephone as it was easy and convenient, and didn't require them to take time off work. They also had used the internet for certain interactions with the council although this wasn't true of older customers;
- Conversely, those customers who were less technically able, and benefit dependent preferred face to face contact as they felt things were more likely to get done, and they found lengthy phone calls expensive. However, they stressed their preference for local council offices where they could easily get to, and discuss their issue with someone who knew their local neighbourhood;
- With regards to self service, many customers felt that if making their enquiry online, that it would be lost and not followed up, or that it would take a lot longer for their enquiry to be dealt with. Some customers portrayed a lack of trust in using the council services on-line. On the phone, however, they got immediate confirmation of the action needed. Self service by those in less capable groups would be difficult as many do not have computers, so they would require resources and support, perhaps in libraries, for getting logged on. However for those in the less capable group who had self-served (e.g. blue badge application), it had been quick and effective;

Ownership of the enquiry is important to customers

Different customer groups expect different things

- Those in less capable groups didn't rate the standards of customer service as highly as other groups whose requests were possibly less complex and therefore easier to resolve;
- When using the internet, customers would appreciate a confirmation email which told them that their enquiry had been received and giving them an estimated time of when it will be dealt with or allowing them to track it themselves. Communicating throughout the enquiry could be improved by using SMS and ensuring that the council calls customers back when they say they will;
- Some customers weren't particularly positive about the idea of providing information for life stage planning e.g. job loss, moving house, etc, due to data protection issues. On the other hand, other customers (especially those in less capable groups) were very enthusiastic about life stage planning, seeing the bundling of services as a positive action.

This strategy has been developed to ensure that customer expectations are delivered and to address concerns and shortcomings in the way that customers currently access services or information.

2.2 Where do we want to be?

Providing Services to Customers

The following set of guiding principles has been designed to address the requirements of our customers and to underpin the provision of future Customer Service.

The principles of customer service:

- **Customer Centric approach including regular consultation...** Consultation with all key stakeholders groups will provide a better understanding of their needs, behaviours, attitudes, preferences and values. This will drive customer segmentation supported by analysis of geographic and demographic issues and allow the provision of the right services to those who need it when they need it;
- **Providing convenient, secure and easy access to information and services...** Customers can choose how they interact with the council using their preferred method (phone, face to face, web, e-mail, post, text) and trust that their interaction will be dealt with consistently and securely. They can also do this at a time that suits them;
- **Personalisation of services...** Customers will feel that they are receiving personalised service based on their needs. If dealing with council staff they will have the information available to assist them. If self serving they will be able to find what they want to do easily and track the current status of requests or applications;
- **Keeping it simple...** Customers will know how to make contact with the council. Once the contact is made their interaction will be kept as simple as possible by providing clear guidance on what is expected of them to achieve the desired conclusion;
- **Joined-up service delivery with partner organisations...** facilitated by the National Citizen's Account which will enable all information (security permitting) about joint customers to be linked and accessible from one service point providing a single view of the customer's interactions with the Council and partner organisations;
- **Innovative use of technology to support smart, efficient and quick service delivery...** through the use of identification devices, such as smartcards, to authenticate customers allowing them to move into the service request with the minimum of effort and still retaining the integrity and security of the process;

Listening to customers will help understand their needs

Customers can choose their method of how they access services

Customers will feel that the services are specific to their needs

Customers will be guided through the steps to completing their service request

Customer information will be available in a secure way when needed

Use of technology will speed up identification and access to services

Quality Service and Value for Money through efficient processes

Satisfying requests at first point of contact across all channels

Consistent and accurate information is provided reducing unnecessary contact

- ***Providing Customers with Value for Money...***through the implementation of standardised efficient leading practices designed around the needs of the customer;
- ***Meeting service demands at First Point of Contact....***by making access simple and the information available to address customer requests when contact is made no matter what channel is being used;
- ***Being Right First Time...***by making sure that information is readily available, accurate and consistent and there is “one version of the truth” thus avoiding inconsistent or wrong information being given to customers.

Service Standard Commitments

Our commitments to making a difference to customers can be captured in the following statements;

Our Service Standard Commitments

- **Customers will be provided with quick, accurate and personal responses to enquires and service requests**
- **Customers will be provided with flexible, simple and appropriate ways to access services and we will ensure that their specific requirements are met by understanding who they are and what they need from us;**
- **Customers and staff will always have access to the relevant information they need to resolve requests at first point of contact, the information will be timely and up-to-date and will be available in a secure and appropriate way;**
- **Customers will always be kept informed about our performance. Their views on what we do and how we do it will be gathered and used to improve the way we do things;**
- **Our staff will be trained and supported to always deliver to the highest standards. They will be knowledgeable, courteous, polite, respectful and friendly and “go that extra mile” to ensure that customers’ needs are met;**

2.3 The Benefits to Customers

In developing the strategy the following benefits will be available to customers:

- Customers will be able to choose how and when they interact with services;
- Customers will access relevant information simply and be able to choose self-service or a ‘human-assisted’ channels;
- Customers will have their enquiries dealt with more effectively by employees who have the right tools, processes and information available to them;
- Customers will receive a higher quality of service performance, quick responses, minimal delays and will no longer need to navigate around many different departments to complete multiple transactions;
- Customers will influence how services are provided by the council;
- Customers and staff will be able to track and view progress of service requests in a consistent way.

How we will manage the way we deliver services to our customers to achieve these and wider organisational benefit is outlined in the following sections.

3 Managing Service Delivery to Customers

3.1 Where are we now?

The Council's Customer Service Strategy was launched in February 2003, and it was integral to the delivery of the Corporate Statement, Community Plan and Efficient Government Strategy, as well as being one of the Council's top corporate initiatives.

Efforts up until now have been of a practical nature, (for example, with the establishment of the customer service centre) which creates an excellent position to move from clearly tangible activities onto more strategic customer management activities.

Over the last five years, the Council has made significant progress in continually improving its approach to customer service including the rollout of service points in libraries, community centres and neighbourhood offices across Renfrewshire providing local access to services.

The Customer Contact Centre and Customer Service Centre currently manage customer contact for 17 service areas.

In order to demonstrate both the current and desired state of customer management, a maturity model (see figure 1) has been created based on the key elements that drive leading practice. This covers the following areas:

- Strategic Direction – Vision, Strategy and Culture;
- Customer – Segmentation, Channels, Understanding needs and wants;
- People – Competencies, Training & Development;
- Organisation – Processes, Locations, Performance and Measurement;
- Technology – CRM, Integration.

This model displays, in relatively simple terms, the type of functionality and practices that can be observed in the council across varying maturity levels. The maturity levels cover four levels of performance for each of the above areas:

- Weak
- Basic
- Improving
- Excellent

Success in rolling out the customer service centre, customer service points and multi functional contact centre

Customer Service Unit Contact

- Deals with over 250,000 calls annually
- Deals with over 55,000 visits annually
- Takes over 90k payments each year for over £30m
- Over 1m website hits each year

Future opportunity areas are centred round technology – integration, CRM and channels

In Figure 1 the council's current and desired state are mapped to the model with the gap between these representing the basis for the implementation plan for the strategy

Whilst the majority of the current assessment indicates a basic level of maturity, it is important to recognise that there is great potential for improvement across the council as a whole, and it is this potential that is being reflected in the maturity model.

Particular areas of strength lie in our Customer focused culture and the success of, and plans for, our customer contact and service centre.

The red shaded boxes represent the councils current level of maturity in relation to the elements which are needed to deliver excellent customer service performance across the organisation with the target state of maturity shaded in green.

	Weak	Basic	Improving	Excellent
Vision	Each service is responsible for its own vision and objectives.	We are focussed largely on a department/silo specific vision and objectives.	One single council vision , objectives and statements exist, but not yet fully deployed council wide	One Vision shared by all
Strategy	None	Basic plans in place but not integrated or council wide	Plans in relation to Contact Centres and Customer Service Centres	Fully integrated council wide approach defined and supported by leaders and members
Culture	We are Task / Job Focussed and deliver what we can	We are Department/Silo Focussed and focus on those who need us the most or reactive to those who contact us	We are Customer Focussed and customers are treated the same	We are truly Customer Centric and customers are treated as individuals
Customer - Segmentation	No segmentation mapping	Some segmentation identified and utilised on a department or service only basis	Significant segmentation undertaken, understood and being applied in services	One segmentation model exists and is applied consistently across the council
Customer – Channels	Multiple access points and website largely used as information repository	Contact Centre and Service Centre in place for some services but multiple access points still exist across the council. Basic website functionality with some integration	Contact Centre and Customer Service Centres in place with smaller number of access points available across the council with widely used Transactional Website	Consistently managed and fully integrated channel access via minimal number of 'front doors'.
Customer – Understanding Needs & Wants	No analysis or research is undertaken	Some basic information captured, for example complaints but little is utilised to change the way we work with some customer focus groups and surveys conducted.	More systematic to customer consultation to business design. Some change takes place as a direct result of customer intervention, but we could do much more.	Customers involved in service design and feedback, including complaints is captured, implemented and measured to drive change and improvement
People – Customer Competencies	We expect people to be polite and courteous to customers but we don't map customer competencies	We recruit customer focussed staff in some service areas, for example the Contact centre and Customer Service Centre and make reference to competencies in our job descriptions.	Customer competencies are represented in a number of customer facing role descriptions with some multi-skilling, but are mostly frontline staff.	Customer competencies sit at the heart of the council and drive training, recruitment and performance management for all staff.
People – Training & Development	Little or no additional training and guidance is provided. It is expected that staff will deliver good service anyway.	Relevant training is given, but it tends to be service specific and limited to a few highly customer facing roles.	Good amount of training and coaching takes place. We operate development programmes such as national qualifications, but they tend to be for very specific roles, for example contact centre staff.	Fully integrated training and development programme across the council and is tailored to all levels, including the CE, Leaders and Members and are based on the core competencies and workforce plan.
Organisation – Processes	Because of the diversity of services, each service function essentially operates independently and is responsible for its own customer interactions.	Some processes are standardised, for example we take some calls for a range of services through the contact centre, but there is some inconsistency across the organisation.	Some processes are the same and delivered in the same place. For example, the way we deliver enquiry handling is largely consistent across a number of services.	Regardless of where the process is delivered it is based on a single set of corporately agreed, simplified and standardised processes and these processes operate within a structured operating model.
Organisation - Location	There are multiple premises and multiple 'front doors'.	We have a contact centre and / or one-stop-shops, but we still have a large number of other telephone numbers and 'front doors'.	We only have a few numbers with which to contact the council, an appropriate number of community based council offices that handle customers face to face and enable some self service.	We have one number, a virtual contact centre , a small number of segment based community locations and a large proportion of transactions are conducted over the web.
Organisation – Performance & Measurement	Normal service specific KPI's are in place.	We measure some services on customer satisfaction.	Services are measured on key customer performance measures.	There is a golden thread of customer centric measures and targets which are linked to individuals.
Technology - CRM	Each services keeps its own records of customers	We have a CRM system, which is mostly used in the Contact Centre and / or customer services team for initial contact management, but it is not integrated into back office or core departmental systems.	We have a CRM which is integrated to some core systems and populated by all front line services. In addition we can interrogate the system to understand customer preferences and interactions already underway.	CRM is fully integrated and provides a single view of the customer. It tracks all interactions, including web, provides links directly to front line through workflow and scheduling tools. A true source of customer knowledge that supports business processes
Technology - Integration	All records and knowledge are based on legacy and core systems, with minimal or no integration with other systems. Mostly paper based and data entry.	Some integration with other core systems, but still a lot of paper based processes and re-keying of information.	Integrated customer management information, through a connecting CRM system which allows integration with other systems and partners.	Fully integrated and blended channels through fewest appropriate number of technologies which are linked and used consistently across the council.

Figure 1: Customer Management Maturity Model

3.2 Where Do We Want To Be

The Principles of Customer Management

The following guiding principles will underpin the Council's management of the provision of services to customers with the objective of harmonising and standardising service delivery and achieving the 'Where do we want to be?' state:

Development of channels will be prioritised based on volumes and demand

Standard processes designed once and used across services

Reduce checking and rework by utilising effective technology

Engaging with customers to inform service design

Personalised services delivered by staff who are committed to high quality customer service

Modern, integrated and efficient infrastructure to support customer contact points

- ***Manage contact channel choice and encourage self-service...*** by guiding customers to the most effective channels for them it is possible to deliver services in the most efficient way possible. Not all services will be offered through all channels and the need, effectiveness, volumes and cost to serve will be considered in defining the areas for development. Customer self service, where appropriate, will be promoted and encouraged for the right customer groups;
- ***Operate with standardised processes for routine transactions...*** and complement these with common customer care standards to ensure a consistent, high quality 'right first time' experience for customers. Standard processes will be developed for types of customer interaction and implemented across the appropriate services that fit with the process type;
- ***Improve operational efficiency and minimise overheads...***by continually challenging the processes performed and streamlining these by removing non value add activities such as rework and checking and utilising technology where possible to minimise waiting and transit times, and avoidable contact;
- ***Listen to our customers and act...***by engaging with our customers and using their input to help design the services;
- ***Develop the knowledge, experience and values of employees to deliver what is promised with a personal touch...***by developing staff in customer care and in encouraging them to see the council from the eyes of the customer ensuring that each customer is being dealt with in a way that takes account of their personal circumstances;
- ***Improve investment in new technology and buildings to provide a smart, state of the art customer service...*** aimed at developing each channel to achieve maximum impact and efficiency e.g. high quality modern and efficient buildings for face to face contact, telephony infrastructure and integrated systems to support the contact centre, and transactional up to date web site information;
- ***Work with partners to deliver joined-up services and information...***by looking at customer needs in a pan public sector way and working with

Working with partners to deliver consistent ways of working designed around the customers

Developing a knowledge sharing culture

Measuring satisfaction and respond and react to what customers tell us

Providing Members with open and transparent access to the information

Branding is consistent and is synonymous with excellent service

Opportunity for efficiency savings are in simplifying and standardising processes

partners, where possible, to be consistent, remove duplicate activities, streamline processes and handovers, and change ways of working;

- **Exploit new ways of working to enable continuous improvement...**by fostering a challenge culture that encourages staff to promote change which is viewed as a positive contribution to the organisation;
- **Use Customer, business and management information to inform service design...**by developing a knowledge culture on sharing of information and leading practice in customer management so that all services can benefit from all relevant improvements;
- **Measure customers' satisfaction with services...** and their confidence in the Council's ability to govern the community effectively and discharge our responsibilities as a public authority;
- **Establish a brand that customers recognise as a symbol of consistent and high quality service...**the brand is visible and is promoted at every opportunity in interacting with customers and the council staff understand the value of the brand;
- **To improve our Members ability to assist constituents with problems....**providing our Members with easy and convenient access to customer information and access to reliable customer information in a convenient way will improve their ability to assist constituents with problems and lead to increased customer satisfaction.

In order to deliver the vision, the desired state of maturity against the same criteria is outlined in Figure 1. Whilst it is recognised that the ideal of being “excellent” in every element would be the ultimate state, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect to achieve “excellent” in every element over the next three to five years. This strategy is geared towards attaining the specified desired level of maturity which is both appropriate and achievable. The greatest opportunity for efficiency savings exists in simplifying and standardising the customer process and this is reflected in a Excellent level of maturity to realise that potential.

Within the customer journey elements, it is important to aim for a strong Improving level of maturity; providing the foundation for continuous learning about customers and therefore aiming to reach Excellent maturity thereafter.

A high Improving level has been reflected in the people elements and will provide the basis for a more customer centric culture, in addition to which the technology infrastructure is reflected at the same level to enable staff to deliver higher service standards. Underpinning all journeys is the need for a strong Excellent Vision, Strategy and Culture across the organisation and this has been reflected accordingly.

3.3 Alignment with the Council Plan

Implementation of the Customer Strategy address the themes defined in the Council Plan.....

Greener

Reducing reliance on paper and improve communications by

- offering services to customers through the Council's website (www.renfrewshire.gov.uk) and telephone
- communicating with staff through the new intranet site

Smarter

Providing the highest standards of customer service through the Customer Contact Centre and Customer Service Centre and driving forward the development of excellent customer service skills for all staff across the Council.

Establishing 2 new local customer service centres in Johnstone and Renfrew.

Improving interaction with customers using technology by using for example the Council's website (www.renfrewshire.gov.uk), self-service kiosks, text messaging and video conferencing.

Introducing the Citizen's Account to enable easier access to personalised services. This will support the provision of joined-up customer information and promote partnership working.

Implementing the Council's smartcard strategy, which will aim to streamline all cards used by our customers to access Council services into one single smartcard. By doing this, the Council aims to offer improved access to services, in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

Healthier

Promoting a carers self assessment which can be accessed through social work offices and the Council's website. The self assessment enables carers to identify key supports which will help them maintain their caring responsibilities.

Developing our organisation

Developing communications, press and marketing plans which are better co-ordinated and more focused, and which are therefore more successful in communicating required messages and information to both local and national audiences.

Continuing to develop appropriate methods for consulting and engaging with our customers, partners and employees, and ensuring that consultation that is undertaken with partners is joined up wherever possible.

4 How will we get there?

The delivery of the strategy is an ambitious transformation programme which will impact on every service area across the whole council and will require commitment from all services to achieve a successful delivery. The provision of future customer Service across the Council and with Partners as outlined in Section 2 will be underpinned by the Customer Management Implementation Plan.

This strategy sets out the six workstreams which will deliver the strategy and realise the benefits for the council.

Each of the workstreams is a consolidation of a number of individual projects, which were developed following a detailed review of the council's requirements. By taking this approach, all projects and initiatives, current or future, are integrated in such a way to meet the vision and ultimately the customers' needs. Outlined below in Figure 2 is a high level implementation plan for the six workstreams. Information on a more detailed implementation plan is available as a separate implementation plan document within the strategy knowledge library.

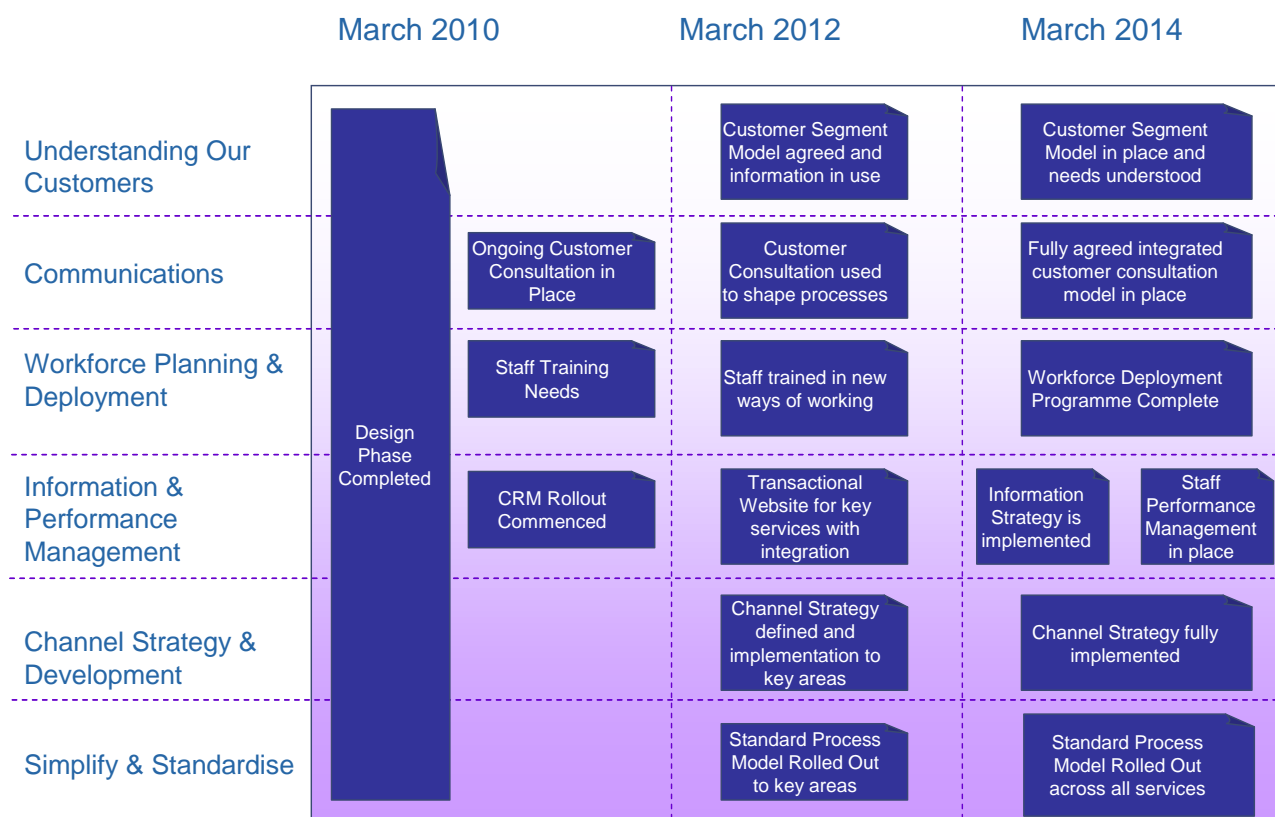


Figure 2

Each of the workstreams is summarised as follows:

Services will be designed around customer groups

4.1 Understanding Customers

Customer Segmentation... is the practice of dividing a customer base into groups that are similar in specific ways relevant to the services they are provided with from the council. Segmentation should reflect age, gender, geography, needs, and so on. Using segmentation will allow the council to target groups effectively, and design services to meet their needs. Examples of customer groups include:

Low income Families

Single people

Renters now owning their home

Young upwardly mobile couples with children

Older working couples

Retired People

Communication with customers will target specific groups

Effective customer segmentation will inform the design of other projects identified in this strategy, ensuring as a council that council services are delivered appropriately and cost effectively. Information gathered through the CRM and the use of smartcards, will be used to analyse customer information and patterns of behaviour and help to place customer in customer groups

Customer Consultation... The Council has a duty to consult with customers on their service needs and preferences. By informing and involving customers in service design, their buy-in and support will increase, and the council can gain valuable insight that would not otherwise be possible.

Consulting with customers will shape future service delivery

4.2 Simplify & Standardise

The development of a range of common service themes and designing service delivery around life events will improve the accessibility of services, and will assist in targeting service delivery to areas of greatest need. Delivery will be assisted by the development of corporate systems to support this, such as booking and payments systems.

Streamlined Processes... Simplified and standardised processes will improve service delivery and overall customer experience by making it easier and quicker to manage customer demand. Also, the application of these consistent, standardised

Easier and quicker access to services and simplified ways of doing the things we do most often

approaches to the delivery of high volume, routine customer transactions across the council can generate process efficiencies.

In the past the approach was taken to try and identify parts of services that could be moved to the service team and contact centre, which will deliver some benefits, but real sustainable improvement will come from looking at how to deliver simplified and standardised customer processes across the whole council. For example, design how to perform enquiry handling or appointments and bookings, and apply this approach to all services. This creates a strong baseline position to naturally share and integrate with improved collaborative working between departments and convergence with partners as similar processes are implemented. Joined up working can be demonstrated through the eyes of the customer in “life events” where a number of council departments are effected by changes in circumstances. These will be profiled against council services. Typical examples include: Going to School, Leaving School and Finding a Job, Moving House, Getting Married, Having a Baby, Being a Parent, Bereavement and Disability.

Service Redesign... Once the simplified processes have been defined, service redesign will ensure the standard application of these processes. It is only then that real improvement can take place as services identify processes that should be delivered elsewhere, releasing capacity to enable them to concentrate on their core business.

4.3 Channel Strategy and Development

The channel strategy will recommend the best method to engage customers, the *type of engagement best supported by each channel and the way channels interact* with each other. It will ensure consistency of information and service provision, and will give the Council the ability to analyse channel usage and provide a better understanding of customer behaviour and preferences.

An effective channel strategy will reduce demand on high cost entry points by providing relevant information and enabling lower cost self service for applicable services and information. It will enable the Council to shift full transactions onto self service platforms for example automated and standardised payments. Such a strategy will support the migration from resource intensive “face to face” service delivery to telephone or from telephone to self service via transactional web services. The development of other contact channels like text messaging and e-forms will also form part of the strategy.

A fully transactional website to provide self service opportunities for all relevant services

We will measure and report our performance consistently and take action to improve

Corporate customer service standards in place across the council

360 view of customer to improve service provision and decision making

4.4 Information and Performance Management

There exists an opportunity for the council to improve its performance through more effective use of customer intelligence. Customer information is currently an underutilised resource and its value as an ‘asset’ that can be used to drive improvements to service and performance is not exploited.

Better understanding of customer needs and preferences, supported by customer segmentation, can drive the development of meaningful customer service performance indicators. This information can provide a basis for better service design and ultimately be used to reduce the cost of service delivery and improve service take-up.

Measuring performance in terms of customer feedback and impact of service delivery on customers is an increasingly important feature of performance management. It will be difficult to do this effectively and difficult to quantify without reference to hard data about customers’ use of services and their preferences.

Corporate Standards & Performance Management...In order that the Council can become customer centric, the manner in which service is delivered by staff needs to be consistent across the organisation. Clear corporate standards will demonstrate what is expected of staff. These standards will also apply to internal customer interactions. It is essential that the Council clearly defines and adheres to tight customer service and corporate standards if we want to achieve accreditation under the Government standard “Customer Service Excellence”. This is vital to support a single Council submission, should that be the preferred option going forward.

To embed these standards there is a requirement to develop appropriate systems to allow effective Customer management performance management. This includes coordinating all current customer management performance management and measurement activities, driving improvement in employee performance and ensuring benefits and objectives are realised.

It is important to ensure that there are minimal measures needed to help achieve the vision. It also involves thinking about the process of how to use information to drive change and improvement.

Information Management & Reporting Process...Allowing access to the full range of data will ensure consistency of information; provide a 360 view of the customer and their service history. It will allow the assessment of demand for services and effective preparation for peak periods of demand. Integrated information will ensure employees are able to respond to a higher number of enquiries at first point of contact and will allow the Council to make informed decisions when dealing with customers. Having access to all available, relevant

information will assist the Council in targeting key services where they are most required and in protecting and improving service delivery for the most vulnerable customers.

This will also result in the reduction of duplication and improve the integrity of data held across the council. This will be achieved by the development of the Citizen's Account, robust data management and full implementation of the CRM system across the council which will include full integration with back office systems. This will enable the single view of the customer to be achieved and will fully facilitate self-service.

4.5 Communications

Customer Communications...It is important to manage the perception of the Council amongst customers, stakeholders (including the media) and partners. There will also be a need to educate customers on the revised channel strategy to encourage use and maximise take up.

To address this there is a need to develop a marketing and communications strategy to externally promote the Council's focus on customer management and to enhance its reputation amongst all external customers, stakeholders and partners. Any branding or marketing work should fall in line with the Council's existing marketing and brand management strategy and should also be developed in conjunction with the internal communications and employee engagement strategy.

Internal Communications...There is a need to bring the staff along on this journey. Everyone at all levels of the council knows what the vision is, understands how they are helping to achieve it, and feel motivated to work towards it.

Employee engagement includes recognising when achievements have been made and celebrating these successes.

Staff need to feel that they have had input into being part of the process from the start. This project will review existing internal communications and employee engagement strategy to ensure that it is geared towards informing employees of the Council's increased customer management focus.

4.6 Workforce Planning & Deployment

This involves providing a framework and infrastructure which will enable all employees to:

- Develop the required skills to equip them to work effectively;
- Maximise the benefits that will be achieved by the introduction of standardised processes and technology;
- Focus on the importance of good customer service throughout the organisation.

The brand will be well known to our customers as representing excellent customer service

The right people in the right place at the right time

Service standards will improve and deliver efficiencies by doing things right first time

Well trained knowledgeable staff with a high customer service ethos will improve service standards and deliver efficiencies through delivering ‘right first time’ services thus reducing avoidable contact.

The workforce of the future will be different in many areas compared with today, especially in a more customer centric environment. The development and implementation of a standard workforce planning process will establish a detailed view of the size and shape of the future council. Comparing this with the existing skills and competencies and staff demographics will provide the gap that needs to be addressed through e.g. succession planning, recruitment (apprentice programmes, graduate development, specific professional skills), and the development of existing staff.

It is imperative that this is addressed on a council wide basis in order that no individual service area is left behind. We need to become more focused on how we plan our customer management activity and be consistent in how to deal with its implications.

The customer service vision can be best achieved if the right levels of appropriately skilled staff exist within the council.

Customer service is a competency which is not always formally assessed or discussed during recruitment and performance reviews. A formal process for ongoing development of the staff’s customer management skills is essential. We must develop a training and skills strategy, based on future career planning which will focus on increasing the relevance of staff training. This will cover both skills needed for the immediate role and development to support future direction. The skills review should also include change management in order to support those tasked with delivering the change needed for achievement of the vision.

Staff need to be ready, willing and able to make the changes happen.

Workforce Development also helps to ensure that customer focus is at the forefront of the thinking of every employee through all employees’ working lives. This means joining up how the customer management elements of a role are managed from recruitment, to training and development and finally right through to performance management activities and reward (how to deal with poor performance and how to recognise and reward excellence?). This applies to everyone, not just those in a customer facing role.

The customer will be a core competency for all staff

Staff will be motivated to achieve the planned changes

Everyone knows their role and how to deliver best service

4.7 What will be achieved by when

In order to monitor progress on the implementation of the strategy a view of what will be achieved in the future is shown in the following tables. This is representative of a progressive approach to implementation. During the design stage of the programme an implementation approach will be agreed with priority areas being those where major benefits can be achieved from an organisation and customer perspective.

By the end of year 1...	
<p>The Council will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have agreed the full design of the programme • Have identified the priority areas and begun to work up an implementation plan • Have identified the full benefits of the programme and have a plan designed to ensure that they are realised • Have an agreed set of corporate standards • Have identified the staff training needs across the organisation and they will be informed about and involved in the programme • Have consolidated the CRM systems and begun a roll out to wider customer facing areas 	<p>The Customer will.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have begun to receive information about our plans for change • Have begun to tell us what they want and think about our plans for customer service

By the end of year 3...	
<p>The Council will....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have implemented the new ways of working in the key areas across the council and have begun to implement the standard processing model deployed across the council • Have identified the staff numbers needed to deliver the new customer service processes – cashable efficiencies will have begun to be realised and plans will have been agreed to realise them in full • Have decided what services will be available via which channels and implemented the changes in some key areas • Have a transactional website for key services with front to back integration with systems and processes • Have trained staff on the new processes and supported them through the change programme; they will understand their role and be enthusiastic and involved. • Have developed and deployed the CRM across the council to the key areas • Have implemented the Citizens Account and Smartcards • Have agreed customer service standards and measures and have developed the means of recording and reporting the information • Have agreed a customer segmentation model and begun integration into the key processes and design 	<p>The Customer will.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know about our new ways of working and how to access services or information • Have new ways of accessing services and they won't always need to identify themselves to do so because they have a Citizens Account or Smartcard • Be routinely serving themselves via our transactional website and they will do so with confidence because they trust the process and be able track their service requests on-line • Have complete trust in the information that the council provides via the website because it is current and up-to-date • Be able to provide information once when being assessed for service and the council will use this to assess for other services – benefits/clothing grants/school meals • Not need to repeat information when they are revisiting a request for service because a 360 degree view of their contact will be available to all staff who need it • Be offered access to bundled services that they may not be aware that are available to them – life events like moving house, bereavement or losing their job • Be more satisfied with our services and have easy ways to telling us what they think

By the end of year 5...

The Council will....

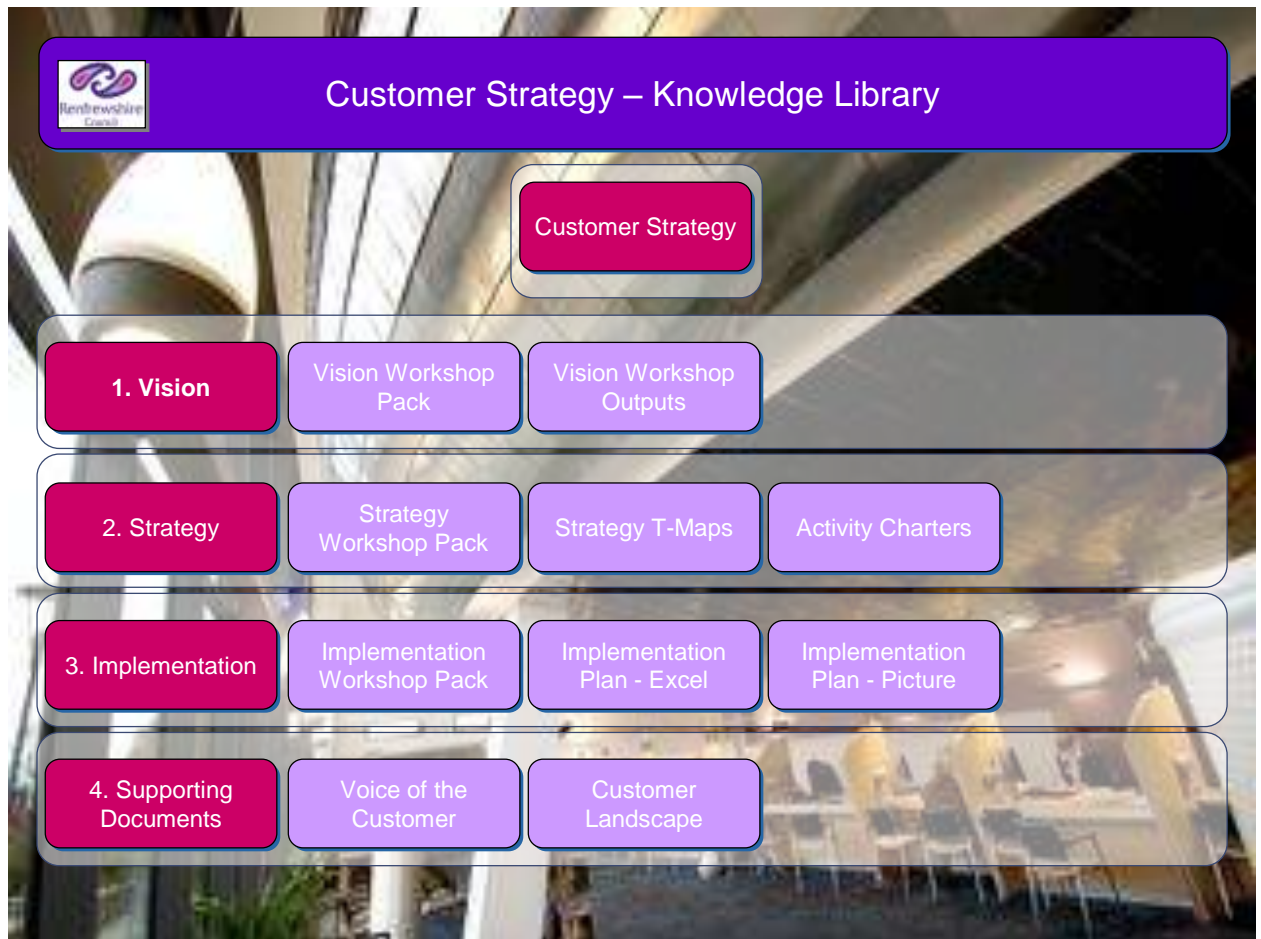
- Have deployed our standardised processes across all customer service areas
- Have all relevant information available to provide first class customer service
- Have achieved complete integration of key systems linked to the CRM
- Have implemented the full workforce deployment programme and have realised the full cashable benefits of the programme
- Be assessing performance of staff against the agreed standards
- Be systematically reporting customer service performance
- Have a full picture of all of our customer segmentation groups and understand what services they use, how they access them and what their requirements are for future service design
- Have an agreed fully integrated customer consultation model
- Have an integrated suite of IT systems with access to all the necessary information to enable customer service staff to deal with all enquiries

The Customer will.....

- Have a consistent experience when accessing services
- Be using the channel that is appropriate to them – web self-service for those who can will be the norm
- Be receiving a first class customer service experience at every contact made
- Be routinely providing feedback to the council about their customer service experience
- Be confidently using the new access channels including SMS and video conferencing

Further Information

This document provides an overview of the customer strategy. There is a sequence of supporting documents available to support the work undertaken in the development of the strategy. These are contained in a knowledge library as follows:



Further information on the contents can be provide by Elaine McCue, Customer Services Manager on 0141 840 3331 or elaine.mccue@renfrewshire.gov.uk

