



Putting you first

Transforming customer experience

[DRAFT FOR CUSTOMER CONSULTATION]



Belfast
City Council

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Our customer vision

Providing easy to use and accessible services, whenever and wherever you need us.



Introduction

Belfast City Council has embarked on a customer experience transformation programme to provide quicker and better experiences to all our customers. Over the next three years (2020 -2023), we will begin putting in place the foundations to transform our customer experience, offering increasingly easy to use and accessible services.

Our customers

Our customers include everyone who lives, works, visits, learns or does business in Belfast. Our customers also include our own staff – around 62% also live in the Belfast area. In order to deliver the very best service to all our customers, it is more important than ever that we understand who they are and what they want from us.

We are committed to ensuring all our customers, whatever their needs, have an excellent customer experience across all channels when they deal with us. We know that while some residents prefer traditional ways of contacting us, an increasing number of our customers would use digital self-serve facilities if they were improved and available, or are willing to use digital channels if supported. We will support customers who want to get online.

Putting you first

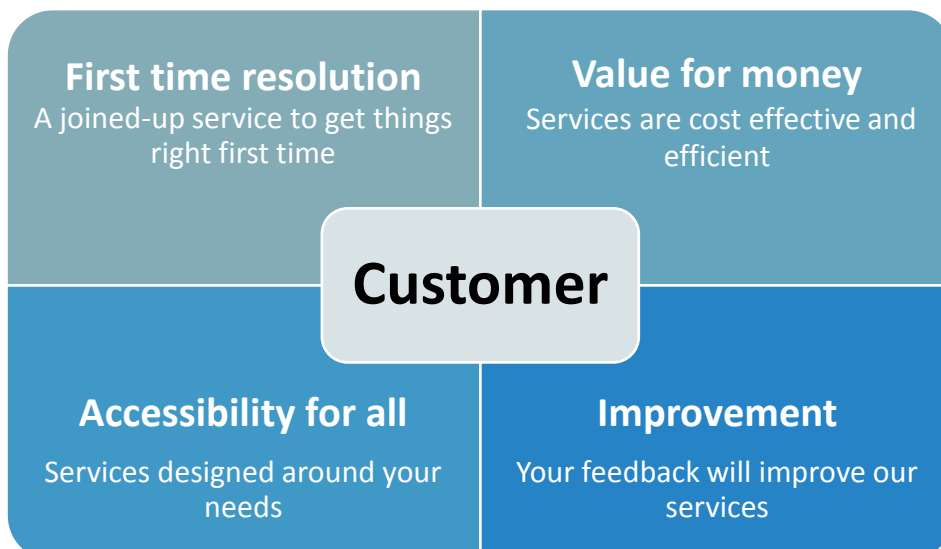
Our Putting You First vision sets out how we intend to provide services to our customers. We have consulted extensively with our customers and this highlighted the challenge for us to satisfy the varied and more demanding expectations of our customers.

Some common themes emerged when we asked what we could do to improve.

You want us to:

- make it easier to contact us,
- have more services online, and
- be more responsive to your needs.

Our approach is to provide you with consistent and joined up services whenever possible, underpinned by easily understood standards. This is set out in our draft customer charter on page 16.



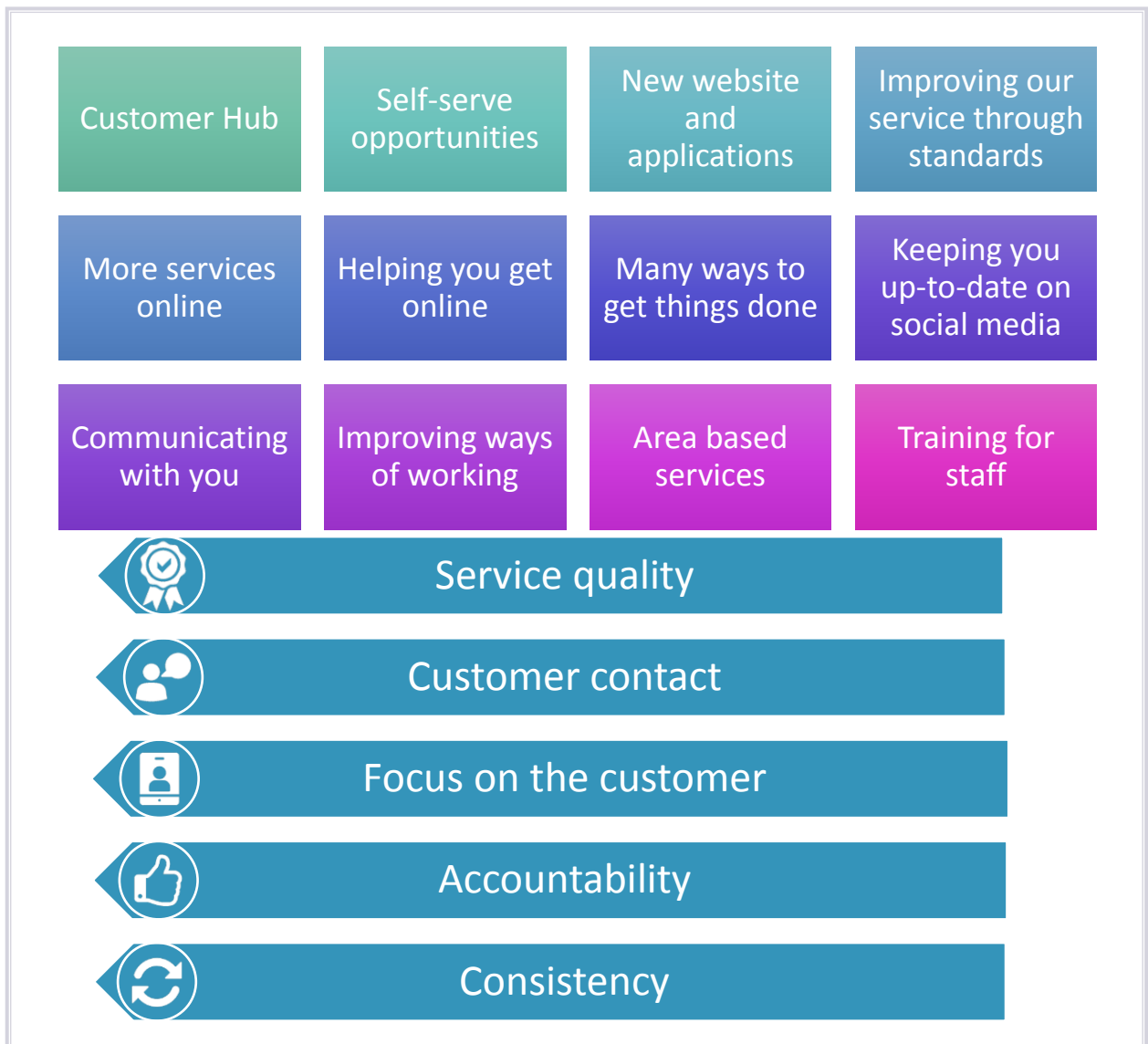
We will actively ask you for feedback and use it to make decisions about how to improve our services. We will make it easier for you to find the information you're looking for, whether it's online, by phone or face-to-face so you can access information in the way you would prefer. We will simplify our processes and make them more efficient.

We know that many people prefer to use digital services. It's quick and easy. We know our customers are using their smartphones and tablets more and computers less frequently when going online.

Our Putting You First framework sets out to provide you with the best possible customer experience and service. And, that our approach is about accessibility and inclusion for all our customers.

This will include a new convenient, multi-channel customer hub for customers accessing the council. We will be putting significant investment into a brand new website including important enhancements to increase self-serve opportunities and provide support for customers who aspire to use digital channels but might need assistance in getting online.

Putting You First Framework



You can look forward to...

- A quicker response and issues sorted on the first point of contact, where possible.
 - better information about where your enquiry is up to.
 - more opportunity to get things done yourself.
-

You can choose...

- to contact the council online at a time to suit you.
-

You can trust...

- we will endeavour to deliver an excellent service.
 - if you do have cause for complaint we will try to resolve your issue at the earliest opportunity.
 - that we will only use and share your details within the council, where appropriate, to give you the best possible service.
 - we will treat all your personal details confidentially in accordance with GDPR
-

You will feel...

- that you have been valued as a customer.
 - confident in making future enquiries and transactions online.
 - encouraged to give feedback on how your contact was handled (good or bad) and know this will be listened to.
-

You will know...

- that we are aiming to provide the best possible service.
 - the response and information you get will be correct and we are providing a value for money service.
-

We will...

know that we are improving our services as we have identified a number of performance indicators that will keep track of our progress. In support of our transformation, we are starting to put in place a range of customer service standards that will underpin our services to you. For example, you'll be asked your views on our customer experience more often so we can make changes and improvements more quickly, offering a more agile, effective and efficient council.

Our customer experience principles



One view of the council

Consistent joined-up approach underpinned by standards to get things right first time.



Customer Centred

Customer centred to improve your customer experience so you receive a seamless joined up service, regardless of the issue.



Make informed decisions

Provide greater insight and analysis to provide services that meet your needs, both now and in the future, by continuous review and improvement.



Digital first, not digital only

Enable you to choose, making sure you have fair access to the services we provide, offering more self-serve opportunities and providing support if you need help to get online.



Improving customer experience

Provide access to the right information at the right time and from anywhere. We will design our services around your needs.



Improve the efficiency of processes

Give value for money and provide efficient services.

1. One view of the council

Customer expectations are changing quicker than ever. People now want timely, secure, round the clock access to facilities, and our services are no different.

By doing more of your business with us online, you will be able to do things quicker and better and it will help us target our resources more effectively.

Looking forward, our website will allow you to securely access a whole range of services. Increasingly you will receive information that is more tailored to your needs. We will be able to anticipate your needs more effectively and the range of information you can access and services you can request will increase over time.

Very soon we will start planning to provide you with a more personal service. For example, in the future if you have a current query, you'll be able to see the status of that query and when a response is expected.

You will also be able to book and pay for an increasing number of services online. Including, for example, if you wanted to order a new waste bin, you would do this by completing a form on our website and pay for any charges at the same time. You will then be able to track the status of your order.

We will:

- improve our technology so you can do more things online,
- join up all the services you receive so that all your information is in one place,
- improve our back office processes so we can easily provide you with status updates on any queries you have made,
- use social media to get messages out there so you may not need to get in touch as often,
- send messages about things that are important to you,
- put all possible services online so that you are in control,
- allow any payments to be made securely online.



2. Customer centred

However you contact us, you will receive consistent advice, information and access to services. Digital options will offer a quicker and better experience when you need to contact us.

We will:

- enable you to do more of your transactions or requests online, where before you may have needed to telephone or visit,
- provide information about all of our services online,
- make it easier for you to contact us online,
- support and develop our staff to offer the best possible service and ensure they have the right skills, knowledge and tools to help you,
- improve customer experience through all available channels.
- we will treat all your personal details confidentially in accordance with GDPR



3. Make informed decisions

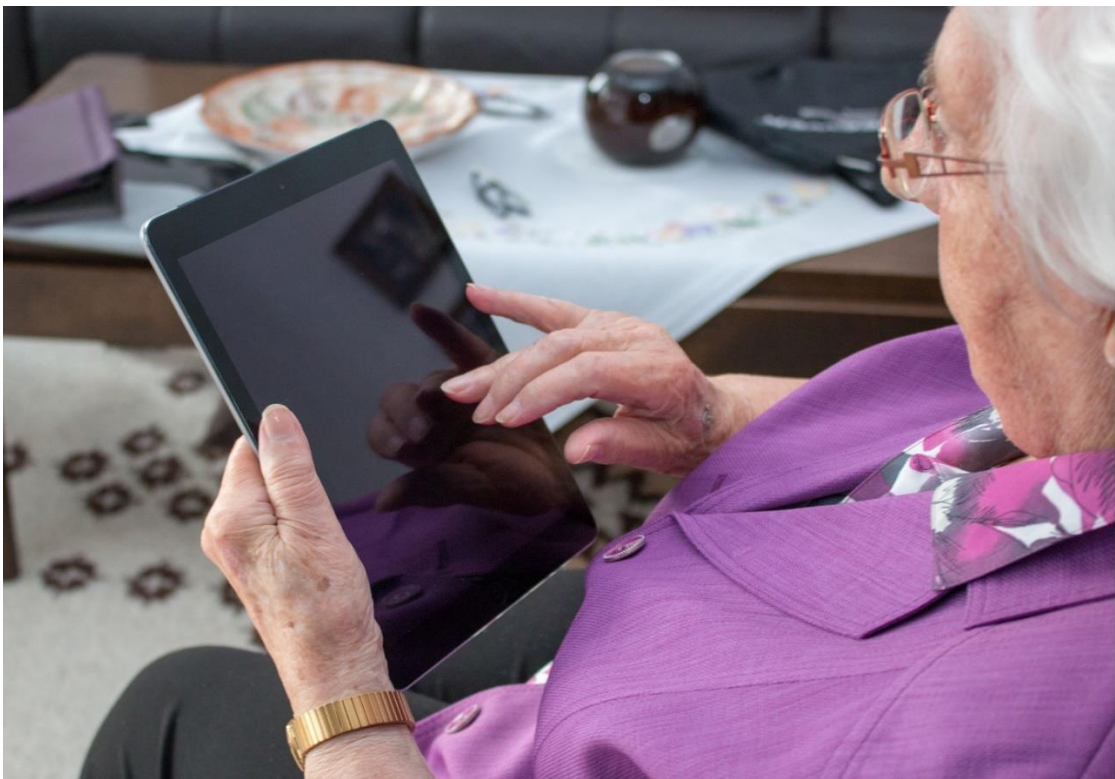
Customer insight is about knowing our customers better so we can provide an improved service to you. If we understand what is important to you and how you use our services, we can prioritise our resources to support you better.

We will be able to send you information about issues or events that may be relevant to you and tailor the service you receive.

Also, if we receive lots of reports about a particular issue in a certain area, we will be able to target our services where they are needed most.

We will:

- improve our 'report it' system so it is easier for you to use and can advise our services,
- use a combination of social media, email and SMS to send relevant information to you,
- ensure we have the most up to date information about you so we can best serve your needs.



4. Digital first, not digital only

We will help those who don't have the technology or the skills to access our services online.

We know around 88% of our customers are online and already do a lot online. We also recognise that not everyone has the skills, access to the internet or equipment to take advantage of our digital services. We will help more of our customers get active online as we know being online can help save you time and is more convenient. However, you will still be able to contact us by phone or visit us.

We will encourage people that do have the skills to do things online to help support those who do not. This may be done through support in the community, on the phone or at our customer hub.

We will:

- encourage all our customers to use digital methods to contact us,
- continue to offer support to those who need it,
- change the way we deliver services so that we can offer support to people who need it,
- continue to provide technology for public use.



5. Improving customer experience

We want to make it easier for you to give us important feedback and we will have more opportunities for you to tell us what you think. We need to know how you feel about our services so we can share good practice on what we're doing well and improve areas which you aren't as happy with. This will help us improve overall customer satisfaction.

As we change how we deliver services, and move more of our services online, we will consult and be asking you to test things out for us. We will listen and respond to what you tell us. Your feedback about our online services will help us create a better service.

We will:

- test new digital services with you and use your feedback to improve,
- identify more opportunities for you to tell us what you think,
- use information about how you use our website to tailor and improve our service,
- make sure your feedback on council services is used to improve and change what we do.



6. Helping communities

We became responsible for community planning in 2015 as a result of Local Government Reform. It's about making sure public services work together with communities to deliver real improvements for local people.

We have been asking residents and organisations in Belfast to tell us what kind of city they want for the future and what we should be focusing on now to make this happen. People told us that they want a city that provides a high quality of life for everyone who lives here and for the city to be a great place to work, study, visit or set up and grow your business.

The Belfast Agenda community plan was created by a partnership of key city partners, residents and community organisations.

Belfast also has a vibrant and active voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, playing a valuable role in the social, economic and environmental fabric of city life.

In many of our communities, there are groups who are informally providing services and community support. These groups offer real value to their communities and we want to make sure we help and encourage this kind of community capacity building and self-support.

There may be occasions where community groups want to do some volunteering in the local area and this is also something we would encourage.

We believe communities can offer informal advice and guidance, helping each other to do things for themselves rather than having to contact the council, making it quicker, easier and better for them. This would reduce pressure on council services and help community enterprises to develop. We are reviewing our community provision capacity at the moment to support access to neighbourhood services.



7. Improve the efficiency of processes

We will lead and embrace the shift to digital ways of working and change our behaviour to make sure we are able to serve you in new ways. A process of continuous improvement.

We will guide and support our staff to do things differently to improve the overall customer experience you get. Our staff should have access to records when out visiting you at home. Our digital team will help us to make sure we get the right information to you when you need it.

We will:

- give our staff the equipment and skills to deliver services to customers more effectively and efficiently,
- remove paper where possible to make our services more efficient and save money,
- change the way we work so our processes are streamlined,
- improve how we securely share data so we can respond better to your needs,
- make sure our all systems and processes are digital ready,
- continue to embrace new technologies to ensure we are constantly improving,
- work with our elected members to support them to use digital ways of working.



Conclusion

We will know our 'Putting you First' is successful when you:

- find it quicker and easier to access our services and information,
- get the service you need first time,
- can access services and view your contact history in one place,
- are satisfied or very satisfied with the service and information you receive. We will gather feedback so we can check this.

Delivering our shared vision in this way will give you greater choice, more control and improved access to our services. Easy-to-use digital tools will give you your own personalised service. It's a journey we will make together.

You will be able to access council information and services through a range of channels.

We will have a workforce with the right skills and tools for the future to inform and guide you to the right services for you. We will be working closely with our communities to increase access and support to our services and will have strong partnerships in place that allow us to support people through options for self-serve.

We see success in delivering Putting You First as excellent customer experience, fit for purpose services and responsive as our customers' needs change.

Draft customer charter

Customer charter

Belfast Agenda: Developing our city, driving growth, and creating a great city and neighbourhood living experience



Belfast City Council

Our customer vision

Our customers are:

- ✓ at the core of everything we do, anyone who comes into contact with us for any reason.
- ✓ residents and everyone who works, visits, learns or does business here.

We want to:

- ✓ be an outstanding service provider and will strive to always provide a high standard, cost effective and consistent level of service.
- ✓ be helpful, courteous and respectful.
- ✓ get things right – first time, every time.
- ✓ make sure our customers have fair access to the services we provide.
- ✓ use Plain English when we write or speak to you.
- ✓ provide services that meet our customers needs both now and, by continuous review and improvement, in the future.
- ✓ respect your confidentiality at all times.

Our customer commitment

First time resolution



We want:

- to get things right first time.
- you to receive a seamless, joined up service – regardless of the issue.

Value for money



We want to make sure:

- you get value for money.
- our services are cost effective.
- we provide efficient services.

Accessibility for all



Our services will be:

- designed around your needs
- available when and where you need them
- simple and easy to access.

We will:

- use technology to improve accessibility and flexibility.
- design services to be digitally accessed and offer more self-serve opportunities.
- provide support if you need help getting online.

Improvement



We will:

- use your feedback to make our services better, faster and easier to use.
- involve you in developing new ways of delivering services.
- investigate all complaints thoroughly, within the agreed timescales and learn from our mistakes.
- continually monitor our performance and report back to customers on how we have performed.

Complaints, comments and compliments

Your feedback is important to us.

Let us know if we've delivered a good service or if you've a suggestion for improvement.

As our customer you have every right to expect the best possible services. And, when we fall short, you have the right to complain. A copy of our complaints, comments, and compliments policy can be found at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/feedback.

How to contact us

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E: enquiries@belfastcity.gov.uk
[@belfastcc](https://www.facebook.com/belfastcitycouncil)
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4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast, BT2 8BP

What we ask of you

In return you:

- treat our staff with courtesy and respect.
- be considerate and polite to other customers.
- provide us with further information if requested.

We're committed to making sure that our publications are available to all sections of the community and will consider providing this in other formats. If you need an alternative format, please call 028 9050 0510.



Contact us:

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