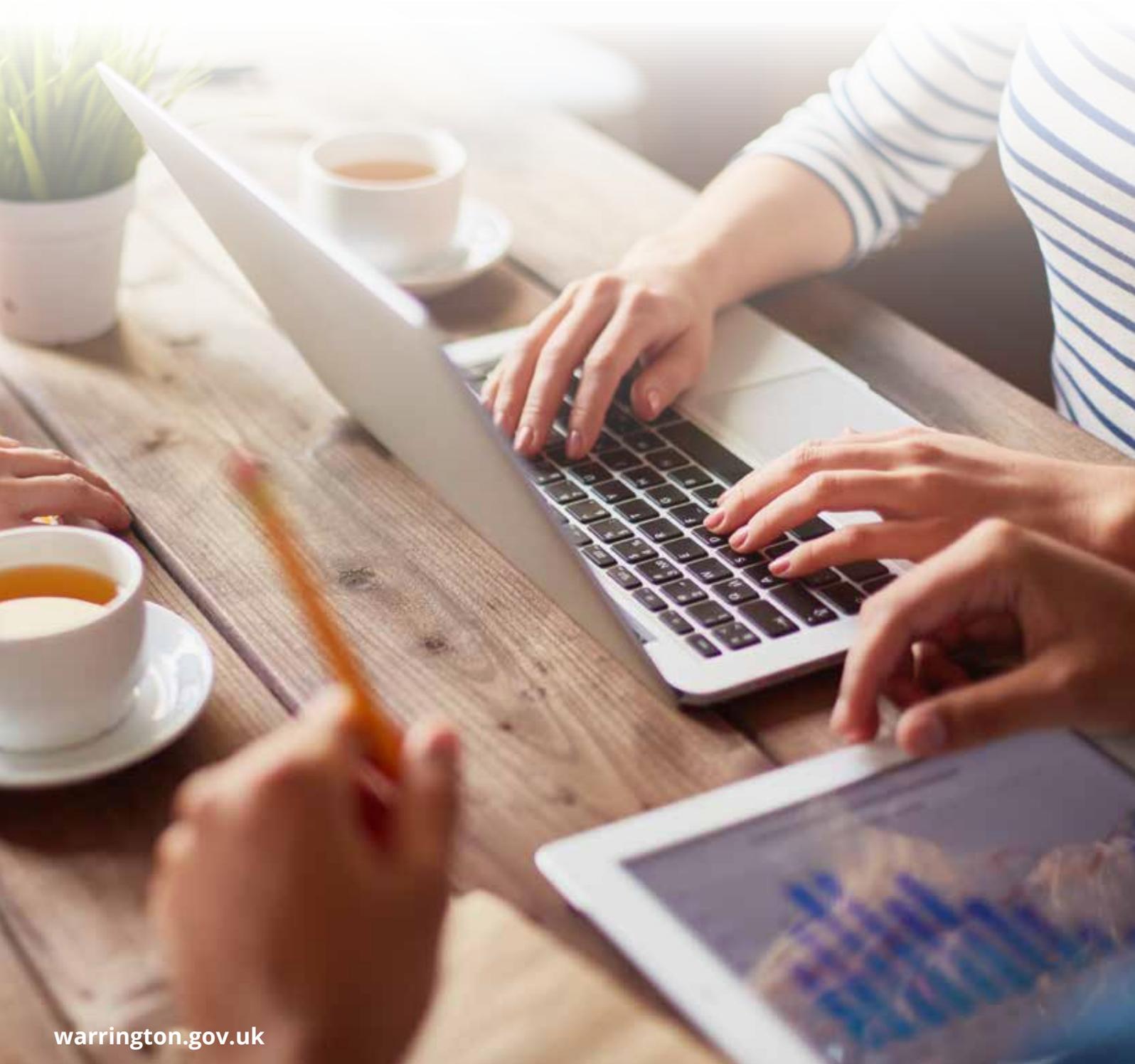




WARRINGTON
Borough Council

2020: Our vision for a digital council

Customer Strategy 2016-2020



Introduction

In 2014, we launched a new customer strategy that set out ambitious plans to improve customer service across all parts of the council. We have done a lot of work so far and we remain ambitious for the people of the borough.

By 2020, the council's budget will have been cut by more than £130m. While we are proud of the work we have done to deliver 'more with less', we are also realistic and recognise that the scale of these cuts means we will have a different relationship with our residents in the future. We are at the point where we simply can't afford to do some of the things we have always done.

You have told us that you want us to deliver basic council services consistently and reliably. We also want to continue to support the most vulnerable people in our communities and to enable and encourage increased independence where it's appropriate to do so.

Our financial position means we can no longer aim for gold standards of service across all of our service areas and that we will need to work together to maintain the things that you really care about. As an example, to create capacity to support the people who need us the most this means that we need to encourage the people who can access services online, to do so. Online services are cheaper for us to deliver and doing this means that we can put our reducing resources into the things that really matter to you like improving our roads,

cleaning our streets, ensuring our crime rates remain low and supporting vulnerable people.

We also recognise that we need to invest in new technology to help us to reduce costs over time and that we need to re-structure our services so that we get things right first time more often, avoiding expensive follow ups. Without this investment we can't achieve further savings and will be able to do even less in the future.

As council budgets shrink, the role our communities and our partners play in helping people to access services and in enabling greater independence becomes even more important. We need to do more to harness this capacity and to work together to mitigate the impact of austerity – that's why we are supporting the borough wide 'Count me in' campaign that encourages everyone to 'do their bit' and will help reduce demand on public services overall.

'Count me in' also celebrates the existing work that happens in communities day in, day out. Thank you to our employees, our partners, the voluntary sector and the huge number of volunteers and carers across the borough. We know that every one of you is working hard and doing more than ever before under sometimes difficult circumstances. You are all at the sharp end of the changes to funding and we cannot thank you enough for your dedication and the hugely important and impressive, work that you do.

Together we can continue to make a positive difference.



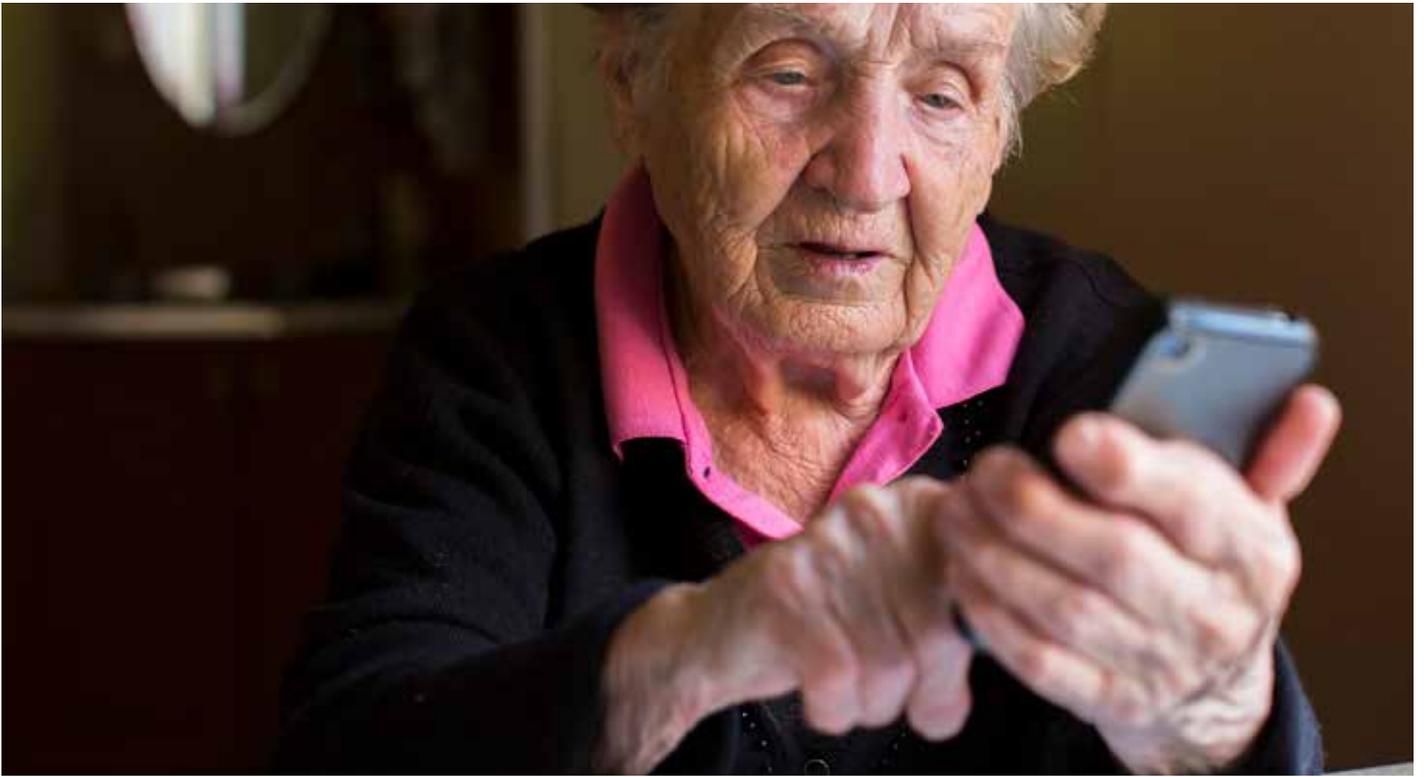
Councillor Terry O'Neill
Council Leader

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. O'Neill".



Councillor Hitesh Patel
Portfolio holder

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hitesh N Patel".



Our vision

To deliver easy to use services that are designed with input from our customers, that deliver improved value for money for the council and that encourage and enable greater independence.

To encourage customers who can self-serve, to self-serve so that we can focus our reduced resources on the people who need our help the most.

The scope of this strategy

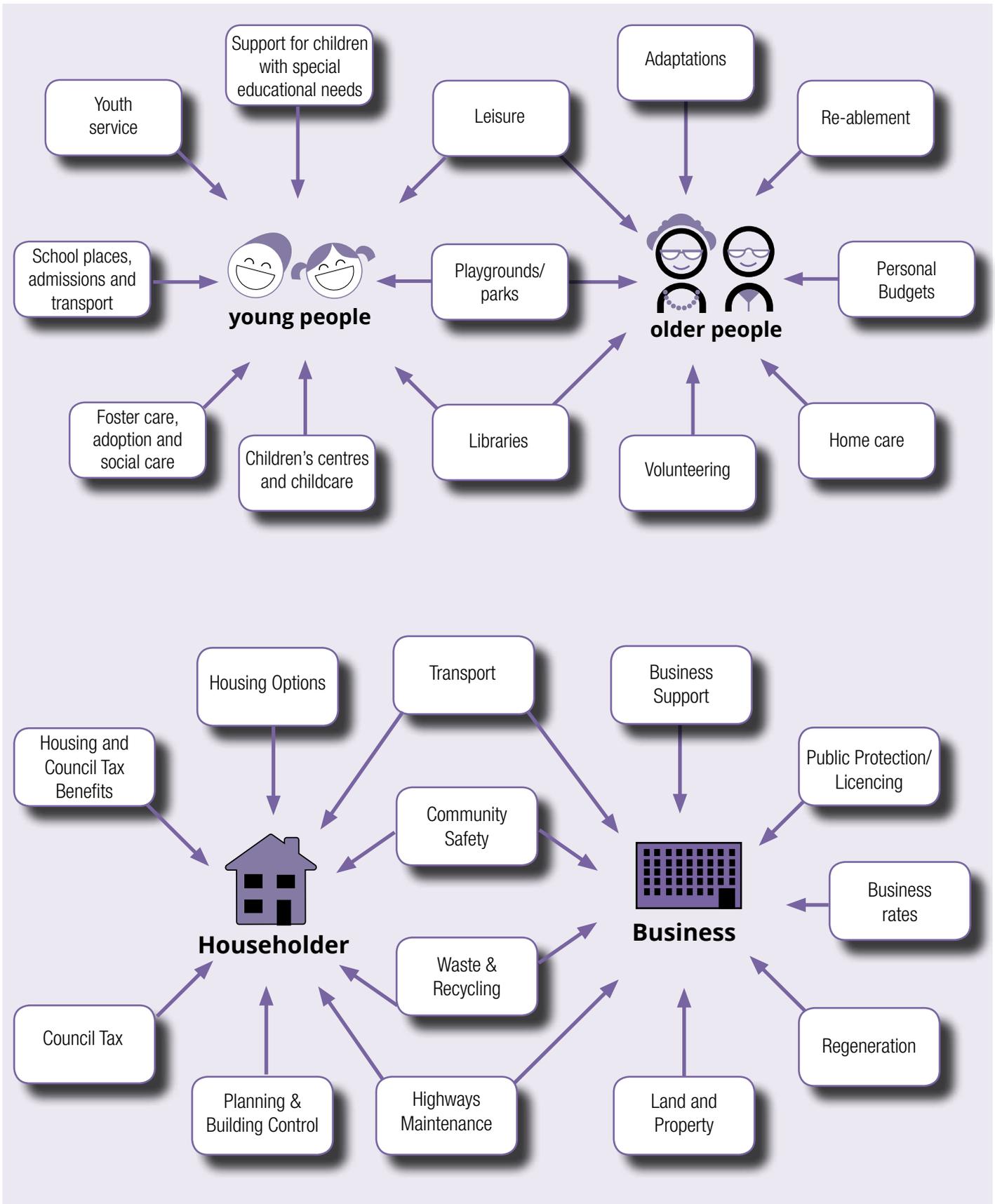
This strategy applies to all parts of the council and to services that are initiated by customer contact across all customer access channels, for example:

- Website and mobile
- Telephone
- Face to face
- Contact via social media

It applies to both inbound and outbound contact and covers all aspects of service delivery from the initial contact being made right through to resolution.

Who are our customers?

The council provides lots of services to people of varying needs. The following diagram shows the diversity of demand for services. Some services are provided to all, whilst others are tailored to need.



What our customers and front line staff tell us

"I just want to be able to phone up and have my enquiry dealt with there and then, without being passed about or waiting for someone else to get back to me."

Make it easy

"I'm busy, so I prefer to do things online. It would be great to be able to get text messages or to look online to see where my request is up to rather than having to phone."

Keep me updated

"I've used your online services - and then someone had to phone me back to take payment, I'd expected to be able to do this all at once - online services need to be improved."

Give me online services

"I struggle to get through on the phone sometimes and would prefer to know where I am in the queue, so I know whether to wait, or to call back."

Manage my expectations

"Service structures sometimes inhibit good customer service. We've designed our processes around our organisational structure and sometimes this creates complexity, adds cost and means customers wait longer for things to get done."

Design processes from a customer perspective

"I spend a lot of my time double keying information that comes in on e-forms into the CRM - I would rather spend my time actually adding value and helping customers."

Use resources wisely
Give me the right tools for the job



Our ambition

By 2020 we will:

Improve our online services

- Have a council website that is as good as any bank or supermarket website – that allows you to request and pay for services online and, if you wish to, to log in, see your interactions with us and get information about where any requests you've made are up to.
- Implement an update service – so if you contact us online, you can get emails or SMS text messages to tell you exactly what is happening and when.
- Ensure that our online service is easy to use whether you access from a desktop, laptop or smartphone.
- Continue to ensure that we handle all of your data in a safe and secure way.

Make our services more reliable and easier to use

- Redesign our processes and associated structures to deliver services that are more responsive to your needs and allow us to get more things right first time.
- Re-structure our contact centre so that our staff patterns match customer demand, giving you the reassurance that your call will be answered in a reasonable timescale.
- Make sure that you won't have to speak to a machine after you have selected the first option from a menu (unless you choose to do so – for example to make an automated telephone payment).
- Introduce appointments for most face to face services, so you don't have to waste time queuing.

Make it easier to understand how to contact us and ensure everyone can

- Have no more than ten external numbers published to contact the council.
- Reduce the overall volume of websites in use by the council and council funded partners to make it easier to know where to go for what.
- Create a network of ambassadors, including within partner agencies and across the voluntary sector, who can help you to access our services if you need face to face support.
- Improve our emails and letters so that they are easy to understand and clear about how to get in touch with us if you need to.
- Ensure we retain face to face services for people who need them the most.
- Provide information in alternative formats and make better use of assistive technologies to improve access for people with a disability.

Tell you clearly what we can and can't help you with

- Ensure all information about council services is available on our website.
- Be clear at the start about those services we charge for and those that we provide for free.
- Explain how long requests are likely to take and how we will keep you updated.
- If we are unable to help you with your enquiry, explain why.



Reduce our costs

- Actively encourage those people who can use online services to do so. Where appropriate, make digital the first choice option for all high volume, low complexity services.
 - Have a single, well resourced, contact centre in place for the whole council to achieve improved responsiveness and economies of scale.
 - Improve how we use data so that we can predict the services our customers are likely to need and make better informed decisions about future service delivery.
 - Better align our in house and commissioned information and advice services so that we avoid duplication or gaps.
 - Introduce automation within our processes and our reporting, so that we use technology to support repetitive activity and can focus our people on activities that add real value.
 - Invest in modernising and joining up our customer related IT systems across the council so that we spend less on long term support and maintenance.
 - As services are consolidated, reduce overall management costs across the council.
- Create mandatory customer service training for all front line employees delivered in a way that is relevant to their role.
 - Improve development pathways for staff within a streamlined organisational structure.
 - Make sure we are clear about the customer focused behaviours we expect of all of our staff and of our commissioned service providers and actively monitor these.
 - Recognise and reward our staff, our partners and members of our communities when they go above and beyond.

Listen to what our customers and front line staff tell us and use this to continually improve

Invest in our people

- Help our own employees to get online so that they act as digital ambassadors at work and in their communities.
 - Provide our team with the tools they need to help them to help customers and to do their jobs more efficiently.
- Develop a new performance framework for customer contact to better understand service responsiveness and quality.
 - Ask our customers about their satisfaction with our services.
 - Involve customers and staff in designing and testing new products and services before we launch them.
 - Ask our employees for ideas and feedback on an ongoing basis.
 - Use customer insight, complaints data and customer and employee feedback to understand areas for improvement and have a single improvement plan that is prioritised council wide.
 - Feedback what we have done as a result.



How we will do this

The level of ambition that we have means that we need to take a focused and co-ordinated approach to delivering the change. To do this, we will put in place a Customer Transformation Programme and this will be split into two phases:

Phase 1 – Building the Foundations

This phase builds on the work that has taken place since the last Customer Strategy was launched. At this stage, we will:

- Clearly set out a roadmap for change that includes a vision for how customer facing services will be organised and how they will be better supported by improved processes and technology in the future.
- Prioritise making changes to how we deliver existing services that start with a customer contacting Contact Warrington.
- Invest in automating some routine tasks within our Revenues and Benefits service so we speed up the time it takes to process some of our work and reduces costs.
- Re-structure our contact centre to bring email and call answering teams together, to improve overall efficiency, development opportunities for our teams and to create a scalable foundation for the future.
- Make initial improvements to the council's website to make it easier to use.
- Develop a business case for the delivery of Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Service transformation

We will review all customer facing services to make them easier to use and to reduce costs, looking at:

- Processes
- Costs
- How we use data
- Reporting and key performance indicators
- How we use technology
- People and structure





How will we know if we have delivered well?

We will develop a detailed way to monitor and manage the benefits that will be delivered. A small number of these are set out below.

If we are successful, this will mean that:

- More customers will access our online services (individual targets will be developed process by process).
- We will see a reduction in overall face to face contact and contact by telephone.
- We will be able to evidence more efficient use of resources as we bring services together and make our processes leaner.
- More calls will be answered overall.
- We will better understand emerging issues as a result of improved intelligence and we will prioritise how we respond to these council wide.
- Our overall 'cost to serve' will reduce.
- Customer satisfaction with individual services will improve over time.
- Our data, organisational structure and our systems will be less complex.
- Our long term IT development, support and maintenance costs will reduce.
- It will be easier to upgrade and exchange different components of the IT system.
- Our partners, councillors and staff will tell us that we are giving them the information and tools they need to do their jobs well.
- We will reduce our data management and reporting costs.
- We will be able to evidence an overall reduction in demand caused by service failures (things like missed bins or not being able to access our services online).
- We will reduce management costs in relation to customer service delivery.



Our shared commitment



To deliver this strategy, it means we need to make a shared commitment with our customers.

We will develop and communicate this as part of the borough wide 'Count me in' campaign.

Our commitment to our customers

We will:

- Always be honest about what we can and can't do, and the reasons for this.
- Aim to deliver the best services possible within the funding constraints that we face.
- Invest the most in the things that you say are important and in protecting our most vulnerable residents.
- Involve real customers in helping us to design our new ways of working and in testing our new technology.
- Listen carefully to your feedback and act on it, whether it's a complaint or a compliment.
- Use plain language and make sure our communication is easy to understand.

What we need from you

We would like you to:

- Respect our employees, most of whom do a great job under sometimes difficult circumstances.
- Help us save money by using our online services, recycling more, not letting your pets poo on the streets, not dropping litter and generally 'doing the right thing'.
- Help your own family and your neighbours as much as you can to avoid them going into care.
- Try to be active and as healthy as you can, and support others to do the same.
- Help in your local area when you have time.
- Recycle more.....and right.
- Spend more of your money locally.
- Tell us what you think of our services in a constructive way.

The way people access services is changing



31,000
service requests

Made online in 2015

27,000 walk in visits
to Contact Warrington



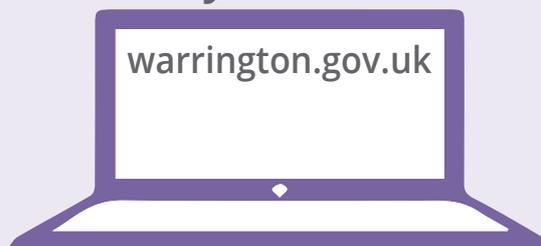
250,000

calls to
Contact Warrington
but more come
directly to services

52%
warrington.gov.uk

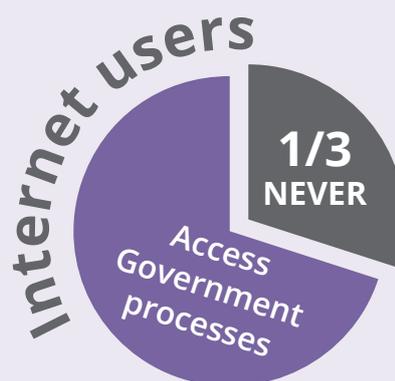
Access from a
mobile device

1 m
unique visits a
year to



25 - 34 yr olds	77%
35 - 44 yr olds	79%
45 - 54 yr olds	76%
Over 75s	37%

Internet users looking for
public service information



Contact Warrington

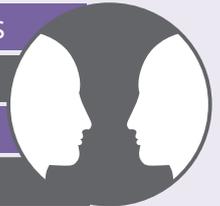
Our top contacts **via the contact centre**

- Revenues and Benefits
- Bulky waste
- Bin order
- Registrars



Our top contacts **face to face**

- Revenues and Benefits
- Payments
- Concessionary Travel
- Blue badge



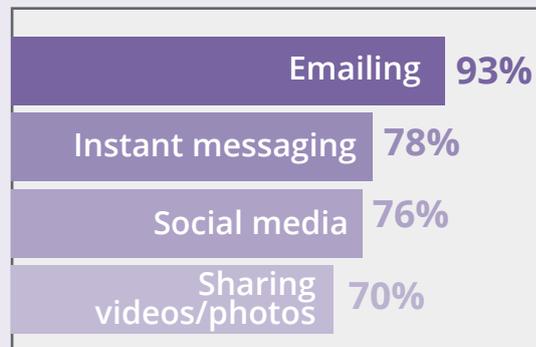
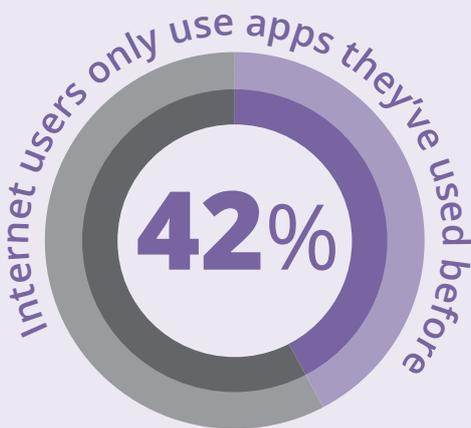
9 in 10 adults use a mobile phone



use a smartphone



@WarringtonBC



Most popular activities online



95% social media users are on Facebook



While the demand for digital services has grown significantly in recent years, the data suggests that there is a preference for trusted channels over and above the creation of new apps. In developing online services we must also ensure that alternatives remain available particularly for older people who are less likely to have direct online access. Alternatives should include the ability to use an intermediary to assist.