



2024 - 2029

Customer and digital strategy

for Norwich City Council

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Foreword

Norwich City Council's vision, as set out in the corporate plan 2024-29 is to become a fair and thriving city, full of ambition. Delivering on key priorities, being an open and modern council and doing the basics well in an efficient, timely and well-informed way is key towards achieving this. This strategy outlines how we will support this vision through the development of our customer and digital services.

Our customers are increasingly wanting to access our services digitally and at a time that suits them. By making our services straightforward, intuitive, and available 24/7 – in the way that we now expect from other organisations – will mean more customers use digital services by default.

By increasing the take up of online services, we will make our services more cost effective, enabling the council to focus resources on those who need them most. But we recognise that it is

not one size fits all and that customers have varying needs, so we will continue to provide traditional contact options for those that have challenges with accessing digital services.

This new strategy will build on the work delivered from the Customer Experience and Digital Strategy 2021-24 that focussed on developing modern, agile workforce tools and the building blocks for better data management.

Talking and engaging with those that use our services while we developed this new strategy has provided us with the insight needed to refocus where we will make improvements. Going forward we will continue with our customer engagement, gathering feedback as we put this strategy into action, to make sure that our digital services are accessible and easy to use. We will also work with other organisations to benchmark our success, share best practice, and develop modern innovative services.

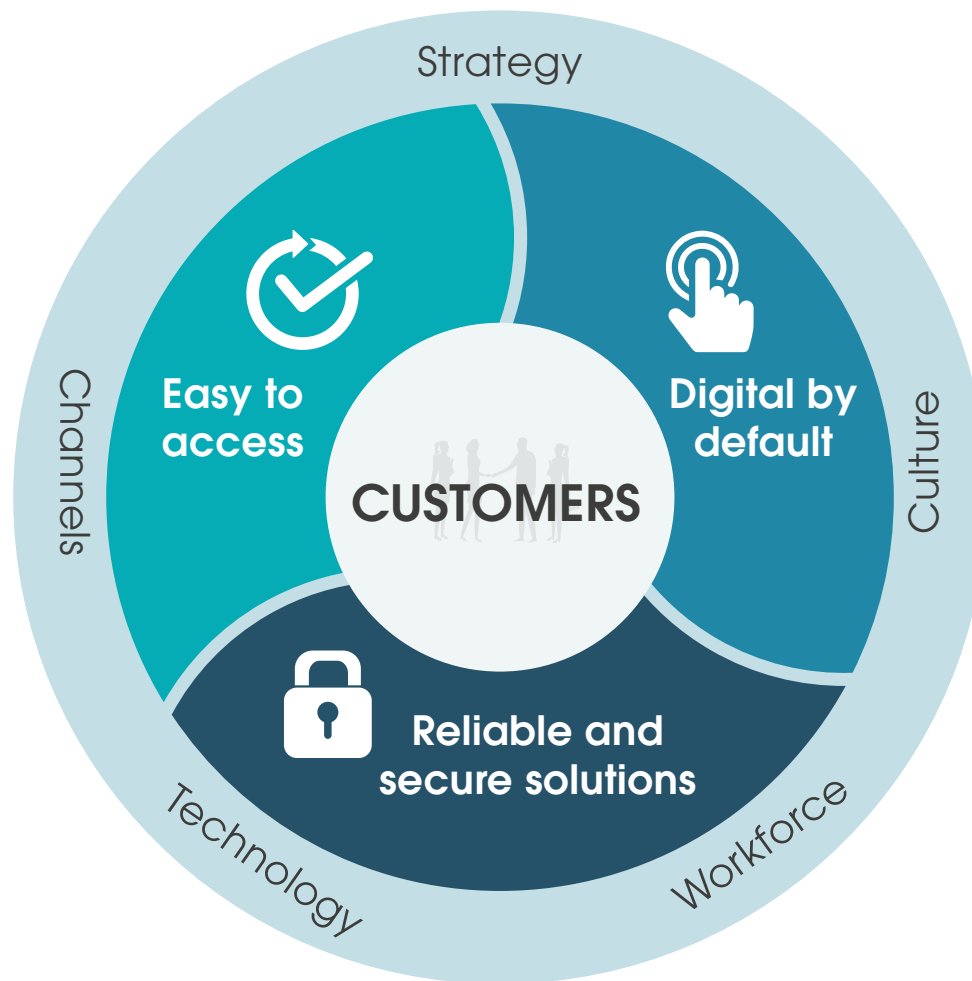


Councillor Matthew Packer
Portfolio holder – customers and digital

2. Vision

Our vision is to become a digital organisation, providing easy to access services that our customers want to use by default.

Our workforce will be supported to develop modern and innovative ways of working, delivering inclusive, cost effective and efficient services.



Our strategy will be led by the Government Digital Service Design principles

- Start with user needs
- Do less
- Design with data
- Do the hard work to make it simple
- Iterate. Then iterate again
- This is for everyone
- Understand context
- Build digital services, not websites
- Be consistent, not uniform
- Make things open: it makes things better.

3. Our customers and our services

Consumer research (customer digital index 2022) suggest that 99% of the UK are now online. In the east of England 89% (UK average 88%) have essential full or partial digital skills for life*.

We understand that the experience of using our online services will be compared with others such as banking, retail and central government therefore moving forward with continuous development and improvement is essential to keep pace with growing customer expectations.

The majority of our customers have access to online and are digitally enabled and they expect our services to be easy to access and available 24/7. Our data shows that there is great opportunity to increase take up by improving their experience of using our services.

It is recognised that some customers cannot access services online and not all enquires are suitable to be accessed in this way.

We continue to provide a:

- telephone service with an option to request a call back and not wait in a queue, with a focus on a quality service with targets achieved for the success of calls.
- face to face appointment service that it is arranged with the most suitable officer to deal with the enquiry to ensure the best outcome and service.
- translation assistance for those who are not able to access information about our services or communicate with us easily. For example, may not be fluent in English, either written or verbal; may need a British Sign Language interpreter or lipreader; or need documents in Braille, or information on audio tape.
- the council website has an accessibility function

Our definition of customer

Within the context of this strategy customers are defined as anyone who lives, works or visits the city council area and our internal workforce and councillors.



*The Essential Digital Skills Survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Lloyds Bank, is the UK's benchmark for digital skills. It measures the fundamental tasks needed to access the online world and the essential digital skills needed for life and work. The most recent survey conducted in 2022, suggests that 99% of the UK are now online. In the east of England 89% (UK average 88%) have essential full or partial digital skills for life.

4. Shaping the strategy - consultation and engagement

This is a council-wide strategy and has been informed by a number of different sources:

- the Corporate Plan 2024-29
- Norwich 2040 Vision
- outcomes from the Customer Experience and Digital Strategy 2021-24
- performance data
- local government best practice
- website analysis
- complaints
- channel shift data
- equality data obtained from our strategy team.

Feedback from:

- consultation survey and workshops
 - councillors
 - colleagues
 - residents
 - voluntary and community groups
 - businesses
- IT Services Survey
- corporate plan consultation
- EDI strategy consultation
- customer user experience/satisfaction feedback.

5. Governance

Our strategy will be supported by a strong governance structure and a **roadmap**.

The delivery status of our objectives and subsequent themes will be supported by a detailed **action plan** that will measure and assess against the strategy and outcomes. This will be shared at directorate, internal boards and with the organisation.

The outcomes measured through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be published externally.

6. Objectives - summary

Our strategy objectives are summarised below. We want to:

- Provide services which are **easy to access**.
- Develop our approach to best serve our customers expecting a **digital service by default**.
- Ensure IT and digital solutions are **reliable and secure**.

Environmental impact

Digital technology will aid the environmental agenda and is a key enabler in supporting low carbon activity:

- Increasing the percentage of digital-led services will reduce the council's environmental footprint, contributing to reaching our 2030 net-zero target. The sending of paper letters has a considerable environmental impact, and so moving towards digital-led services will reduce this*.
- The vast majority of emissions linked to digital services are connected to electricity use; these emissions will further decline as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise and the council ensures its continued procurement of green electricity.

*www.sciencefocus.com/planet-earth/the-thought-experiment-what-is-the-carbon-footprint-of-an-email

Objective 1 – provide services which are easy to access.

We will provide accessible services that are on time, right first time and delivered professionally and inclusively.

We will develop and enhance our online services so that customers will choose to use them by default. Increasing digital services means that we are more cost-effective and enables us to focus our resources on those who need them most.

To achieve this, we will:

- Implement and publish co-designed service standards to ensure that we together we agree these with our customers.
- Implement and publish service standards for key services.
- Review and rewrite customer communications so that they are accessible and understood.
- Promote our online services so that our customers are aware of options available.

- Develop and enhance our customer relationship management (CRM) system and create a dashboard of corporate performance so that standards can be monitored and shared across the organisation.
- Engage with customers and the voluntary sector in the development of our new website and our online services making sure that they are easy to access and use.

Measuring outcomes

As part of the **action plan** development we also need to develop reporting and establish baseline data to create meaningful targets.

We expect to achieve our outcomes across the following areas:

- service standards and performance measures
- customer satisfaction
- enquiries dealt within agreed timescales
- feedback from website customer engagement panel
- online content meets or exceeds web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.1)



Objective 2 – develop our approach to best serve our customers expecting a digital service by default.

We will improve the experience of our digital online services so that customers will use them by choice and ensure they are accessible.

We will develop modern, inclusive technology to provide our workforce with the skills and tools to empower them to work efficiently, collaboratively and creatively.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put user experience and customer focus at the heart of our services and design them to be fully digital.
- Implement a new council website that makes it easier for customers to find information and access services.
- Review and redesign all digital webforms/ service requests so that the design is consistent, accessible and easy for customers to request services.

- Simplify access to customer accounts to make the process of creating an account and accessing information more streamlined.
- Deploy automation where required and appropriate, for example exploring use of AI and chat-bot/virtual assistant internally and on the website.
- Monitor customer feedback and engagement on our website and use this information to make improvements as a result.
- Provide easy to request paperless bills and communications for our customers.
- Develop our workforce systems that includes the project to migrate shared folders to Microsoft 365.
- Develop the use of Microsoft apps and streamline internal processes to support collaborative, agile working for the workforce.
- Provide IT induction training for the workforce to give an overview of the service and how support can be accessed.
- Develop apps that can be used on mobile devices that support more efficient, agile working.

Measure of success

As part of the **action plan** development we also need to develop reporting and establish baseline data to create meaningful targets.

We expect to achieve our outcomes across the following areas:

- Satisfaction with website services.
- Number of unique visitors to our website.
- Percentage of service requests made online (channel shift).
- Registration and usage of customer accounts
- Regular review of website information to ensure it is up to date.
- Reduction in telephone volumes.
- Decrease in carbon footprint.
- Reduction in print, post and cost of communications, both in actual volumes and as a proportion of outbound communications.
- Successful delivery of Microsoft 365 project.
- Implementation of new Microsoft tools and techniques to improve process.
- Take up, completion of and satisfaction with IT induction training for staff.
- Workforce satisfaction with IT services.

Objective 3 – ensure IT and digital solutions are reliable and secure.

We will provide safe and secure services that customers and the workforce can have confidence in using and which are supported by a strong governance framework.

We will be informed by accurate and secure data.

To achieve this, we will:

- Publish an information and data strategy.
- Develop a framework to provide effective governance for all council used IT systems.
- Ensure new and existing systems are safe and secure in line with best practice guidelines.
- Effective disaster recovery procedures are in place and regularly reviewed to minimise disruption.
- Standardise our approach to renewing new and existing systems to ensure effective functionality and governance is in place.

- Migrate to cloud solutions by default.
- Better utilise our IT systems, and where possible, rationalise to realise cost efficiencies.
- Improve the data quality of customer data, including contact details and the development of our master data management solution.
- Use data to proactively support customers and inform strategic planning.
- Support the City Hall project by providing innovative IT solutions that are fit for purpose in a modern working environment.
- Develop the IT service function to enhance support and first time resolution of requests.
- Ensure availability of our systems within core working hours and 24/7 for online services.

Measuring success

As part of the **action plan** development we also need to develop reporting and establish baseline data to create meaningful targets.

We expect to achieve our outcomes across the following areas:

- First time fix for workforce IT requests.
- Reduction in the number of contacts to the support team.
- Workforce satisfaction with IT services.
- IT solutions availability.
- Delivering IT audit actions within agreed timescales.

We will deliver the following and monitor to ensure success:

- Action plan to monitor information and data strategy.
- IT governance framework and change management procedures.
- IT business continuity plans – review regularly.
- Produce a dashboard providing cyber assurance to senior leadership and audit committee.
- Standardised approach to delivery and development of systems.
- A single version of the truth for each customer, contact details and property in our systems.
- Public Services Network (PSN) compliance and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) certification



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