



Bracknell Forest Council Customer Contact Strategy 2017-2020

A Three-Year Strategy to December 2020

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Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Foreword by Executive Member for Communities | 1 |
| Executive Summary | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Key aims of the strategy | |
| 3. Where are we starting from? | |
| 4. Objectives for the customer | |
| 5. Delivery of the Strategy | |
| 6. Governance arrangements | |
| 7. Training | |
| 8. Conclusion | |
| 9. Action Plans | |

Appendices

- A – Customer insight – what we know about our customers**
- B – How customers contact us currently**
- C – Current customer contact volumes**
- D – Objectives for the customer and customer feedback**
- E – Digital Inclusion in the borough**
- F – Current voluntary sector activity**

FOREWORD BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, CORPORATE SERVICES & PUBLIC PROTECTION

This strategy is being published at a time of considerable change for the borough of Bracknell Forest. The newly developed town centre, the significant rate of new homes being built and a growing population mean that demand for our services is ever increasing. At the same time, serious financial pressure on the public sector means that we need to find ways of making our services more cost effective and efficient.

We are however in the fortunate position of having a very digitally able population, and this gives us the opportunity to redesign our services, making them more digital and self-service enabling, wherever possible. In this way we can continue to deliver valuable services to our residents at a reduced cost.

This strategy sets the direction for our approach to the management of customer contact in the coming years. It presents the principles which will guide our redesign of services, and a series of actions that will help us make further progress on the journey to increased self-service and improved efficiency whilst maintaining a high quality customer experience.



Iain McCracken
Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services & Public Protection

Executive Summary

1. This strategy, covering the period to December 2020, establishes the direction of travel of the Council in relation to Customer Contact. It examines emerging trends, and suggests how these will affect the Council and its operations over the period. It describes the current model for managing customer contact, noting the areas where there is scope for improvement or development, and recommends a way ahead. It casts a vision of how things could be by the end of 2020, whilst recognising that funds and staff time are limited. Finally, it proposes how to get from where we are now, to where we want to be.
2. The priorities for the Council are clearly stated in the Council Plan:
 - Value for money
 - A strong and resilient economy
 - People have the life skill and education opportunities they need to thrive
 - People live healthy and active lifestyles
 - A clean, green, growing and sustainable place
 - Strong, safe, supportive, and self-reliant communities
3. The Council is currently undergoing a major transformation, in response to diminished funding, and to become more effective and efficient. Better management of customer contact, reduction in demand and new models of service delivery will be key to delivering the desired outcomes from the transformation programme. It should be noted that to deliver the aims of this strategy and the Citizen and Customer Contact programme the ICT strategy and Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy will need to be aligned with these aims.
4. This strategy notes the trends in the management of Customer Contact which have emerged in recent years, including the ubiquity of technology, the rapid shift to digital delivery and self-service, the adoption of multi-channel engagement with citizens, better use of data analytics to predict and manage demand, risk-based security to enable customers to manage their own data, and the beginnings of 'intelligent agents' and 'smart machines', which may one day replace some local government staff through the automation of their roles.
5. The main focus of delivery of the strategy is the shift to digital, which will have a major impact on the Council's contact with citizens. Digital channels hold great promise in providing an improved customer journey, while reducing Council costs. Self-service and self-reliance are important themes for how we work with citizens in the borough, in this increasingly digital world. It is imperative that end-to-end processes, and indeed desired outcomes, are examined and thought through, re-designing them as appropriate. We must avoid simply creating digital versions of processes that were optimised for the paper, post and telephone era.
6. Current customer service provision is examined in some detail, and a range of specific improvements proposed, to enhance the customer experience and to support the transformation agenda. As with the national digital guidance, the first rule of design will be 'start with user needs.' Traditional silos will be broken down, and newly designed processes implemented, focusing on the 'value' to the customer, enabling self-service and removing, or automating, administrative steps, wherever possible.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Bracknell Forest Council has taken a strategic, corporate approach to the management of customer contact since September 2003, with a focus on improving the quality of service delivered. Given the current financial challenges facing the public sector, this focus now needs to shift to the management of demand for service and the costs of customer contact, whilst still maintaining the standards needed by residents.
- 1.2. The overarching aim of the Customer Contact Strategy is to ensure the quality of customer service provided by the whole organisation to the borough's residents and service users is of a consistently high standard, and is delivered in the most cost-effective and efficient way.
- 1.3. This Strategy outlines the direction of travel for taking customer service delivery forward by building on achievements to date, managing inbound customer contact, and making use of proactive outbound communication to improve delivery of , and better manage demand for, services. The Strategy details how the Council will take advantage of existing and emerging technologies to provide high quality service in the most cost efficient manner possible.

The current context for the borough

- 1.4. Bracknell Forest is a good place to live with a mainly affluent, well-educated and independent population. The borough lies 28 miles west of London, at the heart of the Thames Valley and within the county of Berkshire. Between 1991 and 2001, the population grew twice as fast as the average for South East England (14% compared to 7%). The population growth rate has slowed considerably since 2001 from 14% to 3%. The 2015 population estimate is 118,982. The 2015 analysis shows the population in Bracknell Forest:
 - increased by 957 (0.8%) from 2014 to 2015
 - increased by 1,458 (1.25%) from 2013 to 2014
 - is relatively young, with a median age of 38.5 years
 - is split 49.5% male to 50.5% female
 - has a population density of 10.7 persons per hectare
 - experienced net migration of 216 people between 2014 and 2015

Emerging Issues

- 1.5. The development of this strategy needs to take into account a number of emerging issues, locally, nationally and internationally, which may impact on customer demand over the next three years, and also on the Council's ability to meet that demand:
 - Local development means an increase in households of approximately 20% over coming years. This is likely to mean an increase in customer demand over the same period
 - Political uncertainty could impact the national, and local economy
 - A number of businesses have their European headquarters in Bracknell Forest. This could change following the outcome of the EU referendum.
 - Increases in the population of 0-18 year olds as a result of development leading to, for example, 6 new or significantly expanded schools and greater demand for related services
 - It is likely we could see an increase in schools becoming academies
 - Review and development of services provided by the Council may result in different types of customer demand.
 - Decisions to change how services are managed, or by whom, could result in some customer contact handled by other organisations.

- The Bracknell Forest population is digitally very able, and demand for digital services and communications exceeds what the Council currently provides.

Recent trends in customer access and service delivery

1.6. Since the publication of the previous Customer Contact Strategy in 2011, some considerable advances have been made, both in terms of the technology available to service providers to enable the development of more streamlined, efficient service delivery, and to customers, making access to digital, online and self-services ever more intuitive and straightforward:

- Smartphones – these are now ubiquitous, with nearly everyone carrying one in their handbag or pocket
- Tablets – these have become the ‘go-to’ means of accessing the internet. More than 50% of the citizens accessing the council’s website are now doing so using a mobile device
- Apps – banking, health management, etc. These have really helped to build people’s trust in internet based services, with their ease of use, reliability and high levels of security
- Supermarket self-checkouts – more and more of us have got used to doing things for ourselves that had previously been done for us. This helps to build our independence and self-reliance, and reduces the demand we place on service providers
- Online appointment booking – this works well for GPs, dentists and other public services
- GPs self-check-in – customers often prefer this option, as it removes the need to share personal information in a public place, and means that the professional you are seeing knows you have arrived.
- SMS reminders of appointments – this has significantly reduced costs for GPs, hospitals and dentists, as far fewer appointments are missed. And customers really appreciate the reminders arriving in a medium that they access all the time

1.7. In recent years, some key trends have emerged in delivering government customer service, at local, national and international levels. These trends are reflected in the approach Bracknell Forest Council is taking to developing its Customer Contact Strategy:

- Authorities are increasing their focus on digital business strategies to improve the overall customer experience
- Mobile is accelerating as a way to deliver service anytime, anywhere
- Social media continues to deliver information and services effectively, especially to specific populations and demographics
- Collection and measurement of key performance and customer satisfaction data is improving
- Contact centres continue to be an important channel, although becoming more Customer Engagement Centres, delivering across multiple, integrated channels, and moving more to assisted digital and encouraging self-reliance
- Channels are being aligned, to deliver the same answers / outcomes for customers via email, phone, web-chat, website, face to face
- Many authorities now have a ‘Customer Office’ reporting direct to the CEO
- Customer feedback measures experience and satisfaction with the whole customer journey, not just the customer contact
- ‘CRM Lite’ solutions are enabling authorities to make better connections with citizens
- Personas and customer journey mapping are helping authorities identify and address the ‘trouble spots’ in their services and workflows
- ‘Big data’ is being used to understand customer demand, and help design ways to better manage it

- Employees are being recognised and rewarded for delivering great customer experience to the public

2. Principal Aims of the Strategy

- 2.1. The current Council Plan states that we will focus resources on identifying and supporting those in greatest need to be able to maximise their opportunities to become independent. The Council will work with partners to provide joined-up support for those who rely most on public services. We will significantly reduce the overall cost of serving our communities and citizens by reducing the demand for services. The Borough's neighbourhoods and businesses will work together to enable people to provide more mutual support. More volunteers will do their bit for their communities. If they do need the Council's help, most people will prefer to use the Council's online information and services. When they really do need to talk to someone, the Council will deal with their requests efficiently. Income-generating services will be marketed well, delivered effectively and payments handled efficiently.
- 2.2. The Council will provide leadership and work with others to keep the Borough a place where all residents can thrive and benefit from effective core services. What we do ourselves we aim to do well, but we must prioritise and target our services to live within our means. In targeting our services, we will prioritise people and areas with the greatest need, early help and prevention so struggling or vulnerable people can maximise their opportunities to become independent.

Council Plan: Strategic Themes



2.3. The future approach to managing customer contact will reflect the aspirations of the Council Plan, and be responsive to the needs of the Bracknell Forest population. It should be noted that this strategy has been prepared in a period of significant change for the Council, driven by financial constraints and managed through a Council-wide Transformation Programme. Key decisions about the level of services the Council will deliver in future will need to drive how customer contact should be managed. This strategy therefore provides principles on the management of customer contact, but detailed developments will be delivered through the Transformation Programme.

2.4. The principal aims of the Customer Contact Strategy are maintaining levels of quality and customer satisfaction whilst achieving a substantial reduction in the cost of customer service provision, by:

- Maximising the efficiency and integration of all access channels.
- Moving to digital channels wherever possible.
- Identifying those in greatest need to target with joined-up services.
- Identifying and promoting opportunities for citizen self-reliance.
- Identifying the most cost-effective models of delivery.
- Managing the demand for services, by changing customers' behaviour.

- 2.5. The Council is currently undergoing a major transformation, both to respond to substantial cuts in funding causing the need for substantial savings, and also to be fit for the future and best placed to meet its aims, in changing and austere times. A Transformation Board was established in October 2015 to develop and deliver the programme, to fulfil the Council Plan's commitments to review the focus and delivery of all services over the following three years by which time savings of £25m are required. Those services representing major areas of expenditure are being reviewed in detail, to make them fit for the future. It is especially important that the ICT strategy aligns with, and fully supports both the Council-Wide Support Services review, and the Citizen and Customer Contact Programme, which form part of the larger agenda, along with the initiatives described below.
- 2.6. A fundamental part of the Transformation Programme will be a change in the organisational culture, which can be summarised as:
- Empowering managers and communities to be more self-reliant
 - Closer working with voluntary sector, partners, and communities
 - Blending a more commercial outlook combined with public sector ethos
 - Maximising the use of digital and automation
 - Joined-up and whole systems thinking
 - Managing risk and greater tolerance of risk
 - Breaking down silos and sharing information
 - Consolidating and removing duplication
 - Redesign of structures to reflect needs of a reducing organisation
 - Smarter use of buildings e.g. libraries
 - Invest in self-service technologies
 - Invest in volunteering
- 2.7. It is vital that this strategy links closely with the Communications and Marketing Strategy and its successful delivery is dependent on correlation with both the Corporate ICT Strategy and the Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy.

The Needs and Assets of the Borough

- 2.8. During the "analyse phase" of the Council's Transformation Programme we undertook some detailed research and analysis to better understand the needs of the borough's population, and the assets available both through the Council, and the wider borough, to meet those needs. This analysis provided the following information:
- The borough's population is largely online and highly digitally enabled.
 - There is a small proportion of the population that is not online (mainly older people), but evidence that the vast majority of them want to get online.
 - The population of the borough is growing and demand for services is therefore also growing, particularly for adult social care.
 - However within the Council we have a very fragmented approach to managing customer contact, and there are multiple contact points, which can be confusing for customers, and this is not the most cost-effective means of managing customer contact.
 - There is considerable duplication of contact and effort, both within the organisation and across different agencies, and particularly for complex cases, some of this effort undermines efforts elsewhere.
 - Council staff provide good customer care, and are often willing to go the extra mile – sometimes too willing, resulting in the Council delivering more than customers need, and potentially creating dependencies, and raising customer expectations of a level of

service beyond that which is needed. We need to shift the culture to one focused on helping people become more independent and self-reliant.

- There are some good examples of large scale use of volunteering but the use and management of volunteers across the organisation is fragmented and inconsistent.
- We can draw better upon a vibrant and diverse voluntary sector, as well as partners, including parish and town councils and the business sector.

2.9. The Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) analysis shows that take up of the Council's website is very high, with more than 50 web visits per household in the year to July 2015. The borough has the lowest rating for likelihood of digital exclusion (Doteveryone Digital Exclusion Heatmap). According to the Residents' Survey in 2014, 94% of residents have access to broadband at home, and recent tests show the average download speed in the borough is 38.1mbps. Given the digitally able population, and the widespread access to the internet in the borough, the Council is well placed to move to a delivery channel model making more use of digital channels (see model on Page ?)

3. Where are we starting from?

3.1. The delivery of previous strategies has ensured that we have made significant progress on the journey to delivering a federated digital model:

- The Council's website has been redeveloped, with a clear focus on simplifying customer journeys, and providing speedy and efficient transactions. This is currently in the beta phase of testing.
- The Council has an effective mobile version of the current website, and the new website has been developed to be mobile responsive.
- The Council has moved to a "CRM lite" solution, with an online customer account. To date, more than 16,000 customers have signed up for an account.
- The CRM system is based on our online forms package, and is completely responsive to mobile
- We have implemented automated telephony for the management of "switchboard" type calls, and have an automated telephone payment line
- Online bookings are available for a number of services, including bulky waste collections and Community Learning courses
- Secure online payments and telephone payments are enabled

Whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do, e.g.:

- The current operating model in the Council is very fragmented, and therefore relatively expensive, compared with other local authorities.
- There are several, independently operated telephone contact centres, handling customer contacts with varying degrees of success. Some of these contact centres have high rates of unanswered calls, and limited performance reporting or analysis.
- Better use of the technology already in place would enable improved resource planning, routing of contacts, performance monitoring and management, and would facilitate 'load sharing' when demand in one area is higher than others.
- Feedback from customers through the Residents' Survey tells us that we are failing to meet their expectations, based on their experiences elsewhere, and their propensity to use digital channels.
- The Council has not yet trialled some channels routinely used by other councils, such as web-chat and SMS. These technologies are relatively inexpensive to implement, and could significantly extend the range of digital channels available to customers.
- Some councils have all bookable services available online – we need to investigate possible solutions that could meet all our booking requirements.

- End to end processes need to be reviewed, to reduce manual input and double-handling. Whole customer journeys need to be redesigned, to ensure we focus on the activities that add value to the customer.
- More automation of processes, using workflow in the CRM and telephony system will enable more services to be delivered digitally.

4. Objectives for the customer

- 4.1. Customers will choose which method they prefer for contacting the Council. Their preferred method of contact will vary, depending on both the profile of the customer and the type of enquiry. However, customers have told us in the residents' survey that they have an appetite to do more online than we currently provide. It is important, therefore, to design services, including the methods of contact, around the needs of the customer, and to facilitate the easiest possible digital journey, to ensure we can maximise the use of digital channels.
- 4.2. The main reasons for customers contacting the Council can be seen in the research findings in Appendix D.
- 4.3. The benefits for the customer of developing more digital access to services include:
- Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
 - They can choose when and where to access services
 - Customers can use the device they are familiar with to access services
 - The experience is familiar - similar to experiences they have with other organisations
 - Increasing digital (and therefore cheaper) access for the majority of customers allows us to reallocate resources to customers with higher levels of need, and to create better, more joined-up services for them.
- 4.4. All customer contact can broadly be categorised in one of two ways, which have distinct characteristics:

| Transactional customer contact | Relationship-based customer contact |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High volume • Low complexity • Rules based/standardised process • Target areas for automated self-service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower volume • Higher complexity • Can be more discretionary • Some aspects likely to work via self-service (e.g. online self-assessment, pre-population of application forms), but likely also to require specialist intervention |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to be a one-off transaction (e.g. report it, apply for it, pay for it) • Signposting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need co-ordinated input from multiple services (e.g. ASC, Housing, Benefits) |

High volume transactional contacts: Main reasons:

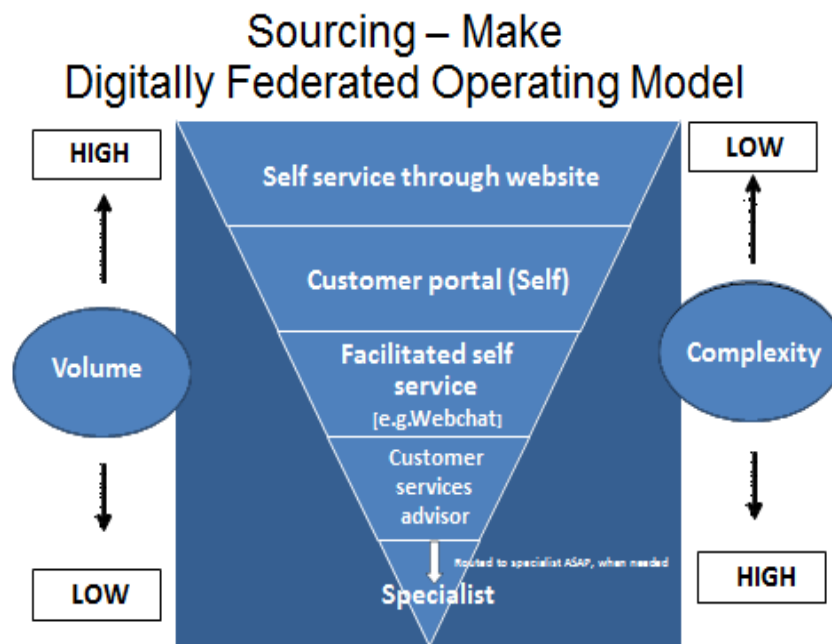
- Apply for something, e.g. e+ card, or free school meals
- Report something, e.g. a faulty street light, or graffiti

- Pay for something, e.g. council tax, or brown bin collection charge
- Book something, e.g. a course at the Open Learning Centre, or an appointment with a Registrar
- Ask for information, e.g. what's on in my neighbourhood, or when is my bin due to be emptied?
- Provide information, e.g. documents to support a planning application
- Notify a change of circumstances, e.g. moving house, or changing a name

4.5. All these activities lend themselves to being carried out online, through self-service. The operating model we will pursue to achieve delivery through the most appropriate channels is as follows:

5. Delivery of the Strategy

Digitally Federated Channel Model



What this model of delivery means for customers:

- The future model for customer service looks very different from today's
- The vast majority of customers will have a self-service account and use online services
- Where customers have difficulties using the web, we will provide assistance, with a view to moving them to self-service digital channels
- This model envisages a significant reduction in telephone contact
- Technology will be used to route calls to the most appropriate person or department
- Where a customer needs to speak with a specialist, they will be routed to the right person or department as quickly as possible

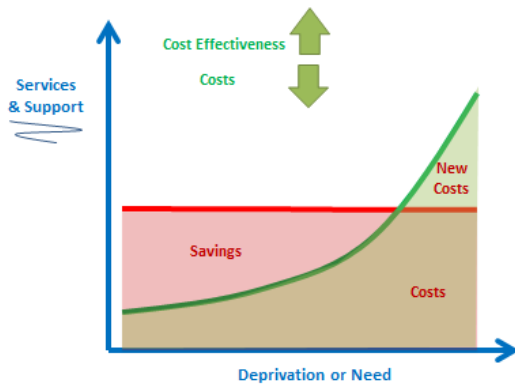
- 5.1. To ensure we can continue to deliver the objectives of our customers, we will continue to provide a range of contact channels which reflects the profile of our customer base, and recognises customer preference. However, we will encourage customers to use the cheapest channels, both by changing our communications with them and by reducing the ease of using more expensive channels for services that can, and should, be accessed online.
- 5.2. We will provide services digitally so that customers can, wherever possible, carry out their business with the Council at a time and in a manner convenient to them. Where investment would support channel shift to online and digital services, we will facilitate this.
- 5.3. We will promote digital inclusion so that customers are encouraged, where appropriate, to make maximum use of online services.
- 5.4. We will engage in proactive outbound communication to provide information, promote services, maximise income and reduce the number of inbound enquiries. We will make use of appropriate technologies to enable customers to subscribe to digital communications, to enable us to reduce the use of paper communications, and to ensure customers receive the communications that are relevant to them.
- 5.5. We will review all existing and technologies used by the Council in customer service delivery, to ensure we are getting maximum value from our investments, and to identify opportunities for rationalisation.
- 5.6. We will review structures, to ensure customer contact is managed in the most cost-effective and consistent way that meets the needs of customers. All functions dealing with external customers will be in scope, and in the early stages of the review will include:
 - Customer services
 - Digital Services
 - Registration service
 - Communications
 - Forestcare
 - CSC duty desk (MASH)
 - School admissions.
 - e+ card,
 - Complaints
 - Post
 - Revenues Service
 - Welfare and housing service
 - Community Engagement
 - Adult Social Care first point of contact
 - Family Information Service
 - Parks and countryside,
 - Planning
 - Freedom Of Information requests
 - Contractor interfaces, e.g., car parking
- 5.7. We will make optimum use of council, and partners', sites and buildings from which to deliver services to customers, providing customers with access to technology and appropriate support to enable them to access our digital services.
- 5.8. We will review performance standards and reporting, to ensure we are measuring the impact on customers through all our contact points and channels, and to improve the customer experience, wherever possible.
- 5.9. We will seek opportunities to work with partners to join up service delivery, particularly in delivering to those customers who are most vulnerable, or who have the most complex needs. For these customers we will take a 'whole system' approach to how we design their services, ensuring that we break down silos and reduce unnecessary repeating of information provision or decisions in one area resulting in failures in another.
- 5.10. We will make efficiency savings and reduce the cost of the delivery of customer-facing services across the Council by :
 - reacting to the changing shape of the organisation, and shaping customer contact around this,

- improving efficiency by delivering more for customers at the first point of contact, and removing low value contacts,
- configuring resources around the customer, particularly those who are most vulnerable, or who have the most complex needs,
- reducing “avoidable contacts” and removing waste and duplication in customer-related processes
- moving enquiries to lower cost contact channels, using digital, self-service channels wherever possible
- generating income from chargeable services, and collecting income in the most cost-effective ways, removing, or at least reducing, the use of expensive transactions using cash and cheques.

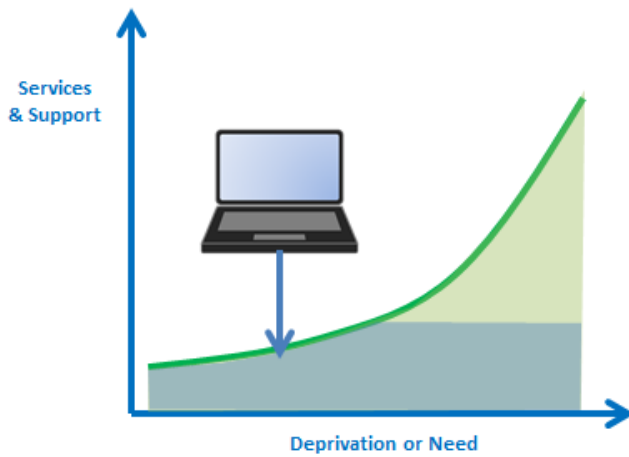
5.11. We will develop and implement an action plan which delivers this strategy, through the outcomes of the Citizen & Customer Contact Transformation Programme.

The cost of service delivery is reduced, if it can be delivered digitally. Those customers with the lowest levels of deprivation or need tend to have the lowest levels of need for services and support. These customers will be able to access most, if not all, of the services they use, digitally. For those customers with higher levels of need and deprivation, they will still be able to access some services digitally (or will be assisted to do so) but as the support and services they need become more complex, they will need more personal interaction. In this way, we can keep costs down for more straightforward services, and redirect money to those with higher needs.

Targeted Investment



Targeted Investment



6. Governance arrangements

- 6.1. Overall governance and monitoring of the Strategy and its action plan will be provided by the Citizen & Customer Contact Transformation Programme Team, chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. Representatives from each directorate will be required to sit on the Group. Corporate Services will be represented by the Chief Officer: Customer Services, the Customer Services Manager, the Digital Services Manager and the Chief Officer: Information Services.
- 6.2. Critical to the strategy is the monitoring of customer feedback. Customer satisfaction surveys will continue to be used in order to assess the impact of changes to customer service delivery. These will be rolled out across all channels, and to all services where there is customer contact. All services will work to the same standards for customer contact, including customer satisfaction and other measures.
- 6.3. The Chief Officer: Customer Services will have overall responsibility for the customer experience across all channels and across all services, and will have the authority to make changes to how customer contact is dealt with, when required.

7. Training

- 7.1. Delivery of the strategy will be dependent on the capabilities of our employees.
- 7.2. In order that a high level of customer service and effective demand management can be provided across all contact channels, all staff handling customer enquiries across the Council will be trained appropriately in contact and demand management, digital knowledge, “soft skills” such as how to support customers in accessing digital services, and the ICT systems used for contact management, enquiry recording and information provision. Refresher training will take place at regular intervals to ensure that knowledge is maintained and kept up to date.
- 7.3. Customer Services staff in particular are cross-trained so that they are able to respond to enquiries made by telephone, in person, by e-mail or by any of the range of developing channels, including web-chat and social media, and can provide assistance with self-service.
- 7.4. ICT Services staff will be fully trained in the range of systems used, in order that support can be provided to all service areas, and to ensure maximum value is obtained from all systems procured.
- 7.5. ICT Services staff will be expected to keep up to date with existing and emerging technologies in order that their advice and support may provides all service areas with an awareness of the opportunities available for customer service delivery, and improve the quality of business intelligence data collection to improve future strategy
- 7.6. Staff across the whole organisation will be given opportunities to improve their knowledge of digital technologies and digital skills, to ensure that they can get optimum benefit from the ICT systems in use, and can support customers in making the transition to more digital service access. This will be delivered through the Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy.
- 7.7. Customers will be encouraged to move to digital service access, and we will work with partners to support those who are digitally excluded to develop the skills and knowledge they will need to make the transition.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Strategy will build on the progress made in developing how we deliver customer services across the Council over the period of the previous strategies, whilst responding to the financial pressures facing the Council. The high use of the Council’s website by residents, and the high propensity of residents to access services online, provides a platform for channel shift to move more customer services to using more digital services, and in the process reduce costs. The action plan, which will continue to be developed through the remainder of the Transformation Programme, will be key to the successful delivery of this strategy for the period 2017 - 20.

9. Customer Contact Strategy - Action Plan 2017-2020

Assisted Digital / Accessibility

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|--|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Develop Easy-Read and other accessible versions of key website content | December 2017 | Head of Digital Services | |
| Remodel Time Square reception to facilitate digital access, and provide assisted digital support | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |

Channel Development

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Extend the use of the e+ card to support digital access to services | March 2018 | E+ Programme Manager | |
| Implement web-chat for Customer Services | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Develop plan for wider implementation of web-chat | March 2018 | Head of Customer Services | |

| | | | |
|---|------------|---------------------------|--|
| Investigate use of SMS for appropriate services, and develop business case for implementation, as appropriate | March 2018 | Head of Customer Services | |
|---|------------|---------------------------|--|

Citizen Engagement

| Action | By When? | By Whom? | Additional information |
|--|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Change messages about services to ensure that digital access is encouraged | June 2017 | Head of Communications & Marketing | |
| Change the tone of communications to show a shift in expectation to self-reliance and independence | June 2017 | Consultant in Public Health | |
| Implement subscription-based digital communications system | September 2017 | TBC | |

Customer Insight

| Action | By When? | By Whom? | Additional information |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| Develop data analysis and customer insight tools | September 2017 | Head of Performance | There are opportunities to share Mosaic data with Bracknell Forest Homes. |
| Develop reporting from CRM and other customer contact systems, to analyse demand | September 2017 | Head of Performance | |

Customer Online Account

| Action | By When? | By Whom? | Additional information |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Link Council Tax account to online account | June 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Identify other accounts to be linked, and develop plan for integrations | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |

Digital Strategy

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|----------------|--|------------------------|
| Continue redevelopment of public website, adding in new functionality | December 2018 | Head of Digital Services | |
| Trial online booking system to deliver a proof of concept | September 2017 | Head of Digital Services / Head of Customer Services | |
| Develop business case for roll-out of digital bookings for other services | December 2017 | Head of Digital Services / Head of Customer Services | |

| | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|--|
| Engage with the development of central government platforms for services, and implement them at BFC, when appropriate, e.g. Gov.Pay, Gov.Verify | December 2018 | Head of Digital Services | |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|--|

Digital Inclusion

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Work with partners to improve the digital skills of customers who are not digitally confident | March 2019 | CO: CS / Head of Customer Services | |
| Improve access to digital technologies at Time Square, and provide support | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |

Email

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Remove email addresses from website and publications | December 2017 | Head of Digital Services | |
| Develop structured contact forms for website, to ensure emails are categorised and routed effectively | December 2017 | Head of Digital Services | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--|
| Investigate email automation systems | June 2018 | Head of Digital Services | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--|

Face to Face

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|--|----------------|---------------------------|--|
| Remodel Time Square activities to promote self-service and provide access to assisted digital, as required | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Work with the voluntary sector to provide more support to customers wanting to access services | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | This work needs to tap into already existing resources providing digital inclusion opportunities |
| Work with the voluntary sector to support channel shift at Time Square | September 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Develop appointment-based operating model, and create self-service digital journey | March 2018 | Head of Customer Services | |

High Needs Customers

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|--|----------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Develop joined up, 'whole system' approach | September 2017 | CO: Housing | |

| | | | |
|--|------------|------------------------------|--|
| to supporting households in most need | | | |
| Work with the voluntary sector to identify or develop support for high needs customers | March 2019 | Head of Community Engagement | |

New Media

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|--|---------------|---|------------------------|
| Develop and implement model for Customer Services staff to respond to social media interactions | June 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Investigate social media management systems to identify possible means of streamlining current processes | December 2017 | Head of Communications & Marketing / Head of Customer Services | |

Paper and Post

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Review current ingoing and outgoing paper post, and reconfigure | September 2017 | CO: CS | |
| Develop plan to replace paper post with digital alternatives, e.g. e-billing for Revenues, etc. | December 2017 | CO: CS / Head of Revenues | |

Payments

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Implement chip & pin payments across Council premises | September 2017 | Head of Revenues | |
| Review collection of cash and cheques, and replace with digital alternatives, wherever possible | March 2018 | Head of Revenues | |
| Review payments system and methods, with a view to de-scoping the authority for PCI: DSS purposes | September 2018 | Head of Revenues | |

Performance

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Improve data collection to measure the impact of channel shift on costs | March 2018 | Head of Performance | |
| Introduce new performance standards for all customer contact | June 2017 | CO: CS/ Head of Performance | |
| Develop new reporting model | March 2018 | Head of Performance | |

Service Redesign

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|-----------|---------|------------------------|
| Develop plan for roll-out of service redesign | June 2017 | CO: CS | |

| | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| for all services across the Council | | | |
| Focus on making services work digitally, end to end | December 2020 | CO:CS | |
| Review digital capability of existing ICT systems to ensure maximum benefit from investment | March 2018 | Digital Services Manager | This work may need to continue throughout the Service Redesign roll-out |

Staff Training and Development

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Improve the digital skills and understanding of staff | September 2018 | CO: HR | |
| Ensure all staff understand their responsibility for digital leadership | September 2018 | CO: HR | |
| Train all customer facing staff in managing customer contact effectively | December 2018 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Train all customer facing staff in delivering assisted digital and facilitating digital inclusion | December 2018 | Head of Customer Services | |

Telephony

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|--|----------------|---------|------------------------|
| Review current contact model and implement digitally federated model | September 2017 | CO: CS | |

| | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|--|
| Review current implementation of ACD system and reconfigure to maximise the benefit from the system | December 2017 | CO: CS | |
| Implement Queue-buster technology | June 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Review use of voicemail and other telephony standards | March 2018 | CO: CS | |

Volunteering and Community Engagement

| Action | By When | By Whom | Additional information |
|--|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Identify roles in citizen & customer contact where volunteers could support delivery | December 2017 | Head of Customer Services | |
| Develop volunteering strategy and plan | March 2018 | Head of Community Engagement | |
| Recruit and train suitable volunteers | March 2018 | Head of Customer Services | |

Appendix A – Customer insight – what we know about our customers

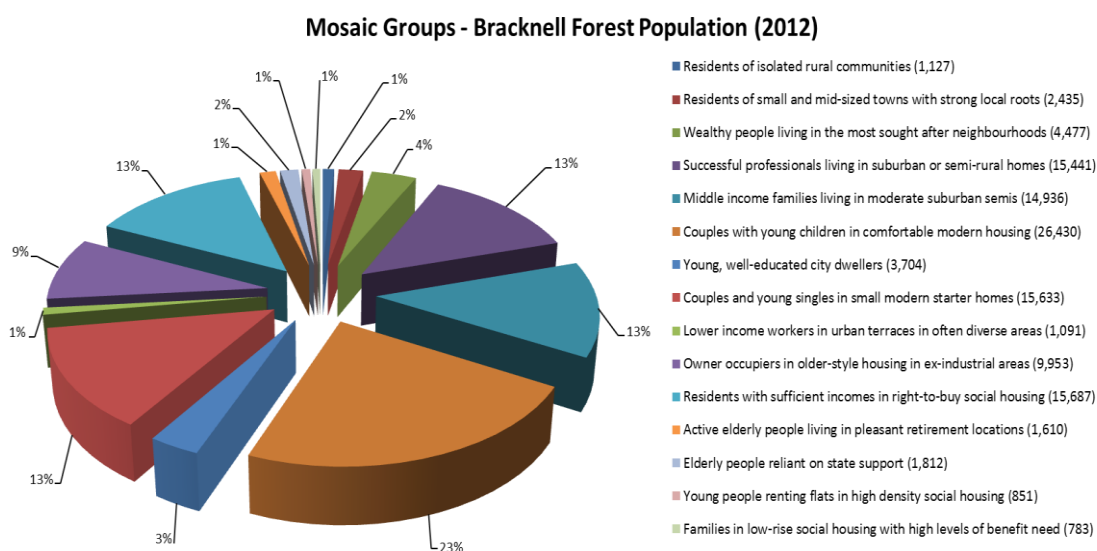
As part of our efforts to better understand the population of the borough, and how likely they are to be able to make use of digital services, we undertook some analysis of the data provided by Mosaic, which enables quite detailed segmentation of the local population.

Some of the high level findings are:

- Very low Income Deprivation compared with mean level for England;
 - Low levels of both children and old people living in poverty;
 - High levels of home ownership;
 - Higher levels of life expectancy than the rest of England;
 - Lower levels of self-rated ill-health; and so on.
- All the above indicate lower levels of need and vulnerability than faced by many other local authorities, and likely correspondingly lower levels of demand for council services such as Benefits and Social Care
 - It is predicted the population will rise to 134,000 in 2030, indicating that Bracknell Forest, like the vast majority of councils, will need to cope with a growing and changing potential customer base as the number of both children and older people grow

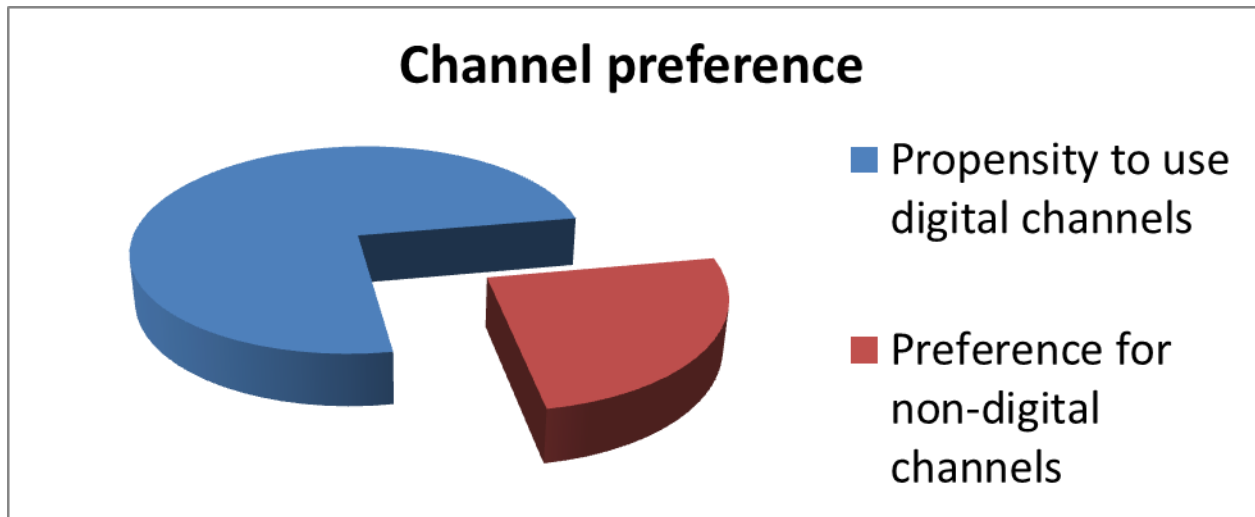
Five customer types make up around 75% of the Bracknell Forest population:

- Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing.
 - Residents with sufficient incomes in right-to-buy social housing.
 - Couples and young singles in small modern starter homes.
 - Successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes.
 - Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis.
- There is significant under-representation of types associated with the preference/need for non-digital channels.
 - At least 75% of the population should be able to go digital allowing us to concentrate our resources on the other 25%.

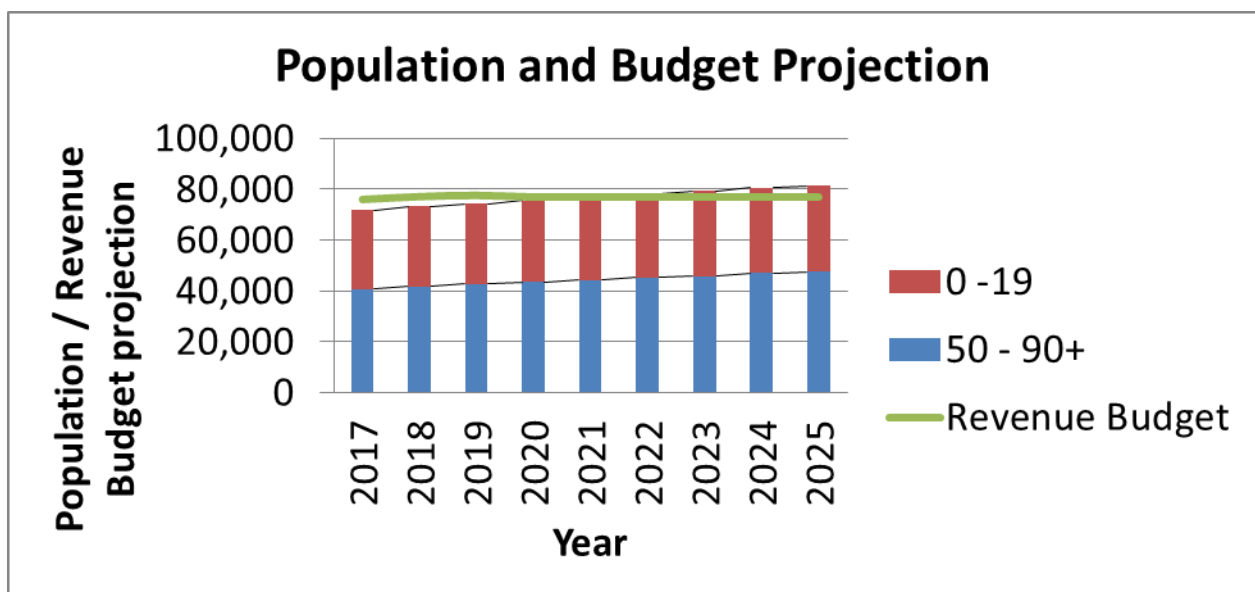


Channel Preference

- The Residents' survey 2014 suggests there is a much greater opportunity to use online and social media for communications with citizens.
- While 'online' was only the fourth most common mechanism for accessing information, it was the second most **preferred** method of accessing information ... accessing information 'online' was preferred over local media such as 'local newspapers / radio'.



Given the projected increase in the numbers of older people and children over the next few years, and the higher levels of demand these groups place on public services, it is anticipated that without changes in how we work, the demand for services will far outstrip the available budget.



Based on the national picture, Council budgets are reducing as the population and consequent demand for Children's and Adults' social care services increase.

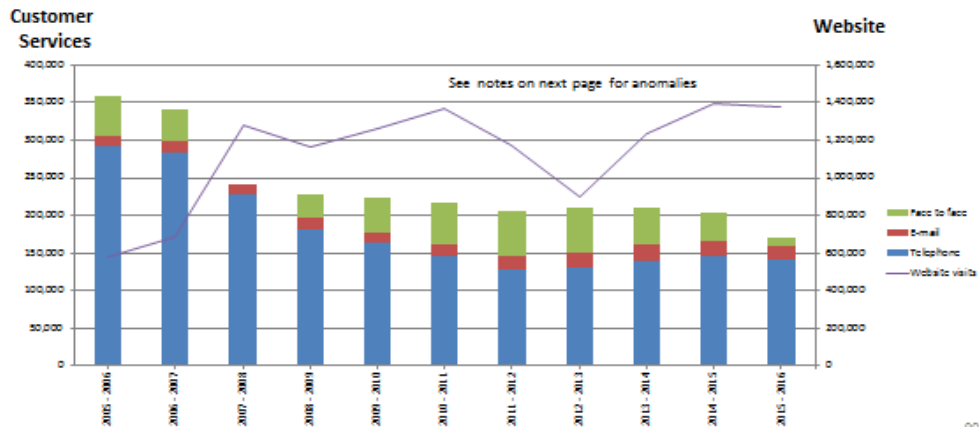
Appendix B – How customers contact us currently

The Council's face to face presence has been reduced in the town centre to one office, although there are many other physical locations across the Borough, where customers can access services. In addition, public and voluntary sector partners are offering locations for face to face contact. This presents an opportunity to share locations, thereby reducing costs to all organisations involved. We have not taken advantage of technological advances in the management of face to face contact, and there are opportunities to shift many of these interactions to digital channels.

The borough's physical contact points:


| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Children's centres | 4 |
| BFC offices | 2 |
| Drug & Alcohol Team | 1 |
| Leisure sites | 6 |
| Libraries | 9 |
| Youth centres | 4 |
| Schools (incl Academies) | 39 |
| Cemetery & Crematorium | 1 |
| Parking office | 1 |
| Open Learning Centre | 1 |
| Bracknell Forest Homes | 1 |
| Involve | 1 |
| Parish & Town Councils | 6 |
| Community Centres | 13 |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | 1 |
| National Offender Management Service | 1 |
| Longshot Lane (waste service) | 1 |
| Total | 92 |


Baselining – changes in contacts over time through Customer Services





90


Baselining - Changes over time - notes


- 

General trend – contacts via ‘traditional’ channels (telephone, post, face to face) are reducing, while web traffic increases
- 

The number of telephone contacts remains steady, in the context of a growing population, and increased range of services dealt with through the Corporate Contact Centre
- 

2007 – 2008 - Bracknell Forest Homes transfer
• Also issues with face to face data recording
- 

2012 – 2013 – Issues with Google Analytics code on the (then) new website meant inaccurate data for part of the year
- 

2014 – 2015 – Face to face contacts for Benefits and Housing now handled by Benefits team, rather than customer services
- 

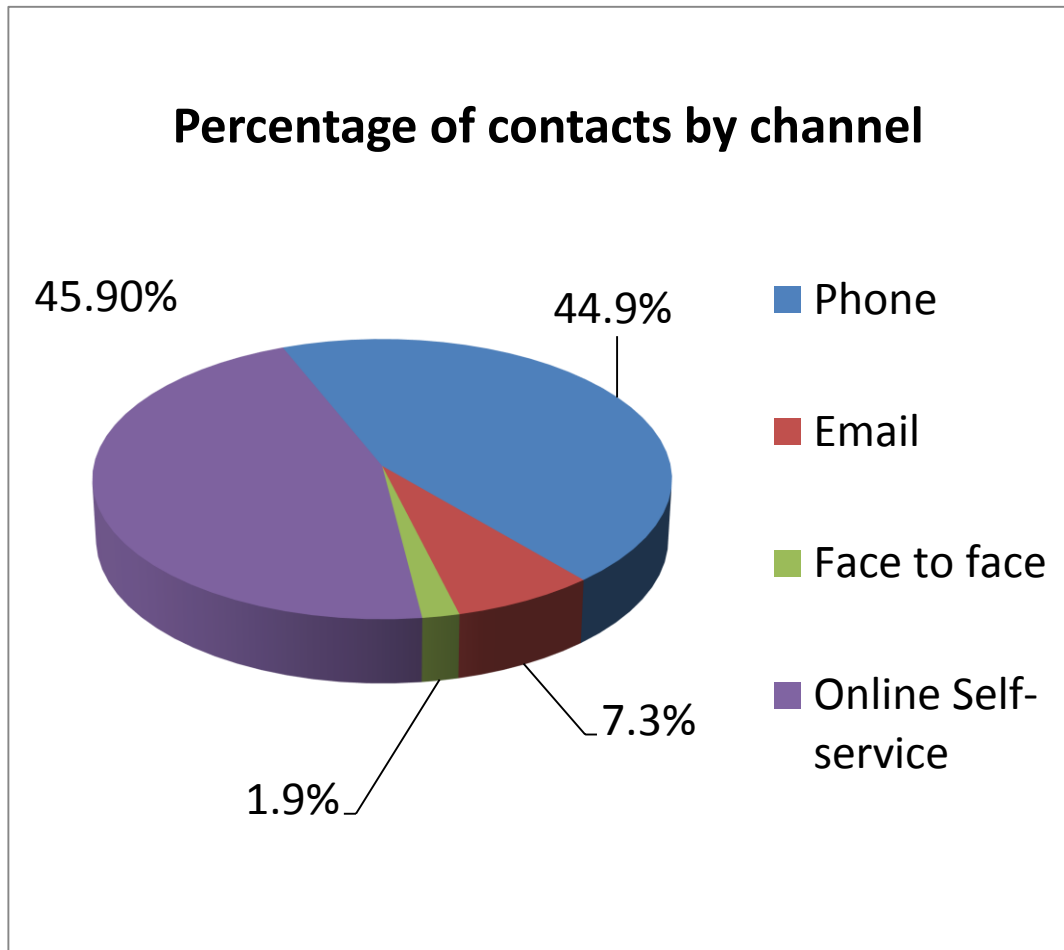
2015 – 2016 – New CRM system does not yet have all enquiries managed through it, so data, particularly for face to face, is patchy

91

Appendix C – Current customer contact experience

As part of the early stages of the Citizen and Customer Contact Transformation Programme we analysed the Council's data on customer contact, to try to better understand how this is managed, and what the experience is like for customers. Whilst the data is not comprehensive, it has given us some indication of the volume of customer contact received, and how this is currently channelled and managed.

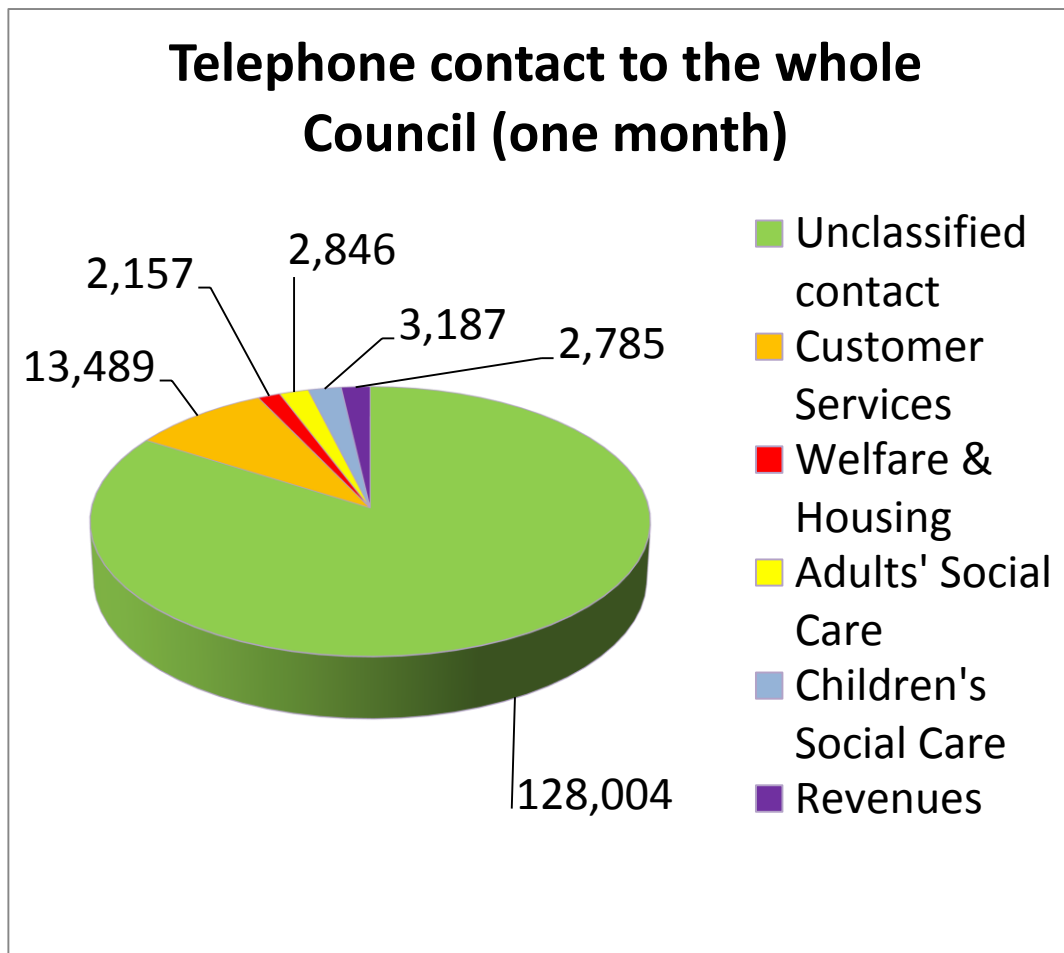
Channels for contact through Customer Services



Notes:

- Only about 20% of customer contact is channelled through Customer Services systems, and therefore able to be analysed by channel, or reason for contact. As can be seen from this data, the balance of contacts by channel has shifted to marginally more online self-service than telephone.

Telephone Contact Statistics – the whole Council



Notes:

- This data is from the Council's whole telephone system, and includes calls to external sites, such as Leisure centres
- More than 80% of telephone contact goes direct to service areas, and therefore cannot be analysed
- There is no way of knowing how these calls are handled, whether they are adding value, or what level of performance is being achieved
- In some areas, further analysis has shown that about 50% of calls are being missed, or redirected to voicemail

Top Ten hits via public website

SOCITM statistics show that the Council’s website is very widely used by local residents. Leisure services information is also accessed by large numbers of people outside the Borough. Work is underway to simplify the parts of the website that enable straightforward transactions, and to facilitate better promotional content for those commercial services who are generating income.

Baselining - top ten hits via public website

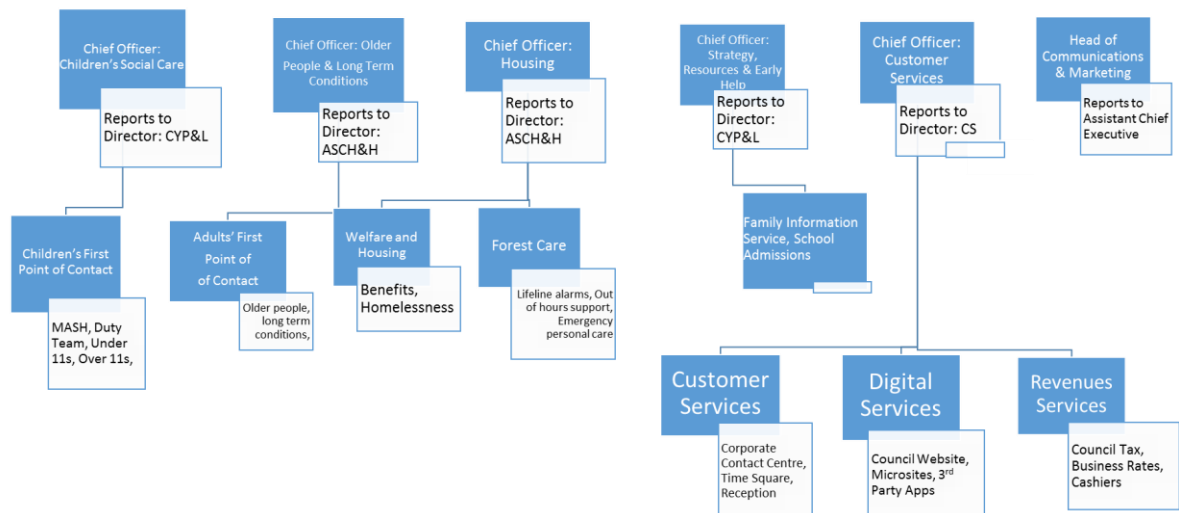
| | Page views | Visitors |
|--------------------------|------------|----------|
| Coral Reef | 1,205,864 | 803,055 |
| The Look Out | 579,535 | 387,880 |
| Bracknell Leisure Centre | 461,848 | 313,367 |
| Jobs and careers | 260,641 | 180,790 |
| Planning applications | 213,946 | 151,512 |
| Libraries | 205,844 | 136,024 |
| Waste and recycling | 194,808 | 128,085 |
| Schools | 174,869 | 102,984 |
| Public transport | 146,311 | 78,434 |
| Contact and complaints | 61,026 | 61,026 |

Period Apr 2015 - Mar 2016

71

How the management of customer contact is currently structured:

As can be seen from the following illustration, customer contact is managed in a very fragmented way across the organisation. This can mean that the standard of service received is very variable, and customers with complex needs often have to provide information to the Council repeatedly, and services for these customers are not ‘joined up,’ often resulting in sub-optimum outcomes.



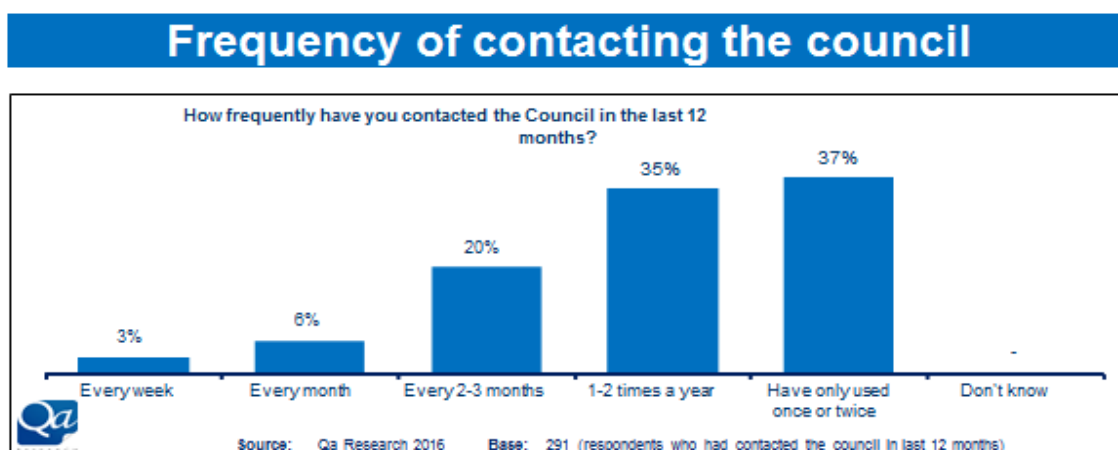
Appendix D – Objectives for the customer and customer feedback

Objectives for the Customer

We undertook some research with residents, using a statistically significant sample, to better understand:

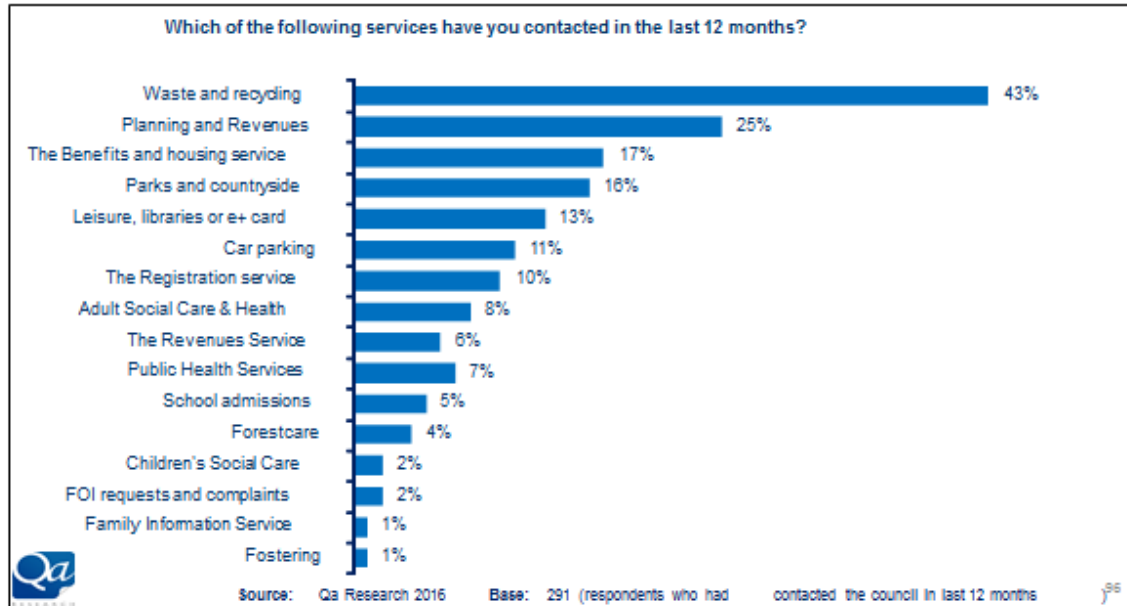
- How they contact the Council (by which channels)
- Why they contact the Council (for which services)
- How often they contact the Council
- How they rate the Council services they contacted
- How likely they are to use digital channels to contact the Council
- How they prefer to receive information about the Council and its services

The results of this research are summarised on the following pages

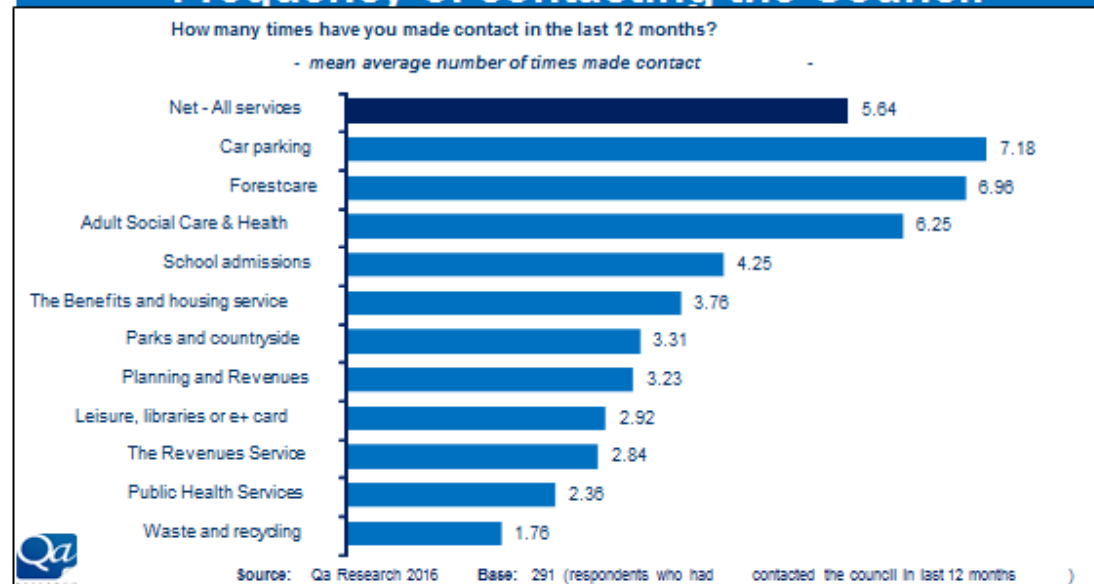


- Subgroup analysis
- Respondents aged 16-29 were significantly more likely to answer 'have only used once or twice' (65%) than those aged 30-59 (33%) and 60+ (39%).
- There were no other significant differences by demographic measures.

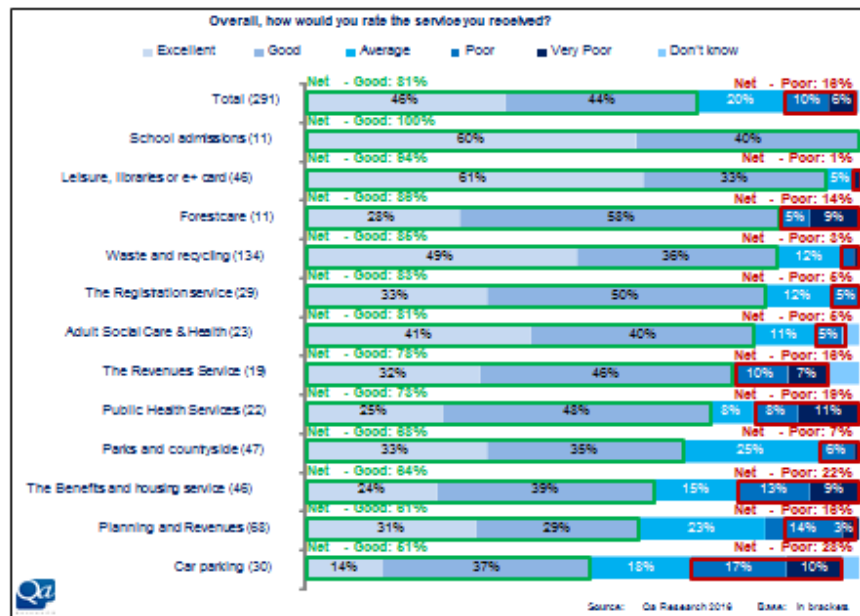
Which services were contacted



Frequency of contacting the Council



Quality of service received

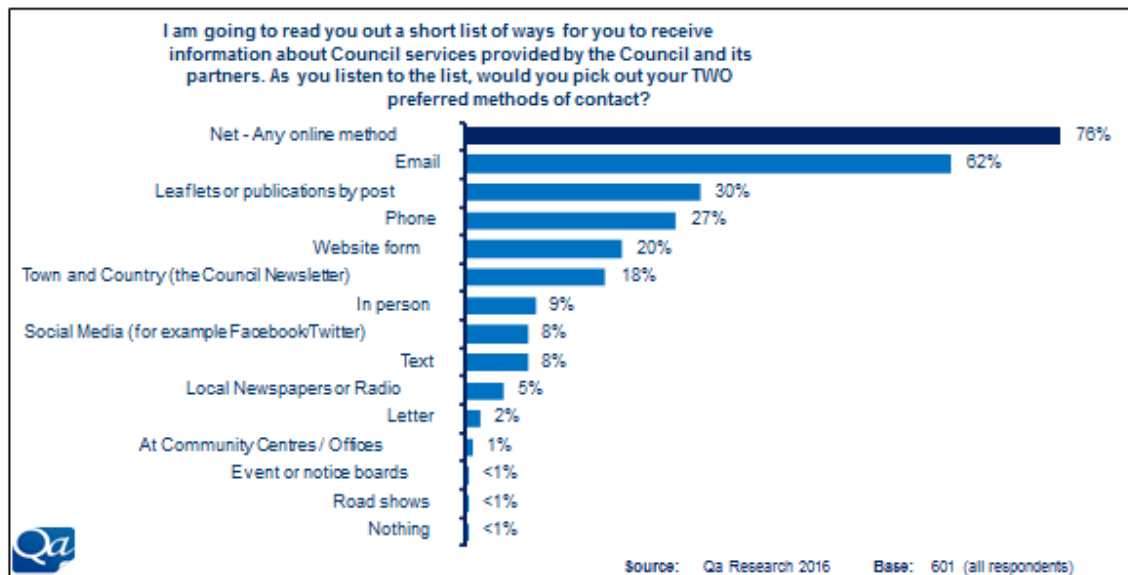


Likelihood of contacting the Council online

| If you could contact the Council about ... and you could do everything you needed to do with them online, how likely would you be to do this? | Total | The Revenues Service | The Registration service | Leisure, libraries or e-card | Parks and countryside | Waste and recycling | Planning and Revenues | The Benefits and housing service | Forestry | Adult Social Care & Health | Car parking | School admissions | Public Health Services |
|---|-------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Net - Likely | n/a | 77% | 70% | 70% | 67% | 67% | 67% | 65% | 61% | 61% | 59% | 56% | 45% |
| Net - Unlikely | n/a | 23% | 18% | 20% | 25% | 28% | 20% | 32% | 38% | 31% | 35% | 28% | 37% |
| Very likely | 52% | 41% | 52% | 30% | 48% | 53% | 55% | 44% | 17% | 20% | 42% | 41% | 36% |
| Likely | 10% | 36% | 17% | 31% | 10% | 15% | 12% | 21% | 44% | 32% | 18% | 15% | 0% |
| Neither likely nor unlikely | 6% | - | 10% | 6% | 6% | 4% | 12% | 2% | - | 6% | 0% | 11% | 15% |
| Unlikely | 17% | 15% | 7% | 14% | 13% | 17% | 12% | 16% | 0% | 16% | 12% | 18% | 23% |
| Very unlikely | 13% | 6% | 11% | 0% | 12% | 11% | 6% | 13% | 30% | 12% | 24% | 7% | 14% |
| Don't know | 1% | - | 2% | 1% | - | - | 2% | 1% | - | - | - | 7% | 3% |
| Base: | 291 | 19 | 29 | 48 | 47 | 134 | 68 | 48 | 11 | 23 | 30 | 11 | 22 |

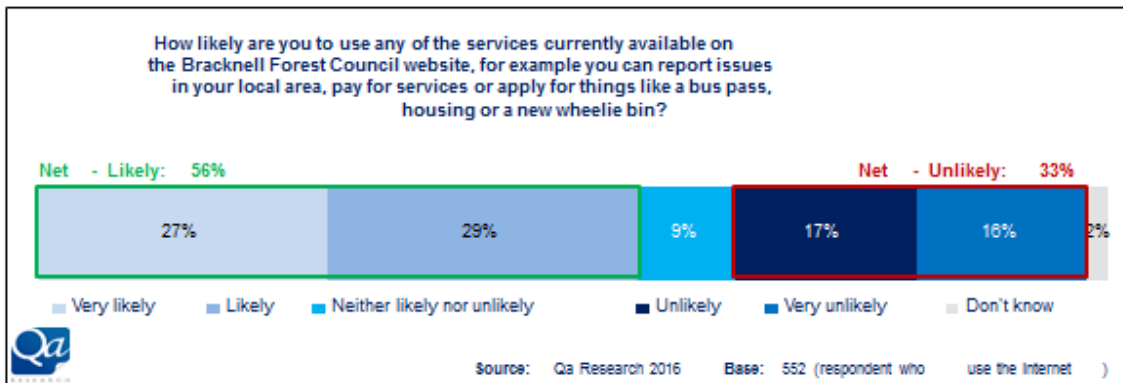
99

Preferred methods for receiving information



100

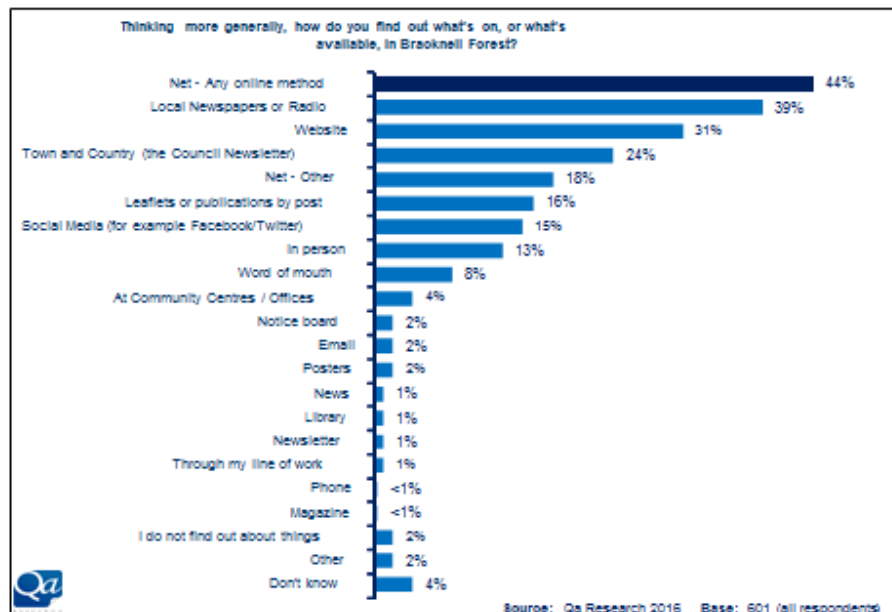
Accessing the internet



- Subgroup analysis
- Respondents aged 16-29 were significantly less likely to answer *very likely* or *likely* (37%) than those aged 30-59 (63%) or 60+ (58%)

101

Communication channels for general information



104

Conclusions from Residents' Survey

- Residents contact the Council infrequently, on an "as needed" basis
- 'Passive' contact methods are preferred when receiving information from Council and active methods preferred when wishing to make contact
- Waste and recycling was a key service for contact
- Satisfaction with services is high, although there is room for improvement
- Residents are generally likely to use on line services
- Although phone is preferred, online is the second preference
- For those who were unlikely to use online services the barrier is a lack of need, rather than a resistance to digital access

Customer Feedback

Our research shows that customers are generally quite satisfied with the Council, and how it manages the local area. There is positive sentiment about the Borough as a place to live, and about the Council's reputation.

| Resident views and satisfaction levels measured by Residents' Surveys over time: | 2009 | 2012 | 2014 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percentage of residents who feel they can influence decisions in their locality | 28% | 30% | 41% |
| Percentage of residents who participate in regular volunteering (monthly) | 21% | 28% | 20% |
| Percentage of residents satisfied with the local area as place to live | 83% | 85% | 87% |
| Like best about the borough – parks and open spaces | 61% | 58% | 42% |
| Like best about the borough – access to nature | 63% | 50% | 30% |
| Like best about the borough – sports and leisure facilities | | 23% | 16% |
| Percentage of residents who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together | 82% | 87% | 94% |
| Percentage of residents who think people in the area not treating one another with respect and consideration is a problem | 30% | 14% | 13% |
| Percentage of residents who are satisfied with the way the Council runs things | 50% | 60% | 65% |
| Percentage of residents who believe the Council offers value for money | 35% | 55% | 59% |
| Percentage of residents who feel very well or fairly well informed by the Council | 39% | 64% | 64% |

Complaints Experience

- The Council has a very low level of complaints, compared with other authorities
- Most customer dissatisfaction is resolved at first point of contact
- Very few complaints go to the final stage and are dealt with by the Chief Executive
- A very small number of complaints go to the Local Government Ombudsman (in 2014-15, just 18 complaints)
- Only 6 of these resulted in detailed investigation by the LGO
- Of the 6, only 1 was upheld by the LGO

Appendix E – Digital Inclusion in the borough

As part of the analysis for the Transformation Programme for Citizen and Customer Contact we analysed the results of some research undertaken by Age Concern into Digital Exclusion among Older People in the Borough.

Preliminary research findings indicate that:

- 35% of older people were offline, but wanted to be online.
- Only 11% of older people were offline and were not interested in being online.
- 26% of older people were online, but were restricted in use.
- 28% of older people were online and active users.

Some of the barriers to older people getting online included:

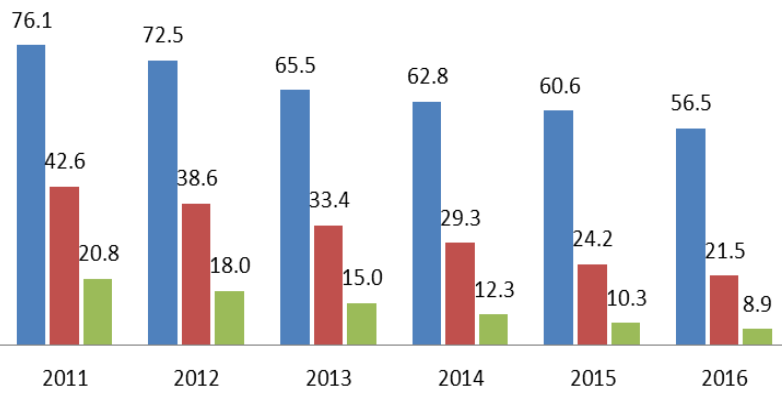
- No internet access in their own homes.
- No Wi-Fi in communal areas of care homes.
- Lack of knowledge of how to use a tablet/pc.
- Difficulty in retaining knowledge of how to use a tablet or pc.
- High costs of equipment.
- Little/no understanding of the value of the internet
- Fear of using the internet

Some ideas for addressing these barriers were:

- Informal digital tea parties
- Developing digital champions in the community - age appropriate training at various locations by digital champion peers
- Produce a 'catalogue' of the current support offer available to older people to access the Internet or be supported to do so and identify gaps
- Map of WiFi-spots in the Borough, with information about how to access them
- Produce an "App map" to determine the kinds of software & apps used by older people in order to create a directory of useful tools that can be promoted to older people to improve health and wellbeing
- Since the ONS survey began in 2011, the proportion of over 75's never having used the internet has fallen from 76% to 56.56% in 2016, representing a fall of approximately 20% whilst other older age groups have halved.
- Trends in internet usage by 75+ year olds nationally show that the numbers of who have never used the internet is falling year on year.

Decline in internet non-users, by age group, 2011-2016

■ 75+ ■ 65-74 ■ 55-64



Appendix F – Current voluntary sector activity

High level summary of the voluntary and community sector

The number of registered charities based in or offering services in Bracknell Forest is 643. Of this number:

- 366 support and work with children and young people
- 174 support and work with elderly/ old people
- 197 support and work with people with disabilities
- 38 support and work with people from a particular racial or ethnic background
- 279 support and work with the general public

NOTE: this data doesn't include all voluntary/ community groups that aren't required to register as a charity there are many small community groups in the borough run by volunteers who do not have or need charity status.

Further data analysis shows that the income and expenditure of 167 of these charities (majority being based/ have a head office in Bracknell Forest) is approx. £60 million per annum

High level summary of the public sector:

Bracknell Forest Council's public sector partners include:

- Thames Valley Police
- RBFRS
- Bracknell & Ascot CCG
- Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
- Housing Associations, Inc. Bracknell Forest Homes, TVHA and Radian
- Bracknell & Wokingham College
- Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
- Six Parish & Town Councils
- 5 other unitary authorities in Berkshire

There are further opportunities for collaboration with partners to better meet the needs of customers with high levels of need, reduce demand for services, shift to digital, increase community self reliance and resilience and in providing community information.

High level summary of the business community in the borough:

- Approx. 4400 businesses in the Bracknell Forest post code area
- 35 large corporates, approx. 400 SME's and almost 4000 micro businesses
- 177 local businesses are globally owned multi-national corporates
- According to the 2015 Bracknell Forest Skills Survey 84% of local companies do not have a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy; although the likelihood of having one increases with the size of businesses
- Within the Council's business liaison programme we have talked to 15 large corporates about their CSR strategy in the past year and supported them in setting up or increasing their CSR activities
- involve is currently engaged with over 20 of some of the largest organisations based in Bracknell Forest and is building relationships with these organisations, supporting them with to increase their Community Engagement

Bracknell Forest Council Residents Survey 2014

Rates of formal volunteering at least once a month were at 20% of the total sample, much lower than the national average reported in the Community Life Survey and lower than the 28% in 2012

Barriers to volunteering

work commitments (50%),
commitments in the home or in caring for children (28%)
commitments with other uses of spare time (30%)
never having thought of volunteering (14%),
not being aware of local volunteering opportunities (10%)
not thinking that they were the 'right age' to volunteer (10%).
bureaucracy (including need to undertake training & requirement for a new DBS Check)

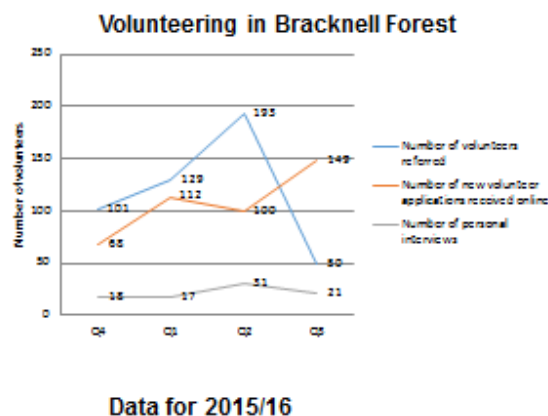
Baselining – Volunteering Involve's Volunteer Centre data

Number of volunteers referred to Volunteer Centre –
number of online applications received

2014/15
Q1 – 149 - 158
Q2 – 137 - 118
Q3 – no data*
Q4 – 73 - 68

15/16
Q1 – 129 - 112
Q2 – 193 - 100
Q3 – 50 - 149
Q4 – 120 - 91

* do-it.org - main portal for volunteer referrals
temporarily closed



106

Community Self-reliance

There are multiple examples of locally led actions and activities

- The Bracknell Foodbank, emergency food for people in need in the Bracknell Forest area who are referred by a wide range of local agencies and organisations. Volunteer driven.
- The Parkrun: free 5k timed run. (200 runners each week) – improves fitness, health and well-being of participants
- Bracknell in Bloom / Your Gardens Scheme, encouraging the community to take part in Bracknell In Bloom and take pride in Bracknell, making it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Volunteers in the Community

- Involve currently has 107 volunteers delivering the befriending service in the borough, visiting weekly for 1- 2 hours a week.
- Good neighbours schemes such as Sandhurst GNS have 50+ volunteer drivers, transporting clients across the borough and beyond to medical/ health appointments.

- Homestart currently utilises over 50 volunteers to provide intervention to families in need.
- Cruse Bereavement Service uses volunteer counsellors and currently have over 40 volunteers delivering over 100 counselling sessions a week.

Where the Council currently use volunteers

- Managers who responded to a Council survey in 2014 reported using around 1,700 volunteers over 12 months, with approximately 920 of these people volunteering regularly
- This is a total of over 129,500 hours of time
- Costed at £12.20 per hour (BFC average hourly pay) this equates to a contribution of £1,579,900