



## **Customer Service Strategy**

### **A. Strategy Statement**

The Council aims to make it easy for all customers to access services by making sure appropriate contact channels are available and are promoted.

There are no plans to remove any of the current methods of contact.

### **B. Introduction**

The Council exists to provide services to the residents of the Borough and other customers.

This strategy is concerned with external customers; the Council has made and continues to make improvements to customer services and service accessibility.

The Customer Service Strategy has three purposes:

- to establish the overall aims of the Council in delivering services to customers;
- to set out the direction for the development of customer access channels, regardless of department or service; and
- to provide a framework for customer service improvement based upon clear and agreed principles.

### **C. Customer Access**

The Council's customer services are delivered at:

- the Town Hall: from the Cornwallis Street entrance; Customer Services, Housing Benefits, Housing Department, Council Tax and Business Rates
- Customer Services includes enquiries regarding waste management, street care and environmental services;
- Online at [www.barrowbc.gov.uk](http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk);
- By telephone at 01229 876543 (switchboard);
- the Park Leisure Centre;
- the Forum (theatre and conference facilities);
- the Dock Museum; and
- The Cemetery Office.

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Other Town Hall based services will be reviewed with the intention of moving those front facing elements to the Customer Services team on the accepted principles of cost reduction, capacity improvement and improved customer care - however if these cannot be demonstrated there will be no business case for services to change existing arrangements.

The Council aims to provide a single point of contact for services, providing consistent customer care and first contact enquiry resolution with reliable information being provided.

### **D. Aims of the Strategy**

The strategy aims to set the objectives for the review of existing and future methods of contact. The review will cover service accessibility, convenience, usage and cost/benefit analyses.

The current methods of contact available to customers are:

- online self-service;
- kiosks;
- telephone self-service;
- telephone contact centre; and
- face to face.

The strategy may result in variances for the leisure venues where the customer contact profile will be very different to other services.

The review has to take into account various challenges including:

- meeting the needs of a variety of customers;
- requirement to deliver services through multiple channels;
- the financial environment in local government;
- limited resources;
- complex technology; and
- other priorities.



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### **E. Customer Service Drivers**

The drivers for the Customer Service Strategy are:

- providing accessible services;
- ensuring services are fit for purpose;
- ensuring all customers are treated consistently and fairly
- ensuring services are efficient, effective and economical;
- ensuring that staff have the relevant skills and training opportunities;
- delivering efficiencies and economies; and
- acting on customer feedback wherever possible.

### **F. Customer Feedback**

Customer feedback will be sought, collated and acted upon where possible.

Also where possible, customer feedback will be incorporated into strategy revisions which will allow customer contact to be re-designed to meet the requirements of customers.

### **G. Action Plan**

Reviewing the current provisions the actions for 2015-2016 are:

- to improve and enhance the website provision;
- to improve and enhance self-service;
- to introduce responsive design online;
- to promote user registration online;
- to roll out kiosks within Cornwallis Hall;
- to establish customer/usage information already collected;
- to establish how much of customer contact is delivered through the Customer Services team;
- to establish the usage of the existing methods of contact;
- to minimise service failures; and
- to establish a corporate Customer Strategy Group.



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Actions beyond 2015-2016 already identified are:

- to plan to increase self-service usage;
- to plan to increase telephone usage;
- to aim to minimise face to face customer contact;
- to aim to reduce avoidable contact;
- to publish customer standards – expectations;
- to plan to carry out regular user satisfaction monitoring; and
- to review text messaging as a method of contact.

### **H. Strategic Links**

This strategy contributes to the delivery and achievement of the Council Plan, in particular the Council Priority in relation to service delivery:

- 4.2 Improve the customer experience:
- 4.3 Measure customer satisfaction:
- 4.5 Implement the Workforce Strategy:

There are also direct and complimentary links to:

- the Workforce Strategy;
- the IT Service Strategy;
- the work of the Business Improvement Team; and
- the Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy.