

From: [Foi Enquiries](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI-16-0843 - ITT Strategies
Date: 13 July 2016 15:51:15
Attachments: [Improving the Customer Experience programme overview.pdf](#)
[Further Information - Right to Review & Appeal.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your information request of 27th June 2016. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has completed the necessary search for the information requested.

I am currently researching attitudes to Digital Transformation in Local Government and would like to make the following request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Can you please provide me with a copy of any of the following strategy documents if you hold them?

1. **Digital Transformation Strategy**
2. **ICT Strategy**
3. **Customer Service Strategy**

Can I also ask for a copy of any published case studies, if you hold any, regarding Digital Transformation initiatives undertaken by your authority?

We have combined our IT Strategy and Digital Transformation Strategy to a single Digital Strategy which is expected to be approved September 2016. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 16 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that we are refusing your request under the terms of Section 27 (1) of the Act.

Under section 27(1) information is exempt if it is due to be published within 12 weeks at the point of the request, where it is reasonable in all of the circumstances that the information is withheld until the publication date.

A Customer Service Strategy is currently in the process of being designed and as such, we are unable to provide you with a copy of this document. Therefore, ACC is unable to provide you with the requested information as it is not held by ACC. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Section 17 of the FOISA, ACC hereby gives notice that this information is not held by it.

However, please find attached a copy of our transformation programme which will deliver our strategy which outlines a number of key areas for development.

We hope this helps with your request.

Yours sincerely,

Nicky Leiper
Information Compliance Officer

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HANDLING OF YOUR REQUEST

ACC handled your request for information in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Please refer to the attached PDF for more information about your rights under FOISA.

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*03000 numbers are free to call if you have 'free minutes' included in your mobile call plan. Calls from BT landlines will be charged at the local call rate of 10.24p per minute (the same as 01224s).

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Improving Customer Experience: Overview

Why do we need to improve Customer Experience?

Over the past five years the ways in which customers interact with organisations have changed almost beyond recognition. Aberdeen City Council must also transform if we are to thrive in this rapidly changing customer landscape and effectively manage customer expectations. We need to reorganise ourselves so that we mirror and enhance the 'omni-channel' customer journey; a journey that provides the customer with a seamless experience whether accessing services online from a laptop or mobile device, by telephone or face-to-face.

Digitally empowered customers have reset the bar on acceptable customer experience. For the council to prosper in this new customer world we have to adopt a mind-set where we are all responsible for contributing to an excellent customer experience, every day. We need to adopt leadership capabilities that empower an integrated approach to customer engagement.

In simple terms the ability to deliver our vision depends on the extent to which 'customer-centricity' is embedded within every single person in our organisation. Every interaction, every day has the potential to make a difference. So next time you are engaging with your colleagues, ask yourself - what is my intention? how might my colleagues perceive it? how does this contribute to improving the customer experience? We need to recognise the importance of the service that we are providing to one another, and the impact this has on our colleague's ability to contribute to improving the overall customer experience. Becoming more customer-centric is a core business requirement and one that needs to be embedded within the organisation.

In summary we will be seeking to embed a customer culture, where what's good for the organisation and for customers align and become the driving force behind what we all do. It will start with managers who understand the necessity of serving customers in order to succeed. The result of that understanding is a culture where a positive internal environment and the creation of delighted customers go together. It is a culture that naturally emphasises continuous improvement of processes and one that results in a healthy workplace and satisfied customers.

Where are we trying to get to?

Our aim is to enrich the lives and experiences of our customers, building to a level of excellence and personalisation where the customer is at the centre of everything we do.

We will transform the way in which our customers access services and transform the services themselves as we continuously review and improve what we do. We will recognise the diversity of our customers providing them with equality of treatment and where appropriate tailoring services to meet their needs. We will be recognised as providing a good customer experience, with residents who feel that council services are accessible and know that it is easy to do business with us. We will listen to our customers' views and give them the opportunity to influence future service delivery as we begin to fully embrace council-wide customer services culture.

Like all other local authorities and other public bodies, we have to operate within legislative, policy and significant resource constraints, especially in the current economic climate. This means that we may not always be able to deliver exactly what is requested. We do,

however, promise to be fair, honest and open and we will always explain the reasons behind our decision.

We are committed to delivering a great experience for our customers, internal and external, and the Customer Experience Programme details how we, working together, can deliver this vision. Our aim will be to successfully help to reduce the effort for customers and improve the overall customer experience while still unlocking significant operational improvements across the organisation’s customer contact operations to contribute towards the £50m funding gap.

How will we get there?

We provide a diverse range of services to the people of Aberdeen City, local businesses, partners and visitors to our area. The Customer Experience programme sets out our plans for delivering these services to our customers. Our approach aims to focus service delivery around the customer, therefore to improve our customer’s experience co-ordinated action is required on a number of fronts. A comprehensive improvement plan has been designed which is centred on 4 key themes:

1. Customer Service Framework
2. Improving Quality and Access to Services
3. Customer Engagement
4. Digital Delivery

Each of the themes sets the vision and direction for improving the overall customer experience. The themes are inter-dependent and are designed to ensure that Aberdeen City Council delivers excellent customer services in an effective environment, underpinned by the triple aim:



Further information about the key projects within each theme is detailed in the table below.

Theme 1: Customer Service Framework
<p>Our ambition is to achieve an empowered customer service culture embedded throughout the organisation which will drive how we deliver both public facing and internal services. When our employees deal with a customer it will be obvious to the customer that we care about their issue. We will deal with them in a professional and respectful way, treating them fairly. Our staff will take ownership of the issues raised and will ensure that the issue is resolved whether by themselves or another. We want our customers to be confident that</p>

they will receive the same high quality service every time regardless of how they contact us or who they deal with. We will agree with the customer at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide. Our customers can expect to be kept informed of progress through to the completion of the task. When we are unable to meet their expectations we will be honest with them and where we can offer an alternative we will do so.

Emotional aspects of a customer's experience have the biggest influence on satisfaction. To create emotionally engaging experiences, we need to prioritise the moments that are inherently most emotional for customers and understand customers holistically. The softer side of customer experience is often regarded as accidental, not essential. This theme therefore focusses on investment in this area to ensure that our staff are empowered to strive for excellence.

The key areas of work currently identified are:

- **Customer Service Charter and Standards:** We will introduce a customer framework setting out principles and standards which will be embedded across the organisation. We will develop a customer charter with clearly defined and measurable customer service standards.
- **Customer Service Training:** We will ensure all our employees are provided with training to support them in consistently demonstrating the core behaviours. We will outline key customer service training modules that will form the basis of core customer service training for all employees.
- **Customer Service Recruitment Framework:** We will introduce a Customer Service Recruitment Framework incorporating a Customer Service recruitment toolkit. We will support the 'Improving Staff Experience' programme in introducing an agreed organisation wide customer service recruitment process and relevant assessment methods that all customer service recruiters are trained in.
- **Multi-skilled Customer Service:** We will adopt a holistic approach to customer needs, cross-servicing as appropriate to better serve the customer and ensuring frontline staff are trained to provide this personalised service. We will develop a multi-skilled training programme to deliver against training needs.

Theme 2: Improving Access and Quality

The 'Improving Access and Quality' theme considers the ways in which customers receive our services and the quality they can expect. Areas of work have been defined which are designed to reimagine the way in which we interact with customers and improve the ease with which they can get in touch.

Improving our current services is at the heart of the theme, helping us to get the basics right and ensure the best possible customer experience. An improved service will engage directly with customers and seek out opportunities to proactively help the citizens of Aberdeen. It will provide the highest quality of customer care and build relationships with its customers which can allow channel hopping and still provide the same levels of service. This may mean longer opening hours for our services, allowing customers to talk to us when they need to, not when we traditionally come to the office.

Our services will be accessible to all members of the public; Many of our customers are vulnerable and a number of them will have disabilities. We should be able to cater for every

person regardless of their needs. This means reviewing the access arrangements to our physical locations, ensuring there is adequate provision of seating, signage and space, and training our staff to help customers who need it.

The key areas of work currently identified are:

- **City Centre Service Provision:** We will reestablish a vision for the Customer Service Centre, Corporate Reception, Town House etc. to improve the customer experience. We will review opening hours, accessibility, signage, health and safety and customer flow. We will review and redesign service delivery processes and will introduce a governance structure for frontline services to support integration.
- **Community Based Service Provision:** We will establish a vision for community based service provision. We will collaboratively review and redesign processes for services provided in the community, ensuring consistency of approach across the different sites.
- **Telephony Service Provision:** We will review and improve service delivery at the Customer Contact Centre by changing the way we work, updating and streamlining processes and improving the use of resources and integrating services. We will implement a customer focused numbering strategy and rationalise our contact numbers for customers.

Theme 3: Customer Engagement

We will listen to our customers' views and give them the opportunity to influence future service delivery as we begin to fully embrace a council-wide customer services culture.

The implementation of a whole system feedback approach would offer a depth of insight not currently achieved within Aberdeen City Council and would enable the organisation to shape our services in tune with the needs of the users. Customer feedback helps us to avoid misdirecting effort and spend into improving areas of service delivery that may be of little consequence to the customer and instead focus on what really matters for each service area and its customers. Better understanding means better services, which in turn means more satisfied customers.

The council currently undertakes an inconsistent approach to gathering customer feedback and there is not enough accurate or consistent data to allow the organisation to baseline overall customer satisfaction levels. As a service provider, we cannot currently be sure how satisfied (or not) our customers are. Where methods of gathering customer feedback do exist, there are not always processes in place for the feedback to be acted upon.

The organisation requires a feedback process that is visible to our customers and demonstrates to them that we are proactively asking for their feedback with the objective of improving the service we provide. It is also essential that a consistent approach is taken across the council with the complaints, compliments and enquiries processes.

The key areas of work currently identified are:

- **Whole System Feedback Approach:** We will adopt a whole system approach to customer feedback and pro-actively use customer data to inform service design and anticipate customer needs. We will introduce standard questions in customer

surveys to enable customer satisfaction to be measured in a consistent way across the organisation. We will identify and deliver improvements to the Member Enquiries and Corporate Complaints processes, including the implementation of audit recommendations. We will establish an integrated customer engagement team.

- **Customer Service Metrics:** We will identify key customer service performance metrics to be measured across the whole council. We will make effective use of tools and systems to establish baselines, benchmark and analyse performance to inform service improvements.
- **Customer Insight:** By achieving a single customer view we will be able to understand a customer's history, risk, propensity to access other services. We will consider the application of data and lifestyle segmentation to a customer's single view records, building deeper and broader insights, into customer lifestyle, behaviours and preferences. We will therefore invest in customer insight to provide the ability to understand customer needs and behaviours and use this to forecast service demands and to inform service priorities and design.
- **Customer Involvement and Co-Design:** We will engage customers in the redesign of our services to ensure their needs are met.

Theme 4: Digital Delivery

We will create a high-quality digital customer experience by adopting an approach to accelerating innovation and digital take-up across the organisation.

Today's connected customers want real-time messages and information that reflect their very individual interests and needs. It's no surprise really, when you consider how the digital revolution has changed the way this generation of smartphone wielding consumers shop and access services. They are used to having information at their fingertips and being connected to everything and everyone – all of the time. They expect us to bridge the channel gap and instantly recognise them however they are choosing to access services and the challenge will be to gain a comprehensive view of a customer's activities and preferences across all channels. We will therefore integrate digital service provision into our mainline business and through the integration of services, customer demand management, creating a single customer view and developing an approach to channel migration that ensures services are delivered via the most appropriate channels we will improve the customer experience.

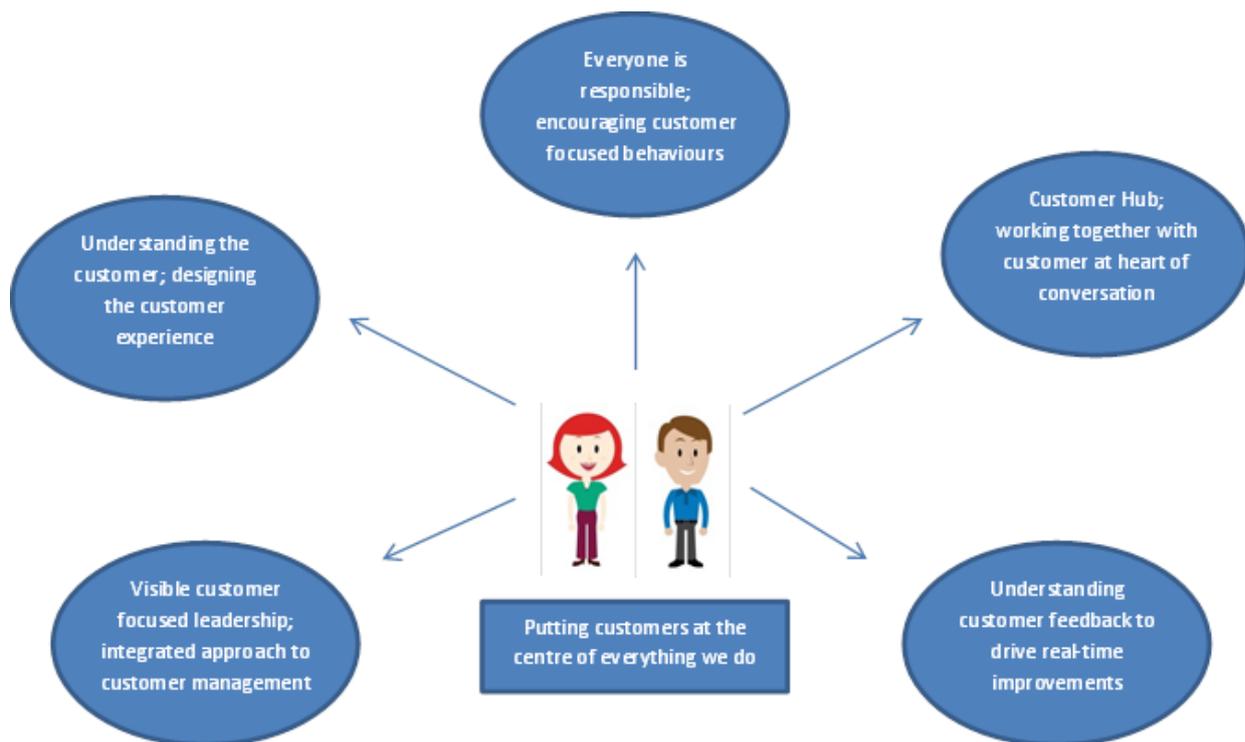
The key areas of work currently identified are:

- **Customer Relationship Management System:** Implementation of a replacement Customer Relationship Management system in preparation for further development and roll—out across the organisation to support customer service delivery and single view of the customer.
- **Single View of the Customer:** Creation of an aggregated, consistent and holistic representation of customer data. The advantage of us attaining this unified view comes from the ability it gives to analyse past behaviour in order to better target and personalise future customer interactions. Adopting a single view of the customer will require a customer centric approach to customer management.

- **System Integration:** Integrate systems to make it easier to service customers, help customers to serve themselves and identify customer needs.
- **Personalisation:** Introduction of the My Account system so that customers can use a single authenticated portal to access all council services using online self-service. Exploration of personalising key channels to customer based on their location and service history.

This programme is designed to be dynamic and agile in its approach, and as such will be subject to continual review and revision. To effectively deliver it we need to establish an approach to customer engagement where employees with complementary skills from all areas of the organisation, front, middle and back office, come together with the customer at the heart of the conversation (a 'customer hub'). This means a leadership approach that takes a creative look at continuous improvement and service innovation: re-energised through new partnerships with customers and employees. This means you and your teams will be directly involved in the shaping and delivery of this programme.

Strategy for embedding a customer centric approach



The Extended Corporate Management Team and the Transformation Board will provide overall governance for the improvement programme. And in order to assess the extent to which the activities have contributed to an enhanced customer, we will establish a baseline, measure the effectiveness of our processes, deep dive areas of excellence and poor practice, share best practice and address weaknesses.