

# Peterborough City Council's CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

## Putting you at the heart of what we do



# INTRODUCTION

Peterborough is one of the fastest growing cities in the country bringing new housing, jobs and opportunities for the people who live here and attracting new residents from across the UK and beyond. As our city grows and the needs and demands of our customers change and grow, we will adapt and respond to these by providing high quality and cost effective services.

We know that our customers have high expectations of the service(s) that they want to receive from the council. However, we recognise that currently the way the council delivers its services, does not always fully meet these expectations.

We understand that it has not always been easy to find the information you want quickly or that you sometimes have to speak to us on more than one occasion to get things done. Customers have also told us that they can get passed around to different people.

We also know that:

- The way the council engages with its customers can vary across different parts of the council
- There is no single customer database that enables staff to access what the council knows about a customer and therefore better assist with an enquiry
- It has been difficult for customers to carry out some routine transactions online due to the limited functions of the council's website
- We need to work more with our partners to jointly deliver services that matter most to our customers.



# TRANSFORMING OUR CUSTOMER SERVICES

Peterborough City Council has embarked on an ambitious transformation programme that will ensure that customers have greater choice and control of how they engage with council services. We will redesign the way we deliver our services to the people we serve to always put them first in everything we do.

Our vision is to deliver needs led, easy to access customer services however you choose to contact us. We will put you at the heart of what we do, to ensure that we continue to deliver the right services, by the right people, at the right time, in the right place and at the right cost.

This strategy and transformation programme will help us to deliver our core values to all of our customers whether they are residents, businesses or visitors to our city.

## OUR CORE VALUES



### Expertise

We recognise and value the differences, skills, knowledge and experience of all our colleagues



### Trust

We are honest and open in all our dealings and deliver on our promises



### Initiative

We are proactive and use our creativity to identify and resolve problems



### Customer Focused

We understand and aim to meet our customers diverse needs, treating them fairly and with respect



### Work Together/One Team

We work with colleagues and partners to deliver the best seamless services possible.

# OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Our transformation programme is based upon the following aims:

## **Our information will be provided in an easy to find, clear and understandable way**

We have already begun to radically overhaul our website to make it easier for you to find information you want quickly. Over the coming months, we will offer more services online and make it easier for you to contact us via email, social media or via the My Peterborough App.

## **The Services you need are always delivered...**

**...by the right people** – We are working with our staff to build a culture where excellent customer services is a key part of everybody's job. We will achieve a right-first-time approach wherever possible so that you can complete the transaction you want without the need to be passed on to other members of staff in the council.

**...at the right time** – We will ensure that you can contact us at a time and by a method that is convenient to you. We know that more people than ever go online to find information and carry out routine transactions such shopping or banking. We already provide a range of online services and we will be extending and improving these over the next year.

**... in the right way** - We will use customer feedback, council and partner data and intelligence to better understand the needs, experiences and expectations of our customers. We will design intelligent and responsive services that can respond quickly to changing or emerging needs.

## **We will deliver value for money on all of our services**

We remain within an extremely challenging financial climate meaning that it is more important than ever to deliver the right service for the right price. We will ensure that we deliver all of our services in the most efficient way possible to minimise cost.

## **Delivering excellent customer service skills**

The way the council interacts with its customers is crucial to delivering needs led services. Our customers should always expect to interact with well trained staff who have excellent communication skills are polite, friendly and always treat you with respect.

# THE RIGHT SERVICES IN THE RIGHT WAY

Ensuring that the Council provides the right services for the people, business and communities in our city underpins our Customer Strategy. We will use our understanding of our customer and business needs to shape the way we deliver our services.

We are a Commissioning led Council, this means that we will deliver better outcomes for our customers through identifying the most efficient, effective and economic models of service delivery. This may mean the council continuing to deliver services on its own, or directly through other

agencies and organisations or as a partnership between the council and other organisations. This will provide us with a range of different abilities, skills and knowledge to enable targeted services to be delivered in the right place at the right time.

A commissioning approach offers significant benefits to local residents and businesses alike. Services will be delivered in more efficient ways, stimulating local enterprise by creating new markets in the provision of local services, and an increased emphasis on the scrutiny of those services.

## Case Study – service redesign

We know that the residents, communities and businesses in our city already contribute to the way Council services are designed and delivered, but we want to do more. We want to bring the power of residents and communities into the delivery of services we provide. For example in Adult Social Care, we have worked with Service Users and their parents and carers to redesign day services for people under 65. The Council worked with a group of users and their parent/ carers as equal partners and co-creators to help design how the service should operate. This approach not only gave service users a strong voice in saying how the service should be run, but provided reassurance regarding the availability and quality of the service for the future.



# THE RIGHT PEOPLE

## Our Staff

We know that our customers expect a consistent and seamless service from the Council, whichever department they come into contact with. Currently, the way the council manages customer information and records is ineffective with many different systems that aren't able to share information across departments. Over the next year, we will replace all of our existing databases with a single customer management system. This will allow staff to quickly access all the information we hold on a customer and better assist with enquiries.

Many of our staff are also our customers. Nearly three quarters of the people working here also live in the city. Both they and their families make use of the services we provide such as schools, housing or leisure facilities. Our staff provide us with vital local knowledge of their experience of living in Peterborough shaping the way we deliver services and helping to make the city a healthy, safe and vibrant place to live and work.

We are committed to providing the highest standard of services to our customers whilst achieving value for money in everything we do. We remain within an extremely challenging financial climate which has seen funding to the council cut by £44m in the five years leading up to 2015/16. To continue to meet our high standards we need to think differently about the

way we provide services, this includes promoting the use of technology, encouraging self-service and collaborative working with our partners and the community to save money and develop joint solutions to multi-agency problems.

This will mean that we work outside traditional organisational boundaries and find collaborative and innovative ways to meet the needs of our customers, an example of this in practice is outlined in the case study below.

### Case Study - The 'MASH' Hub

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) involves staff from a range of agencies such as the Police, Probation, Women's Aid, Health and Mental Health working alongside Children's and Adult Social Care, education and others. When a professional, family member or member of the public is concerned about the safety of an adult or a child, the MASH brings agencies together to provide a collaborative, multi-agency response to ensure that children, young people or vulnerable adults are safe. Through the MASH Hub staff from across these agencies will be able to share data in a secure environment so that our collective support for the most vulnerable children and adults living in Peterborough is more effective. For more information about the Mash Hub [click here](#).



# THE RIGHT TIME

## Getting in Touch With Us in Ways and Times Convenient to You

You can contact us in a variety of ways to find the information you need and to ask for help and support. We recognise that your expectations are changing and you will compare your experience with Peterborough City Council to your digital interactions with other organisations for example when online shopping or banking. We live in a digital age: people are already well used to online shopping from their smartphones, tablets or PCs and whilst we already have a range of online services, we will be extending and improving these over the next year.

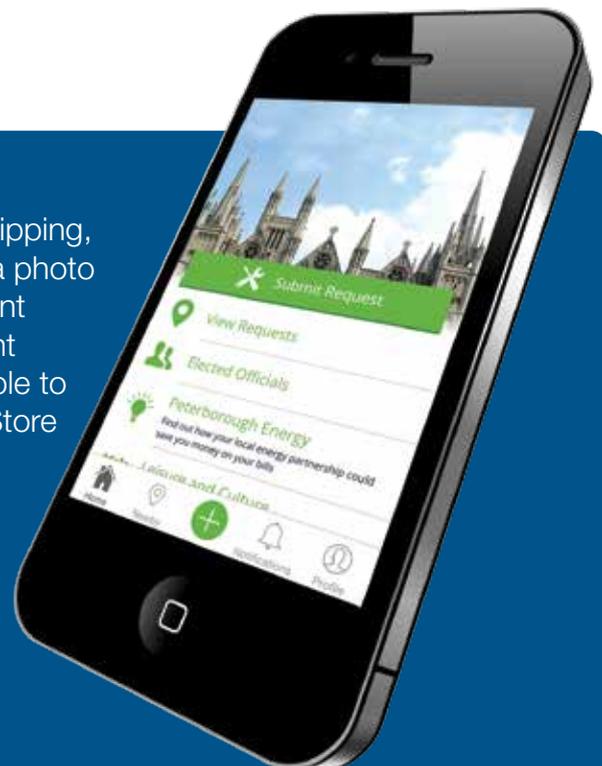
While council customers cannot choose where to get their council services from, they nevertheless rightly expect high standards of effectiveness, efficiency and value for money. This means that if we are to keep pace with changing expectations, we must plan and deliver our services in ways that make sense to customers, in ways that are convenient to them.

We are improving the ways customers can access our services; you will have a choice about how to get in contact with us quickly and easily. What's more you will be able to do it at times that suit you and receive an answer to your query in a timely manner and in a way that you prefer. We will use new digital technology including mobile apps and social media to make contacting us easier than ever before.

We understand that not everyone will be able to access services digitally and so we will continue to provide alternative methods for those who need it. You can still contact us in person at Bayard Place, by telephone (01733 747474) or in writing. We will work with partners across the City to make sure everyone is able to access our self-service facilities. Whilst self-service works well for many of the services the Council offers, it cannot completely replace face to face contact to resolve complex problems. We will ensure that our Customer Service staff are always able to provide the information and help you are looking for.

## Case Study - My Peterborough App

My Peterborough enables you to report issues such as fly-tipping, graffiti or abandoned vehicles direct to the council. Attach a photo or let your phone record the exact location to help us pinpoint the problem. The information will be sent straight to the right department. Once we've resolved the issue we'll also be able to let you know. The app can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play for free.



# WORKING WITH AND IN OUR COMMUNITIES

We are committed to championing and developing projects that build skills, knowledge and support within communities, so that people can work together to solve their problems.

Spotting when things are starting to go wrong and getting support quickly can help to stop problems from getting worse or a crisis developing.

At different times in our lives, we all need help from our friends, families or professionals to manage our problems such as our health, housing, our children's education or dealing with money problems.

We know how difficult this can be and our services will work with you to help provide the right solutions for you and your family.

We will work with our communities to strengthen and build community capacity wherever we can. We believe that in almost all circumstances, families, friends and neighbours are more than able to support their communities, especially when they have access to the right support.

## Case study - Community Connectors

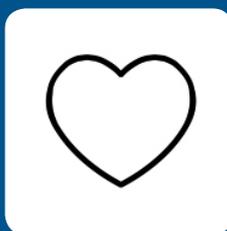
Successful customer service and engagement is dependent on using the right communication methods. Peterborough is a highly diverse city, home to many people from across the UK and the world. With such a range of different backgrounds, cultures and needs we know that we cannot simply use a "one size fits all" approach to providing services. Our Community Connectors are council staff who understand the differing needs that communities have and know how to use the right approach to support these needs. They know this because the staff come from a range of different communities themselves and can not only speak a number of languages fluently, but also have a deep understanding of cultural and faith issues and how these can be handled sensitively.

Through our Community Connectors we can engage more communities more effectively and ensure that the services we provide are having a positive effect for the people we serve.

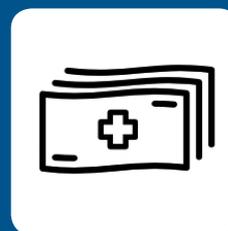
You can find plenty of useful information on our website, click on any of the icons to learn more.



Education



Health and Social Care



Money Matters



Planning and Development



Housing



School Transport

## Case Study - Getting Help

You can find help and information on the council's website ([www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)) on a whole range of services. For example the Family Information Service pages on our website provide information on a range of community services available to support children, young people and their families in Peterborough. On our website you can also find information and support for children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities by searching for the Local Offer. In this one place, you can find information about providers of the following services:

- Special educational provision.
- Health services.
- Social care services.
- Other educational provision.
- Training.
- Travel arrangements for children and young people to schools, colleges and early year's education settings.
- Preparing for adulthood, including housing and employment.
- Leisure and social opportunities.

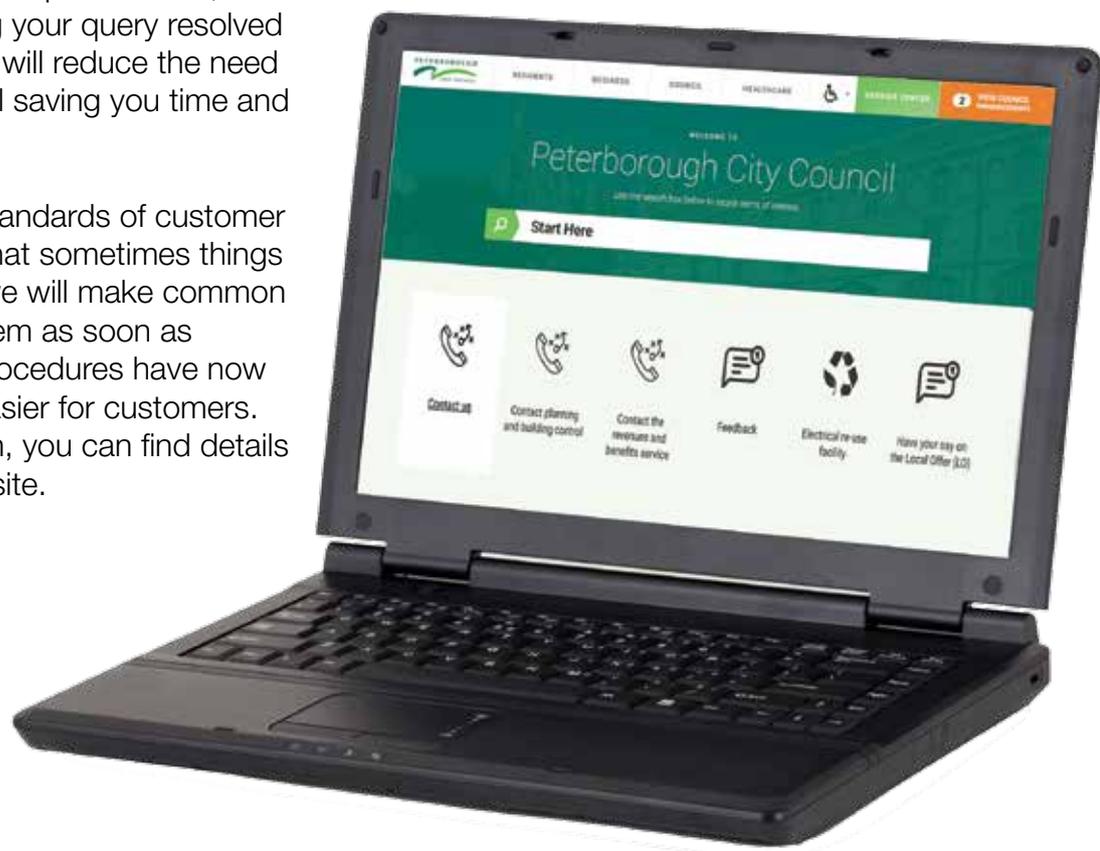
There is a great deal of expertise and knowledge within our communities that can help people when they are in need. We will support our communities to have the right skills, knowledge and confidence to help people when they need it.

### Putting You at the Heart of What We Do

We want customers to feel that they are being listened to and their queries are being dealt with quickly. In future when you contact us you will experience a seamless, consistent and easy to access service whenever you need it. You will receive the support you need at the right time and in the right place from professional, friendly, helpful staff. Getting your query resolved to your satisfaction first time will reduce the need for repeat calls to the council saving you time and us money.

We are committed to high standards of customer service however, we know that sometimes things might go wrong, if they do we will make common sense decisions to rectify them as soon as possible. Our complaints procedures have now been improved to make it easier for customers. Should you wish to complain, you can find details of how to do so on our website.

If you would like to know more about our customer services standards and performance, we regularly publish this information on our website – just search for customer service. You can also feedback your views on anything about the council or its services through the feedback links on our website.





**Peterborough City Council**

Tel: 01733 747474

Web: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)

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