NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Cabinet

Committee Date: 09/06/2021

Report Title: Customer experience and digital strategy 2021-24

Portfolio:	Councillor Gail Harris / Councillor Paul Kendrick
Report from:	Executive director of community services
Wards:	**All Wards**
OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

Purpose

To seek approval for the Customer Experience and Digital Strategy 2021-24.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Customer Experience and Digital Strategy 2021-24subject to additional wider consultation on the principles, with final sign off delegated to Exec Director in consultation with cabinet member following consideration of any changes needed in response to consultation.

Policy Framework

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing, and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report contributes to all corporate priorities

This report addresses the need to streamline and modernise systems which is a strategic action in the Corporate Plan

This report helps towards meeting the needs of the environmental strategy adopted policy of the Council

This report helps to modernise the council and reimagine local services which is an objective of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

Report Details

Background

1. The council does not have a customer experience or digital strategy and there is a need to provide the organisation with a vision and plan of how we will work together to deliver digital services. **Appendix A**

2. The data shows that the number of customers contacting us face to face and by phone is reducing. Since the introduction of web forms in 2014 digital contact is increasing and there is an expectation from our customers that we should provide easy to access online services.

3. Most services are available online and data shows that many customers are accessing them however, we have inconsistent and varying levels of digital maturity across the organisation. There is also a high level of avoidable contact of which the majority is unnecessary clarification, followed by progress chasing. This has the potential to be reduced if customers have access to their information and receive progress updates on their enquiries.

4. There is great opportunity to develop our services, so they provide better experiences for customers and increase take up. Research (customer digital index 2020) suggests that within the East of England 92% of people are online and 84% have essential skills for life which is above the UK average of 78%.

Customer experience and digital strategy

5. The purpose of this document is to inform how the teams across the council are going to collaborate to deliver effective experiences for our customers. The organisation will harness technology and digital opportunities to make services easier to access and make sure that they are accessible for those who are not digitally enabled.

6. Within this context of this strategy customers are defined as anyone who lives, works in, or visits the district of Norwich city council - internal staff and councillors.

7. This strategy will support our change programme which is Future Shape Norwich (FSN) and the Covid recovery plan that has committed the council to learning lessons from how services adapted during the initial phase of Covid, and to consider how they could be delivered differently to enable the council to become more resilient, modern and flexible.

8. The council has less funding available to meet demand for services, needs to transform and reduce costs. Digital services that are end to end and easy to access, providing quality information to deliver positive outcomes, are a key enabler in meeting the requirements to deliver continuous service improvements with less funds.

9. The benefits will deliver more efficient services and will enable the workforce to be less reliant on operating services from one location.

10. Customers will have access to digital support through the council's digital support service and this includes access to digital hubs across the city and lending of equipment.

11. Customers will continue to be provided with a phone and appointment service. By improving our digital services and increasing take up it will enable us to focus resources on proving quality services for those who do not have access to digital or who have complex and varying needs.

12. The strategy aim is to improve services, so the customer experience is more positive and focuses on the following three themes –

    a) smarter services

    b) digital workforce

    c) better data sharing

13. This is an organisational strategy that has been created using a range of insight and data as well as feedback gathered from workshops and customer user experience, this includes –

    a) staff and councillor workshops

    b) staff and councillor survey feedback

    c) customer survey feedback analysis

    d) performance data including avoidable contact, quality monitoring, channel shift and complaints etc...

    e) customer user experience feedback & website analysis

    f) external expertise – digital solutions architect and benchmarking

    The additional consultation is in progress and if any changes are required these will be made to the final draft.

14. Digital technology will help the environmental agenda that is a key enabler in supporting low carbon activity. Providing customer information digitally reduces the need for printing and postage and a digital workforce that has the right tools to enable flexible and virtual working helps towards reducing our carbon footprint.

Conclusion and next steps

15. Once the strategy has been agreed it will be shared across the organisation.

16. A detailed technical road map is being developed with external expertise which will provide more detailed plans for systems and technology which will sit beneath the strategy.

17. Individual projects that support this strategy will be incorporated into the IT road map which is published on the homepage of citynet (the council's internal website) to ensure staff have visibility of IT projects that supports the councils change programme.

18. The monitoring of progress will be managed and shared at the monthly Customer, IT and digital board (CID) as a regular agenda item. This board is chaired by the executive director of community services and represented by heads of service.

19. The monitoring of channel shift is measured regularly and is a key performance measure (KPI) for corporate performance reporting.

Consultation

Consultation has been carried out to inform the strategy and this has included staff and councillor workshops (including portfolio holders) and customer and staff survey feedback.

Customer user experience testing, and analysis of our online services has provided a comprehensive report that sets out the details of how changes to our website will improve the customer experience and reduce the effort of accessing services.

Implications

Financial and Resources

Delivering the strategy and intended outcomes will require significant future revenue and capital investment. Funding for specific proposals will be subject to a separate approval process for inclusion the council's capital and revenue budgets at the appropriate time. Investment will be based on a business cases assessment and detailed review of system and resource requirements.

There are no specific proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. Delivery of specific solutions will include an assessment of what is required.

Legal

There are no specific proposals in this report that have legal implications. Delivery of specific solutions will include an assessment of any legal implications.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:

Equality and Diversity	Positive - digital improvements and accessible access to services 24/7 has positive outcomes for customers.
Health, Social and Economic Impact	Positive - improving access to online services and enabling more customers to self-serve. Continue to provide customers with non-digital access to council services. Flexible working has a positive impact for the workforce.
Crime and Disorder	Neutral impact
Children and Adults Safeguarding	Neutral impact
Environmental Impact	Positive - providing customer information digitally reduces the need for printing and postage and a digital workforce that has the right tools for a flexible and virtual working helps reduce our carbon footprint.

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Not delivering improvements to customer self-serve	Failing to meet customer expectations to deliver modern streamlined services. Fail to provide efficiencies, and costs to provide services will not be reduced. More complex and costly to engage with partners.	Ensure design and testing is aligned to the customer needs. Consistent methodology for delivering self service solutions.
Ability to effectively review and update council systems	The council will continue to rely on existing manual processes and multiple expensive legacy systems with more challenging maintenance and security needs. Greater challenge of meeting data protection compliance because of maintaining multiple data sets of customer information manually.	Review existing processes and systems. Objective and comprehensive review.
Failing to provide a solution for maintaining customer data across multiple systems		Rigorous and thorough testing of processes that update customer information. Working closely with data leads throughout.
IT not proving adequate systems to		Close working with change management

enable change and improvements	IT as an enabling service would not be capable of fully supporting the councils change programme.	(strategy engagement & culture team) Consistent methodology for project management

Other Options Considered

1. Do nothing
2. Deliver solutions as and when requested and when resources allow.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

3. Delivering solutions as part of an overall strategy is the best way of ensuring that well designed and accessible services are available for customers and the council.

Tracking Information

Governance Check	Date Considered
Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)	27-5-21
Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)	27-5-21
Relevant Executive Director	18 May 2021

Background papers: None

Appendices: Customer experience and digital strategy 2021/24

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2021 - 2024

Customer experience and digital strategy
for Norwich City Council

NORWICH
City Council

Foreword

In the last 10 years the number of people wanting to communicate, interact and transact through digital channels has steadily increased. Modern organisations see digital change in a positive light, not only to make them more customer focused, environmentally friendly and immediate but also to enable agile and flexible working for their employees.

In the last few years, the council's use of digital channels has grown, the people of Norwich have adapted and taken full advantage of the services we have already made digital including parking permits and reporting service issues. We have seen residents willing to adopt a new form of customer experience - self-serve. They have embraced on their terms, when and how they want to interact with us.

Covid-19 has quickened the pace of change. Who could have imagined 18 months ago that the way in which many people work and where they work from would change so dramatically? That so many people would shop online and that for many people using cash would be a thing of the past.

This, coupled with the way in which the council, voluntary organisations and local communities stepped up to the plate to help those who did not have the ability, experience, or resources to operate in a virtual world has changed things forever.

In publishing our first combined customer experience and digital strategy we will have a framework for how the whole council can work together with its residents to reshape how we deliver services and how people request and use them.

This strategy is not about one size fits all, it is about adapting to customer needs, not confining how people interact with us but finding the most effective way. This is about helping those who can self-serve but being mindful that some residents will still need our help and assistance.

Councillor Gail Harris
Deputy leader and social housing

Contents

The context

This strategy will support our internal change programme which is Future Shape Norwich (FSN) and the Covid recovery plan. These have committed the council to learning lessons from how services adapted during the initial phase of Covid, and to consider how they could be delivered differently to enable the council to become more resilient, modern and flexible.

The benefits will deliver more efficient services for the organisation and will enable the workforce to be less reliant on operating services from one location.

The strategy will be reviewed each year and updated if required.

It will underpin the delivery of the council's key priorities:

- inclusive economy
- people living well
- great neighbourhoods, housing, and environment
- healthy organisation.

It will inform how the teams across the council are going to collaborate to deliver effective experiences for our customers. The council will harness technology and digital opportunities to make services easier to access and make sure that they are accessible for those who are not digitally enabled.

We will provide modern solutions and systems to maximise the potential for the workforce to help us focus on:

- protecting those with complex and varying needs
- supporting and empowering communities to do more for themselves.

Our definition of customer?

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

Shaping the strategy – consultation and engagement

This strategy has been created using a range of insight and data as well as feedback gathered from workshops and customer user experience.

This includes:

Summary input

- feedback from community participation
- workshops with organisation and councillors
- performance data
- specialist knowledge
- external expertise – digital solutions architect
- best practice examples.

Customer insight input

- customer journey maps and user experience
- avoidable contact reports
- surveys – staff and customer
- complaints, councillor, and MP enquiries
- website analysis
- customer user experience feedback
- channel shift data
- quality monitoring.

Environmental impact

Digital technology will help the environmental agenda and is a key enabler in supporting low carbon activity. Providing customer information digitally reduces the need for printing and postage and a digital workforce that has the right tools to enable flexible and virtual working helps towards reducing our carbon footprint.

Our Vision

To make Norwich City Council a digital first organisation, enabling and empowering people, where possible, to engage with us online.

We will transform the relationship between customers and the council – putting more power in the hands of communities and being more responsive to their needs.

We will support and serve using digital tools that are easy to access and reliable, continuing to provide quality services for those who are not digitally enabled or those with complex needs.

How we will do this

Through this strategy we will help to improve our services, so the customer experience is more positive.

We will deliver:

1. **Smarter services**
2. **A digital workforce**
3. **Better data sharing**

Through increased channel shift – we will create and develop our digital services so that customers will use them by default.

Enabled workforce

|

Enabled customers

|

Enabled communities

CX: stands for customer experience

When our customers use our services, we understand that they have different expectations and many factors can result in having either a good or bad experience. By understanding where the problems lie across the end-to-end journey, we can improve those customer experiences. Improving our digital services and increasing take up will enable us to focus resources on providing quality services

to support those that have complex cases and are most in need.

Research (customer digital index 2020) suggests that **92%** (UK average 92%) of people in the East of England are online and **84%** (UK average 78%) have essential digital skills for life.

We provide services to customers who are:

Digitally enabled

- online by default offering them easy to use online information and services.

Digitally supported

- could and would if supported or encouraged
- we offer them motivation to use our online information and services, we encourage them online at every contact, our staff signpost them to digital access and support, and when appropriate offer help to grow digital skills and confidence.

Tools for the digitally supported:

- frontline staff trained in digital coaching skills
- digital skills support through the inclusion project from trained volunteers, with a range of support offers available in the community
- free digital access at our buildings and a network of community buildings across the city where people can go online for free by using our digital hubs
- access to equipment to use at home through the digital stuff hub programme
- local partnership groups who can offer specialist support for residents.

Unable to access digital services

- unable to use digital
- we provide the appropriate offline services to fit their need over the telephone or by appointment.

How customers will access services

Service method

- self serve
- customer contact team
- service area
- case management

Channel shift to online

face
phone
online
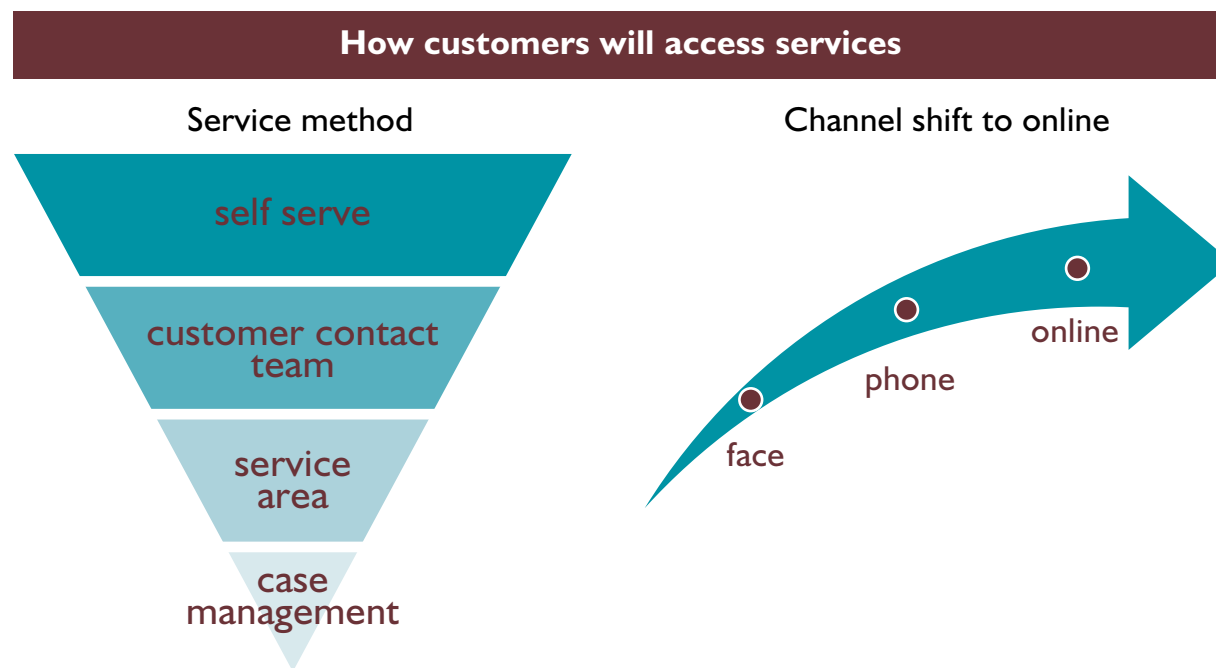
Digital: stands for the electronic end to end delivery of information

This includes customer information across different systems and devices like web or mobile. Information is presented in a way that is easy to use and understand and typically involves transactional services such as submitting forms for processing and receiving benefits.

The majority of services are available online and data shows that many customers are accessing them; however, we have inconsistent and varying levels of digital maturity across the organisation. For example, our parking service offers an end-to-end digital service with virtual permits a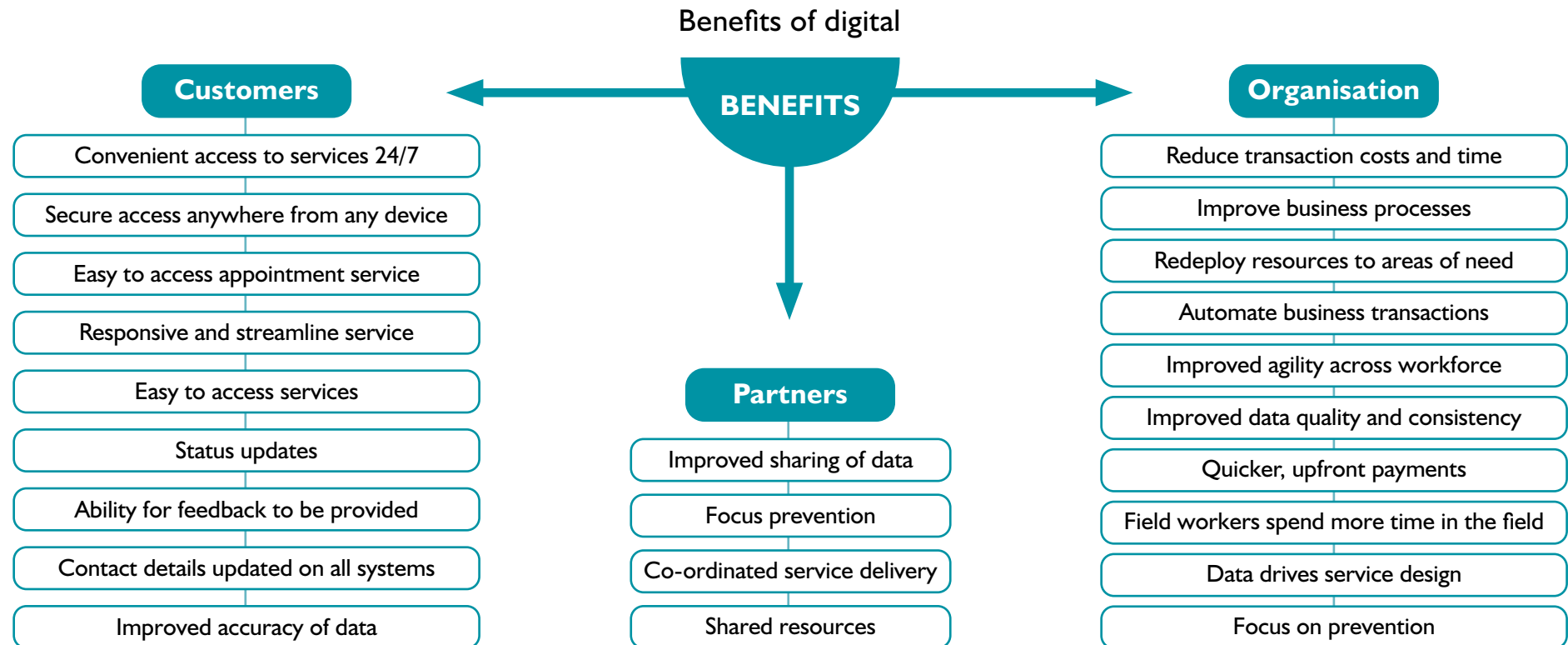nd has over 60% take up, however several services offer nothing online. There is also a high level of avoidable contact, of which the majority is unnecessary clarification followed by progress chasing. This has the potential to be reduced if customers have access to their information and receive progress updates on their enquiries. Therefore, there is great opportunity to develop our services, so they provide better experiences for customers and increase take up. Opportunities for digital see **Appendix**.

Benefits of digital

BENEFITS

Customers

- Convenient access to services 24/7
- Secure access anywhere from any device
- Easy to access appointment service
- Responsive and streamline service
- Easy to access services
- Status updates
- Ability for feedback to be provided
- Contact details updated on all systems
- Improved accuracy of data

Partners

- Improved sharing of data
- Focus prevention
- Co-ordinated service delivery
- Shared resources

Organisation

- Reduce transaction costs and time
- Improve business processes
- Redeploy resources to areas of need
- Automate business transactions
- Improved agility across workforce
- Improved data quality and consistency
- Quicker, upfront payments
- Field workers spend more time in the field
- Data drives service design
- Focus on prevention

Governance

Customer, IT and digital (CID) board

The board includes representatives from across the organisation and provides the governance for projects and new initiatives to ensure a collective digital first approach. Opening briefs are presented to the board who make decisions on progress and prioritisation. Change will be delivered incrementally, continuously assessing against this strategy and outcomes.

Customer, IT and digital road map – our plan

The road map schedules and prioritises agreed projects for development of systems and technology that enable services to digitally transform. This is regularly monitored and reported back to the CID board. Once projects are complete, the maintenance becomes business as usual.

We will be guided by the government digital design principles
(outlined by government digital service GDS)

1. Put the customer first.

2. Become a digital first organisation.

3. Design to operate without human intervention.

4. Move from reactive to preventative.

5. Work with others as one service.

6. Easy to access services/right first time.

7. Ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

8. Flexibility and constant review.

9. Do it once, do it right.

10. Design for inclusion.

Smarter services

The council has less funding available to meet demand for services and needs to transform. Digital services that are end to end and easy to access, providing quality information to deliver positive outcomes, are key enablers to meeting the requirements to deliver continuous service improvements with less funds.

To achieve this, we will:

- continue to invest in a modern infrastructure and decommission old legacy systems

- utilise cloud-based solutions where applicable

- integrate services and systems by investing in web services and API (application programming interface)

- consolidate accurate and consistent customer information using a digital platform (master data management)

- develop digital services that provides customers with updates

- deliver improvements to the website using feedback to enhance content and ensure it is user friendly and easy to locate information and services

- ensure website accessibility standards are exceeded to ensure diversity of usage

- investigate the potential benefits of implementing a virtual assistant for the website to help customers access information and services

- provide e-billing and e-notifications for all relevant services

- explore collaborative opportunities to develop digital services through our local digital declaration membership

- review and update customer service standards.
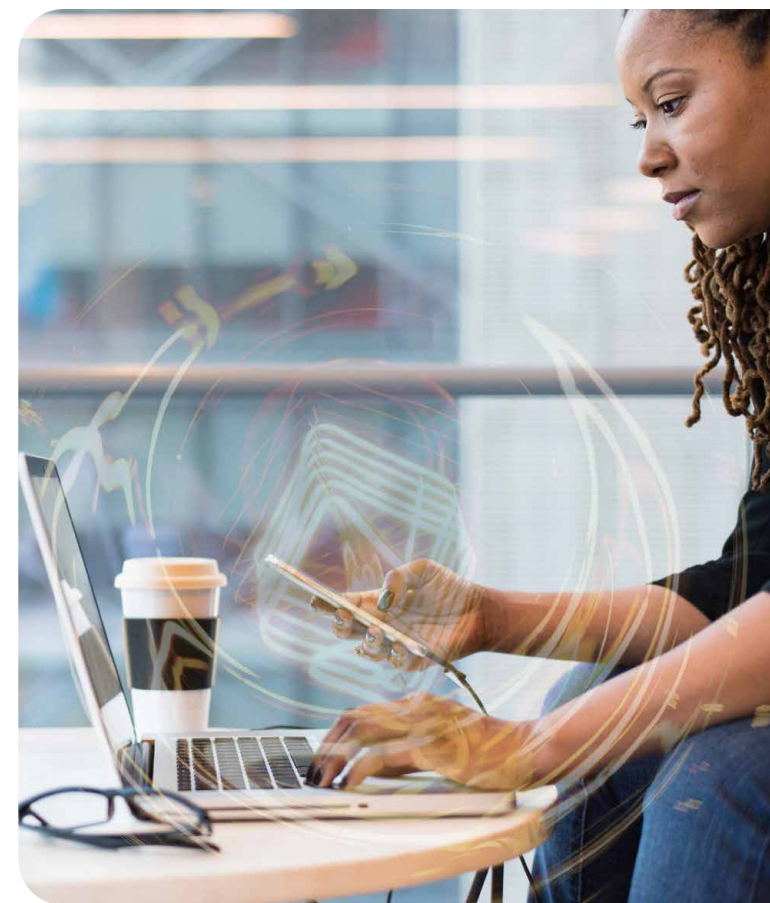
Digital workforce

Digitally capable people with solutions and equipment that enable the organisation to be flexible, resilient, and digital first. Encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace by equipping staff with the digital tools, skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their potential.

To achieve this, we will:

- review and challenge business processes to embrace digital innovation, not simply copy and create onerous solutions to address current business practice

- put user experience and customer focus at the heart of all of our services and design them to be fully digital

- moniter and improve digital services using feedback from customer user experience

- promote a culture in which all business change should be considered through a digital lens

- communicate digital solutions across the organisation and promote for external customer take up

- move to an environment where technology is an enabler for a flexible workforce

- ensure tools and services are consistently available on corporate devices that support flexible working

- develop a collaborative environment that enables our staff and partners to work together seamlessly regardless of their role or working patterns

- publish the IT roadmap that supports service transformation so that the workforce has clear visibility of projects, priorities and status

- provide customers with digital support in their local communities.
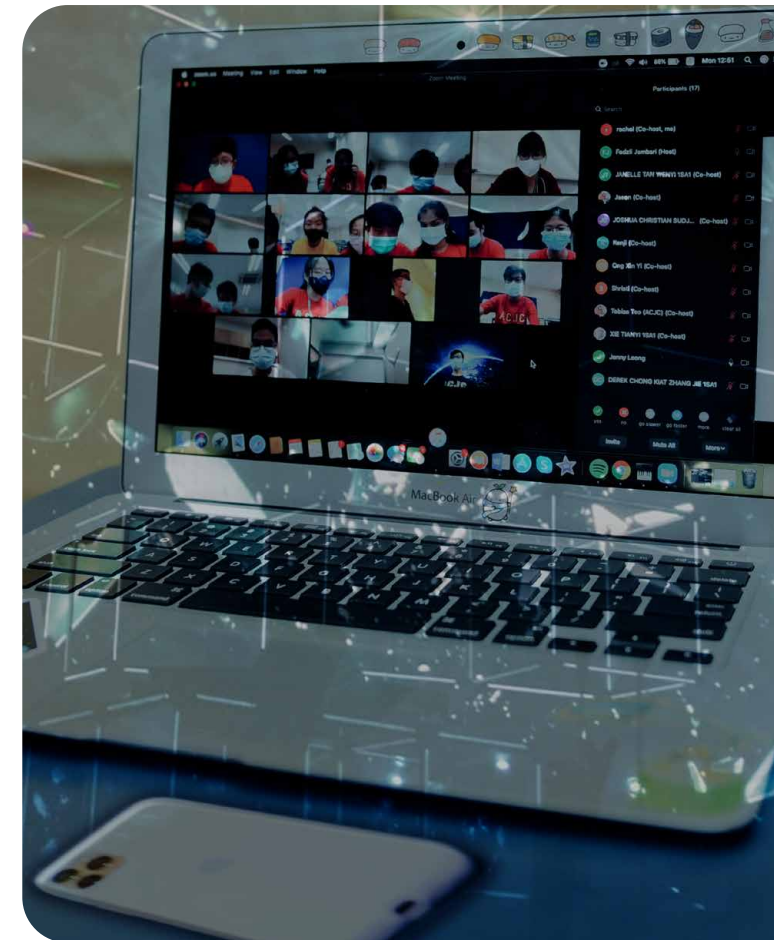
Data sharing

Data and customer information is core; it provides us with knowledge and it needs to be secure and easily accessible. Our ambition is to provide customers with one front door to their information and services to reduce the need for multiple interactions and improve their customer experience.

Customer account example of content – this shows a visual of how a customer's council information and services can be made available

Hello Harry Potter, 1 Diagon Alley, Norwich, NR2 1NH

We will be collecting **recycling and food waste** on Friday **05/02/2021.**
Your ward is **Nelson**
Your ward councillors are   Albus Dumbledore, Sybill Trelawney, Severus Snape.

more...

MESSAGES
Your Permit PHRD10000040 can be renewed

My Norwich

Housing rent balance: £15.00 — Make a Payment
Parking permits: You are in Zone M, you have 3 permits active
Council tax balance: £330 Paying monthly by direct debit — Make a Payment
Housing repairs reported: You have no repairs outstanding
Cases you have reported: Everything has been completed

I would like to
Make a payment
Apply for it
Report it

LUMi A brighter way to share
Click here for community support in your area

Norwich City Council ChatBot

Hello, how may I help you today?

Reply to Norwich City Council ChatBot...

To achieve this, we will:

- develop a consistent and integrated single view of the customer

- enable customers to view their information and request services via their online account

- use our customer insight to make informed decisions that shape the design and direction of our services

- use the tell-us-once methodology to deliver multiple services, reducing duplication of workloads and minimising data errors

- ensure all data is secure, accessible, and available so that customers and council staff can make informed decisions

- use data to be proactive with customers, sharing information across services and automatically updating them on progress

- share data securely with our partners

- use data to support proactive business actions and to enhance strategic planning.
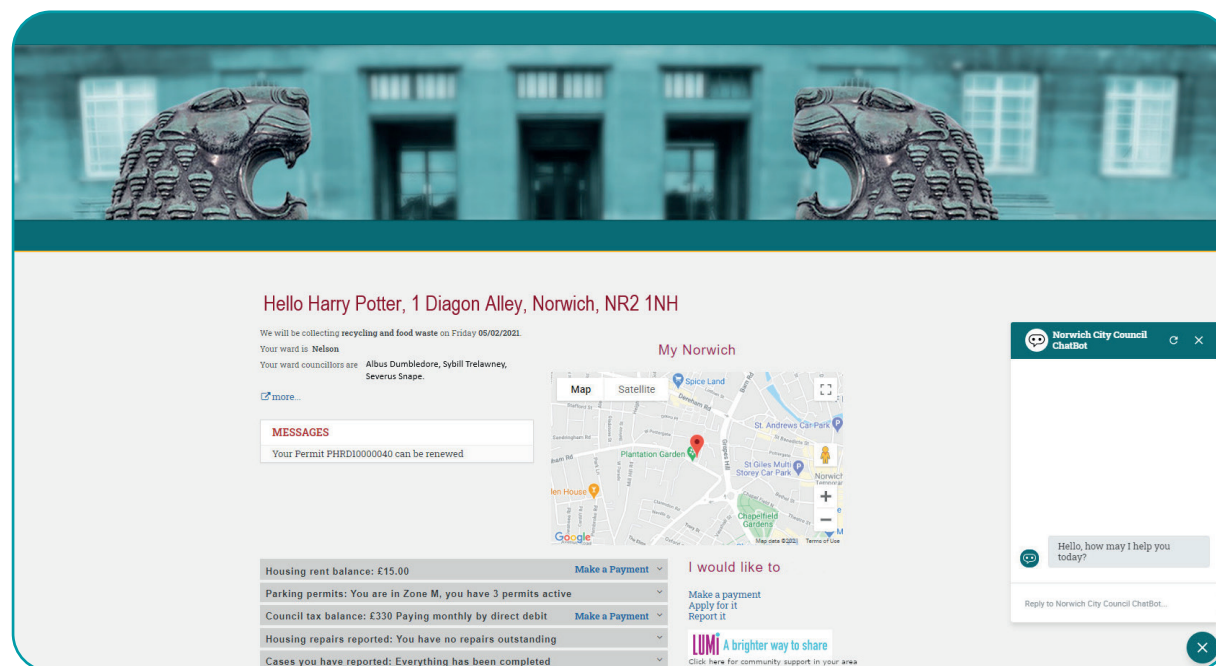
Increased channel shift

We need to continue to develop our digital services so that they are consistent, responsive and easy to use so that customers will use them by default. This requires an organisational approach to change that needs to be embedded across the entire authority to realise digital transformation. The following graph shows our channel shift journey and a potential projection up to 2024 if we apply this approach and harness the opportunities outlined in this strategy.

Channel shift projection

Customer contact – channel shift projection 2021-2024

Legend: telephone, face to face, digital, linear (digital)

y-axis: customer contact (0, 50,000, 100,000, 150,000, 200,000, 250,000, 300,000, 350,000)

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
% digital	2%	4%	6%	9%	15%	27%	32%	39%	45%	53%	60%
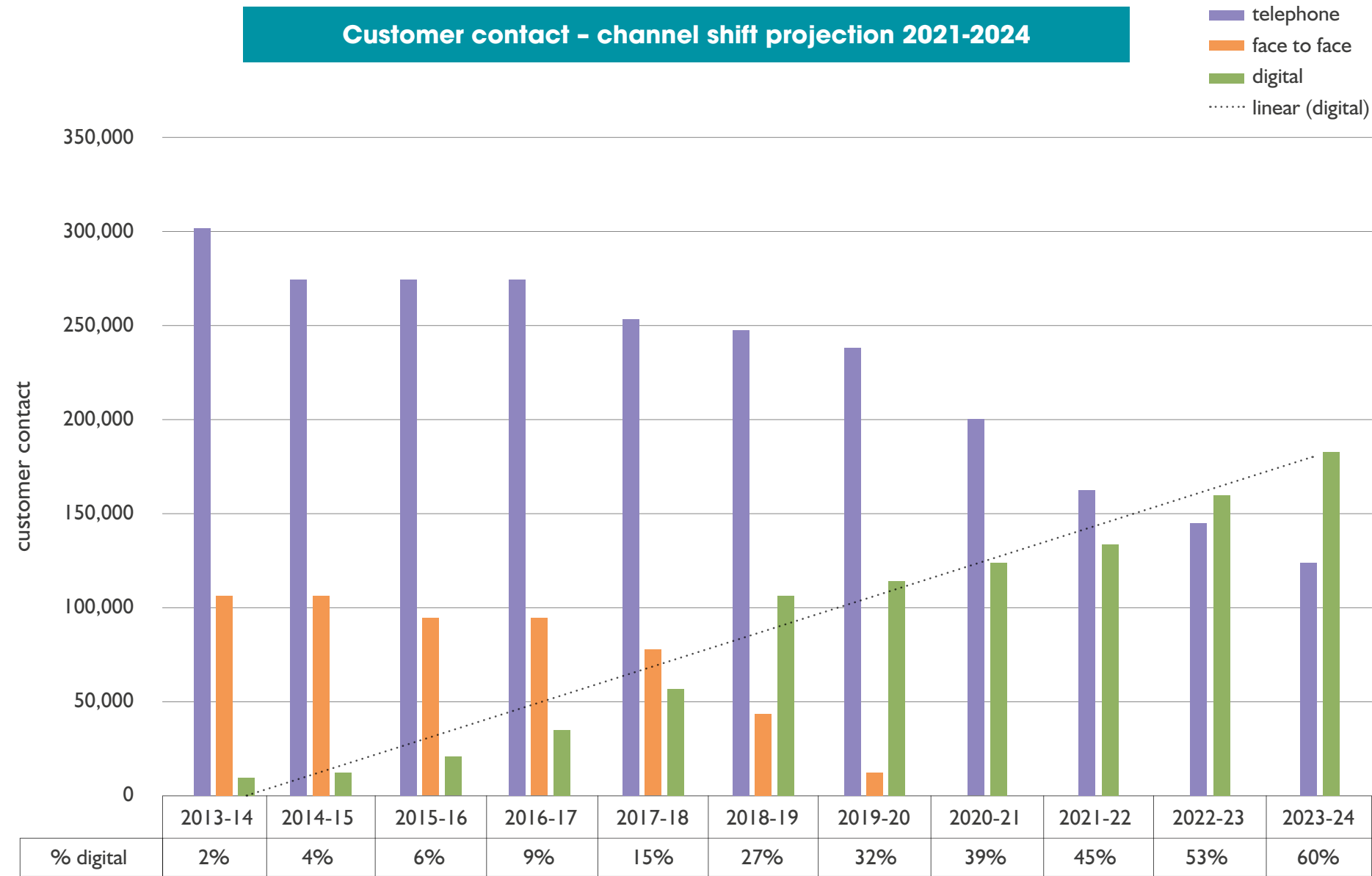
A digital response to council priorities

Master database management

Priorities

Short	Medium	Long term
Enable access to customer information through a "single sign in" customer account	Personalised information available to all customers and workforce using API (application programming interface)	End to end automation, updates and fast real time response

Customers, partners, community

Consumer channels
(access and authentication)

Information capture

Data capture

Data intelligently sent to appropriate systems

Business intelligence

Update

Integration

Master data managment

Services are delivered through outomated processeses

Preventative actions and service improvements identified

Data sharing and analysis

Line of business, data lakes, CRMs and master data managament updated automatically

Line of business application

Now

Customers:

- cannot easily find information and services online resort to calling, writing or visiting to try to resolve their enquiry
- do not get updates on their enquiries and service requests and end up contacting for clarification and for progress updates (avoidable contact)
- usually have to contact multiple departments to achieve a single outcome, like changing their address, because the systems do not 'speak' to one another
- can access Digital Hub points in the community and receive support in most parts of the city, but this coverage is not universal in geography or timings.

Organisation:

- does not have adequate flexible working solutions
- no access to live data when working remotely and information must be updated into systems back in the office
- unable to view all customers' data without interrogating all systems for information
- management of debt is in silo which does not enable the organisation or customer to effectively manage.

Future

Customers:

- can access services online at any time that suits them
- can access their information through their online account and receive status updates on progress of enquiries
- can look up, inform or request services which will automatically deal with their enquiry, updating their details without further intervention
- can access a range of Digital Hub points in their local area at a variety of venues and at different times, and with specialist support available.

Organisation:

- will be provided with flexible working solutions so they are well connected wherever they work
- have access to be able to complete transactions onsite, enabling them to use their time more effectively
- will develop a master data system that enables services to be proactive and provides opportunities for the delivery of joined-up services
- will have the ability to manage customers through a single view of their information.
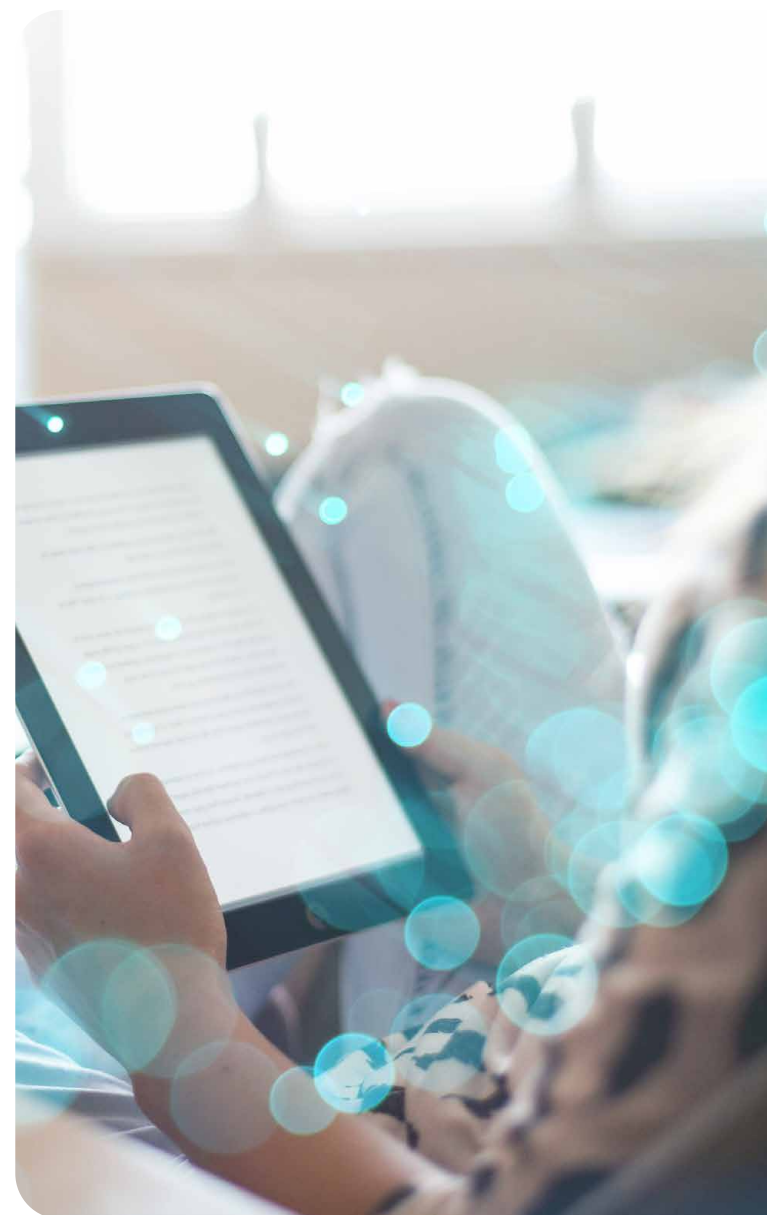
Resourcing the delivery

Existing resources within the Customer, IT and digital service and the transformation team along with service area leads and skills who will form part of the delivery team.

Additional resources and investment may be required depending on the organisational capacity and the investment needed. These requests will require a business case that will be considered through the CID board and alongside the existing "Future Shape Norwich" programme.

Monitoring and reporting progress

- managing programme of projects using the road map reviewed at the CID board

- take up of digital online services and reduction in telephone and face to face contact

- usage of our website and improved accessibility compliance.

- increased take up of customer accounts and e-billing

- reduced stationery and postage costs

- decreased avoidable contact

- increased satisfaction and improved customer user experience of services

- monitoring of staff and member feedback from CID annual survey and action plans to address and track improvements

- monitor and evaluate learner satisfaction with the digital inclusion project

- calculating the total cost of ownership as part of digital change and realising the benefits and efficiencies

- monitoring of data security including data breaches.
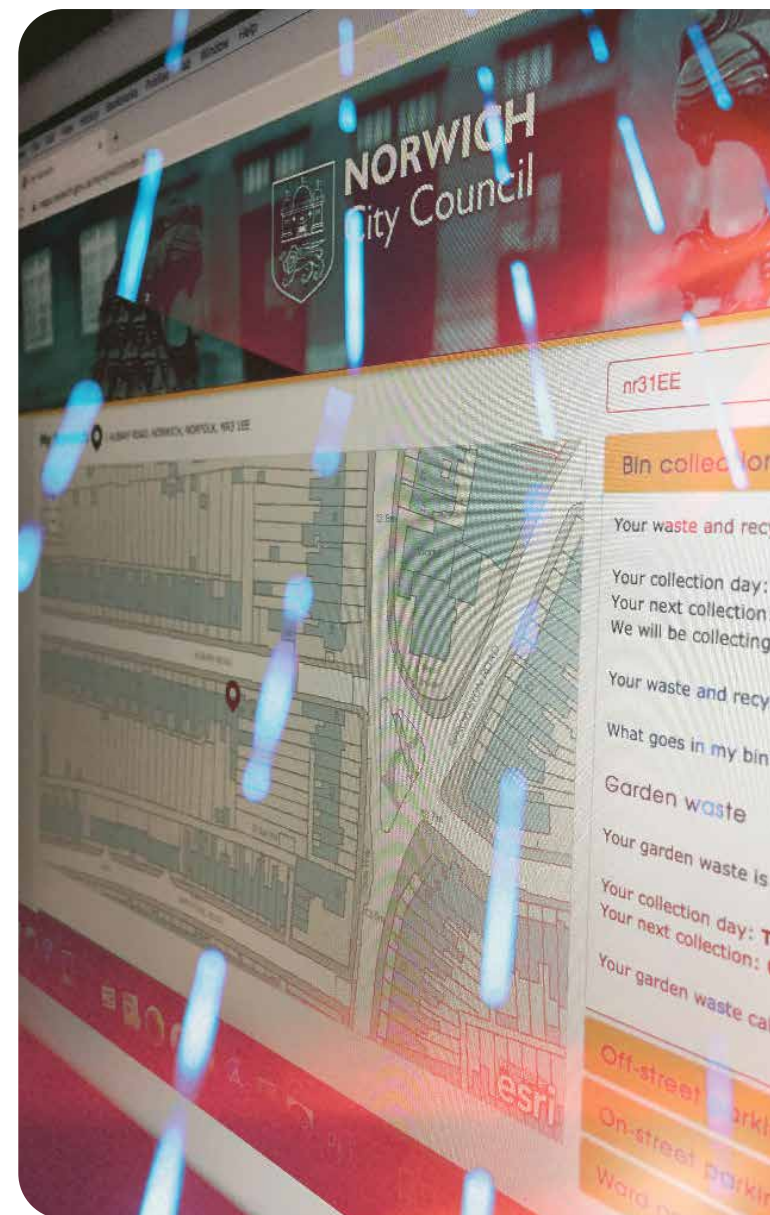
APPENDIX

Opportunities for digital

Channel shift trends – the data shows that the volume of customers contacting us face to face has declined significantly, telephone contact is decreasing and there has been a significant increase for digital take up since the introduction of web forms for services on our website.

Phone and digital comparison – few service areas deliver digital services. We still have plenty of opportunities to deliver digital across the organisation.

APPENDIX

Customer contact channel shift – annual trends

telephone
face to face
digital

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
telephone	402,449	299,181	296,658	291,340	278,706	302,393	275,950	275,049	276,297	226,280	248,502	237,514	200,157
face to face	246,307	253,610	204,626	148,626	118,528	104,557	103,625	93,289	89,837	78,897	43,031	15,163	178
digital						9,186	17,171	23,264	34,637	59,470	110,069	117,930	126,909

y-axis: customer contact
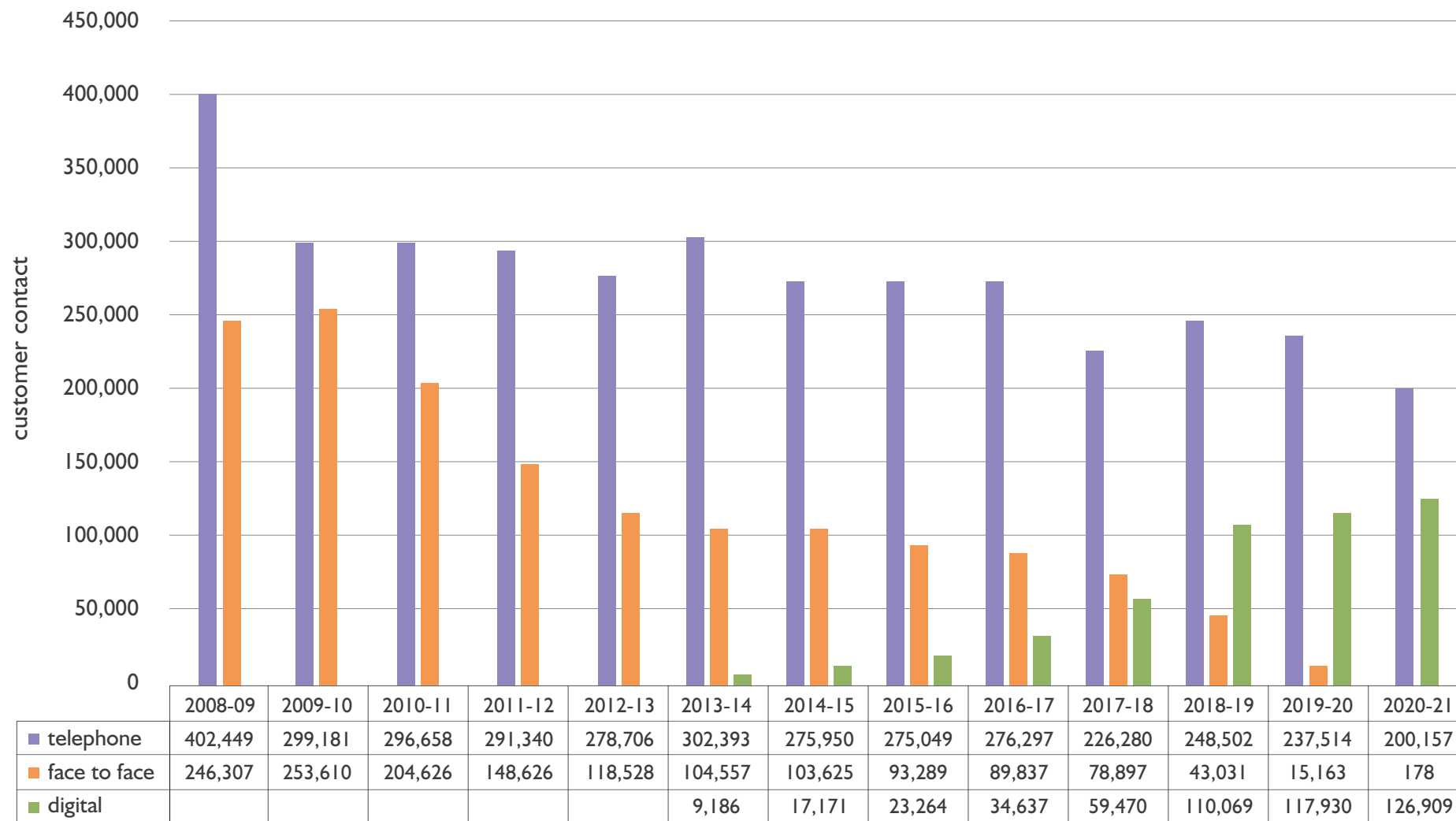
APPENDIX

Customer contact – total contact trend

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
■ total	648,756	552,791	501,284	439,966	397,234	416,136	396,746	391,602	400,771	364,647	401,602	370,607	327,244

Phone and digital comparison 2020

Legend:
- telephone
- digital

customer contact

Telephone values:
- Parking: 18688
- Environmental and waste: 15789
- Council tax: 31016
- Housing repairs: 23658
- General enquiries: 41084
- Benefits: 22233
- Housing options: 15222
- Housing tenancy/rents: 24250

Digital values:
- Parking: 29967
- Environmental and waste: 22505
- Council tax: 28819
- Housing repairs: 8225
- General enquiries: 10615
- Benefits: 4666
- Housing options: 507
- Housing tenancy/rents: 304

| Parking | Environmental and waste | Council tax | Housing repairs | General enquiries | Benefits | Housing options | Housing tenancy/rents |

IN TRAN ®
communication for all

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