

**We want to put all of our customers at the heart of everything we do, reflecting their feedback in the design and delivery of services, and to provide appropriate support to those who need it ensuring that customer experiences are easy, effective and convenient.**

Customers contact us in many ways: telephone, online, face to face, email and post, depending on their needs and the service they want to access. We are committed to providing services which are easy to use, simple and effective. For everyone using our services we want to be easy to deal with. We will also try to provide specific support where customer needs require us to provide services in a different way. In the last few years, more and more people prefer to access services on their mobile phone or computer as this is quicker and more convenient. If we make it easy for them to access our services in this way, we can focus our limited resources on customers who are unable to do it online themselves. Therefore we want to improve our online and digital services.

## Did you know that it costs the council:



The council deals with a large number of customer enquiries each year. Broken down into different channels, on average there are:

Face to face	Post	Emails	Telephone calls	Web form	Web visits
78,000	4,500	80,000	540,000	100,000	3,500,000

## What do we want to achieve?

Outcome	What this means
<b>Better customer experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customers understand what they can expect from us</li> <li>We are easy to deal with</li> <li>Aim to get it right first time, every time which reduces unnecessary multiple contact</li> <li>Simple, easy to understand policies and processes which are clear and encourage self-service</li> <li>Staff focused on providing good service and outcomes for customers</li> <li>End to end services designed from the customer perspective</li> <li>Improve customer satisfaction</li> <li>Improve the council's reputation as an organisation</li> <li>Increased trading / commercial opportunities</li> <li>Improve the experience of those visiting the city</li> </ul>
<b>Digital contact is the first choice for most customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information is easy to find on the council's website</li> <li>The Southampton Information Directory (SID) provides updated information to help people to be self-sufficient and independent</li> <li>Customers can apply for services, inform us of changes, request information and pay quickly and easily online</li> <li>Services are designed so customers can use their own devices, with no need to register or download additional software</li> <li>Customers can complete most tasks digitally from start to finish, without having to contact the council directly</li> <li>Support is available for those who need it to get online</li> <li>Customers are involved in the design of digital public services</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement with customers influences design and delivery of services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to and learn from the city's diverse range of customers, with different backgrounds and perspectives, using a range of communications methods to engage and consult them</li> <li>Customer engagement will foster communities and individuals to help people become more independent</li> <li>Customer feedback and insight will help improve council services by influencing the design of policies, services, systems and processes</li> <li>Keep customers well informed about our services, and any changes or issues which may affect them</li> <li>Provide high quality information across a range of platforms</li> </ul>

## Working together

### Council

- Listen, be open, honest and friendly
- Offer simple and effective services, built around our customers, using their feedback
- Help people to help themselves, and communities to support each other
- Provide value for money and focus our resources on people who need the most help

**HELPING MAKE SOUTHAMPTON A CITY OF OPPORTUNITY WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES.**

### Customers

- Have your say and get involved in shaping services
- Get online and use our online services
- Only seek help when it's really needed
- Get involved in your community
- Understand our resource pressures

## Who are our customers?



We deal with a wide range of people across Southampton, and our customers include everyone living, working, volunteering, investing, studying, running a business in or visiting Southampton.

**Our customers contact us for many different reasons, including to:**

- Get information from us, or give us information
- Apply for, book or arrange services
- Report issues
- Make payments
- Buy our services
- Access specific help and support.

## Key facts and figures



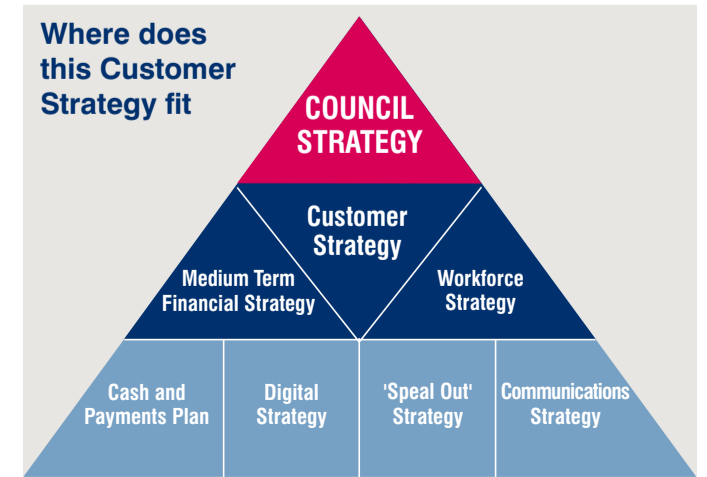
Southampton has **254,275** residents and this is expected to increase to **263,900** by 2022. In total the council dealt with at least **1,156,954** contacts in the last year. There are **127,601** properties which include residential and commercial buildings in the city, and of these we estimate:



A recent customer contact survey showed that approximately **50%** of telephone and email customer contacts were because we did not get it right first time. **Therefore we want to get it right first time, every time.**

As our population grows, there is increasing demand for council services. At the same time, we have less funding than ever before. We can manage this demand better at a lower cost if we improve the quality of our services, improve customer experiences by being innovative and working differently and make it very easy for them to access services themselves using digital channels.

Where does this Customer Strategy fit



## Resident/Customer feedback



**Customer Contact Survey:** 36% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with customer services at Southampton City Council. 47% of respondents were not contacting the council for the first time about their issue. 89% felt telephone was either very or fairly important as a channel of contact compared to 77% for online forms, 86% for email and 62% for face to face. 92% of respondents felt that the friendliness of staff was very important in providing good customer services.

**People's Panel Poll:** 39% rated customer services good or excellent at Southampton City Council, 87% feel knowledge of staff is important for creating good customer service and 80% feel easy ways of reporting and requesting things is important for creating good customer service.

**Ongoing customer feedback:** The online forms received an average customer rating of 3.7 out of 5. Of the customers using the online feedback form only 13% are satisfied or very satisfied.

**City Survey 2016:** 55% of residents are satisfied with the way Southampton City Council runs things

## Quotes from customers about how to improve customer services



*Make the online forms work! The webpage often does not respond! It is very frustrating to contact City Council online.*

**Customer Contact Survey**

*Ensure that the council make provisions for those who do not have a computer to be able to contact them.*

**People's Panel**

*Want to be able to talk, easier to do this with someone on the telephone. In regards to requesting things. And would like more ease of access to find out about requests and the ongoing request times.*

**Customer Contact Survey**

*Perhaps a better connection between requests via Customer Services and implementation of the request via the actual service.*

**People's Panel**

*Make it better known that your on-line forms are easy to use. I put off reporting my missing recycling bin for 2 years because I don't like all that fiddly online stuff, and it turned out to be a simple 30 second job.*

**Customer Contact Survey**

*To resolve the issue as soon as possible and to get back to the customer when it is needed.*

**Customer Contact Survey**

## What are we going to do?



Outcome	Action: What are we going to do?	How will we measure success?
<b>Better customer experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map the top 100 end to end processes from the customer's perspective and make an improvement plan for each</li> <li>Implement a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve processes and give a single customer view</li> <li>Increase the focus of staff on providing good customer services</li> <li>Develop consistent approaches to each customer contact channel</li> <li>Increase the use of clear and accessible language in communication</li> <li>Deliver high quality customer service for paying customers to enable and support the council's commercial ambitions.</li> <li>Reduce the level of contact through generic routes i.e. switchboard / enquiries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce customer contact to chase or query an existing case</li> <li>Increase City Survey measure of satisfaction with the way the council runs things</li> <li>Increase website satisfaction</li> <li>Increase the average website form rating</li> <li>Reduction in the number of complaints relating to customer services</li> <li>Reduce telephone contact</li> <li>Reduce the amount of outbound post</li> <li>Increase the amount of customers who feel we were easy to deal with</li> </ul>
<b>Digital contact is the first choice for most customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of services that are available online</li> <li>Provide online forms that are easy to use and enable completion of common tasks</li> <li>Use of social media and web chat to support the website as the ultimate contact channel</li> <li>Exploit emerging technology including automation software, bots, artificial intelligence, voice recognition etc</li> <li>Make it easier for customers to find the information they need on our websites, by ensuring all pages have clear and informative content</li> <li>Ensure web content is accessible regardless of the device the customer is using</li> <li>Automatic updates to keep customers informed on the progress of their case</li> <li>Publish an up-to-date comprehensive directory of activities and services to help users find support that meets their needs</li> <li>Help the council put digital tools in place that allow customers to give feedback</li> <li>Improve and update Southampton Information Directory</li> <li>Make it easier to pay online</li> <li>Implement a single direct debit process for any council service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the proportion of digital contact with the council</li> <li>Reduction in the number of contacts chasing progress on previous enquiries</li> <li>Increase in website satisfaction</li> <li>Achieve an average rating of 4 for web forms</li> <li>Increase in productivity of customer-facing staff</li> <li>Reduction in visits to the 'Contact us' page</li> <li>Improvement in website satisfaction</li> <li>Increase in contacts through new digital channels</li> <li>All council websites are adaptive</li> <li>Automatic updates for the top 25 journeys</li> <li>All online processes provide automated updates</li> <li>Feedback tools launched</li> <li>Increase online direct debit take-up</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement with customers influences design and delivery of services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate through a range of channels to make sure everyone is up to date on changes and issues which affect them</li> <li>Communicate in a proactive way so customers need to contact the council less</li> <li>Establish a mystery shopping group within the People's Panel</li> <li>Ensure that team and contract success measures include customer feedback</li> <li>Improving the quality of all council communication to ensure they are clear, transparent, jargon free and in Plain English</li> <li>Continue to involve customers in each step of service changes and developments</li> <li>Involve service users in the design and detail of service design and changes through focus groups and workshops</li> <li>Deliver a programme of community engagement to have ongoing dialogue about key issues with a diverse range of people</li> <li>Deliver the 'Speak Out' strategy (engaging with children and young people)</li> <li>Consult effectively with a wide range of stakeholders on key changes</li> <li>Conduct representative market research to give a true picture of the views of residents on council services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the informed rating in City Survey</li> <li>Increased sign-ups for Stay Connected, Twitter followers, and Facebook</li> <li>Improve Stay Connected satisfaction</li> <li>Increase the amount of hyper-local updates sent out about issues or activity to those who live in the immediate area</li> <li>Increase People's Panel membership</li> <li>Increase participation in consultations and surveys</li> <li>Increase the membership of Youth Forum Southampton</li> <li>Increase membership of CICC (Children in Care Council) Southampton</li> <li>Widen the reach of community engagement activity</li> <li>Create a group of digital champions</li> </ul>