Customer Update
FPR Select Committee

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Introduction

In July 2018, the customer directorate provided an overview of a programme of work to inform members and ensure customer needs were being considered and met. This paper provides an update on all projects, current performance and provides an overview of the Customer and Digital workstream for Unitary.

Since the last update, the Customer directorate has seen some changes in the structure - the customer experience and digital team have been aligned with the Customer Service Centre under one manager Kelly Page. This update incorporates the Customer Service Centre and all operational aspects of our digital estate.

National Customer Service Week (NCSW) October 2018

During NCSW, a series of events took place to engage staff and reinforce a culture of accountability. The first ever online customer experience training was launched; to date over 550 officers have completed the online modules. The week provided the opportunity for officers and members to meet and engage with members of the public and discuss our digital offering. This was valuable in capturing insight into the expectations our customers have when contacting us.

Several other events took place, Metro Bank inspired officers with their approach to customer services, taking the very traditional sector of banking and introducing a more retail approach to their delivery model. Workshops to engage officers in digital design and delivering the service standards took place with high attendance and great feedback.

Customer Service Centre (CSC)

After a period of difficulty for the Customer Service Centre, due to significant reduction in budgets, performance is on target and improving continually. The average resolution at the first point of contact is currently at 69%

This is attributed to

➢ Improved recruitment and new starter process
➢ Increased quality monitoring

- ➢ Regular coaching and training
- ➢ Closer working arrangements with service areas in order to better brief staff
- ➢ More collaboration with the digital team to deliver better digital processes

Performance

Calls answered in under 29 seconds has improved from 40% in March 2018 to 64% in February 2019

The average queue time has reduced and is currently at an average of 41 seconds – in September 2018 this peaked to a 188 second average wait time

In August 2018, webchat was deployed on all BCC webpages and these are routed to specialists in the CSC (with the exception of Admissions)
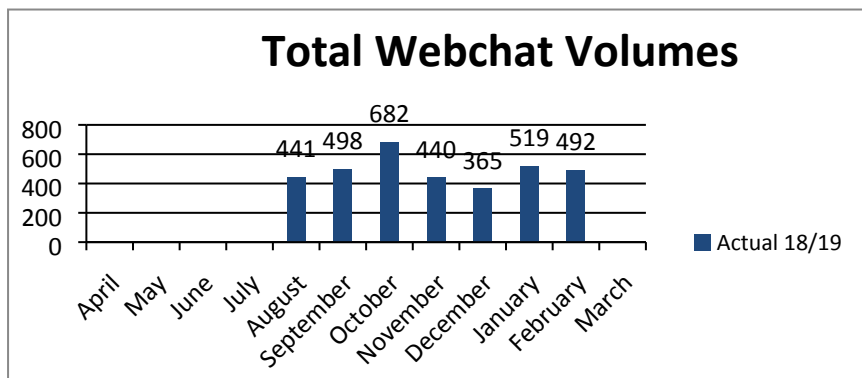
Work to introduce a contact us form to replace a generic Transport for Bucks email address has shown significant improvements. Replacing with a form that is intuitive enough to direct customers to self-service options and ensuring all information is captured has led to a dramatic drop in contact.
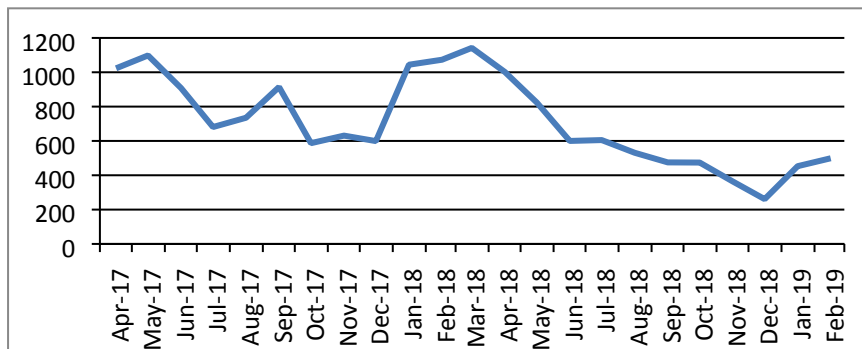
In October 2018, the CSC began taking the contact for concessionary bus passes and has taken over 2,500 calls since then with a 98% answer rate.

December 2018 saw the addition of a new priority line into the CSC to provide direct support for Parish and Town Councils. Usage continues to be monitored in terms of call volumes received and the enquiry types offered.

The CSC has been working collaboratively with CHASC to improve customer experience by:

➢ Delivering targeted training to customer service agents to increase first call resolution
➢ Holding workshops to identify additional self-serve opportunities

The Customer Service Centre has recently incorporated Social Media into a channel for customers. Previously any comments or queries left on our corporate accounts were picked up by a member of staff in the communications team; these are now managed by advisors and captured on our Customer Relationship Management tool.

<u>**Digital**</u>

BCC use Firmstep as our customer account and self-service provision. In March 2018, we recruited additional resource to accelerate the number of transactions customers can access online.

We have grown our usage of My Account from 47,000 customer accounts in May 2018 to 59,000. In the year we have also added an additional 46 customer forms taking the total to 126. Since March 2018 over 150,000 customers have accessed and used our online forms. We measure the satisfaction of these and 91% of customers have rated the forms 4 or 5 stars.

<u>**Brilliant at the basics**</u>

Brilliant at the Basics is a programme of work that aims to strengthen our existing technology, reduce the number of microsites that have been created by the business, reduce costs and protect the Councils reputation alongside enhancing the customer experience.

In March 2018, we designed the programme of work for B@B in order to achieve our ambition of creating a digital front door to the organisation, we needed to truly excel at the basics, creating a platform that our customers can interact with us 24 hours a day 7 days a week

Visits to our website continue to increase dramatically, with over 2.5 million visits to our website since March 2018. Measuring our web performance, helps us to focus on improving and identifying the areas that we need focus on, in order to reach our objective of providing a website that is accessible for all of our users, designed as mobile-first and passes the Local Government Digital Service Standard.

We measure our web performance in the following areas:

- **Digital Certainty Index** - measures the quality and potential impact of the BCC website's digital presence, including its accessibility and usability.

- **Quality Assurance** – measures the credibility and usability of the user-facing aspects of the website such as content quality, freshness, security and the user experience.

- **Search Engine Optimisation** – measures how well the technical elements of the site enable it to be accessed, crawled and indexed by search engines and how well the content is optimised for users and search engines
  .

- **Accessibility –** measures the extent that our website is inclusive so that all users have equal access to information and functionality.

- **Readability –** measures the extent that our webpages meet a reading age 15 and below to ensure that our messages are simple to read and easy to understand.

Our performance

In the 12 months since March 2018, we have improved our rating in all areas of performance and are above the industry benchmark for each indicator except accessibility.

Performance Indicator	Mar-18		Mar-19		BCC 12 month change	Direction
	BCC	Industry benchmark	BCC	Industry benchmark		
Digital Certainty Index	79.5%	78.4%	83.5%	77.9%	*4.0%*	⬆
Quality Assurance	98.1%	86.9%	99.0%	85.3%	*0.9%*	⬆
Seach Engine Optimisation	78.1%	77.8%	86.2%	78.0%	*8.1%*	⬆
Accessibility	61.4%	70.0%	65.9%	70.7%	*4.5%*	⬆
Readability	4.0%		54.0%		*50.0%*	⬆

To further improve our accessibility score and to exceed the industry benchmark, we have:

- Identified areas for improvement and have a number of fixes ready for deployment in March 2019. These updates will take the accessibility score to **75%**
- Inserted alternative text to all images on the BCC site, which tells viewers the nature or content of an image.

SOCITM rating

In August 2018, SOCITM rated our website as 3* (4* is the maximum). Accessibility was identified as an area of improvement in order to achieve a 4* star rating.

The inclusion of alternative text and other fixes has improved accessibility to meet the target of 8/10, meaning the site would now achieve our target of a 4* rating (SOCITM no longer provide ratings for Council websites).

Website Functionality

We have worked with stakeholders and customers to develop a more visual website that services can use to promote their areas. We held a digital engagement day in County Hall where we presented various options for the website and asked officers and members to feed in their ideas.

We also attended the County Show and spoke to many customers about what they liked and disliked about our website. Based on the feedback received, we have now launched new look and feel campaign pages.

Below is an example of the new Fostering pages that can now incorporate video and improved design layouts.
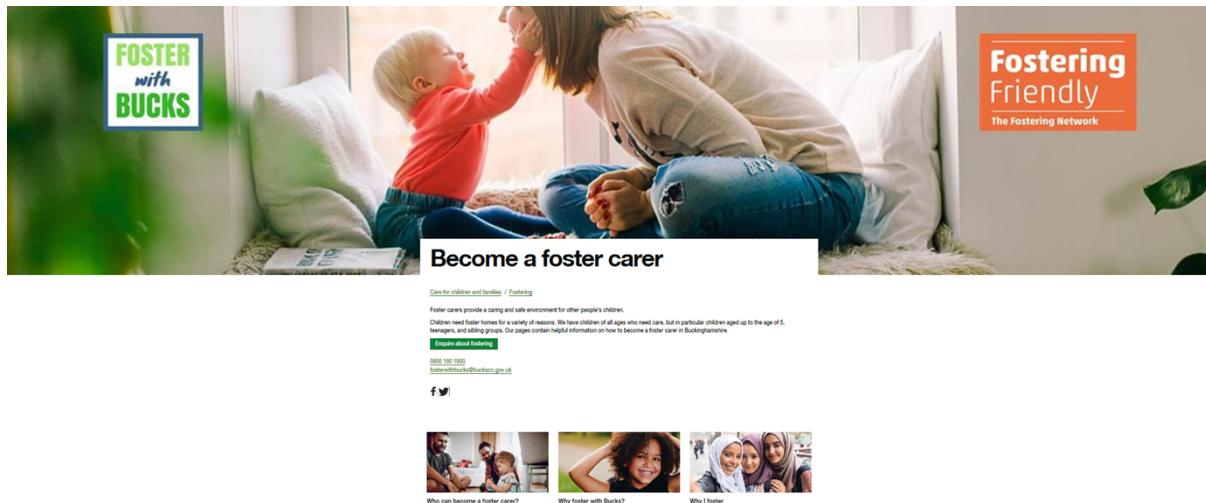
We have produced new microsite and campaign templates and are working with 20 areas to migrate their existing content from older unsupported platforms onto the main BCC site.

Since our last update in March 2018 we have:

- Launched 5 new sites (Country Parks, Weddings, Unitary Jobs, Recycle for Buckinghamshire, Integrated Care) There are 5 more in progress (Kids in Care, Environmental Records, Safeguarding Adults, Teachers Careers, School Travel Planning)
- Delivered 2 Campaign pages (Fostering, Better you) 1 in progress (Adoption)
- shut down/migrated to BCC site (Biodiversity, Archaeology, BucksLaw), 1 in progress (Floodsmart)

Customer Effort Score

Customer Effort Score (CES) is a customer satisfaction metric which measures the ease of access to Council services.

In July 2018, we inserted feedback options to every page on the website, which gives users the opportunity to rate how helpful a page is on a scale of "Very Poor" to "Very Good".

Was this page helpful?

⭐	⭐	⭐	⭐	⭐
Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good

⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

Awesome, thanks for letting us know!

If you have time please tell us what went well so that we can improve other areas

Our current performance

When CES is calculated, the rating is based on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very high effort and 5 being very low effort.

Performance Indicator	Jul-18	Feb-19	Change	Direction
CES	2.76	2.89	5%	⬆

The ease of accessing services on the BCC website is improving. We review feedback received on a daily basis and identify where improvement can be made.

To date, we have received **13,646** star ratings and **2,852** individual comments.

Here are a few examples of feedback received and the action that we have taken to reduce the effort required to access services and information.

Webpage	Feedback	Action
Collections webpage	*"I find this information totally irrelevant to my problem about bin collection."*	Added recommended link to 'Bin collection and council tax' page using the keyword 'collection'
Potholes webpage	*"How do I claim for a new wheel? It was punctured by a large pothole"*	Added related link to claim for damage page
Schools navigation page	*"I'm looking for a list of secondary schools in bucks. I cannot find one"*	Added link to School Directory in the 'Schools' navigation.

Unitary

The creation of a new Unitary authority represents a significant opportunity to transform services for our customers. A key part of this transformation will be designing digital experiences that are fit for the 21st century, experiences that meet the needs and expectations of our customers. County and District officers are currently working together to develop proposals for the future customer service model and these will be presented to the Shadow Executive for consideration once it is established.

What's next?

National Customer Service Week 2019 – we aim to continue to build on the success of the week long initiative and planning is beginning earlier this year, a working group is currently being formed to represent all areas that will debate the key themes and ensure high engagement. This will also provide an opportunity for the Unitary working group to showcase their work and use the event to engage across all current authorities**.**

Redefining performance – The Customer Service Centre was launched in 2005 with a set of Key Performance Indicators. In the last 14 years we know the way customers interact with us has significantly changed and their expectations are hugely different. We will review these indicators and ensure they are measuring the right things for our customers and creating the right culture in our front line staff.

Customer insight – Building on the success of the Customer Effort score we will introduce a similar survey across all of our other channels in order to embed continuous improvement, this will begin with a telephony survey.