

Service in Focus – Cherwell District Council Customer Service Centre (CSC)

Cherwell’s Customer Service Centre provides First Point of Contact (FPoC) to residents and businesses across a range of Council Services including - Revenues and Benefits, Waste and Recycling, Housing Services, Elections Services, Environmental Services, Parking Services and General Enquires. The Post, Bulk Mailing and Scanning functions for the Council are also provided.

Customers access our service via a range of different channels including phone, email, webforms, face to face and phone appointments to assist with complex enquiries.

During the latter part of 19/20 the service benefited from participation in the CSC Optimisation Project along with Oxfordshire County Council CSC. The project had a clear focus on capacity and productivity gains for the service, looking at both short term and longer-term improvement opportunities.

It resulted in a new operating model across the two councils to include a shared Continuous Improvement Team. The Team supports both the CDC and OCC CSC’s with Capacity Planning and Efficiency, Quality and Performance, Business Development, Recruitment and Training, and Voice of the Customer activities. This specialist support will allow the CSC service delivery teams to focus on the customer at first point of contact, while giving an effective focus on projects, proactive process improvements and customer feedback.

The CDC CSC itself is a relatively small team of only 32 people (27.72 FTE) who are focused on delivering “The Best”

OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE IS YOUR EXPERIENCE...



...YOUR SATISFACTION IS OUR SUCCESS.

B = Business Delivery

- We work with our directorates and partners to deliver their outcomes and resolve operational or business issues
- We capitalise on opportunities to grow the business in **an agile and creative** way
- We deliver against our targets
- We promote our digital capability
- We support the achievement of strategic priorities

E = Engaged colleagues

- We operate with honesty, **equality, and integrity**
- We respect, support, and encourage our colleagues
- We provide development opportunities
- We are fair to all when filling vacancies
- We promote a culture of **colleague engagement**

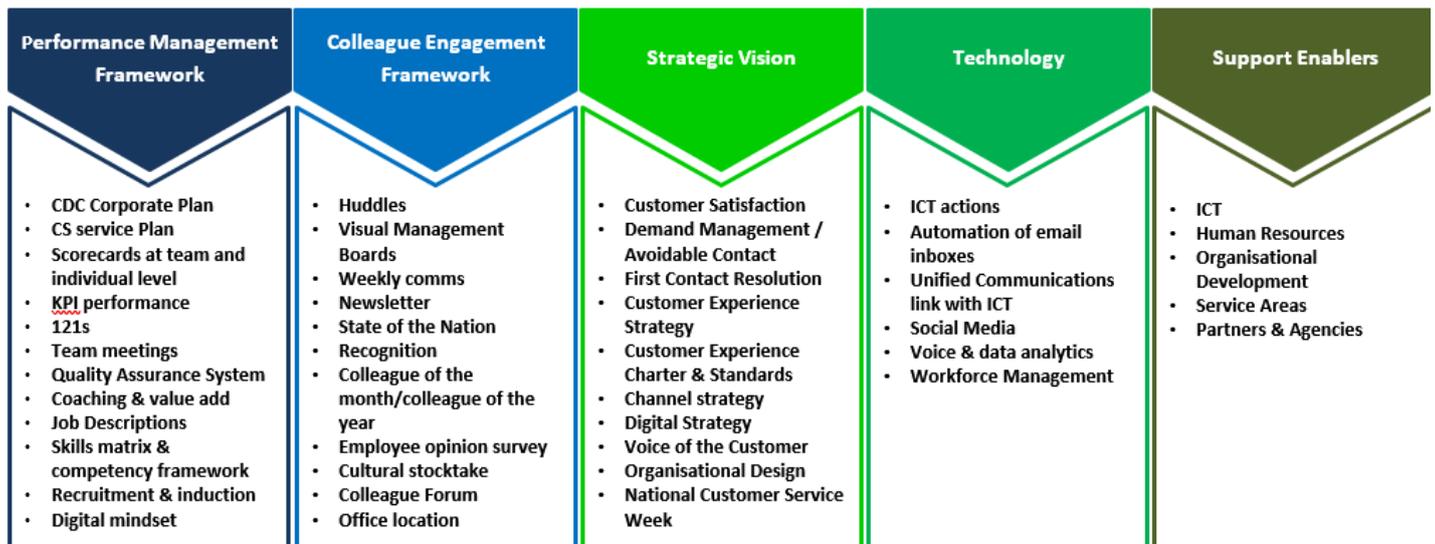
S = Satisfied Customers

- We aim to give outstanding service to our customers
- We identify ways to increase customer satisfaction
- We take **ownership** of customers problems
- We try to meet customers’ needs through a single contact
- We promote quality, resolution, and successful outcomes

T = Teamwork

- We continually seek ways to improve our performance
- We work for the good of the team, Customer Experience, and the Council overall
- We **share ideas and learning** to do things more efficiently and effectively
- We work collaboratively with our internal services areas – our internal customers

To be the best, the service has focused on key behaviours, visions, projects, and partnership working. These are detailed in our five pillars to operational excellence model:



This ethos has resulted in capacity and efficiencies meaning that the service has been able to realise the challenging savings target In 21/22, as well as significantly improving performance and the customer experience (see Appendix 1).

Recent Improvement Projects and activities

- Implementation of Service Improvement Logger (SIL) to enable proactive barrier removal and improvements
- Transfer of telephony system to a shared platform with OCC to enable future savings and shared virtual contact centre
- Work Force Management System Implementation in progress to enable demand led resourcing
- Stand up of Oxfordshire Local Contact Tracing Service, handling over 12.5K cases and successfully completing tracing for over 8.7k cases to date

Future Improvement Projects

- Digital Transformation Phase 2 project, to include document verification via the Post Office service and further online end to end transaction capabilities
- Web chat as a contact channel
- Social Media as a direct contact channel
- Automated email filing to Revs and Bens account to reduce contact handling time
- Improved Quality and Performance Monitoring system capabilities to further improve service levels
- Bring First Point of Contact into the CSC from further CDC service areas

Celebrating Great Customer Service

The CSC recently participated in National Customer Service Week, a week-long opportunity to raise awareness of customer service and the vital role it plays in successful business practice and the growth of the UK economy.

The CSC shared best practice techniques, celebrated colleagues and highlighted great customer service across the Council. Here's a selection of the celebrations

- Thank you ever so much. What excellent service. Your department is a shining star for Cherwell Council.
- What a professional and efficient team you are! Anytime I have had to call in; I've had my query answered straight away, with a kind word and always very helpful. The best organisation that I have had to deal with....thank you!
- Firstly please let me thank you for your kindness and professionalism when helping me with my application on the phone yesterday, you made a very sensitive situation much less painful and embarrassing. Whilst my circumstances are less than fortunate at the moment, it is times like these when people like myself are really at the lowest that they can be, that kindness and understanding goes a very long way and really does make a difference to someone's day when the chips are down! Your kindness and help were very much appreciated, so thank you
- Thank you very much for all you support - I am very impressed with the efficiency and kindness shown from Johanne, Lee and Michele in helping me make my parents lives a little easier
- it was so great to be able to get through to someone so quickly and get everything sorted over the phone. My experience with other companies has not been anywhere near as good.

As we always say in the CSC - *Customer Service is not a department. It's an ATTITUDE'*

Customer service

2020 - 2021



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Total customer interactions 151,323



Phone
91,200



Email
59,024



Customer appointments
992



Face to face
177

Calls by service

14,853

General enquiries

Other services areas e.g. Licensing, Landscaping, Safeguarding also signposting or referring onto to other services not dealt with by Customer Service e.g. Planning, Leisure. General advice regarding private lettings

14,081

Waste and recycling

- Bin orders and reports
- Bulky waste bookings
- Street cleansing

10,611

Housing

Housing register applications, help with bidding for properties, homelessness, general advice regarding private lettings

10,062

Benefits

Queries about or claims for housing benefit and council tax reduction

2,232

Environmental

Nuisance reports, food hygiene, health and safety, dog services, animal boarding enquiries

2,230

Elections

Registration of electors, postal and proxy vote applications, information about upcoming elections or referendums

37,131

Council tax and business rates

Moving into or out of a property, advice about discounts and exemptions, advice about business grants and reliefs, payments for council tax and business rates



Emails by service

13,825
Other



11,533
Benefits

33,666
Revenues