Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tuesday, 27 January 2026 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor David Bellamy, Councillor Pam Bosworth, Councillor James Denniston, Councillor Tim Harrison, Councillor Robert Leadenham, Councillor Habib Rahman and Councillor Lee Steptoe

Supplementary Paper

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SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday, 27 January 2026

Report of Councillor Philip Knowles
Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing

Customer Service Update - Quarter 3 (2025/26)

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for Quarter 3 during 2025/26.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note the report and invited to ask questions regarding its content;**

2. **Note the Customer Experience Strategy action plan and invited to ask questions regarding its content.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	N
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1.   Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1   There are currently no direct budget implications associated with this report.

1.2   Any actions associated with the Customer Experience Strategy will be met from existing budgets or, where required, additional budgets will be requested.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.3   There are no significant legal or governance implication arising from this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2.   Background to the Report

2.1.   The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to Connecting Communities and being an Effective Council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Customer Service Team and high contact service areas strives to deliver these priorities.

2.2.   A customer service update quarter one (2025/26) report was presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. The report focused on the customer interactions during this quarter.

2.3.   The Customer Experience Strategy was presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. The report focused on the introduction of the new Strategy and associated action plan.

2.4.   The Customer Service Team handle customer interactions in various ways for 17 high contact service areas, as well as general public enquiries. This report provides an update regarding customer interactions for these service areas for Quarter 3 (2025/26).

Customer Interaction

2.5.   **Appendix 1** shows the number of customer interactions so far during 2025/26, and comparison to Q3 2024/25. These interactions include all methods of contact.

2.6.   In comparison to Q2 2025/26, on the whole, contact has decreased. This is expected as each year we see a reduction in contact during December. However, table 1 and table 3 show call volumes increasing for other services (not the Customer Service Team). This will be included as an agenda for the Customer Experience Champions to understand these volumes and discuss what activities are being undertaken to promote alternative access channels.

2.7.   In comparison to Q2 2024/25, there has been a significant reduction in website contact of 380,095.

2.8.   The decrease in website contact is as a result of customers not undertaking activities which are higher in volume throughout other months in the year such as green bin renewals, a reduced number of green bin collections. The Waste round review and changes to bin collection days led residents to the website during August and September, which saw an increase. This reduced from October once residents had become familiar with the changes.

2.9.   The Customer Service Team and individual service areas continue to promote the portal. For Council Tax, this is the most efficient way to contact the team, with customers receiving updated Council Tax bills within 24 to 48 hours from point of contact.

2.10. It is important for the Council to provide a variety of methods of contact for its customers. It is appreciated one contact method may not be suitable for all. Therefore, the method for customer contact provided by South Kesteven will continue to include all methods as shown in appendix 1.

Call answering – 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025

2.11. During Q3 2025/26, on average, 93% of calls were answered, with just 7% of calls being 'abandoned' to other service channels. This is an improvement from Q3 2024/25, where these figures were 84% and 17% respectively.

2.12. During December 2025, the call handling increased to 95%.

2.13. Call handling statistics continue to be produced and issued by the Performance and Change Improvement Lead on a monthly basis to the Council's Corporate Management Team and service areas. The information includes number of calls offered, answered, abandoned and average speed of answer.

2.14. Performance clinics with service areas are continuing on a monthly basis which enable both the Customer Service Team and service area to analyse call handling performance and for the service area to advise of changes in service activity and any upcoming activities which may impact on the number or nature of customer interactions.

Ability to contact the Council

2.15. Customer feedback via the Council's corporate feedback process is monitored with headline information being reported to Governance and Audit Committee. The feedback specifically in relation to this report is where the customer has indicated an issue regarding the ''ability to contact the Council''.

2.16. During Q3 2025/26 there was a total of 588 feedbacks received, of which, only two had a 'root cause' identified as 'ability to contact the Council'.

Website – feedback and improvements

2.17. During December 2025 the website contact increased by 26,180 (compared to November 2025). This is in correlation to the reduction of 10,453 face to face, telephone and email contact during this month.

2.18. With regards to feedback, each page on the Council's website has a 'was this page useful?' function. A customer can choose 'yes' or 'no' by clicking on the relevant 'happy or sad face' icon at the bottom of the page. In doing this, the customer is given the option to provide and submit their comments, along with their name and email address.

2.19. A report is produced each month by the Performance and Customer Improvement Lead. For the purpose of this report, the information provided is from April 2025 to September 2025.

2.20. During this period, there have been a total of 166 individual 'was this page useful' interactions and this is broken down as follows:

	Was this page useful				
	Yes	No	Total	% Yes	% No
Total interactions	33	133	166	20%	80%

2.21. Customers are also able to provide comments regarding their feedback and can leave their contact details which enables officers to provide a response as to the

actions taken. Of the 133 respondents which advised the page was not useful, only one provided comments.

2.22.   All comments are reviewed and actions taken where required. The one comment received resulted in an action being taken. The common areas for feedback and reasons for changes not being taken are:

- Customer did not provide enough details for action to be taken
- Information requested is already on the website
- Customer had a service enquiry, not a comment on the page

2.23.   Officers have analysed the feedback and actions taken since 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025 – these are detailed in **appendix 2**.

Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 – Action Plan

2.24.   The Strategy was introduced and ensures all services and staff provide an effective and positive customer experience who are aware of and understand their responsibilities in fulfilling the Customer Charter, Service Standards, Priorities and Vision to a high level.

2.25.   An action plan has been developed which will support the Strategy and its priorities – this is detailed in **appendix 3.** Those areas updated since the last committee are shown with comments and have been rated red (overdue), amber (due and updated) and green (complete).

2.26.   The plan focusses on Year 1 (October 2025 to 31 March 2026) – which covers the 'Explore' activities. The activities for 2026/27 and beyond will move from Explore to Implement, with a new action plan being devised for this period. These activities will be appropriately linked to relevant Service Plans, staff appraisals and will detail financial implications of proposed actions.

2.27.   The Customer Service Management Team will be responsible for the strategic direction of the action plan, collaborating with the Customer Experience Steering Group who will have oversight of the Strategy to enable effective co-ordination of delivery of the actions.

3.   Key Considerations

3.1.   These are included throughout the report and members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

4.   Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1   The recommendations are to ensure Members are aware of and are able to provide feedback regarding the level of Customer Service being provided and the progress being made towards the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy and it's action plan.

5.   Appendices

5.1   There are three appendices included in this report:

- Appendix 1: Customer Interactions
- Appendix 2: Website Feedback
- Appendix 3: Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 action plan

Table 1 – telephone calls and face to face

2025/26					Comparison 2024/25 to 2025/26			
Contact Type	Q2	Q3	Difference	Direction	Q3 2024/25	Q3 2025/26	Difference	Direction
Virtual Operator	22,236	21,834	-402	⬇	20,229	21,834	1,605	⬆
IVR	12,613	9,870	-2,743	⬇	9,206	9,870	664	⬆
Total	**34,849**	**31,704**	**-3,145**	⬇	**29,435**	**31,704**	**2,269**	⬆

	Q2	Q3	Difference	Direction (Q1 to Q2)	Q3 2024/25	Q3 2025/26	Difference	Direction
CS calls exc Switchboard	33,223	29,028	-4,195	⬇	31,892	29,028	-2,684	⬇
Switchboard calls	4,224	3,457	-767		4,129	3,457	-672	⬇
Other teams calls	13,840	16,145	2,305	⬆	14,037	16,145	2,108	⬆
Total Calls	**51,287**	**48,630**	**-2,657**	⬆	**50,058**	**48,630**	**-1,428**	⬇
Grantham walk-in	1,409	1,225	-184	⬆	831	1,225	394	⬆
Bourne walk-in	129	112	-17	⬆	104	112	8	⬆
Total Walk-Ins	**1,538**	**1,337**	**-201**	⬆	**935**	**1,337**	**402**	⬆
Grantham appointments	249	288	39	⬇	142	288	146	⬆
Bourne appointments	81	68	-13	⬇	62	68	6	⬆
Total Appointments	**330**	**356**	**26**	⬇	**204**	**356**	**152**	⬆
Bourne library	**7,747**	**7,359**	**-388**	⬆	**7,608**	**7,359**	**-249**	⬇
Total Interactions	**60,902**	**57,682**	**-3,220**	⬆	**58,805**	**57,682**	**-1,123**	⬇

Table 2: Digital channels – Emails, Online Forms and Website

2025/26					Comparison 2024/25 to 2025/26			
Contact Type	Q2	Q3	Difference	Direction	Q3 2024/25	Q3 2025/26	Difference	Direction
Emails	4,574	3,767	-807	⬇	3,474	3,767	293	⬆
Website	663,162	455,142	-208,020	⬇	541,739	455,142	-86,597	⬇

Total digital Interactions	667,736	458,909	-208,827	⬇	545,213	458,909	-86,304	⬇

Total Contact (Table 1 and Table 2)	728,638	516,591	-212,047	⬇	896,686	516,591	-380,095	⬇

Table 3: Digital channels – Emails, Online Forms and Website – Q2 to Q3 2025/26

Contact Type	Q2		Q3		Direction of volume	Direction as % of contact
	Volume	% of total contact (728,638)	Volume	% of total contact (728,638)		
Telephone calls (table 1)	55,566	7.58%	48,630	9.41%	⬇	⬆
Face to face – walk in (table 1)	1,538	0.21%	1,337	0.26%	⬇	⬆
Face-to-face – appointments (table 1)	330	0.05%	356	0.07%	⬆	⬆
Bourne Library (table 1)	7,747	1.06%	7,359	1.42%	⬇	⬆
Digital (table 2)	667,736	87.52%	458,909	88.84%	⬇	⬇
Total Contact	**732,917**		**516,591**		⬇	

Table 4: Digital channels – Emails, Online Forms and Website – Q3 2024/25 to Q3 2025/26

Contact Type	Q3 2024/25		Q3 2025/26		Direction of volume	Direction as % of contact
	Volume	% of total contact (596,686)	Volume	% of total contact (516,591)		
Telephone calls (table 1)	43,483	7.29%	48,630	9.41%	⬆	⬆
Face to face – walk in (table 1)	1,234	0.21%	1,337	0.26%	⬆	⬆
Face-to-face – appts (table 1)	224	0.04%	356	0.07%	⬆	⬆
Bourne Library (table 1)	6,577	1.10%	7,359	1.42%	⬆	⬆
Digital (table 2)	545,213	91.38%	458,909	88.84%	⬇	⬇
Total Contact	**596,686**		**516,591**		⬆	

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Website Feedback: Analysis of feedback and actions taken since 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
South Kesteven Business Growth Grants	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/economic-development/south-kesteven-business-growth-grants	Economic Development	There is a contradiction. The page tells me what the grants can be used for but then says you are no longer accepting applications. Is there a date when applications can be accepted again?	Page now archived as the grants being referred at that time had closed. The existing web page confirms the current closing date is 9 February 2206: **https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/communityfund**

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Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2029 – Action Plan

The Customer Experience Strategy is underpinned by an action plan that runs from 2025 until 2029.

The action plan currently focusses on Year 1 of the strategy (October 2025 to 31 March 2026) – which are the ''Explore'' activities.

The activities for 2026/27 and beyond will move from Explore to Implement, with a new action plan being devised for this period. These activities will be appropriately linked to relevant Service Plans and staff appraisals

Each action will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through the performance framework and ongoing customer consultation and engagement to ensure it meets current needs and is developed further to accommodate future requirements.

Priority 1	**Our commitment to a customer first ethos**
Priority 2	**Access to multiple service channels**
Priority 3	**Accessibility and Inclusion**
Priority 4	**Regular staff training**
Priority 5	**Technology**

Priority 1: Our commitment to a customer first ethos
Our commitment: To ensure customers are advised when their enquiry is passed on to another member of the team or service area for resolution
Purpose: We will ensure that the customer voice is central to our decision making when we look at how our services are designed in the future. We'll also share learning and best practice across the organisation. To be transparent and keep residents informed throughout their customer journey. Being clear, respectful and responding in a timely manner.

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Work with service areas to continually review the customer journey, measuring, monitoring and providing feedback regarding performance against service standards	Review service area feedback with the relevant Customer Experience Champions; focussing on the feedback provided, query resolution and any remaining actions.	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Monthly performance clinic meetings between the Performance and Customer Improvement Lead and service areas to continue, with focus on the Customer Charter, Service Standards and action plan	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Monitor peaks and troughs in customer interactions throughout the day / week and respond to these accordingly to ensure a high level of service is provided	Daily	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Monitor call handling against the 80% service level standard for calls being handled by the Customer Service Team respond to these accordingly to ensure 80% call handling is maintained	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 2: Embed existing customer champions across service areas, which will be linked to the launch of the strategy	Initial meeting with the Customer Experience Champions to introduce them to the Customer Experience Strategy, Customer Charter, Service Standards and action plan **Updated 13 November:** Initial meeting took place 9 October 2025	One off	31 October 2025	Completed 9th October
	Meet regularly with the Customer Experience Champions to embed the above and received feedback regarding actions being undertaken within their teams	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys through a variety of methods Updated 13 November: This is currently being investigated and meetings have been arranged to review technology available, along with the investigating of use of Microsoft forms. **Updated 9 January:** This has been moved back to 27 February 2026 as the survey will be created internally	Every 6 months	30 December 2025	Overdue 27 February 2026
	Undertake exit satisfaction surveys for customers visit the Bourne and Grantham Customer Service Centres	Daily	31 March 2026	Pending above action
Outcome 3: Produce a clear handover of communication between teams when transferring enquiries and expectations on response times	Awareness to all staff: Information regarding handover to be clearly recorded on relevant software system Updated 13 November: Meeting planned for November 2025 to address and move forward	One off	31 October 2025	Updated and complete

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Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
18	**Completed:** Following the Customer Experience Champion meeting, the Customer Service Manager issued information to Managers and Team Leaders to advise of information needed within a handover to another team.			
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Awareness to all staff: When handing over a communication, that they are to update the customer as to who it is being handed to (officers name and department) and why Updated 13 November: Meeting planned for November 2025 to address and move forward **Completed:** Following the Customer Experience Champion meeting, the Customer Service Manager issued information to Managers and Team Leaders to advise of information needed within a handover to another team.	One off	31 October 2025	Updated and complete
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Pending above action
Outcome 4: Set a standard of communication within teams	Awareness to all staff: Out of office notifications to be standardised across all teams, providing the customer with key information such as date of return and who to contact in the officers absence Updated 13 November: Meeting planned for November 2025 to address and move forward **Updated 9 January:** Draft wording to be presented to Corporate Management for decision (February 2026)	One off	31 October 2025	Overdue February 2026 Updated

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Pending above action
Voicemail training to be provided to all staff; to ensure customer are able to leave a message and know this will be picked up and listened to, with the appropriate action being undertaken. Updated 13 November: This is linked to the rollout of the new telephony solution for non-agent staff. This project has been delayed slightly to December 2025 **Updated 9 January:** Draft wording to be presented to Corporate Management for decision (February 2026)	One off	31 October 2025	Overdue December 2025 Updated
Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Pending above action
Ensuring the corporate feedback system is used correctly and understood by all service areas – how to record feedback, how to use the feedback system, responding to feedback and analysing information to improve services. **Updated 9 January:** Investigating best ways forward due to internal system changes. To be discussed with the responsible service area and way forward to be agreed.	One off	30 November 2025	Overdue 27 February 2026

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Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
				Updated
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Pending above action
Outcome 5: Ensure consistency of messaging via phone, email, online form or in person. Implement Training and development plans to respond to feedback and improve our offer. Embed the customer voice into our performance appraisals across the authority	Undertake a review of supporting documents relating to telephone, email and online to ensure consistent information is provided

Updated 9 January: Many services areas will undertake this as part of the end of year review. All Customer Experience Champions have been tasked with this activity and ensuring service areas undertake the review. This will be monitored regularly by the Customer Service Team | Quarterly | 30 November 2025 | Updated and complete |
| | Inclusion of Customer Charter and Service Standards in appraisal process to ensure requirements are understood and training needs identified | Annual | 28 February 2026 | |
| | Review training and development in line with front facing needs – such as handling difficult situations and managing difficult conversations

Updated 13 November: Conflict resolution training being completed by CS and officers managing face to face enquiries. Operating procedure and lock down process reviewed and tested and will continue to be.

Updated 9 January: Conflict resolution training being completed by CS and officers managing face to face enquiries. Operating procedure and lock down process reviewed and tested and will continue to be. | Quarterly | 30 November 2025 | Updated and complete |

Priority 2: Access to multiple service channels
Our commitment: Ensure customers have access to multiple service channels to support their needs and type of enquiry.
Purpose: To enable customers to choose their preferred communication channel at every touchpoint.

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Each of our processes will continue to be reviewed in detail, and where necessary, remodelled to support digital interactions in the future	Ensure customers have access to multiple service channels to support their needs and type of enquiry	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Where possible, staffing levels will be reviewed to complement peak activities	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Analyse the data available to understand whether service channel access needs to be reviewed	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Discuss with service area Customer Experience Champions to review processes and potential remodelling other methods of interaction Updated 13 November: Planned for the next customer Experience Champion meeting to be discussed November/ December	One off	November 2025	Updated

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Updated 9 January: Discussed in the Customer Experience Champion meeting and is also part of the website review and discussions with service areas undertaken by the Peformance and Change Improvement Lead			
Outcome 2: Focus on the core channels our customers prefer	Encourage customers to notify the council of changes promptly so we can respond to this change in a positive way	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
Outcome 3: The customer will get an improved outcome and will have greater choice in how to access a service	Review access channel use for service areas – most / least used, at what time of day is the service access and how Updated 13 November: Discussions taking place with regards to gaining data to give us greater insight into the web usage. **Updated 9 January**: Upon further investigation, using software currently used, there are a number of bespoke reports which will need to be created; therefore the impact of this will be considered further.	One off	January 2026	Updated
	Active promotion of all service channels available to customers for each of the service areas – highlighting the benefits of each service channel **Updated 13 November:** This is promoted across the Customer Service team over the 17 areas we manage. However, this will be discussed in the Customer Experience Champions Meeting during November / December.	One off	November 2025	Updated and complete
	Ongoing promotion of service area channels (once appropriate method has been identified)	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Provide visual information to customers which shows busy / quiet periods – day of the week and hour of the day **Updated 13 November:** Performance data is being looked into by the Performance and Change Development Lead with potential to display on the website and in the TCs in the two customer service centres	Monthly	December 2025	Overdue 27 February 2026
Outcome 4: The council will see lower operating costs through greater levels of automation and a reduction in repeat contacts from customers.	Activities link to Priority 5: Technology			

Priority 3: Accessibility and Inclusion
Our commitment: We will ensure our services are accessible and inclusive for everyone regardless of ability, background, or circumstance.
Purpose: To comply with legal requirements and a commitment to supporting all customers equitably.

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: We will aim to identify any and all barriers to accessing our services (e.g language, literacy, digital inclusion), reducing these through continued working across all teams	To undertake activities which ensures all those involved understand accessibility is not just about place – but always about people	Immediate	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Customer Service section on SKDC website to include all relevant information regarding people and place accessibility and inclusion **Updated 9 January:** Meetings have taken place and information has been included on intranet.	Immediate	November 2025	Updated and complete
	Promotion and advertising of translation service on request of any document (except a form) **Updated 9 January:** This is in place under the following website: Equality and diversity	South Kesteven District Council. There are further plans to include	Every 6 months	December 2025	Updated and complete

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
25	this information on a slide on the PowerPoint presentation TV in the Grantham CSC.			
	Consider (with relevant service areas) providing easy read versions of documents / advice / instructions for those customers who have limited literacy, whose first language is not English Updated 13 November: Performance and Change Improvement Lead to discuss this with service areas in monthly performance clinic meeting on their approach and way forward with this. **Updated 9 January:** To be discussed at the Customer Experience Champion meeting in January 2026	Every 6 months	January 2026	Updated
	Review of feedback and demand as to whether outreach is needed within Deepings and Stamford. **Updated 9 January:** Since the introduction of the strategy, there has been no feedback indicating outreach is required. This will continue to be reviewed every 6months	Every 6 months	January 2026	Updated
	Review accessibility for people who are deaf and hearing impaired – such as hearing loop and text relay. Updated 13 November: Looking at the cost of portable hearing loop units that can be utilised in multiple locations across both offices.	Immediate	November 2025	Overdue 27 February 2026

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
26	**Updated 9 January:** The Performance and Change Improvement Lead is currently investigating the cost of a hearing loop which can be utilised in multiple locations across both Bourne and Grantham Office			
	Ensuring we include within our location on the website that both Customer Service Centres can be access on one level Updated 13 November: Website will be updated and access promoted during discussions with customers	Immediate	October 2025	Completed
	Ensure all staff are aware of ''Language line'' and how to use this service Updated 13 November: Customer Services Manager has spoken to relevant teams recently about this and is looking to put a document out to all staff on net consent on how to use.	Immediate	October 2025	Completed
	Liaise with SKDC IT Team and external provider to undertake a review of Website accessibility **Updated 9 January:** IT have confirmed a full accessibility audit was undertaken the Council moved across to the new website (30 October 2023). Information regarding accessibility can be found here: Accessibility	South Kesteven District Council	Every 6 months	December 2025	Updated
	All service areas to work together to understand what the needs of our vulnerable customers are. To be undertaken up as part of the regular meetings with Customer Experience Champions	Quarterly	31 March 2026	Ongoing

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Liaison with third sector support organisations to better understand the barriers customers have when accessing our services	Ongoing	31 March 2026	Ongoing
Outcome 2: 100% of our staff to receive training in accessibility and continuous learning in this area to increase staff confidence and capability	To ensure all staff are aware of the support available in Outcome 1	Ongoing	31 March 2026	Ongoing
	Liaise with HR to explore the potential of customer facing (front-line) staff being trained in disability awareness - not just physical disabilities – but to also include insights into neurodivergent conditions, dementia, mental health etc	Immediate	November 2025	Ongoing
	Liaise with HR to explore the potential of customer facing (front-line) staff receiving British Sign Language training Updated 13 November: This is an issue with single point of failure if limited number of staff receive training. The training is intensive and its advised to practise daily. **Updated 9 January:** Further consideration is being undertaken with HR for suitable actions.	Immediate	November 2025	Overdue 27 February 2026
Outcome 3: Satisfaction scores from consultation with groups who may have previously experienced inaccessibility will be improved	Introduce exit surveys at Bourne and Grantham Customer Service Centres Updated 13 November: This is currently being investigated and meetings have been arranged to review technology available **Updated 9 January:** This has been moved back to 27 February 2026 as the survey will be created internally	Immediate	December 2025	Overdue 27 February 2026

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Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Work with our Community Engagement Team colleagues to ensure we engage appropriate. The team have contacts for groups that work with people with varying disabilities and also those who work with people whose first language isn't English.	As required	Ongoing	
	To work with the Community Engagement Team to ensure in person consultation is considered with those groups who support the people whose first language is not English. The consultation could form part of the feedback process from any interaction.	As required	Ongoing	
	Ensure service areas act on responses from consultation & feedback and publicise the outcomes / changes. It is important customer know that something has changes as a result.	Quarterly	31 March 2026	

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Priority 4: Regular staff training

Our commitment:
We will ensure our staff receive regular training to enable them to respond to enquiries with accurate information.

Purpose:
To ensure all staff have knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver excellent customer service across all service areas.
To stay current with changes in policy and procedure and service area updates.
Our aim is to support all residents effectively across all contact channels.

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Development of staff learning plans to increase staff confidence through training	Ensure relevant staff training is identified through the appraisal and 1-1 processes (2025 appraisals)	One off	31 October 2025	Complete
	Review of current training needs and ensure our staff receive regular training to enable them to respond to enquiries with accurate information **Updated 13 November:** Ongoing in regular check ins	Quarterly	31 December 2026	Complete
Outcome 2: Develop our knowledge-base for use by customers, staff and virtual assistants	Performance and Change Improvement Lead to liaise with service areas as part of monthly performance clinics to identify gaps in information, to produce FAQs online and consider these activities as part of developing Virtual Assistants (see technology action)	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing
Outcome 3: Training to better improve staff	Monitor customer feedback through variety of methods: We have asked customers to engage positively and give honest & constructive feedback to help the Council understand how services can be improved.	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
understanding and response to feedback	Provide relevant training as a direct result of the feedback from our customers			
Outcome 4: Embedding a learning culture about customer service across our teams	Ensure all services are aware of their responsibilities within this strategy – customer service is an ethos, a culture, not just one team **Updated 13 November:** This was highlighted at the Customer Experience champions meeting and is referenced regularly during the performance clinic meetings with service areas.	One off	31 October 2025	Complete
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Ongoing

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Priority 5: Technology

Our commitment:
To review the provision of technology to improve services – such as customer contact, keeping customers up to date with progress of enquiries, website information.

Purpose:
To provide user friendly technology that enhances the customer experience and improves efficiency to access services. We want to ensure our customers can easily access information and services when and how they need to via our website, online portals, telephones and offices. Technological advancements are moving faster than ever and have a significant impact on customer expectations. There is no such thing as standing still. If we don't invest then in reality our services will be going backwards and won't be moving at the pace our customers expect. We need to fundamentally review the type and configuration of technologies used to deliver services across each channel.

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Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Evaluate and consider the procurement and implementation of a new digital engagement / CRM platform	Meet with other Councils to understand what digital engagement / CRM platforms are used to understand the capabilities and benefits Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
Outcome 2: Evaluate the deployment of new booking solutions to provide greater customer choice,	Explore the technology which is currently available to us (if new technology if needed) to enable customers to undertake self-booking Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
independence and automation	Review use of desk bookings by service areas to understand whether this is officer or customer led. To review improvements to ensure the contact channel is known to all staff and customers and is being used to its full potential **Updated 9 January:** Management to undertake a review of desk bookings in both offices to identify need, demand and peak times. On occasions where staff are not available, this will be included within the performance clinic meetings for the service area to resolve	One off	30 November 2025	Completed
Outcome 3: Evaluate deployment of chat technologies, including chatbots in high volume, repetitive environments	Research to be undertaken to understand how technology is being used by our customers to engage with the Council – platforms for access etc Meet with other Councils who are using this technology to understand the objectives they have set, whether these are being met and the outcomes from deployment of the technology Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
	Telephone system – text message and chat bot Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
Outcome 4: Continue to improve digital access - 24/7, portals, online forms,	Promotion of online and self-service portals during National Customer Service Week (6 to 10 October 2025)	One off	6 to 10 October 2025	Complete

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
support in offices for the less digitally confident	Review existing online / feedback – working with service areas to review specific customer feedback to ensure digital access continues to be developed and relevant technology is considered to move the Council forward Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
	Work with Third Sector organisations to understand the technological barriers faced by residents of South Kesteven Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
Outcome 5: Ensure fast efficient updates through online portals, phone system, online, text message	Review available technology can provide proactive messaging to customers. Where existing technology is not available, consider alternative requirements. Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
Outcome 6: Procure and deploy a new telephone system (September 2026)	Review the specific improvement requirements for new telephone system (replacement in September 2026) and include in tender specification Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2 **Updated 13 November:** Priority requirements list completed and visit to another Lincolnshire District Authority with IT team review their telephony system and AI.	One off	February 2026	Updated

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 7: Continued development of our website – using feedback and improvements to our web pages from customer engagement. Also identifying gaps in our online information and update regularly	Review resources available to undertake activities directly associated to the website, co-ordination of web champion, regular review of website content, liaison with service areas for improvement, review of customer feedback	One off	31 March 2026	
	Continue to monitor monthly website feedback and report improvement requirements to service areas	Monthly	31 March 2026	

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