

Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2029 – Action Plan – Year 1 2025-26

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	Complete
	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	Complete
	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	Complete
	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	Complete

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. Ongoing in meetings with champions	One off	30 October 2025	Complete
	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	Complete
	Undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys through a variety of methods. Surveys completed by CSAs will be undertaken, as well as available on our self-serve machine Email links for online surveys to be shared with our Customer service team for promotion with customer on email and telephone. Also, we will be utilising the SKToday database and joining future surveys.	Every 6 months	30 December 2025	Moved to Q1 2026/27
	Undertake exit satisfaction surveys for customers visit the Bourne and Grantham Customer Service Centres	Daily	31 March 2026	Moved to Q1 2026/27
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. This has been addressed with the Customer Experience champions in the meeting with a positive response. Champions to take this back to their teams to communicate.	One off	30 October 2025	Complete
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete
	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	One off	30 October 2025	Complete

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
	<p>Meeting in December planned to address and move forward.</p> <p>This has been addressed with the Customer Experience champions in the meeting with a positive response. Champions to take this back to their teams to communicate.</p>			
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete
Outcome 4: Set a standard of communication within teams	<p>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</p> <p>Staff handbook has been developed and approved by the Corporate Management Team. All staff made aware in March 2026 (distributed on NetConsent) with immediate implementation.</p>			
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete
	<p>Voicemail training to be provided to all staff; to ensure customers are able to leave a message and know this will be picked up and listened to, with the appropriate action being undertaken.</p> <p>Staff handbook has been developed and approved by the Corporate Management Team. All staff made aware in March 2026 (distributed on NetConsent) with immediate implementation.</p>			
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
	One off	30 November 2025	Complete	
<p>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.</p> <p>Discussed on a regular basis in monthly performance clinics and Update in Champion meetings.</p>				
<p>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</p>	Quarterly	30 November 2025	Complete	
	Undertake a review of supporting documents relating to telephone, email and online to ensure consistent information is provided.	Annual	28 February 2026	Complete
	<p>Inclusion of Customer Charter and Service Standards in appraisal process to ensure requirements are understood and training needs identified.</p> <p>HR collaboration and plans for active promotion during Customer service week and discussion in Senior Management Team for cascading in teams by Management.</p>	Quarterly	30 November 2025	Complete
<p>Review training and development in line with front facing needs – such as handling difficult situations and managing difficult conversations</p> <p>Conflict resolution training being completed by Customer Service and officers managing face to face enquiries. Operating procedure and lock down process reviewed and tested. This will continue to be reviewed alongside annual risk assessment reviews.</p>				

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	
<p>Outcome 1: Each of our processes will continue to be reviewed in detail, and where necessary, remodelled to support digital interactions in the future</p>	<p>Ensure customers have access to multiple service channels to support their needs and type of enquiry.</p> <p>This is regularly observed by the Customer Service team and changes made where identified, with improvements made to the website where constructive feedback is provided.</p>	<p>Monthly</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Where possible, staffing levels will be reviewed to complement peak activities.</p> <p>Customer Service Co-ordinators move staffing within the team to compliment peak activities. This also monitor other service area phone lines to make suggestions to other team leaders on demand.</p> <p>Significant positive outcome as call handling averaged 92% for 2025/26</p>	<p>Monthly</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Analyse the data available to understand whether service channel access needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>The Performance & Customer Improvement Lead monitors this on a monthly basis and discusses impacts with the service areas in the Performance Clinics.</p>	<p>Monthly</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Complete</p>

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
	One off	November 2025	Complete
<p>Discuss with service area Customer Experience Champions to review processes and potential remodelling other methods of interaction</p> <p>This is included in the Customer Experience Champion meetings alongside website discussions regarding improvements – which is undertaken by the Performance & Customer Improvement Lead</p>			
<p>Outcome 2: Focus on the core channels our customers prefer</p>	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete
<p>Encourage customers to notify the council of changes promptly so we can respond to this change in a positive way.</p> <p>The Performance & Customer Improvement Lead monitors this on a monthly basis and discusses impacts with the service areas in the Performance Clinics. Reference is made to the “Was This Page Helpful” button on the website, and outcomes which are analysed. The Customer Service Team are also reviewing all webpages and telephony messaging from a customer perspective.</p>			
<p>Outcome 3: The customer will get an improved outcome and will have greater choice in how to access a service</p>	One off	November 2025	Complete
<p>Active promotion of all service channels available to customers for each of the service areas – highlighting the benefits of each service channel</p> <p>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 Dec.</p> <p>This Customer Experience Champions confirmed they do promote service channels with customers.</p>			
<p>Ongoing promotion of service area channels (once appropriate method has been identified).</p>	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Any improvements identified via the 'Was This Page Helpful' button on the website are reviewed on a regular basis.		
	Provide visual information to customers which shows busy / quiet periods – day of the week and hour of the day. This has been included on the website: Access to Customer Services telephone lines South Kesteven District Council This will be included on the TV screens in Bourne and Grantham CSC	Monthly	December 2025
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	Complete
	Customer Service section on SKDC website to include all relevant information regarding people and place accessibility and inclusion Details added to the Office Details page of our website: Contact us - Office Details South Kesteven District Council	Immediate	November 2025	Complete
	Promotion and advertising of translation service on request of any document (except a form) This is in place under the following website: Equality and diversity South Kesteven District Council There are further plans to include this information on the on the powerpoint presentation TV in the Grantham CSC.	Every 6 months	December 2025	Carried forward to 2026/27

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
<p>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</p> <p>This was discussed with the Customer Experience Champions and further actions are needed.</p>	Every 6 months	January 2026	Carried forward to 2026/27
<p>Review of feedback and demand as to whether outreach is needed within Deepings and Stamford.</p> <p>Feedback is reviewed every 6 months – with no requirement for this to be reconsidered during 2025/26</p>	Every 6 months	January 2026	Complete
<p>Review accessibility for people who are deaf and hearing impaired – such as hearing loop and text relay.</p> <p>Purchase of 2 portable hearing loop units that can be utilised in multiple locations across both offices. Text relay to be included in a handbook and sent via NetConsent</p>	Immediate	November 2025	Complete
<p>Ensuring we include within our location on the website that both Customer Service Centres can be access on one level</p> <p>Details added to the Office Details page of our website: Contact us - Office Details South Kesteven District Council</p>	Immediate	October 2025	Complete
<p>Ensure all staff are aware of “Language line” and how to use this service</p> <p>Staff handbook has been developed and approved by the Corporate Management Team. All staff made aware in March 2026 (distributed on NetConsent). Easy reference cards created and distributed</p>	Immediate	October 2025	Complete

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Quarterly	31 March 2026	Carried forward to 2026/27
<p>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.</p>	Ongoing	31 March 2026	Complete
<p>Outcome 2: 100% of our staff to receive training in accessibility and continuous learning in this area to increase staff confidence and capability</p>	Ongoing	31 March 2026	Carried forward to 2026/27
<p>To ensure all staff are aware of the support available in Outcome 1.</p>	Immediate	November 2025	Carried forward to 2026/27
<p>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</p> <p>The Customer Service Manager is currently progressing this with HR to determine what training is available.</p>	Immediate	November 2025	Complete
<p>Outcome 3: Satisfaction scores from consultation</p>	Immediate	December 2025	Not pursued
<p>Introduce exit surveys at Bourne and Grantham Customer Service Centres</p>			

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
with groups who may have previously experienced inaccessibility will be improved	We are pursuing other satisfaction surveys as per earlier activity within this plan			
	Work with our Community Engagement Team colleagues to ensure we engage appropriately. 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	Carried forward to 2026/27
	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	Carried forward to 2026/27

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	30 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 This is ongoing throughout 2025/26 and included as part of regular 1-1 check ins with all CSAs	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	Complete
Outcome 3: Training to better improve staff understanding and response to feedback	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	Complete

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
	Awaiting official feedback reports from Amber and Business Supports progression on feedback performance groups.			
	Provide relevant training as a direct result of the feedback from our customers. This is undertaken within Customer Services Customer Experience Champions to provide feedback regarding their own service areas. This links to the Feedback policy, lessons learnt and implementation of changes.	Quarterly	31 March 2026	Carried forward to 2026/27
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 This was highlighted at the Customer Experience champions meeting and the Performance and Change Improvement Lead refers to it regularly / ongoing at monthly meetings with service areas.	One off	30 October 2025	Complete
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete

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.

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Evaluate and consider the procurement and implementation of a new digital engagement / CRM platform	<p>Meet with other Councils to understand what digital engagement / CRM platforms are used to understand the capabilities and benefits</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2.</p> <p>Currently undertaking procurement for a new phone/digital engagement system.</p>	One off	31 March 2026	Complete
Outcome 2: Evaluate the deployment of new booking solutions to provide greater customer choice, independence and automation	<p>Explore the technology which is currently available to us (if new technology if needed) to enable customers to undertake self-booking</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2.</p> <p>Various review activities have taken place</p>	One off	31 March 2026	Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
	One off	30 November 2025	Carried forward for further implementation in 2026/27
<p>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</p> <p>Review undertaken to identify need, demand and peak times. The Performance and Change Improvement Lead has contacted all teams who undertake appointments with customers</p>			
<p>Outcome 3: Evaluate deployment of chat technologies, including chatbots in high volume, repetitive environments</p>	One off	31 March 2026	Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27
<p>Research to be undertaken to understand how technology is being used by our customers to engage with the Council – platforms for access etc</p> <p>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</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2.</p> <p>Currently going through procurement for a new phone/digital engagement system</p>			
<p>Telephone system – text message and chat bot</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2.</p> <p>Linked to procurement for a new phone/digital engagement system.</p>	One off	31 March 2026	Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27
<p>Outcome 4: Continue to improve digital access - 24/7, portals, online forms,</p>	One off	6 to 10 October 2025	Completed
<p>Promotion of online and self-service portals during National Customer Service Week (6 to 10 October 2025)</p>			

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
<p>support in offices for the less digitally confident</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p>	<p>One off</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27</p>
	<p>Work with Third Sector organisations to understand the technological barriers faced by residents of South Kesteven.</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2.</p> <p>Expand the use of our third party desk, identifying appropriate partners. This will be full utilised during 226/27 linking to the introduction of the Crisis Resilience Fund</p>	<p>One off</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Ensure fast efficient updates through online portals, phone system, online, text message</p>	<p>Review available technology can provide proactive messaging to customers.</p> <p>Where existing technology is not available, consider alternative requirements.</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2.</p> <p>Linked to procurement for a new phone/digital engagement system.</p>	<p>One off</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27</p>
<p>Outcome 6: Procure and deploy a new telephone system (September 2026)</p>	<p>Review the specific improvement requirements for new telephone system (replacement in September 2026) and include in tender specification</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p>	<p>One off</p>	<p>November 2025</p>	<p>Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27</p>

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
	Priority requirements list completed and visit to another Lincolnshire Local Authority undertaken. Linked to procurement for a new phone/digital engagement system.			
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	October 2025	Carried forward for implementation in 2026/27
	Continue to monitor monthly website feedback and report improvement requirements to service areas. This is undertaken monthly – as detailed within the Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports – with all feedback reviewed where comments have been received.	Monthly	31 March 2026	Complete