

Watford Borough Council Customer Experience Strategy - 2022 to 2026

Watford Borough Council provides over 400 different services to our residents, businesses and visitors. It's important to us to deliver these services in the way our customers need, and to the standards they expect, and the standards we expect of ourselves.

This strategy sets out our vision of how we will:

- Provide the best-possible customer experience for the people who live and work in Watford, and for those we welcome to our town.
- Design and deliver services that meet our customers' needs and make best use of technology to deliver our services as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.
- Use customer insight and data to identify and deliver ongoing improvements to our services.
- Enable and empower staff to provide excellent customer service.

The strategy is aligned with our overall Council Plan that focuses on making Watford an outstanding place for everyone.

Who are our customers?

For the purpose of this strategy customers are defined as anyone who lives, works or visits the Watford Borough Council area, internal staff and councillors.

Our aims

Our strategy is focussed around 4 key aims.

1. Services designed with people at the heart of everything we do

We will design and deliver services with our customers in mind, using customer insight and feedback to design and improve our services. We will develop our digital channels to allow customers more flexible access to our services, and ensure they are simple and easy to use.

Our commitments

We will:

- Engage with the community for feedback, and use these insights to shape how we design and improve our services.
- Design our services from end-to-end, to be as efficient as possible, working on a 'right-first-time' principle and keeping customers informed on the progress of their enquiries.
- Ensure all our services are accessible and take into account customers' needs for equality.
- Work with our partners across Watford and Hertfordshire to help individuals and families within Watford impacted by digital isolation
- Increase and improve our digital offering for customers and encourage customers to use digital channels in the first instance.
- Promote the uptake of paper-free initiatives, such as e-billing and resident parking permits, to reduce our impact on the environment.

2. Our people

We will make sure that everyone working for the Council, our partners and suppliers, understand their role at every stage of the customer journey and how their behaviours and actions are key to creating a positive or negative customer experience.

Our commitments

We will:

- Ensure all our people have the skills and knowledge to deliver an excellent customer experience.
- Ensure our people are engaged and feel valued, so that they in turn can deliver an excellent customer experience.
- Create a system of shared values and behaviours that helps our people focus on delivering great customer experiences.
- Lead from the top – model behaviours, corporate culture, trust and purpose.
- Ensure our people are informed and engaged in the design and improvements of our services and the standard of service delivered to our customers.
- Encourage cross-departmental working / no internal silos, to ensure customer experiences are integrated throughout the organisation.

3. Technology

We will make the most of new technology to help deliver simple and convenient services, whilst being mindful of those who may require a more in-person approach. We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to support residents who do not have access to technology, or who lack digital confidence, to help equalise opportunities in our town.

Our commitments

We will:

- Continue to improve how customers can engage with us online via the MyWatford portal, including expanding our online reporting / service delivery and online mapping capability.
- Continue to improve our website, with a focus on improved usability, better content and improved accessibility.
- Increase our ability to engage and communicate with us through digital channels, such as our website, mobile apps, online forms and social media.
- Investigate the potential for new service channels to support our customers, such as web chat.

4. Insight

We will use data to understand how customers use our services and how they feel about them. We will act on this information to continuously improve our services and approach. We know our customers' needs change, so we will continually review our services, to ensure we are planning and developing our services, based on their needs.

Our commitments

We will:

- Using customer journey data and feedback to continually review and improve our services.
- Respond to changes in demand for existing and new service channels, based on customer expectations and use.
- Be open with customers about when and why we collect their personal information, including where we use personal information to improve our services and communication.
- Have all appropriate and proactive steps in place to maintain data integrity, meaning customers can be confident that their personal information is safe and protected from cyber security threats or data breaches.
- Make non-personal data sets publicly available where appropriate so we are open and transparent and ensure information is easy to obtain where necessary