CUSTOMER ACCESS CHANNEL STRATEGY 2014

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Distribution

	Name/Group	Title/Organisation	Purpose
1.0	Customer Services Team	London Borough of Bromley	Review and input
1.1	Resources Managers	London Borough of Bromley	Review and input
1.1	Customer Focus Group Members	London Borough of Bromley	Review and input
1.2	COE	London Borough of Bromley	Review and input
1.4	Customer Focus Group Members	London Borough of Bromley	Review and input

Revision History

| Version	Date Updated	Revision Author	Summary of Major Changes Made
1.0	March 2011	Duncan Bridgewater	Initial draft for comment
1.1	April 2011	Duncan Bridgewater	Addition of stats
1.2	May 2011	Duncan Bridgewater	Target alterations
1.3	March 2012	Duncan Bridgewater	Target refinement
1.4	April 2014	Duncan Bridgewater	Re-draft & update

Part 1 - Introduction

WHAT IS AN ACCESS CHANNEL STRATEGY?

The London Borough of Bromley has a responsibility to provide excellent services to the public and value for money to the taxpayer. The channels through which public services are delivered and by which the public has contact with the authority, (be that via telephone, online, in person, or via other means), are a critical part of public service provision, and there is an ongoing impetus for them to be managed effectively and efficiently for everyone.

An access channel strategy is an organisation's plan for the channels it will use to deliver services to, and interact with, its customers. An access channel strategy explains how an organisation will meet the contact demands of its customers using the resources it has available bearing in mind the needs of the customer.
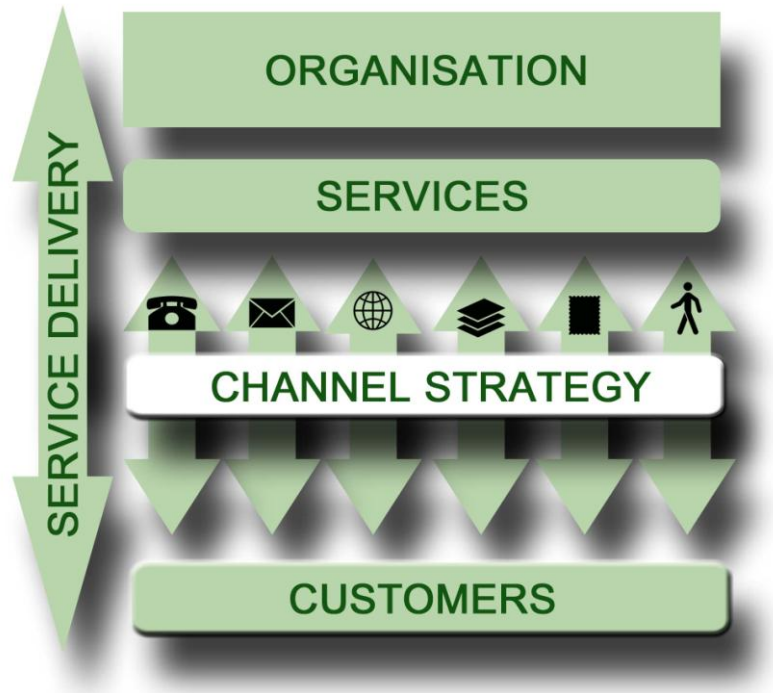
An access channel strategy is not simply a plan to move service provision to online channels, but it does seek to establish:

- **Self-service by default**
- **Assisted service by exception**

WHY IS AN ACCESS CHANNEL STRATEGY IMPORTANT NOW?

Unprecedented financial challenges now face all aspects of public service and it is therefore essential local government moves customer contact to the cheapest possible access channel if it stands any chance of meeting those budgetary pressures. Customers receive a high standard of customer service from many public and private sector organisations, very often on-line. Local government must aspire to meet and exceed the standards provided in the private sector. One of the ways it will do this is by providing new opportunities for customers to interact with the Council, maximising self-service choices and providing 24/7 access.

In order to meet the needs of customers, The London Borough of Bromley must provide self-service access that is:

• Easy
• Simple to use
• Secure
• Convenient
• Cost effective
• Robust

It is also important to bear in mind the target audience's access to technology, the type and complexity of the contact, their personal circumstances as well their technical skills when selecting channels.

Rising internet use, public expectation and central government's drive to move services on-line and be digital by default present an ongoing opportunity for public service providers. Competent online services are easy and quick to use, available whenever customers need them and have a relatively low administrative burden. Managed well online access to services is an effective channel with considerable benefits for customers and taxpayers.

As 'easier' access channels become available, an increase in what was previously unreported incidents is likely to occur. This is known as suppressed demand. Systems and processes should be designed to disregard multiple reports from a service perspective so not to increase operational costs. However, the customer should receive acknowledgements and updates as if they were the only one reporting the issue.

As customers move to digital access, the Council must do everything possible to keep them on that channel and not to inadvertently force them back to traditional channels by not providing relevant and informative updates on service requests. The is a balance between information over-load in the customer's view and appropriate service updates and conclusion.

Many customers actually prefer not to speak to us or visit our offices.

The London Borough of Bromley will provide an assisted service to those without internet access or technical skills. This will enable and empower everyone to become self-sufficient in the future, and maximise use of resources in Receptions, Libraries and Community Hubs.

The London Borough of Bromley already has almost the highest percentage in the UK of users who access the internet daily, with over 92%* of residents claiming to have used the internet at some point. It also has one of the highest percentages of households with Internet access, with an increasing number of households (95%*) having some form of broadband coverage.

Increasingly, internet access via a mobile device has also surged in the last few years with a 100%* increase from 2011 in individuals accessing the internet 'on the go' across all age ranges.

It is clear that customers today and in the future want to have access to services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but also want to access those services from anywhere. While this presents challenges in meeting these demands, it also presents significant opportunities to provide services in a more economically viable method.

For many services, self-service or digital by default will be the new standard, however for a minority digital access still provides a barrier to services. For this group it is important that they are able to receive support through assisted service either by phone or face to face.

*ONS data 2013

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The need for insight

The process of developing and implementing a access channel strategy needs to be guided by insight specifically relating to:

- The customer
- The services an organisation is providing and each service area in question

- The current delivery channels at the organisation's disposal as well as those that may be available in the future
- Other factors that may have an impact on service provision and delivery

This strategy is aimed at the following main customer groups:

- Residents of the borough
- Non-residents
- Internal (Officers and Members)
- Commercial – in and out of borough
- Friends groups
- Resident Associations

In order to deliver services in ways that customers want, we must understand the demography of the borough as well as the lifestyles and behaviours of the people who live here.

The London Borough of Bromley claims a fairly diverse population, we do have a high percentage of five 'types' of resident. These have been categorised into 15 family types or groups. Each group has certain characteristics that that is slightly different from another; however within each group there is further segmentation. In total there are 69 types, each with their own profile describing their circumstances, behaviours, attitudes, health, income and backgrounds. Based on census data and incorporating a wealth of information from other sources, these profiles allow us to understand our population in a detail in a way that has never been possible before.

The largest groups of residents living in Bromley can be described as:

1. Young well educated city dwellers
2. Middle income families living moderate suburban semi-detached houses
3. Wealthy people living in the most sought after neighbourhoods
4. Couples and young singles in small modern starter homes
5. Active elderly people living in pleasant retirement locations
6. Successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural locations

In total there are 15 groups, each with their own specific needs and wants. Understanding their requirements through segmentation and data collection will help to shape service delivery more appropriately.
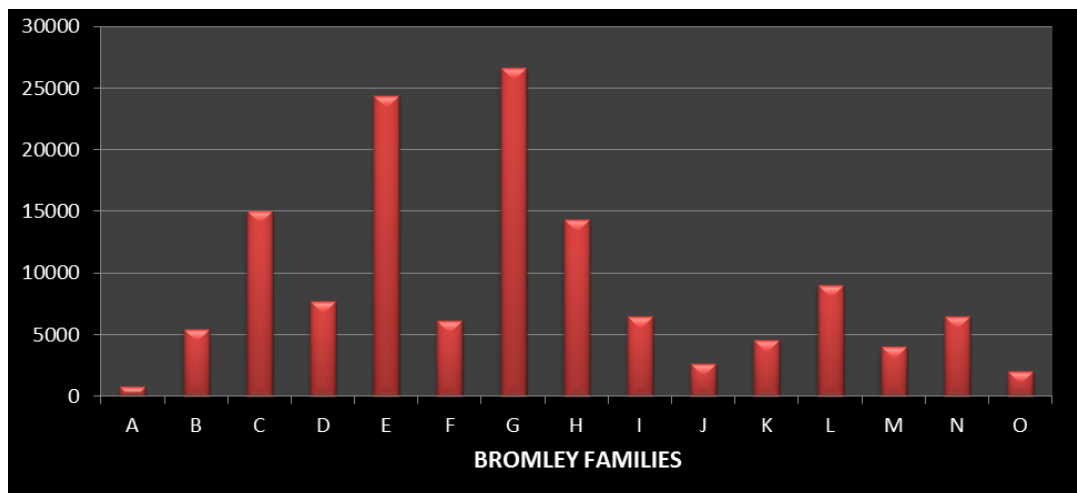
Source: Mosaic

Legend

A	Residents of isolated rural communities
B	Residents of small and mid-sized towns with strong local roots
C	Wealthy people living in the most sought after neighbourhoods
D	Successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes
E	Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis
F	Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing
G	Young, well-educated city dwellers
H	Couples and young singles in small modern starter homes
I	Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas
J	Owner occupiers in older-style housing in ex-industrial areas
K	Residents with sufficient incomes in right-to-buy social houses
L	Active elderly people living in pleasant retirement locations
M	Elderly people reliant on state support
N	Young people renting flats in high density social housing
O	Families in low-rise social housing with high levels of benefit need

However channel migration is a multi layered approach using a number of techniques to encourage users to change their behaviours. Allowing customers to access services at times that suit their lifestyle and circumstances places control back with the customer.

It is also important to understand the wider online services market as expectations of online services are driven by customer experiences of using similar services of other organisations.

Organisational challenge

In considering an access channel strategy it is important to recognise there is often a considerable challenge and change required to existing organisational processes. An access channel strategy needs to become an integral part of the organisation and the way the objectives of the organisation are realised. It cannot be super-imposed or retro-fitted onto existing practices and as such is likely to require process change.

We also need to recognise that people will use different channels not just for different types of interactions, but also to suit their own convenience. Particularly at local level, an access channel strategy should therefore be integrated into the processes supporting these interactions with our customers.

Part 2 – Basic Principles & Scope

- **Self-service by default**
- **Assisted service by exception**

PURPOSE OF STRATEGY

Outline the broad principles for how The London Borough of Bromley will deliver its services through a range of contact channels that provide better value for money, are more accessible and are designed with the customer in mind.

SCOPE

This strategy document sets out the basic principles by which The London Borough of Bromley will deliver its services to the public through the contact channels currently available.

Contact channels in scope include:

- **E-channels including web, mobile, e-mail, social media**
- **Phone**
- **Face to face**
- **Paper**

This document focuses on three key types of contacts between the Council and the customer

Transactions (e.g. registering a birth, reporting a problem or paying a bill)
Interactions (e.g. obtaining advice, public consultations, petitioning)
Information Provision (e.g. cycle maps, leaflets, web pages)

This strategy is relevant to the nature of the services provided by the Council and ensure that its services are provided through a range of contact channels appropriate to the customers' individual needs and circumstances in a way that is affordable by the Council.

CHANNELS HIERARCHY & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The choice of contact channels available to the public is growing all of the time as new technologies are developed and released.

There is a generally accepted model for the effectiveness of the major channels of contact available today as shown below
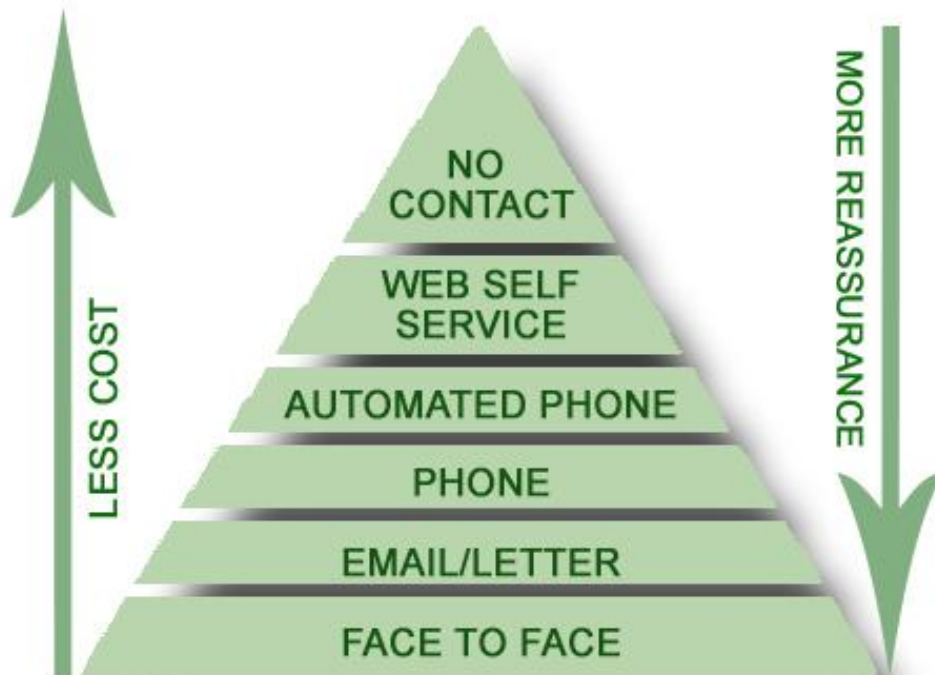
CHANNEL EFFECTIVENESS

What this model shows is that as we move up the triangle the cost of delivery typically gets cheaper for the organisation. However for some types of contact a greater level of human contact is required particularly for contacts that require some level of reassurance.

Portal

The Council and its service delivery partner for Customer Services, Liberata, are developing a secure web portal for customers to interact with the Council.

The customer portal will deliver services to the customer so that the online channel becomes the most effective and easy to use channel for the customer, over time becoming their channel of choice for transacting with the Council.

The user experience offered by the portal will be simple, clean and straightforward with service information presented and accessed in a logical way that promotes self-reliance from the customer rather than driving customers to more expensive service support mechanisms.

Enquiry Scenarios

The Customer Portal must allow the capability for customers to be able to access services and track updates via the following enquiry scenarios:

- Customer requesting a service anonymously *(e.g. – reporting a missed refuse collection)*
- Customer requesting a service, but wishing to be kept updated regarding delivery progress *(e.g. – requesting a disabled facilities grant)*
- Customer's representative requesting a service *(e.g. – individual with authority notifying of change in circumstances for a customer receiving Council Tax Support)*

- Customer's representative requesting a service, but wishing to be kept updated regarding delivery progress *(e.g. – individual with authority to act applying for Housing Benefit on behalf of customer)*

PROOF OF CONCEPT

Contact volumes

	Calls (CSC)	Visitors	Web	E-mails	Total	
08/09	676,540		1,590,835	23,654	2,291,029	
09/10	734,371		1,705,856	32,677	2,472,894	
10/11	687,194		2,301,869	39,656	3,028,719	
11/12	851,023		2,214,604	36,669	3,102,296	
12/13	797,685	94,612	2,622,036	29,743	3,544,076	
13/14	697,808	116,501	3,079,454	28,250	3,922,013	

Costs per contact

	Bromley's costs	Local Authority Average*
Face to Face	£6.42	£8.15
Phone	58p	£2.59
Web	9p	11p

* source; SOCITM report 'Channel Value Benchmarking 2014'

Local Authority Average Cost

Bromley's Cost

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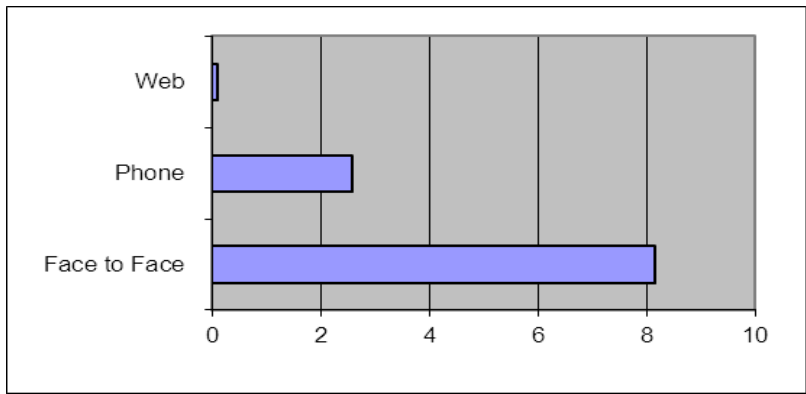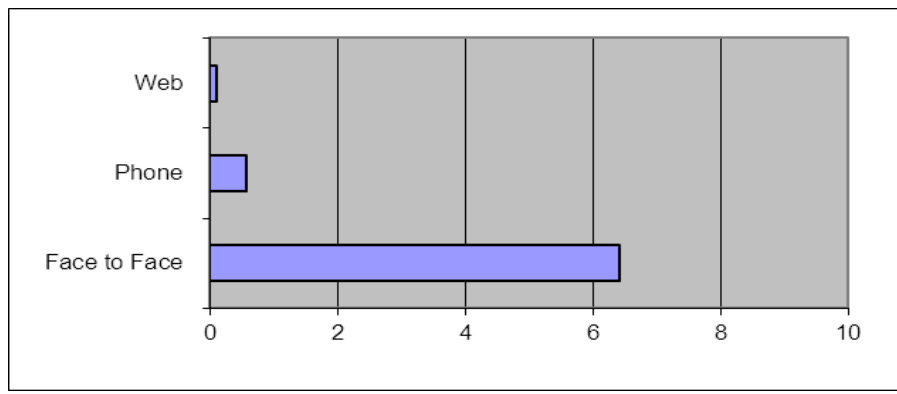
Bromley has seen a dramatic increase in the level of web contact it receives. Notably the volumes of visitors to our web site using mobile devices has also been significantly increasing. Our investment in responsive web design and a broad range of integrated on-line forms is enabling us to realise savings as a result of this increase.

Over the last year access to Bromley's website via mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) has continued to grow and now accounts for almost 40% of all visits (March 2014) , an increase of around 10% over a year.

Part 3 – Bromley Council's Channel Strategies

LOCAL CONTEXT

Bromley is London's largest borough and includes Beckenham, Penge, Orpington, Biggin Hill and Chislehurst as well as Bromley itself. It prides itself on having made its own special contribution to creating and maintaining a pleasant environment for its 309,000 residents.

According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2013 around 83% of households in the South East had home internet access with over 86% of the same population accessing the web in the last 3 months. This usage figure varies from 96% accessing the web the last 3 months for the 16-24 age group down to 30% of the over 65s. 73% of the population access the web every day.

In 2013, 61% of the population were able to access the internet via a mobile phone or other portable connection, 9 out of 10 people in the UK own a mobile phone, in 2013 51% of those were smart phones. Users of WiFi hotspots has doubled in the last 12 months to 4.9 million.

Whilst Bromley is considered an affluent borough and its population is likely to have higher than average access to digital media, it must be born in mind that our residents will span all income groups, therefore this access channel strategy includes a chapter on "digital inclusion"

Bromley's population is made up of 300,000 individuals, each with specific needs and preferences as to how they would like to contact the authority. This integrated channel strategy seeks to provide a full range of choices of access designed to ensure that no individual, group or community is disadvantaged through lack of access to the services the authority offers.

OVERARCHING CHANNEL STRATEGY

> **We want to minimise the need for customers to contact us, but if they need to, we want to provide them with an excellent self-service experience that is quick, convenient and has a satisfactory outcome**

We will

- make access to services available through appropriate and cost effective contact channels designed with the needs of the customer in mind

- seek to encourage greater use of the most effective contact methods, by creating a series of deliberate and targeted channel shifts

- not discriminate against any individual and will maintain and increase overall accessibility to services

OWNERSHIP OF BROMLEY'S ACCESS CHANNEL STRATEGY

The Access Channel Strategy and its implementation will be the responsibility of the Customer Focus Group.

The Head of Customer Services and Customer Focus Group will ensure the contact channels used for delivering services are

- **Easily**
- **Simple to use**
- **Secure**
- **Convenient**
- **Cost effective**
- **Robust**

REVIEW PERIOD

The Customer Focus Group will review the strategy bi-annually and re-publish as appropriate. Bromley will treat this strategy as "business as usual" with a view to constantly evolving the strategy.

GOVERNANCE

Liberata is Bromley's service delivery partner for Customer Services and Exchequer Services and therefore manage a significant proportion of the Council's contact. Areas within the Council that have retained their customer contact will be reviewed periodically to establish:

- Opportunities to channel shift are developed
- Contact is cost effective
- Efficiencies are identified should the contact move to within the contract

THE AVOIDABLE CONTACT STRATEGY

Reduce the need for customers to contact us, but when they need to, it should be via the cheapest possible channel

Why should we minimise avoidable contact?

Local authorities are fundamental points of contact for the customer when seeking access to public services. They provide key services for their local communities that greatly affect the quality of life for individuals and the overall community.

However, both local authorities and their customers also have limited resources and want to interact as efficiently as possible. By identifying customer contact that is 'avoidable', the local authority and its partners are better placed to redesign the way services and information are made more accessible for their customers. The customer will then not have to make unnecessary, valueless contacts which is both frustrating for the customer and inefficient for the provider.

The London Borough of Bromley will work with its partners and internal departments to design processes that reduce the need for customers to make contact with us multiple times to complete a transaction.

The 3 Key Actions That We Will Take To Reduce Unnecessary Contact

- *The Customer Focus Group will regularly look at examples of avoidable contact and determine opportunities to reduce the needs for customers contact us, and commission work to provide reductions*

- *We will improve the number of enquiries we can deal with in one contact by working more closely with our contractors and back office specialists to improve access to information*

- *We will participate in national efficiency projects that are aimed at reducing the need for unnecessary contact with us*

Performance Management and Governance

How will success be measured?

- The Customer Focus Group will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Council's Access Channel Strategy, the Head of Customer Services will have day to day responsibility in overseeing it
- As self service alternatives develop, customers will be pro-actively encouraged to use it, raising their awareness for next time
- Contact volumes across our main access channels will be measured and analysed by the Customer Focus Group on a quarterly basis. To define a target of call reduction and self-service take-up
- Where evidence exists within the organisation, we should avoid asking for customers to provide it when applying for a service eg. Use of council tax database to prove residency in the borough
- Engage in national/local efficiency projects that aim at reducing the need for unnecessary contact with the Council

CHANNEL SHIFT STRATEGY

Design accessible, efficient and user friendly means of contacting the council and then encourage our customers to use the channels that are most cost-effective

What is Channel Shift?

Channel Shift is the process by which organisations seek to encourage customers to access, or interact with, services via channels other than those to which they normally choose.

Deliberate channel shift is the design and marketing of effective and efficient channels because they are the most appropriate channels for the type of contact, customer and organisation in question. Channel shift forms one part of an overall channel strategy, and implemented well it can lower costs, build reputation, empower the customer and improve the overall service proposition. Shifting customers to particular channels involves behaviour change on the customer's part, but once they are aware of the channels available, they will use the one that works best for them

Bromley Council will encourage residents to shift to new and more effective channels by a number of means, including the following actions:

- *Our staff will use our web site to process enquiries where possible*

| 🖱 Report it | 🖱 Apply for it | £ Pay for it |

- ***Develop customer registration with our web site to encourage customers to engage in on-line services, create a sense of ownership and maintain their data accurately***

- ***Measure activity and pro-actively seek feedback from our staff and customers who***

    - ***Use on-line service through our web site***
    - ***Abandon processes part way through the logging process***
    - ***Review processes and refine them to improve customer experience***

Sample chart plotting web/traditional contact volumes

Current transactional activity on missed waste collections
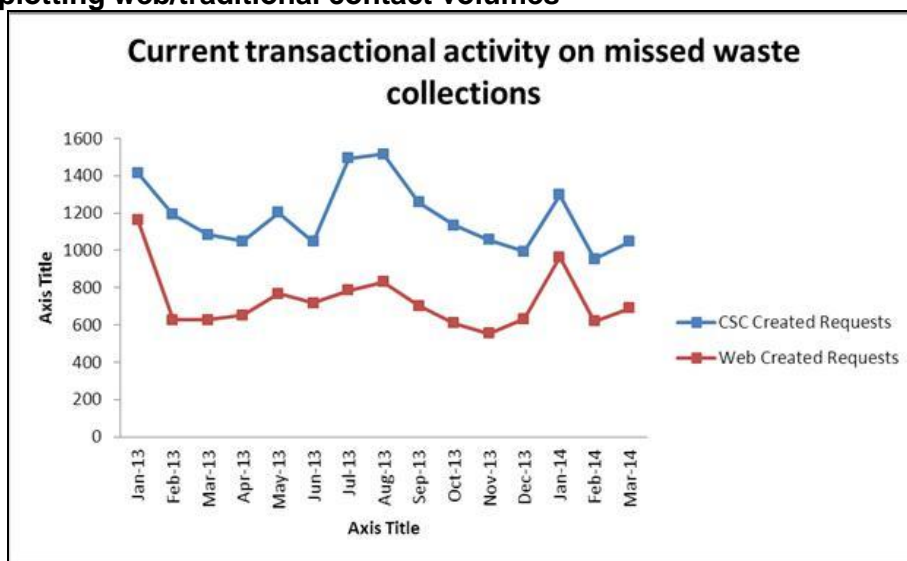
Performance Management and governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Volumes of traditional access to services reduce
- Web content will be regularly reviewed and areas not visited will be removed
- Proactively engage with front-line staff and contractors to assist and inform the best design and construction of self-service processes to maximise customer take-up
- The "exit points" and transaction abandonment on the website will be analysed each month to see where transactions are failing and corrections made accordingly
- We will compare the effectiveness and usage of different channels for each service and seek to shift contacts to the most appropriate channels
- Business cases will be prepared to move more transactions online (including information transactions), that take into account the dual benefits to the public, and ease of use in Customer Services
- Wherever possible, our staff will use the public website to transact in their day to day work to ensure that the site is fit for purpose for our residents
- More engaging content will be placed on the website to increase public confidence, usage and interaction with the site
- All new services including information services will be designed to provide 24/7 web access as primary source of access, and ensuring all channels have access to the same information to accommodate 'channel hopping'

- We will provide status updates for any transactions that are started on the web to ensure that if a customer chooses to use the web they can continue to do so without having to ring us

- Transactions across all channels will be reviewed and may be withdrawn or users signposted to more effective channels where appropriate
- All channels should have exactly the same information available to them (i.e. if an e-mail was sent, this same content should be visible if the same user logs in to the website, or rings the contact centre)

DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Ensure that customers who do not have access to digital channels at home or work are not disadvantaged when communicating with the Council

What is a Digital Inclusion Strategy?

Around 14% of the UK population have not used online channels. Exclusion from access to digital channels matters for these users, especially as the digitally excluded group includes socially excluded and hard to reach groups who are likely to have the greatest need of public services.

It also matters for the delivery of efficient public services, because when people cannot access services online they invariably access them via alternative means which are generally more expensive. Again, the priorities set out in the Government's 'Digital Britain' report reinforce the importance of digital inclusion; the report sets out plans to drive digital participation in the context of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan and the proposed Digital Switchover of Public Services programme which started in 2012. The report also reiterates the Government's commitment to ensuring that public services online are designed for ease of use by the widest range of customers.

It is therefore important that any access channel strategy includes plans for communicating these hard to reach groups.

The 3 Key Actions That We Will Take To Reduce Digital Exclusion

- ***Continue to provide public internet access at our key locations e.g. Libraries and reception points***

- ***Provide assisted access to our web site where requested via the Customer Services, Libraries and Receptions***

- ***Widely promote the full range of access channels available***

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Invest in Responsive Web Design to improve the experience of visitors to our web site using mobile devices
- To continue to provide public internet access and Wi-Fi at our key locations, e.g. Libraries and Civic Centre
- To widely advertise our choice of contact channels, particularly to hard to reach groups for example transient and socially excluded groups
- To provide fully assisted access to our website for the public via the council's face to face points of access
- To continue to provide and support learning via our Libraries for customers to improve their IT skills

ACCESSIBILITY OF CONTACT STRATEGY

> **Provide a full range of contact channels for each of our services and enhance access to those for customers with special requirements**

What is an "Accessibility of Contact" Strategy?

In the context of this document, accessibility of contact refers to the ease or difficulty that a customer may experience whilst using different electronic access channels to obtain services from the Council.

The 3 Key Actions That We Will Take To Provide Access for All

- ***Continually engage with groups representing those with specific requirements for the way they contact us and ensure that an appropriate choice of channels is available to those individuals***

- ***Ensure that we widely advertise our choice of contact channels, particularly to hard to reach groups***

- ***Continue to provide translation services to allow easy access to the Council through face to face, telephone and web channels***

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Obtain accessibility accreditation for our website
- Carry out an Equality Impact Assessment of the channel mix and regularly consult with disability advocacy groups and make reasonable adjustments to the channels as needed.
- Provide a range of language and easy read options where practical on our website and when it is not practical to do so to clearly indicate how a customer can obtain translation services or obtain information in a format suitable for them.
- Provide assisted access to our website via Customer Services
- Provide assisted access to our website via the council's face to face receptions and Libraries
- Provide a comprehensive translation and signing service to allow easy access to the Council through the face to face and telephone channels
- Widely advertise our choice of contact channels, particularly to hard to reach groups
- Continually engage with groups representing those with specific requirements for the way they contact us

Part 4 – Strategies for Specific Channels
E STRATEGY

Provide a single, comprehensive and secure website and portal that encourages registration and defines on-line as the customer's channel of choice

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The 3 Key Actions to Develop Web Access

- **Promote the web site as the main access point for the Council's services**
- **Provide a secure registration process to access services and financial information**
- **To make online services the channel of choice by continually refining and enhancing the customer experience**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Web visits increase
- Ensure that the website is available and operational 24/7
- Aim to place 100% of our transactional services online and to encourage customer usage to reduce costs and provide 24/7 access to the authority's services
- Invest in responsive web design to enhance the customer experience when using our site from mobile devices
- Promote the website as the main access point for the council's services for simple information and transactional services with the address prominent on all published material
- Provide 'web access only' to service for our commercial customers
- Ensure that business cases for improvements reflect both increased public satisfaction, but also reduced effort in providing mediated access
- Ensure that all web content is written in plain English and is easy to understand
- Increase the usability of our online systems to make them the channel of choice
- Provide appropriate intuitive map based interfaces to both transactional and information systems
- Integrate all online transactions directly into back office systems to prevent double entering of information
- Provide status updates for any transactions that are logged on the web
- Ensure that all council leaflets and literature are made available via the website in order to reduce printing, cost and environmental impact
- Ensure that all communications activity is replicated on the council's website
- Promote the use of the council's website through "offline" marketing, and actively de-market traditional channels(removing phone numbers and e-mail addresses)
- Make the content and functionality of the Bromley website available for open use throughout the web
- More engaging content will be placed on the website to increase public confidence, usage and interaction with the site
- Provide a range of language options where practical and when it is not practical to do so to clearly indicate how a customer can obtain translation services
- Establish a roadmap for a single account for residents, business users and friends groups
- Maximise usefulness of content by using FOI requests as an indicator to what needs to be published
- Maintain overall service excellence as evidenced by customer feedback, industry awards and SOCITM usability ratings
- Obtain and maintain accessibility accreditation

MOBILE DEVICES

> **Use mobile technology in a tactical manner to provide better access to information and services**

The 3 Key Actions to Develop Mobile Device Access

- **Further increase customer access to our web site from mobile devices through targeted marketing**
- **Provide a responsive web site that automatically adjusts to the device on which it's being viewed**
- **Use outbound text messaging to provide updates and reminders**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Increase the number of visits to our web site from mobile devices
- Provide access to council telephone based services using only 01,02 and 03 prefixes to ensure the minimum costs to mobile phone users, particularly on "pay as you go" tariffs
- Use outbound text messaging to confirm appointments etc
- Develop in bound report-it opportunities for smartphone users enabling use of their GPS to locate faults requiring our attention

EMAIL STRATEGY

> **Reduce email volume by better use of online reporting alternatives which integrate directly into back office systems**
> *Customer Service Standard – respond within 5 days*

The 4 Key Actions to Develop our Email Provisions

- **Publish web links instead of e-mail addresses to take customers directly to the right area**
- **Provide a complete range of online services to eliminate emails. Remove CSC@Bromley.gov.uk and departmental addresses from publicity**
- **Deflect customers to self-service options where they exists**
- **Promote self-service options via the auto response signature**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Aim to eliminate e-mail as an initial contact access channel
- Provide a complete range of online forms to minimise the amount of emails handled
- Aim to place 100% of our transactional services online and to encourage customer usage to reduce costs and provide 24/7 access to the authority's services
- Provide status updates for any transactions that are started on the web
- Increase the response time to answer e-mails to more than 5 days
- When information is sent electronically, it is done from a 'no-reply' address and contains web links for further information

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Use social media to interact with users and to promote E-services and campaigns

The 3 Key Actions To Develop our Social Media Provisions

- **Utilise social media as a channel of communication for the public with due regard to the corporate communications policy**
- **Development and promote informational videos for both web and reception areas.**
- **Raise staff awareness on the use of new media**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Develop a roundup of information, an e-update that can be emailed initially to residents associations to drive web traffic by promoting e-services while highlighting key seasonal messages and web content
- Work towards more tailored messages to particular target audiences.
- Overall governance of new media should be the responsibility of the Customer Focus Group
- Integrate new media functionality into the Bromley Website i.e. embedding YouTube videos, Twitter Feeds, Flickr photographs, Social bookmarking (Facebook and Twitter "like" buttons on news stories and events)
- Integration and centralisation of the management of new media within the website CMS using the Jadu Social Client or equivalent
- Automation of broadcast and syndication of website content out into the Social Media arena
- Investigation and development of transactional functionality within Facebook
- Development of Bromley's YouTube Channel to hold a library of instructional videos
- Delivery of a series of Social Media "masterclasses" to raise awareness of opportunities by staff

TELEPHONE STRATEGY

Minimise the volume of published phone numbers, ensuring the Council's service standard for response time is met. Reduce the quantity of calls our customers have to make
Customer Service Standard – calls answered within 30 seconds

Key Actions To Provide Easy Telephone Access

- **Provide one main phone number for customers to easily find, maximising the investment made in voice recognition software**
- **All published numbers must either route via Customer Services or through a system within the service team which is monitored and measured**
- **Provide access to council telephone based services using 01, 02 and 03 prefixes to ensure the minimum costs to phone users, particularly 'pay as you go' mobile users**
- **Provide and promote self-service options for our customers that are available 24/7 through our telephony system and website**
- **Ensure use of friendly web links on all communications, reducing reliance on phone numbers**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Significantly reduce the number of phone calls the Council receives
- Ensure customers are actively encouraged and supported to self-serve their transactions when contacting us by phone, both by the staff answering the calls and the messages played whilst they are waiting
- Provide a range of telephonic self-service alternatives to customers for simple service requests
- Provide one main phone number for the organisation which can be easily found in order to make contacting the council straightforward for our residents
- Use 01,02 and 03 phone number prefixes wherever possible to make contacting the authority cheaper on "pay as you go" mobile phones
- Use telephone call data and customer feedback to identify areas of improvement within the council and work to eliminate red tape, process failure and unnecessary contact to the Council
- Seek opportunities to work with other public sector contact centres to improve overall service, accessibility and improve value for money
- Wherever possible, our staff us the public website to transact with customers over the phone to ensure that the site is fit for purpose for our residents
- Increasing the response rate to phone calls from 30 seconds
- Deflect contact from our commercial customers to web only interactions

FACE TO FACE STRATEGY

To maintain face to face service provision where there is a defined customer need to do so, whilst migrating demand to cheaper channels
Customer Service Standard – seen within 10 minutes of an appointment time

The 4 Key Actions To Develop our Face to Face Provisions

- **Undertake process reviews to identify potential channel shift and quality improvements so our face to face customers move to more convenient online services**
- **Provide assisted access to the Bromley website by our face to face staff**
- **Effectively manage demand and achieve best value by providing appointments to customers in high volume areas of the business**
- **Reduce reliance on original evidence submission by developing and using existing systems to authenticate customers**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- The number of visitors to the Council reduce
- Undertake process reviews to identify potential channel shift and quality improvements to enable our face to face customers to self-serve
- Provide assisted access to the Bromley's website through our face to face facilities
- Provide face-to-face staff with quality information via electronic means reducing reliance on paper files
- Customers will be seen at the appointed time or, if we are delayed, will receive an explanation within 5 minutes of their appointment time, and be kept informed of any further delays
- We will provide a clean, tidy, safe and comfortable waiting area and, wherever possible, a space to speak to us in private. We will keep customers fully informed of waiting times
- Reduce our opening times

POST/PAPER COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

> **To reduce the amount of post and paper communication by better use of electronic channels and already available data**
> *Customer Service Standard – acknowledge within 5 days, full response within 10 days*

The 4 Key Actions To Develop our Face to Face Provisions

1. **Provide a complete range of online and interactive services to minimise the amount of paper handled**
2. **Remove PDF and downloadable forms and replace with interactive e-forms reducing reliance on paper**
3. **Place our leaflets and information online. Send information electronically from a no-reply address with links to web pages for further information**
4. **Reduce reliance on paper evidence by utilising in-house systems to verify ID, address and eligibility where possible**

Performance Management and Governance

How success of this strategy will be measured

- Reduce the volume of outgoing and incoming post, and faxes
- Provide a complete range of online services to minimise the amount of post handled
- Place more of our leaflets and information online in order to minimise printing and reduce our environmental impact
- Use second class post as our main postal tariff to minimise cost to the council tax payer
- When information is requested by phone, send electronically from a no-reply address
- Reply to all letters within 5 working days
- Commercial customers should contact us electronically
- Increasing the response rate to letters from 10 days