



Customer Experience Strategy 2021–24



Lambeth

Introduction

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In creating a customer experience strategy our motivation is simple; we want to make sure our services deliver what you really want, when you want, and that you are able to access those services in a way that suits you best.

The challenge for all local authorities is to provide excellent customer service to our residents in a period of diminishing resources. To help us achieve this, we are introducing new customer standards which will clearly set out our promise to you and how we will go about improving our services.

We have redesigned our customer contact centre in response to what users of the Town Hall said was working, and what was not; we have also launched our digital strategy that will enable even greater access to our services using modern technology, providing support for those who need it to ensure that no one is disadvantaged.

The customer experience strategy has not been written to gather dust on a virtual bookshelf, but rather has been designed to be responsive – we will continue to listen and work collaboratively with you, our residents, to understand the changes we need to make to improve our services and to measure our success in delivery.

We love Lambeth, as you do: its vibrancy and culture, and in delivering this strategy we will make significant improvements to how we serve you, therefore ensuring our borough continues to thrive.

Councillor David Amos
Councillor of Finance and Cost of Living



“This strategy outlines the transformation we want to achieve within the council. We want all customers to receive an accessible, efficient and excellent customer experience and we are committed to delivering this.”

Bayo Dosunmu Chief Executive

Our borough, our customers

Our customers are anyone who needs or chooses to interact with us. This includes residents, businesses, visitors, partners, community groups and even our own staff



328,000
population



2,437
parking permits renewed online (Jan 2021)



145,000
households paying council tax



Over 60
parks and open spaces



22,906
council tenancies



38,000
school children within 93 school settings



1.7 million
visits to libraries in a typical year



over 150
languages spoken



4,154
planning applications in 2020



16,000
registered businesses work from the borough



9,480
leasehold properties



3,900
receive long-term adult social care



674
marriages and civil partnerships over 2019/20



1.6 million
waste collections each month



232,000
people registered to vote



834,575
calls in to the call centres (end Feb 2020 – Mar 2021)



9,142
business rate payers



23,000
housing benefit claimants



4,902
deaths registered over 2019/20



11,568
births registered over 2019/20



3 million
visits to the council's website every year

Our engagement with you

We wanted to know what improvements we should prioritise, and this is what you told us...

Our partners want us to improve the contact channels to access council teams.

Partners often need to work with, or alongside, other partners that they do not have a relationship with. Sometimes this causes breakdowns in the customer journey and something we should focus on improving.

You told us you don't always trust our online services and feel that the phone will get you a faster response to an issue.

We need to become more collaborative across departments, take ownership of queries and improve accessibility out-of-hours.

Our colleagues would like more training in customer service, accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

Housing partners have noticed significant improvements over the last 6 months and feel strategically aligned to the council's visions and goals.

Our partners told us they are happy with the improvements made to the complaints process - making it easier for them to respond to and manage complaints.

You want us to improve our contact channels, online and phone, making it easier to get in touch and be kept up-to-date.

You use email as an alternative to the phone when you are not happy with how long it takes us to answer the phone, or if you can't find the right contact easily.

Our colleagues would like to have up-to-date information of our internal organisation and networks.

Our colleagues are proud of our schools, parks and how we care for the vulnerable - especially over the last 12 months.



Our strategic vision and objectives

Why we need a strategy

Lambeth has a vibrant and diverse population with a mix of customers and communities that need, or want, to engage with us.

We want to provide you, our customers, with the best possible experience 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This strategy has been developed in partnership with you. It outlines what we have agreed to achieve.

We know that in the past we have not always provided a consistent customer experience. We want to change that.

This strategy clearly sets out;

- ▶ what we want to achieve;
- ▶ how we will achieve it; and
- ▶ how we will measure improvements in your customer journey.



Delivering our vision



Shared principles

We will apply principles that we designed together

- ▶ Always put you at the heart of everything we do ensuring we understand what you need from us
- ▶ Provide a joined-up experience across our services so that you don't have to tell us twice or chase us for updates
- ▶ Make our services easy to use and accessible so everyone can access them no matter your skills or abilities
- ▶ Continuously review our services and seek feedback and evidence to improve how we do things
- ▶ Support our staff to provide the best possible experience to you, and to invest in their training and understanding of good customer service
- ▶ Invest in the right technology to meet our ambitions
- ▶ Provide a reliable and secure service



Customer standards

We will live up to our customer standards

- ▶ We make it easy for you to access services and to interact with us
- ▶ We resolve our queries at the first point of contact and keep you updated if it takes longer
- ▶ We say sorry if we get things wrong and put it right, quickly
- ▶ We listen to your feedback and take it into account when making improvements to our service
- ▶ We will only collect relevant information from you, store it safely and use it appropriately
- ▶ We are an accessible and transparent council



Empowered staff

We will empower our staff

- ▶ Provide our staff with the right skills, tools and technologies
- ▶ Create a culture of customer excellence
- ▶ Support our staff to get it right, first time
- ▶ Design efficient processes across all our services

Delivering our vision (continued)



We will strengthen our partnerships

- ▶ Together we will deliver the objectives within this strategy
- ▶ Together we will innovate and improve
- ▶ Together we will make sure we are delivering joined-up services
- ▶ Have flexible contracts to allow us to adapt to changing demand



We will introduce new and innovative technology

- ▶ Provide online access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- ▶ Provide you with a choice of channels to contact us
- ▶ Keep you updated with messages and alerts



We will provide a choice of channels

- ▶ Our website will be available 24 hours a day all year round
- ▶ Our face-to-face services will be available for those who need it
- ▶ Our trained staff will be available on phone lines for when you need to talk to us
- ▶ We will make social media channels available for you to interact with us
- ▶ We will make sure everybody has equal access to services

The customer experience journey

We will manage delivery of our vision and objectives against the five levels of our customer experience model.

We recognise that true change does not happen overnight and have set ourselves a target to reach level 4 by 2024.

At the launch of this strategy, we are moving from level 1 to level 2.



How will we know we've got it right?

We will refresh this strategy regularly, to ensure that our objectives remain current, relevant and valid and to check we are measuring the right things.

We will do this by listening to you and learning to keep improving our services.

To measure our success, we will use a mix of methods - gathering feedback from you and from our staff, and analysing the information we collect.

Things we measure include:

- ▶ How easy it is to use our website?
- ▶ How easy is it for you to contact us?
- ▶ How helpful and polite our staff are to you?
- ▶ How useful are the online services we provide?
- ▶ How quickly we resolve your issues first time?
- ▶ How quickly we respond when you ask for help?



FEEDBACK FROM YOU

- ▶ Customer surveys
- ▶ Public consultations
- ▶ Community groups
- ▶ Engagement with focus groups
- ▶ Customer satisfaction results
- ▶ Feedback from compliments and complaints



FEEDBACK FROM STAFF

- ▶ Annual staff survey
- ▶ Regular mini surveys
- ▶ One-to-ones and appraisals
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Staff forums
- ▶ Ideas and innovation forum



FEEDBACK USING DATA

- ▶ Web analytics
- ▶ Volumes of compliments and complaints
- ▶ Analysis of themes and trends
- ▶ Contact volumes by channel
- ▶ Service measures (KPIs and SLAs)



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