

Customer Experience Strategy: Formal Consultation Report

APPENDIX B

Purpose of the Report:

To share the results/feedback of the Customer Experience Strategy consultation. This report should be considered alongside the informal engagement activity Appendix that outlines activities undertaken to inform the initial draft strategy whereby over 300 separate responses from customers were provided.

Contents:

1. Purpose of the consultation
2. Method of engagement
3. Findings from engagement

Purpose of the consultation:

To engage with local people and groups to better understand their views in helping to shape Leicestershire County Council's Customer Experience Strategy 2024-28.

Method of engagement:

Who? Which customers were targeted?

The consultation aimed to seek views of the County Council's customers, as well as internal staff. The term 'customer' refers to any individual or organisation who engages with Council services in Leicestershire, including Leicestershire residents, family and friends of Leicestershire residents, visitors to Leicestershire, and a breadth of organisations, from public and voluntary sector organisations such as district and parish councils through to commercial businesses requiring Council services.

Online: All visitors to the councils website during Sept/Oct/Nov 2024, were invited to complete the consultation survey which was visible on the 'have your say page' of the Council's website.

Telephone: A targeted text message using gov.notify was sent out to approximately 1750 customers who had called the council during a 4-week over September and October inviting them to share their views on the proposed strategy. Customers with mobile numbers who had contacted our highest demand services were picked at random. Services included: highways, transport, waste, blue badge, concessionary travel, adult social care, and school admissions.

Paper: Posters inviting people to complete the consultation survey were displayed in libraries and in County Hall reception, with the option to pick up a paper survey (return address details included) from these locations should a customer be unable to go online.

The media: There have been multiple media publications (via television, radio, and newspapers) to encourage residents to provide their input.

Targeted communications were sent to a range of public, voluntary and community groups including:

- Carers network
- District Councils
- Parish Councils
- Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG)
- Vistablind
- Leicestershire GATE (Traveller, gypsy and roma community group)
- Leicestershire deaf forum
- NHS
- Leicestershire Police
- East Midlands Ambulance Service
- Fire Service

All groups have been invited to comment on the Strategy using the survey link or by getting in touch with the programme team to arrange face to face or virtual briefings.

Elected Members: All Elected Members received an email on 16th September advising them on the start of the consultation. In addition, the Council's Scrutiny Commission received a report on 6th November, inviting them to comment on the draft strategy.

Internal staff campaign: Council employees were made aware of the consultation via senior management briefings, intranet articles, all staff emails and in various internal staff spaces across County Hall. Staff were both invited to share the consultation opportunity with their customer networks, as well as respond to the survey directly if they were either a Resident of Leicestershire County Council, or if they were part of a team directly handling customer enquiries.

There have been targeted email communications to staff group networks including:

- Disabled workers group
- LGBTQ+
- Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME)

What? Questions asked within the survey:

Q1- In what role are you responding to this survey? (drop down list of customer types)

Q2- If you indicated that you represent an organisation, business, community group, school/other educational establishment, please provide your details.

Q3 - Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation? Please select one option only

Q4 - When was the last time you were in contact with Leicestershire County Council, if ever?

Q5 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision?

Q6 – Q 11 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this principle? -

- Q6 - Customer focused: building a culture that is aligned with good customer experience .

- Q7 - Accessible and inclusive: designing services accessible to those who need them, with clear and comprehensible content.
- Q8 - Transparency: in our decision making and communication.
- Q9 - Efficiency and effectiveness: in maximising value, addressing barriers to deliver good quality services.
- Q10 - Continuous improvement: in learning, innovation, service redesign, performance, impact, and results.
- Q11 - Sustainable design: in considering the environmental, social, and economic impact of our customer service.

Q12 - Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft Customer Experience Strategy 2024-28?

Q13 - What else, if anything, should we consider within our draft Customer Experience Strategy 2024-28? Do you have any views about what we could do to deliver this?

Q14 - What is your gender?

Q15 - Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Q16 - What was your age on your last birthday?

Q18 - Are you a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under?

Q19 - Are you a carer of a person aged 18 or over?

Q20 - Do you have a long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity?

Q21 - What is your ethnic group?

Q22 - What is your religion?

Q23 - What is your sexual orientation?

When

The opportunity for customers to share their views on the customer experience strategy was available from Monday 16th September until Monday 11th November, via the means outlined above.

Findings from engagement:

154 surveys were returned during the formal consultation, in addition to 316 surveys that were returned during the informal engagement period, all of these were submitted online with the exception of 1 returned by post. There was 1 request for an in-person engagement session, and this took place on 27th November with the Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group.

About respondents

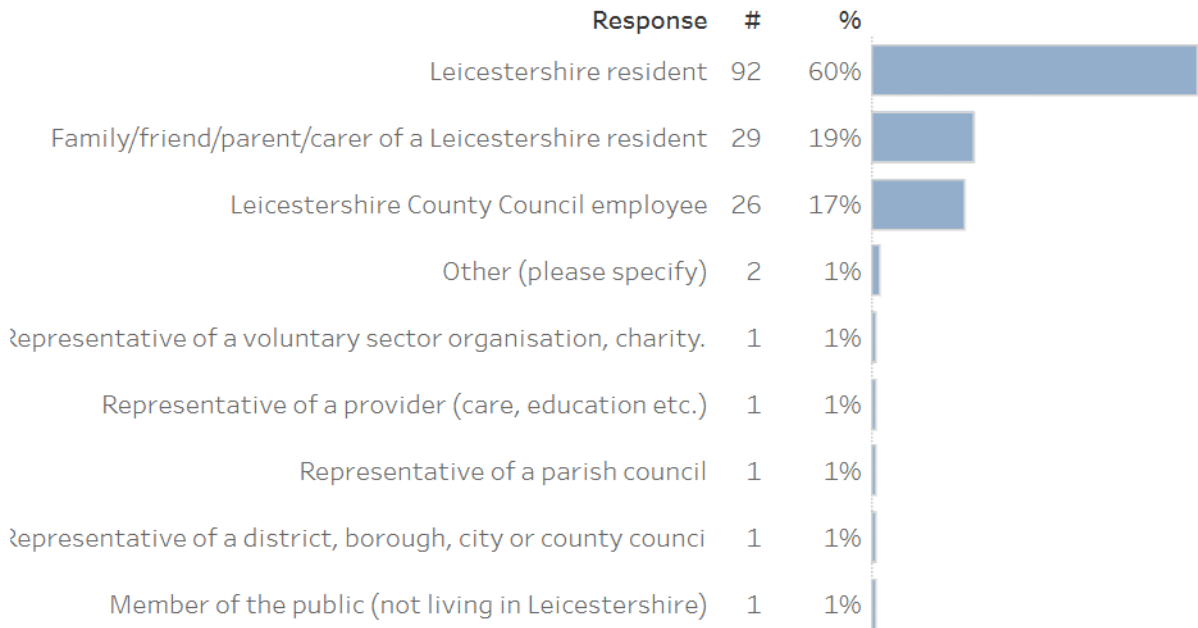
The majority of respondents were:

- a Leicestershire resident (60%)
- female (59.3%)
- aged between 45 and 84 (85.8%)
- did not have a long-standing illness or disability (67.9%)

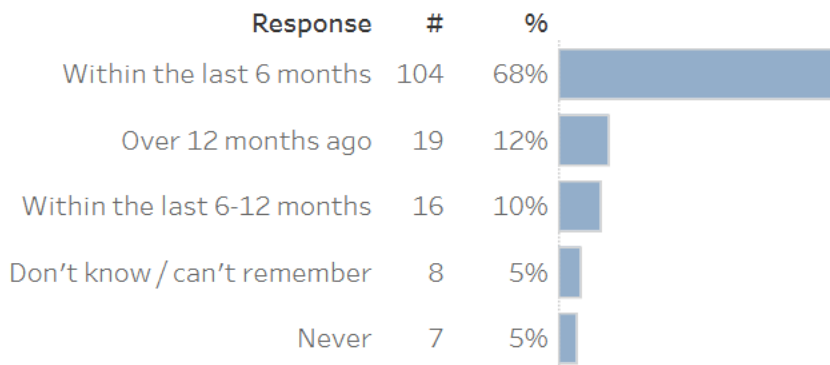
- white ethnicity (92.7%)
- 68% had been in contact with the council in the last 6 months
- External (non LCC employees) (83%)

Only 1 respondent was submitting a response officially on behalf of an organisation.

Q1: In what role are you responding to this consultation?

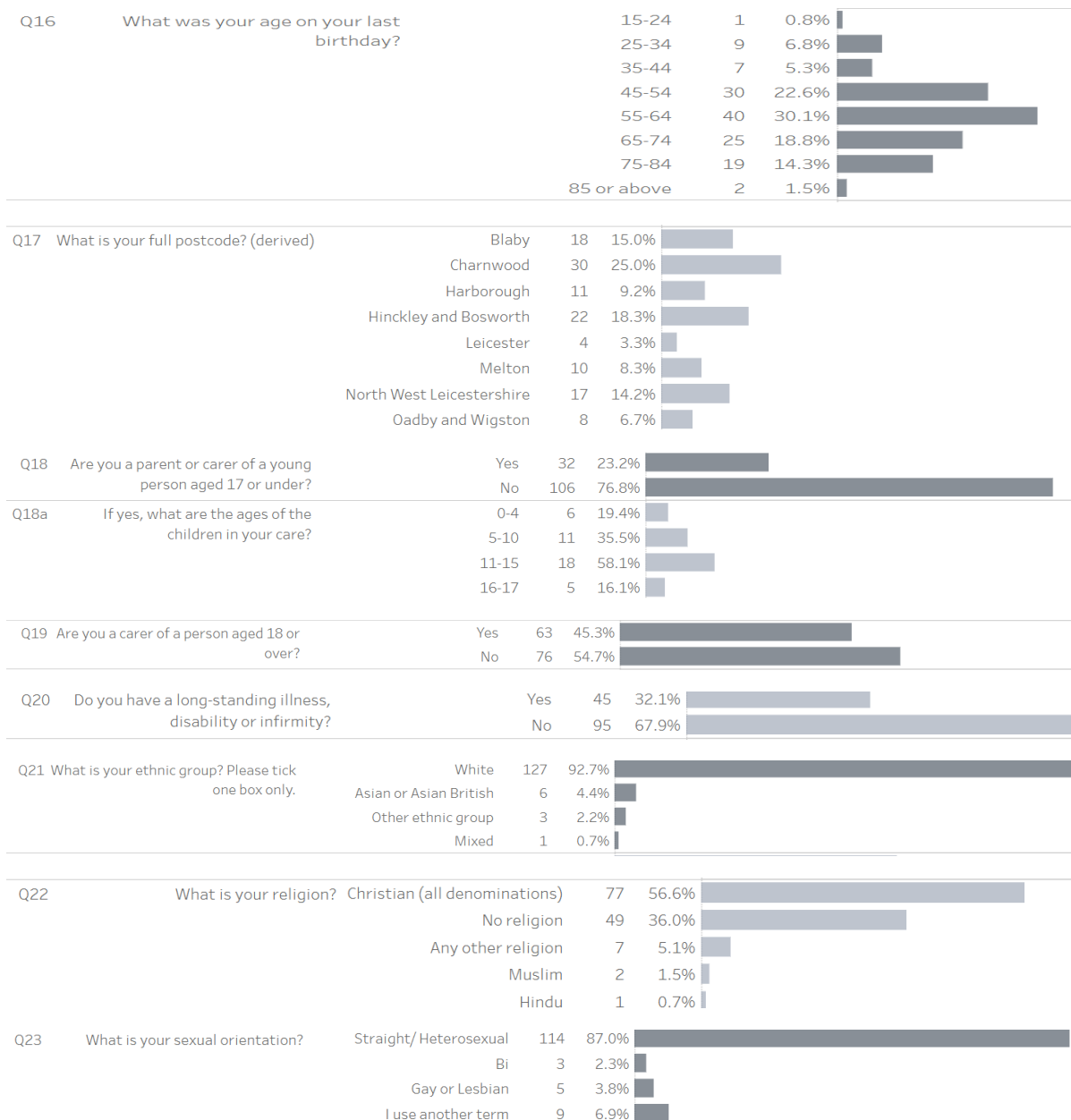


Q4: When was the last time you were in contact with Leicestershire County Council, if ever?



Q14	What is your gender?	Female	83	59.3%
		Male	56	40.0%
		I use another term	1	0.7%

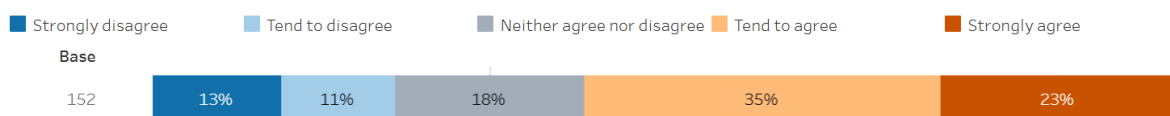
Q15	Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?	Yes	136	99.3%
		No	1	0.7%



Understanding responses based on the respondent profile:

Support for the Vision:

All respondents:

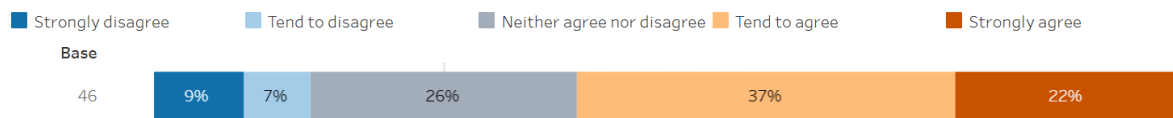


Geographic profile of respondents:

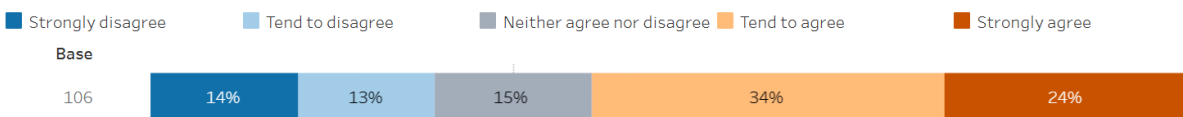
Responses from Leicestershire Residents who provided the district were split as follows (irrespective of other demographics):

District	No.	% agree with the vision
Blaby	14	73%
Charnwood	26	55%
Harborough	10	63%
Hinckley and Bosworth	20	64%
Melton	10	70%
North West Leicestershire	14	70%
Oadby and Wigston	7	63%

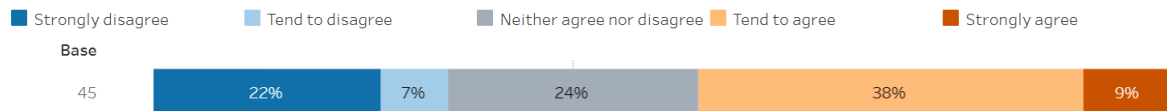
Age – those reporting to be age **65 and over** in relation to whether they agree with the vision:



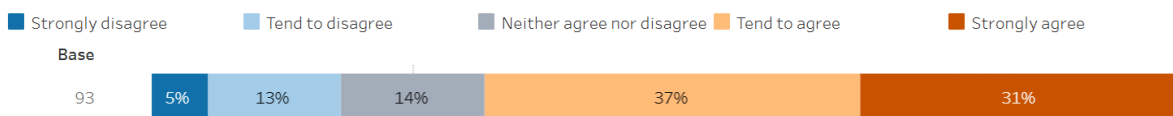
Age – those reporting to be **age under 65** in relation to whether they agree with the vision:



Disability - Those reporting to have a **disability or long-standing illness** in relation to whether they agree with the vision:

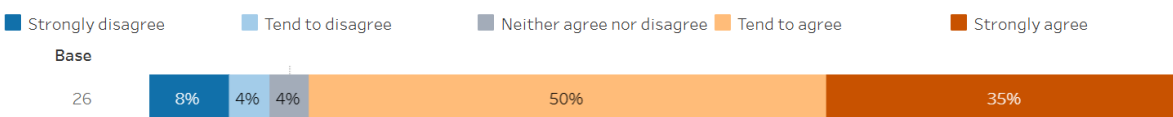


No disability –

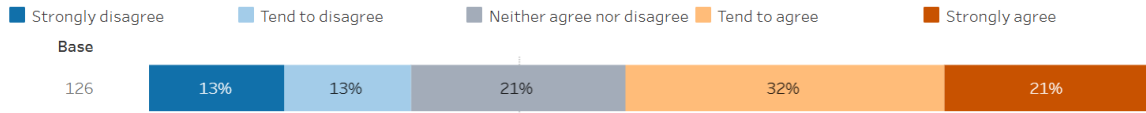


Internal vs external response to views on the vision:

Internal LCC staff (17% of all respondents):

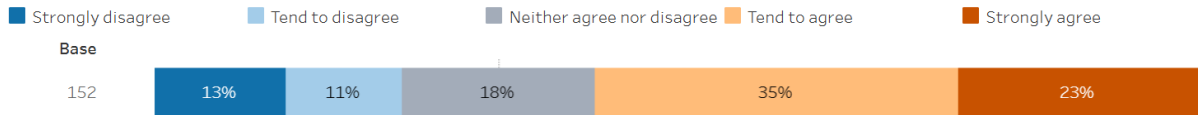


External to LCC (83% of all respondents):

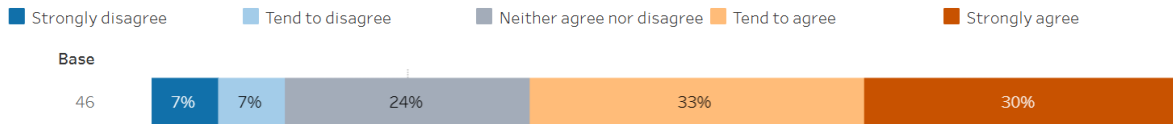


Support for the draft strategy as a whole:

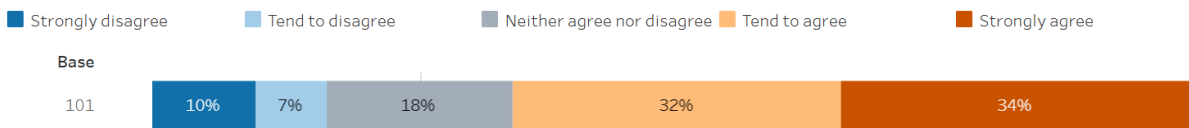
All respondents:



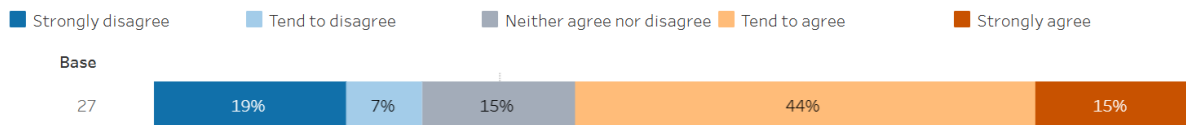
Age – those reporting to be age 65 and over in relation to whether they agree with the draft Customer Experience Strategy 2024-28:



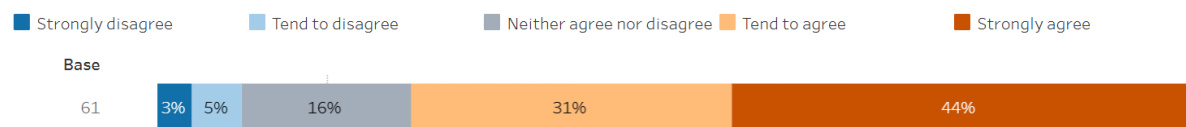
Age – those reporting to be age under 65 in relation to whether they agree with the draft Customer Experience Strategy 2024-28:



Disability - Those reporting to have a disability or long-standing illness in relation to whether they agree with the draft Customer Experience Strategy 2024-28:

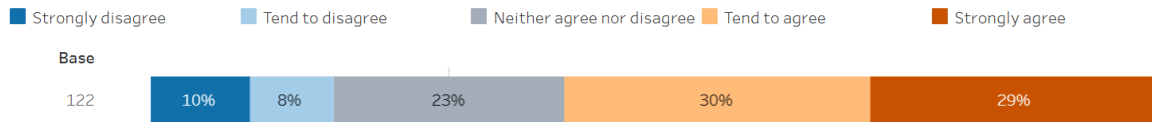


No disability –



Internal vs external response to views on the strategy as a whole:

Respondents external to LCC (83%)

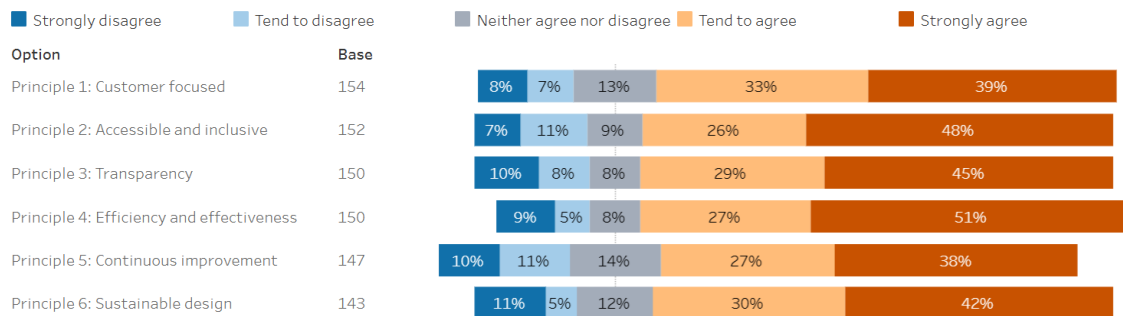


Respondents internal to LCC (17%)



Responses to the principles within the strategy were as follows:

All respondents (irrespective of demographic):



The above results were broadly reflective of the total cohort of respondents irrespective of age, with the only notable differences being:

- that those under the age of 65 were more likely to strongly agree with the Sustainable Design principle (46%) vs over 65s (33%).
- Those over the age of 65 were more likely to strongly agree with the Efficiency and Effectiveness principle (58%) vs under 65s (48%)

Respondents with a disability or long-standing illness were more likely to strongly disagree with the principles compared to those without a disability:

Principle	Disability - % strongly disagreed	No Disability - % strongly disagreed	Unspecified - % strongly disagreed
1. Customer focussed	17% (out of 29)	5% (out of 65)	14% (out of 14)
2. Accessible and inclusive	18% (out of 28)	3% (out of 64)	7% (out of 14)
3. Transparency	21% (out of 28)	8% (out of 63)	8% (out of 13)
4. Efficiency and effectiveness	21% (out of 28)	5% (out of 63)	14% (out of 14)
5. Continuous improvement	22% (out of 27)	6% (out of 62)	7% (out of 14)
6. Sustainable design	15% (out of 26)	5% (out of 59)	25% (out of 12)

Frequent comments relating to what else we should consider within our draft Customer Experience Strategy 2024-2028 and views about what we could do to deliver this:

- Sounds positive on paper and makes sense to people, could be transformative
- Consider Neurodiversity (in provision of information and communications)
- Make it easier to get through to a person (dissatisfaction with some of the call routing set ups)
- Improve the website
- Have an email route
- Clearer and transparent communication is important to people
- There is a strong need for people to still be able to talk to people and to ensure contact routes are clear and in plain English
- Accessible services
- Face to face customer forums
- Need to set out clearly how we are going to achieve the vision and strategy
- Set out clear metrics and targets across the different channels so that progress can be tracked
- Customer care training is needed.
- Communicate realistic timescales
- Removing channels that enable quick, and accessible communication goes against the vision
- Questions/ doubt over how the strategy can be achieved with less money
- Be clear about what good customer service is (Versus what it isn't i.e. there are things we will not be able to provide that might be classed as good customer service)
- Service policies need to be transparent to support management of expectations better
- Customer feedback needs to be genuinely assessed and fed into process improvement to eliminate things not working well or wasteful (emphasis on culture change)
- There is a lot that needs to change to realise the ambition within the strategy
- Address "duplication" across the system in how customer enquiries are dealt with, and then linked to this improve collaboration across different teams to address the core issues impacting experience
- Technology and automation heavy, needs to be balanced with getting the basics right so that staff behave and act to support customers
- There is a need to communicate in different ways depending on the issue, for example automated responses are not always appropriate.
- Where someone does need to get through to a human being, customers should be dealt with respectfully and with empathy. Basic customer service behaviours consistently applied irrespective of the service

Key messages from the LECG:

Overall the group was very supportive of the strategy, and grateful for the work the council does to key channels of communication “open”, particularly when compared to other organisations e.g. GPs and energy supplier. The following questions and suggestions were raised:

1. Is County Hall still signed up to the British Sign Language (BSL) charter? This needed to be clarified
2. The definition of who can be directed online needs to be clearly outlined, there was concern that there were likely to be some people that *could* go online, but the impact of making some individuals going online could be more damaging and lead to indirect costs to the council, for example, the human interface for some people is crucial in managing stress or reducing isolation
3. Telephone and Paper is crucial for the visually impaired
4. Making online transactions are simple as possible was necessary, e.g. key sticking point is often the upload of documents
5. Telephone/ talking to a person helps you pick up significant things about a person such as safeguarding risk
6. The council should raise awareness in the commissioning teams around putting requirements in tender documents/procurement standards linked to user experience and access, spreading the responsibility onto providers (both technology partners and others).
7. Library service is so important as an enabling place to help customer service, bring them in the loop about different processes.
8. Re think using and relying on “productive people” in society to help and do things on behalf of someone else, this doesn’t support enabling people and it can be an insensitive question to ask if someone doesn’t have a family or friend that can help.
9. Reception at County Hall is very good.
10. The group would like to be involved earlier in the process, and be kept updated of proposals linked to changes at a service level, the earlier they are involved, the more they can help the programme get it “right”.