WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL
City of Diversity



2023 - 2025 Customer Experience Strategy

MAY 2023



Mayor's message



Council is committed to creating a City that is liveable and enjoyable for residents, businesses and visitors, and is connected, inclusive and resilient. To help achieve this, I am pleased to announce that Council will be launching a new Customer Experience Strategy aimed to enhance the services you receive from Council and your experience with us.

Our recent Community Perception survey results (2022) were strong with a 95% satisfaction with Council overall. Feedback we have received has helped us focus on where we need to improve and what we need to continue to do well.

Through the implementation of this strategy, our aim is to improve Council's interactions with the community, and to enhance the way of life for all residents and visitors to Willoughby.

I look forward to hearing from you as to how we are going.

Tanya Taylor
Mayor
Willoughby City Council

CEO's message



Willoughby City Council takes customer experience very seriously. We are committed to listening to you, creating a greater customer focused culture, delivering more personalized experiences, and continuously improving our systems and processes. We believe that these strategies will help us create a better customer experience every time you interact with us.

To achieve this we have worked with our customers and staff to develop this strategy. Council will be implementing this 2-year interim Customer Experience Strategy to keep us moving forward as we continue to upskill our staff in service expectations.

The strategy focuses on four key areas:

- Understanding your needs
- Delivering personal experiences
- Creating a greater customer focused culture
- Continuously improving our systems and processes

Our Customer Experience Strategy will help us to deliver the changes that we need to make to improve customer experience and responsiveness across the whole of Council. It will also provide a more cost effective and efficient service to our customers and reinforce Council as a trusted source of information.

Thank you to those community members, customers and staff whom have been involved in developing this strategy.

Debra Just
Chief Executive Officer
Willoughby City Council

Willoughby City Council Customer Experience Commitment

The goal of our customer experience is to make life easier for customers through consistent and responsive services that build trust in us.

Strategy Framework

Willoughby City Council's Customer Experience Strategy is represented by the Strategy Framework, a visual plan outlining our objectives and the associated initiatives that Council will undertake over the next two years to improve customer experience, and how we will measure our performance over time.

Reading the Framework

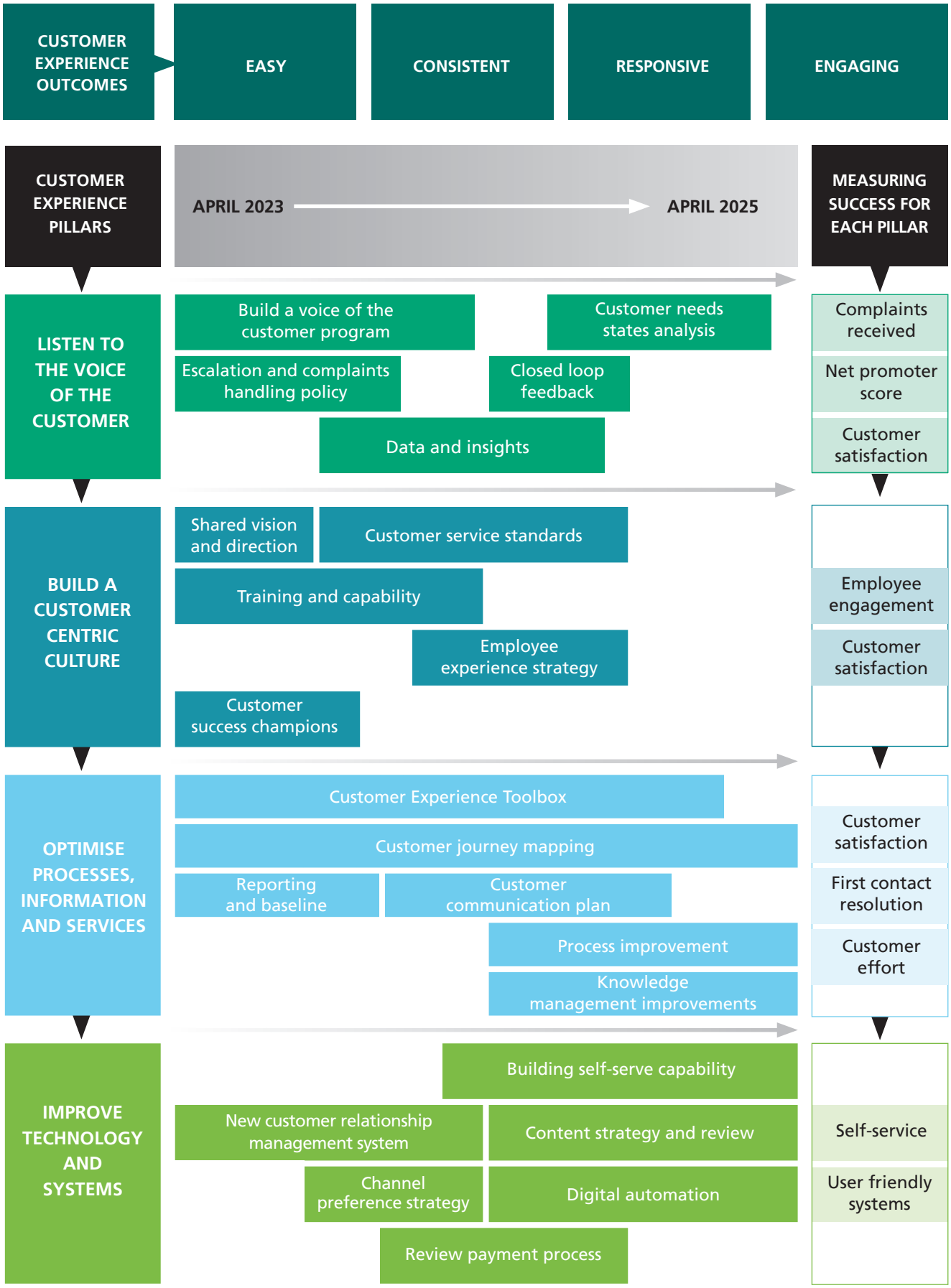
Across the top of the Framework are our Customer Experience Outcomes – these are the outcomes we would like to achieve for our customers after implementation of our Customer Experience Strategy.

Building on what we learned by listening to our customers, we developed four overarching principles, our Customer Experience Pillars: Listen to the Voice of the Customer, Build a Customer Focused Culture, Optimise Processes, Information and Services and Improve Technology and Systems. These Pillars highlight the areas of focus for us as we work to improve our customer's future experiences.

Next to the Pillars are a number of practical initiatives. These Initiatives are the steps we will take to create the desired outcomes for our customers and ultimately deliver on our Customer Experience Commitment.

And finally, to the right hand side of our Framework we outline how we will measure the level of our success.

Strategy Framework*



*A glossary of terms used in this strategy can be found in Appendix 1, on page 24

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Acknowledgement of Country

Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we stand, the Gamaragal people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Overview

Our ambition is to put our customer at the heart of everything we do and provide excellence in customer experience.

The goal of our customer experience is to make life easier for customers through consistent and responsive services that build trust in us. The Customer Experience Strategy includes a framework of practical commitments and initiatives, that will be delivered to improve the experience of our customers over the next two years.

We recognise that we are still in the early phase of our customer experience improvement journey and this Strategy is an interim step in our process. A process, which will create a firm foundation and lead to greater transformational change in the future.

We have continued to make changes and improvements to the way we do things to improve customer experience, including significant investment in new technology, which upon completion (early 2024) will provide us with a single view of the customer.

The Customer Experience Strategy includes a roadmap of practical customer commitments and initiatives that will be undertaken during 2023 - 2025.

Upon the delivery of this Strategy, a five-year Strategy will be developed after our technology is in place, to drive continued improvements to our customer experience into the future.

The Customer Experience Strategy is a key project, which delivers upon the Community Strategic Plan 2032, responding to Outcome 5 – A City that is effective and accountable: 5.7 Deliver excellent customer service.

What is Customer Experience?

Customer experience refers to all the interactions our customers have with us over time. The customer's 'experience' is what they take away from those interactions, it includes their perceptions and how they feel about the organisation as a whole. Customer service is a single element of the customer's overall experience.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

How customers feel about us

Organisation wide

Sum of all interactions in different places, via different methods over time



CUSTOMER SERVICE

It's the direct help you get from us at a specific time, place and method



Our Customer Experience Strategy will deliver the following for our customers and for us:

For Customers

- Greater sense of trust
- Feeling valued and supported
- Simpler systems and process
- A consistent experience
- Fast resolution of enquiries
- Greater connection and engagement

For Council

- Greater customer focus
- Increased synergy and internal alignment
- Better connections between departments
- Greater efficiency and productivity
- Streamlined organisational process

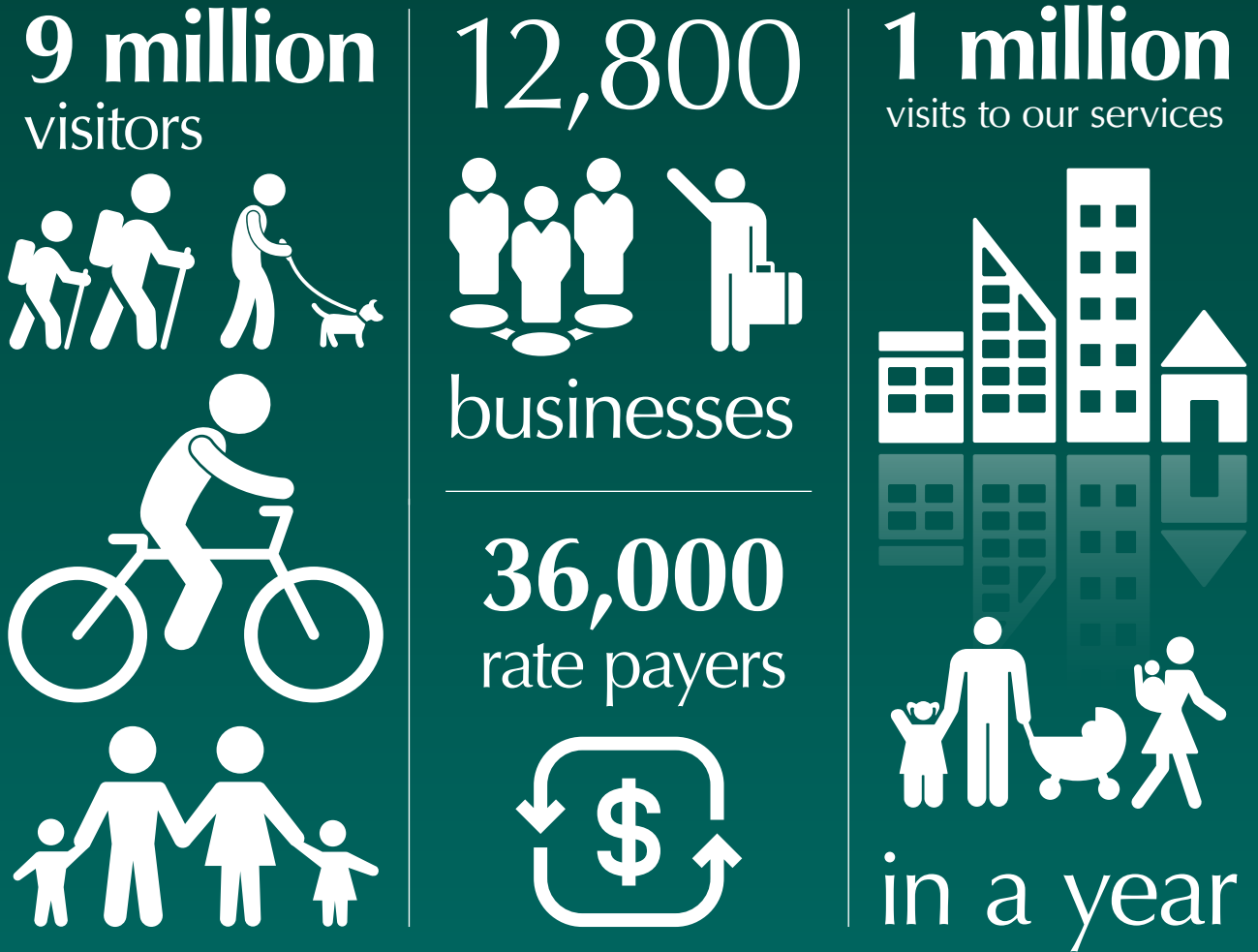


Our Customers

We have a diverse range of customers, sometimes with different expectations. We reviewed the common expectations across different customer groups to develop our approach.

CUSTOMER TYPES

Residents, property owners, tenants, licence and permit holders, animal owners, business owners, investors, solicitors, developers and builders, private certifiers, planners, trades people, students, seniors, volunteers, community groups, families, visitors, service requesters, regulators.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2022 and Willoughby City Council Internal Reporting

Our Community

We have a diverse community living within the local government area.

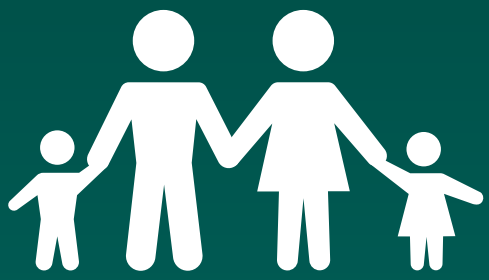
WILLOUGHBY CITY AT A GLANCE

Population

82,000

41%

of residents speak another language



Median age is 39, with

58%

of the population couples with children.

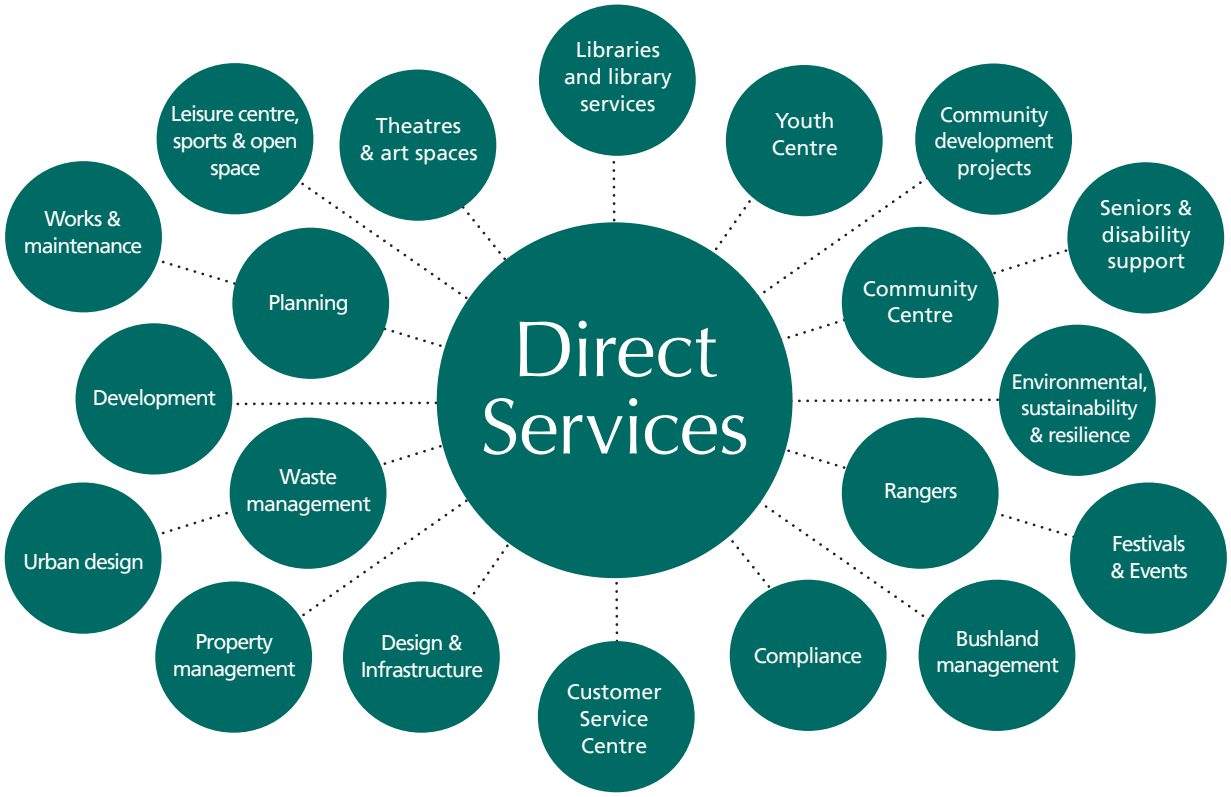
Birth places include:

Australia	49.4%
China	10.6%
UK	4.2%
Hong Kong	3.3%
Korea	3%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2022 and Community Perception Survey 2020

Our Services

Council's services are vast and can be complex to deliver. Council has a wide range of services, which we deliver across multiple areas. These include:





Our Customer Experience Outcomes

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE OUTCOMES	EASY	CONSISTENT	RESPONSIVE	ENGAGING

We have identified four customer outcomes, which reflect our customer's needs and how customers would like to experience working with us.

These outcomes have informed the initiatives we will deliver and are the basis for our commitment: To make life easier for customers through consistent and responsive services that build trust in us.

Prioritised customer outcomes

- **Easy** – Make it easy for me
- **Consistent** – Be consistent for me
- **Responsive** – Respond to me
- **Engaging** – Make me feel heard



Our Customer Experience Pillars

Building on what we learned by listening to our customers, we developed four overarching principles or Customer Experience Pillars that have, and will continue, to inform our decision making. The Pillars outline our principles as we work to improve our customer's future experiences.



Listen to the voice of the customer

Increase customer understanding and use it to design services that improve our customers' lives

Building a customer centric culture

Build a culture that has customer at its centre, that encourages empathy and understanding, with values and behaviours that focus employees on delivering great customer experiences

Optimise processes, information and services

Ensure our processes, procedures and roles have the right capability in place to manage expectations and deliver what we promise

Improve technology and systems

Use technology to share knowledge and to design interactions that are seamless and easy for customers and staff

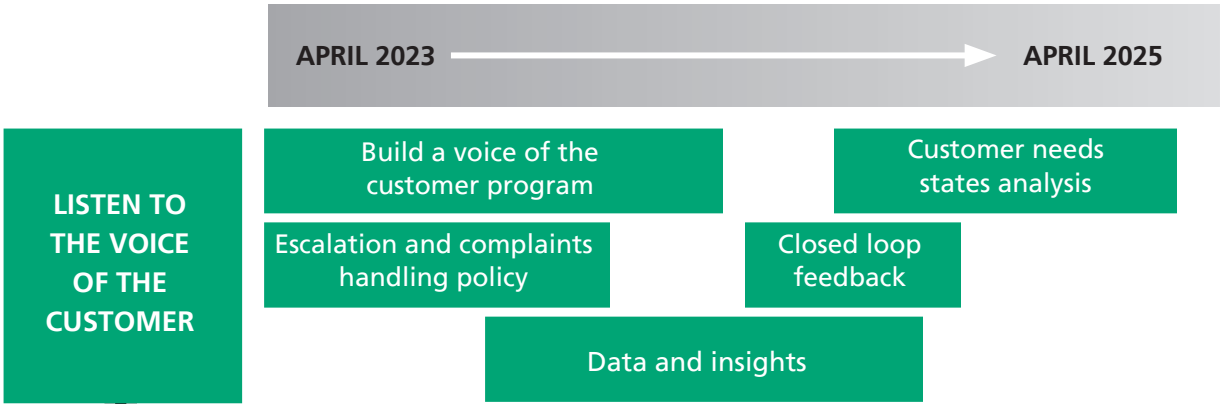
Our Initiatives

Our initiatives have been informed by the customer outcomes and customer experience pillars. Some of the initiatives in this Strategy are about continuing to improve on what we are doing well, and others are about trying new ways of delivering customer experience.

We will work together with our customer's and develop new ways of doing things. Once implemented, new systems and processes will be continuously reviewed to ensure they meet customer needs.



Our Initiatives



Voice of the customer (VOC) program

A measurement framework and tool that captures real time customer feedback and insights, including compliments and complaints.

Escalation and complaints handling policy

A new complaints handling policy and associated processes, delivering greater efficiency in the handling and resolution of issues.

Customer needs states analysis

An understanding of what drives our customers, their visceral needs and resulting behaviors, to provide them with service that aligns with these and meets their expectations.

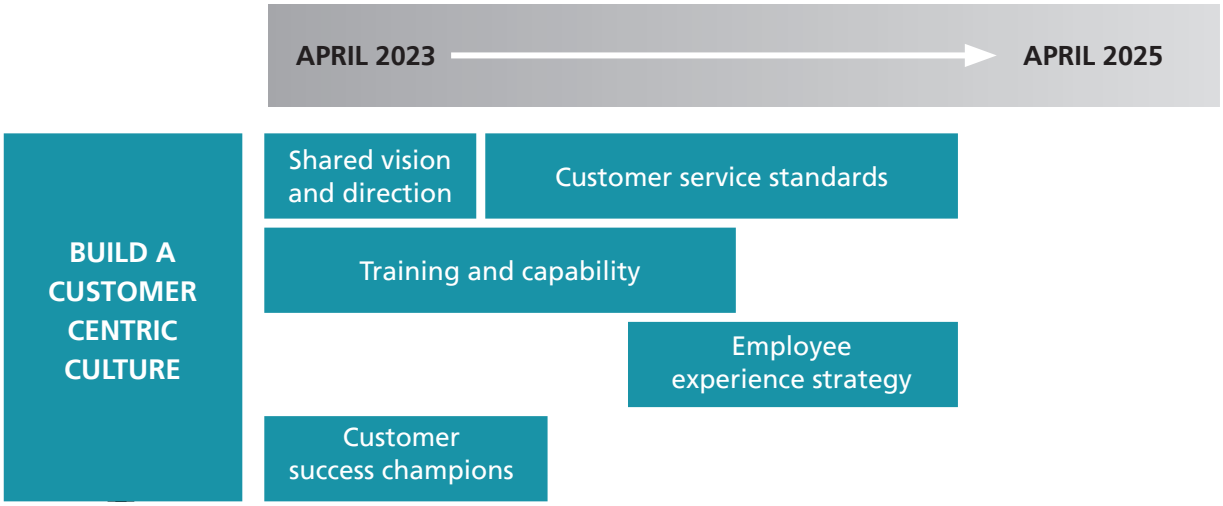
Data and insights

Customer and service feedback is gathered securely in real time and insights are developed and actioned appropriately to inform decision making.

Closed loop feedback

Customers are kept informed and up to date. When a request is raised or feedback provided, the customer is advised of how and when services will be delivered and of any changes that may occur as a result of their feedback.

Our Initiatives



Shared vision and direction

Staff members understand the connection between their roles and our customers and work collaboratively to uphold and promote a shared customer experience vision.

Employee experience strategy

Alignment of employee expectations with customer expectations, placing the customer at the heart of our culture.

Customer service standards

New Customer Service Standards, including internal and external customer response times.

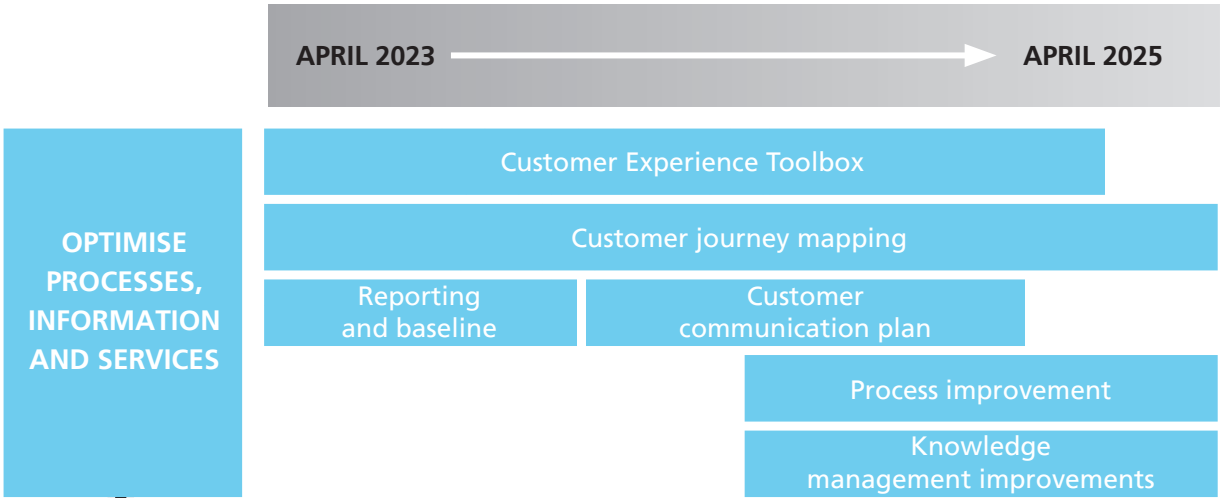
Customer success champions

A dedicated team of 'Customer Success Champions' who will support the development of a culture that keeps the customer at the heart of the way we deliver our services.

Training and capability

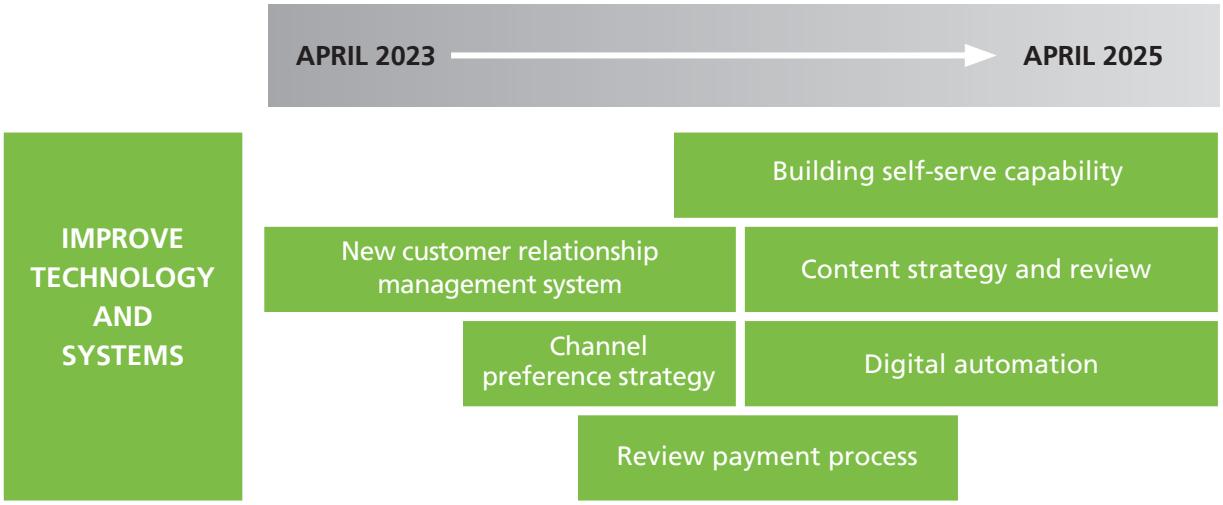
Staff training, focusing on proactive and efficient service, enhanced capability and the creation of positive outcomes for our customers.

Our Initiatives



Customer Experience Toolbox	Providing staff with the information and tools needed to best support our customers throughout their journeys and interactions with us.
Process improvement	Clear and streamlined processes in preparation for our new enterprise wide customer relationship management system, providing improved customer experience.
Customer journey mapping	Documenting (on a visual map) our customer's experiences when interacting with us, in order to develop a greater understanding of our customer's point of view.
Knowledge management improvements	Centralisation of stored information for greater ease of access by all departments, reducing duplication and improving retention of information and corporate knowledge.
Customer communication plan	A communication plan that is consistent, accessible and responsive to our diverse customers.
Reporting and baseline	Use of a reporting and baseline framework to help monitor progress towards goals, make informed decisions and help identify improvements.

Our Initiatives



Channel preference strategy	Identifying the methods of contact (or channels) different groups of customers prefer to use for different purposes or interactions to improve effeciency and service delivery.
Digital automation	Systems and processes are fully automated improving efficiency.
Building self-serve capability	Self-serve options are available which save time for our customers and are easy to use.
Content strategy and review	Information provided to our customers is consistent, correct and easy to understand through all communication channels, including redesigned forms and documents on our website.
New customer relationship management system	Implementation of the customer relationship management system, creating a single view of each customer.
Review payment process	Fast, efficient and seamless payment options available for our customers via a suite of digital products.

Managing Delivery

Our Customer Experience Strategy is a step by step process working collaboratively across Council departments.

Council will receive an annual review of this strategy to show progress of initiatives.
A full review of the impact of this strategy will occur toward the end of the second year of the strategy to understand the success of the program and to inform the development of the Customer Experience Strategy 2026 – 2031.





Appendix 1

Glossary

Automation:
Technology and systems that perform tasks automatically, with limited human intervention.

Channels:
The range of mediums or methods through which an organisation communicates, for example, email, telephone, website, face to face.

Customer Centric:
Customer focussed and keeping the customer front of mind. When we make decisions we think about how this will impact our customers, even when we may not have direct contact with customers every day.

Customer Experience:
Customer experience refers to all of the experiences customers have with a particular business or organisation. The customer's 'experience' is what they take away from those interactions and includes their perceptions and how they feel about the organisation as a whole.

Customer Insights:
A deeper understanding of our customer's needs, opinions, thoughts and experiences.

Customer journey mapping:
A visual map documenting customer's experiences when interacting with a business. It covers all areas from use of a website through to a final purchase or face to face interaction. The map also displays how the customer feels during this process and highlights where the customer may experience difficulties getting what they need. This process provides a greater understanding of the customer's point of view and encourages the organisation to make positive changes to improve the customer experience.

Customer Relationship Management System (CRM):
A CRM system includes software, tools and processes that enable businesses to capture, store and analyse information in line with required privacy regulations and policies. The system supports communications and relationships between a business and customers by retaining important information used for service delivery.

Glossary

Framework:
The structure underlying a system or concept.

Knowledge management:
The efficient handling of information and resources within an organisation.

Process:
Ways of working and policies that guide how a business is run.

Toolbox:
Useful software, resources and information provided to staff members to support them in their job roles.

Touchpoints:
Moments of interaction or contact between a customer and an organisation.

Self-Serve:
The ability of the customer to complete tasks or transactions independently.

Service levels:
The level of the standard at which service is delivered.

Single view of the customer:
The centralisation of customer information allowing the development of a more comprehensive understanding of a customer's preferences and needs. A centralised view of the customer allows the organisation to deliver services in an improved and more tailored manner and eliminates the need for customers to provide repeat information or details when dealing with different departments or individuals within an organisation.

Voice of the customer:
A range of different contact methods are used to record and retain customer feedback. Insights gained are used to better understand what our customers want and need and how we need adjust the way we work in order to provide this to them.

Appendix 2

Methodology

In developing our strategy, we have completed the following actions to inform the customer experience outcomes, framework and initiatives.

1	**RESEARCH**
	Community Perception Survey 2020
	Community Strategic Plan 2032
	Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 2026
	Existing Customer Service Charter
	Emerging customer experience best practice
	ABS (Data) census data 2022
2	**WORKSHOPS**
	Community Perception Survey 2022
	Staff workshops
	Community consultation
3	**INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS**
	15 customer feedback surveys and interviews
	20+ staff interviews
	Community engagement surveys
4	**DATA**
	Complaints, compliments and voice of the customer feedback
	Customer service reporting


coffey
MERIDIAN

WILLOUGHBY
CITY COUNCIL

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