# **Customer Service Programme Discovery Report**

Creators – Delivery Team 2 April 2022



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# **Discovery background**

What is a discovery and why did we need to do one for the customer services programme?



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# What is a discovery?



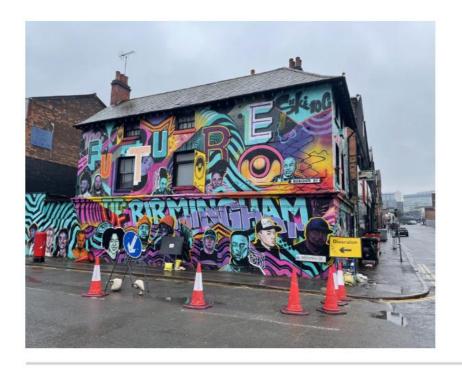
Our approach is aligned with the Government Digital Service Standard. Discovery is the first phase of this approach.

The discovery phase aims to provide a better understanding of:

- The users, including their pain points and user needs
- The end-to-end service and identified user journeys
- Ideas and options of how we can improve the existing service
- Recommendations for the next phase (alpha)



# What is a discovery?



Discovery isn't a linear process. It's a complex, messy process that is happening all at once

During this process we seek to understand the context and our users. We validate any assumptions we have.

Whenever we learn new information, we need to revisit our previous decisions and ask if this new information changes anything.



# The customer service discovery

We are working as part of the Customer Service Programme that is underpinned by the council's new <u>Customer Service Strategy</u>.

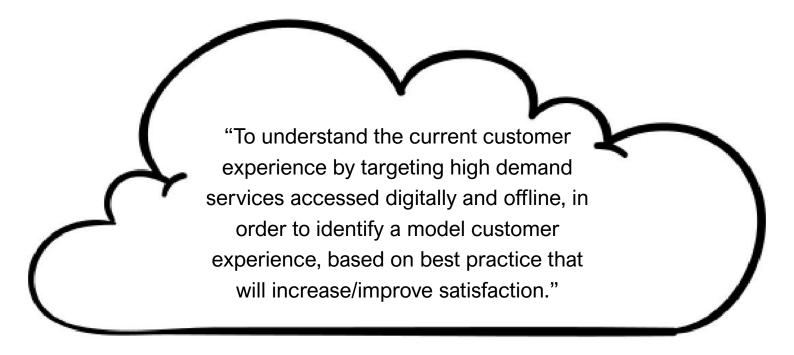
The team has been assigned to undertake an initial discovery that will help us to understand the current customer experience for high demand services. We have focused on Waste Management, Housing Repairs and Highways.

Through user research and data analysis the team have sought to understand the current customer and staff experience, including pain points and user needs.

From this the team has developed a common 'gold standard' experience that is intended to provide a north star that will underpin future activity of the Customer Service Programme.



# **Discovery goal**



# Problem statements (to be explored & solved)

- There is limited information readily available to understand the identified high demand services end to end
- 2. There is limited information about the service users and their needs
- 3. There is inconsistency of customer experience across our service areas, both online and offline

# Service needs (to be explored)

- We need to understand if there are any opportunities to improve the customer journey, and therefore customer experience for the identified high demand services
- We need to understand how a single 'gold standard'/common user experience can be applied to multiple service areas, and those customers using multiple service areas

# **Delivery approach**

What we set out to achieve, how we went about structuring the discovery, what was in scope & high-risk assumptions?





# Meet the delivery team

We have a blended, multi-disciplinary team delivering the discovery



Geraldine M Collins Business Product Owner



Sheraz Yaqub
Technical Product
Owner



Hannah Pinnock Design Strategist



Richard Smith User Research Coach



George Hanlon User Researcher



Surita Solanki User Researcher



Lili de Larratea Service Designer



**Lillian Ip-Koon** User Interaction Designer



Nathan Thomas Lead Business Analyst & User Researcher



Al-Haarith Ali UX/UI Designer



Mariam Imdad User Research support



Azra Majid User Research support



Sue Hopkins User Research support



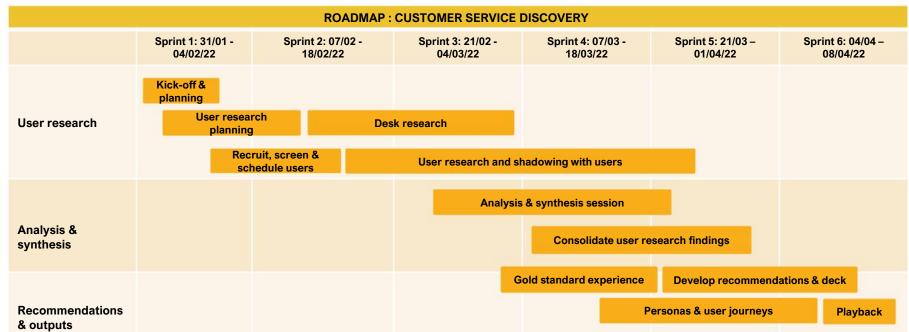






# The discovery plan

We delivered an eight-week discovery. Due to the tight time-frame there may be some discovery recommendations we carry over to the next phase.







# Our ways of working

### **Sprint planning**

Fortnightly sessions to agree the sprint goal & plans for delivery

# Team sprint reviews

Regular sessions to review what has been done

### **Daily stand-ups**

15-minute update meeting on what we've done, what we have coming up & any blockers we have

### Retrospectives

Reflective session, what worked well and what could be improved, agree actions We have delivered this Discovery as an agile project. This means we have worked in two-week sprints, planning at the start of each sprint, reflecting at the end of the sprint. This has helped us understand what we could have improved and react accordingly. Working in this way enables us to react to current information, flexing our focus and timelines as appropriate to meet both our Discovery and sprint goals.

The team use Jira to plan, assign and track agreed sprint goals and tasks.





# **Discovery process**

### Research



- We conducted data analysis to understand what the customer satisfaction, service requests
   & complaints data was telling us
- We have undertaken site visits to understand what a typical day looks like for staff
- We ran user research interviews aiming to speak to a representative sample of users. This included 26 citizens and 33 staff

### **Analysis**



- We conducted analysis and synthesis throughout the process to make sense of what we were hearing
- This helped us identify gaps in our knowledge that we were able to explore and resolve as part of the process

### Recommendations



- Based on our findings we began to draft a 'gold standard' user journey that we intended to be applicable to a wide range of council services
- We identified opportunities to improve the customer experience
- We identified recommendations for consideration
- We identified user stories to guide services when investing in digital tools





# **Discovery scope**

#	Items in scope		In scope	Partial	Out of
1	BCC employed staff who work in the prioritised service areas		<b>V</b>		
2	Citizen facing (this includes staff who have direct contact e.g. Contact Centre or just offer services and may or may not necessarily have direct contact with citizens e.g. street cleansing operatives)		<b>~</b>		
3	BCC employed staff (inclusive of both permanent and contractors) within services that could benefit from improved customer satisfaction		<b>✓</b>		
4	A high-level view of high demand service areas:	Highways, Housing repairs, Waste Management	<b>✓</b>		
		Benefits & School Admissions	_		
5	A low-level look into the prioritised services, which will be the focus areas for the proof of concept				<b>/</b>
6	Subcontractors or organisations commissioned by BCC to deliver frontline services – we spoke to 1 contractor			<b>✓</b>	





# What did we want to uncover (data analysis)

- An understanding of the latest customer satisfaction levels for each service
- An understanding of the volumes and types of service requests logged by customers for each service
- An understanding of the volumes and type of customer complaints logged for each service







# What did we need to discover (user research)

- An understanding of the current customer experience across our three 'universal' services
- An understanding of the staff experience of those delivering our 'universal' services, both resident facing and back office
- Customer expectation around what good customer service looks like



# What were the high-risk assumptions for this discovery?

The following risks were identified at the start of discovery and include a status at the end of this phase:

#	Risk assumption	Assumption status	Assumption update	
1	We will have sufficient time and access to all the high demand services initially identified in scope for this discovery	Realised	Benefits & School Admissions could not be included in the time available	
2	We will have sufficient time to understand the current customer and staff experience, including pain points and user needs.	Closed	See research & analysis	
3	That a common "gold standard' experience can be drafted and applicable to a wide range of council services	Closed	See recommendations	
4	We will be able to meet the target number (20-30) of representative service users in the time available to undertake explorative user research	Closed	Interviewed 26 citizens and 33 staff	
5	We will be able to talk to enough sub- contractors commissioned by BCC to deliver front line services	Realised	We were only able to interview 1 sub-contractor	

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# Research & analysis

What we discovered from speaking directly to users through user research and desk research analysis



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# What we set out to understand

To develop a refined understanding of the current customer experience across our three 'universal' services.

### We will understand:

- initial needs people have when they interact with the council
- high-level service stages someone goes through whilst interacting with a service
- how people's needs develop whilst progressing through the service
- any pain points experienced going through the service.



## What we set out to find out

To draft a model of what good customer service looks like.

### We will understand:

- expectations around what good customer service looks like
- perceptions as to the likelihood of the council's ability to deliver on their expectations



# What we set out to find out

In addition to customers, we conducted research with staff (both public facing and back-office staff across the three service areas and Contact Centre) to understand:

- high-level service stages
- existing insights or research the service have access to
- any perceived pain points from a service perspective.

This research has complimented data we've already collected from previous work.

### How we've done it

- 60-minute semi-structured interviews
- Mostly on a one-to-one basis, some group sessions with staff
- Conducted online, over the phone and face-to-face
- Recruited via GovDelivery email distribution list, mailouts to residents and social media
- Initial screener call to identify any additional participant needs
- Informed consent was gained from every participant
- All participant information has been carefully used and stored

# We have spoken to

26 customers across Birmingham

**33 staff** members across all three service areas and the Contact Centre

# **Getting a representative sample**

We've tried to speak to people representative of Birmingham.

We've been able to get a good sample mix in relation to age, gender, household tenure, disabilities and those who only use the internet confidently, or with help from others.

Future rounds of research need to focus on people who:

- contact the council and do not use the internet at all
- are under 25
- are Pakistani, Caribbean, African, Bangladeshi, Arab and Chinese

## **About our customers**

- People are proud of Birmingham
- There are mixed views of the council
- Trust in the council (and Government as a whole) is low
- There is an awareness that the council is stretched
- There is some discontent around political and contractual structures within the council

# **Research themes**

- Most people commented on a lack of <u>communication</u> when interacting with council services
- Decisions aren't made <u>transparently</u>, there is a lack of understanding about why things happen
- There is an expectation that the council should be <u>proactive</u> – some things shouldn't need customer interaction
- People should be treated <u>empathetically</u>



# **Communication is key**

- Most customers commented on a lack of communication from the council
- There is a lack of follow-up from the council to inform people what is happening after accessing a council service
- Customers would rather know things are going to take longer (or not happen at all), than not being told anything

# "Things just go into a **big black hole**"

Someone reporting a missed bin collection



# **Decisions aren't made transparently**

- Customers don't know why things happen (or do not happen)
- Poorly designed elements of service delivery cause distrust amongst people, feeding the wider narrative of distrust
- There is a lack of trust with the people making decisions, especially when contractors provide services on behalf of the council

"You get a different reference number which restarts the clock"

Someone making a Highways complaint



# People expect the council to be proactive

- People feel like they must report everything in granular detail to get things done
- People feel if they miss anything from a request for help, nothing will happen
- Some of the best examples of council service we've heard about have been when the council has appeared to be proactive

"If it's not on the ticket, **they won't do it**"

Someone reporting a Highways fault

# People should be treated empathetically

- Whilst there were some examples of good service, people recounted numerous examples where they felt they weren't treated in the way they expect
- People want someone to take ownership of their enquiry, rather than passing it on
- People referenced the council's culture, processes and training when receiving customer service

# "The person I spoke to didn't understand or care"

Someone accessing benefits support



# Waste and recycling – storyboard

No one has come to collect Mr Hamid's waste for 2 weeks now and he doesn't know why!

English isn't his first language, so he finds it daunting to call the council. His grandson usually helps, but he's away on holiday and the foxes are getting to his rubbish.





# Waste and recycling – highlights



- People referenced waste and recycling more than any other, focusing on missed collections
- Most comments refer to lack of communication about when and why things happen (or do not happen)
- There was critical feedback of the behaviour of waste crews, whilst crews talked about dealing with abusive behaviour and customers not always following the rules
- Ongoing digital transformation work within waste and recycling could make tangible customer service improvements



# Waste and recycling – customer snapshot

I'm 76 years old and I have problems lifting heavy items and getting out and about. I have someone who helps me around the house and to do the shopping. I'm not able to use technology myself. I often rely on the younger members of my large family to help me when I need to do things online. English isn't my first language, so I often find it difficult to interact with companies and organisations, like the council. I find it difficult to navigate pavements in my local area, moving in between bins and rubbish that has been fly tipped.



- To know I am eligible for an assisted bin collection, and how to get one
- To understand the different types of rubbish that go in the refuse and recycling bins
- To be kept informed if my bins are missed and when they will be collected
- To report any issue to the council by phone with an interpreter if I can't get help to go online
- To get written information in my preferred language

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# Waste and recycling – customer snapshot

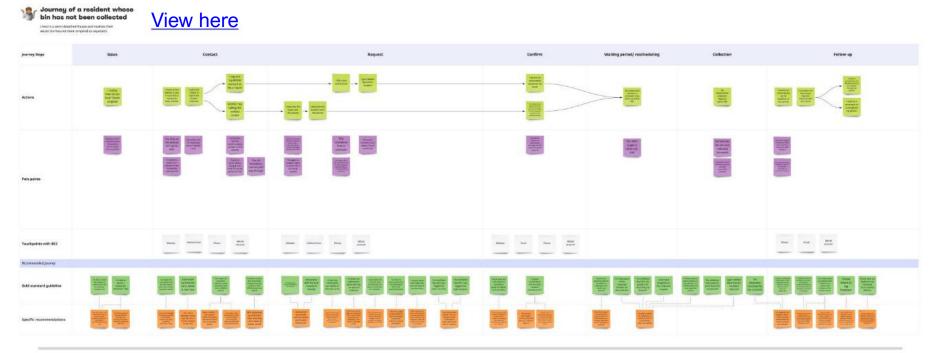
# Positives

 Family members often help me to use online services, including accessing the BRUM account

# Negatives

- My waste and recycling collections are often missed
- I'm unaware of the reasons why they are missed
- English is not my first language, which makes it more difficult for me to understand what is going on
- I can struggle to get around the bins left out on the street
- It's hard for me to speak to the council on the phone without translation services
- Sometimes it feels that nothing can be done to solve my problems around waste and recycling

# Waste and recycling – customer user journey







# Waste and recycling – staff snapshot (customer facing)

I'm a Waste Operative Driver, Team Leader and a grade 4 member of staff. I contribute to collecting thousands of bins every day. I start my shift at 5am and am responsible for checking my vehicle and ensuring that my round is complete each day. I supervise a team of 3 on a day-to-day basis, as well as ensure that they log any issues such as missed bins. I am a positive person who likes to do a good job. When my round is complete, I go to my second job.



### **♡** Needs

- For my team to be consistent, to arrive on time and ready for the round
- To be aware of who my team will be for the day and week
- Customers follow the kerbside policy and recycling requirements
- For action to take place when I report fly tipping
- Appropriate documentation for the round, to ensure assisted collections and other concerns are highlighted
- To have something to give to a customer when I take away a broken bin
- For vehicles to be well maintained and functional
- For the teams to slow down and ensure that they don't miss bins
- That I am kept informed of anything that may affect my round





# Waste and recycling – staff snapshot (customer facing)



- Important alerts are noted on paperwork
- Every day is different
- I'm feeling more relaxed with COVID starting to calm down
- The technology available is good because customers receive information in real time

#### **Negatives**

- The pressure affects everyone in the team
- There's sometimes a breakdown in communication between the team and management
- Team members (loaders) are sometimes late
- Negativity from residents due to missed bins
- Confrontations with residents such as road rage
- Residents putting incorrect items into a bin
- Being told that a vehicle is going for an MOT after all the vehicle checks have been completed is frustrating
- Teams change constantly and sometimes without explanation
- There's not enough staff at times, no more than 4 drivers can take the same day off
- Vehicles can overheat and cut out during hot periods
- Not everybody is aware of job opportunities, some depots are told, others are not
- I'm unable to drive and log information in Slab in the Cab it's time consuming and my job is becoming more complex





# Waste and recycling – staff snapshot (back office)

I'm a Business Support Manager who supports the waste service with whatever they need. I've worked within the council for many years and have been in this role for 4 years. I work across 2 of Birmingham's waste depots and communicate with the service area managers on a regular basis using Microsoft Teams and face-to-face conversations.

#### **Needs**

- To have greater trust in waste operatives
- For waste operatives to have access to online training courses and digital documentation
- A more efficient way for staff to book annual leave
- Paperless approaches to pay slips, tip tickets and assisted collection lists for crews
- For Slab in the Cab to be adopted across the service and be used efficiently and consistently
- For the business support team to spend less time on complaints
- For dropped work to be reallocated the same day

I'm just a support service. I can't make people change. I can just ease them into it.



### Waste and recycling – staff snapshot (back office)



- The constantly changing service that is modernising rapidly
- The roll out of slab in the cab has gone well so far, allowing us to access information in real time
- It allows management to see which rounds have been missed and reallocate to crews nearby
- Feedback on the slab in the cab pilot has been great. The crews are positive, and it works well, especially now that there's 5G connection
- It can be used to send live messages to crews



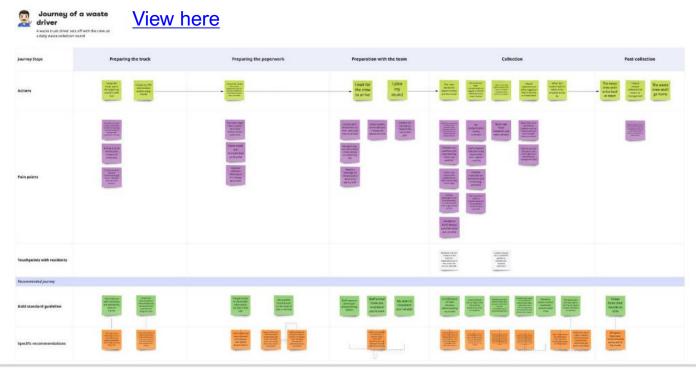
#### **Negatives**

- Crews finish early between 9 10am instead of 12pm
- Buy in from the depots for Slab in the Cab has been slow
- Processes within the waste service are still too manual and paper based with lots of wastage
- Waste Operatives don't currently have access to online training courses
- A high number of complaints relating to missed bins
- Customers report the same missed bin multiple times
- Dropped work is published on the website too early
- It's at driver discretion to continue to use slab in the cab
- Unions are a key stakeholder, we spend a lot of time working with them
- Staff don't have access to digital policies and procedures
- Our business support officers assist with complaints due to limited resources in the complaints team
- It's difficult for crews when a customer contradicts what they say it makes them feel not trusted





# Waste and recycling – staff user journey





**Highways - storyboard** 

Hayley cycles to work and around town daily. The potholes on the roads are a big issue for her and she often goes to the trouble of reporting them to the council.

She can wait weeks or even months for a pothole to be mended, but it is particularly frustrating for her when she sees large potholes fixed and small ones just left. She doesn't understand why - maybe they think this is enough? Small potholes might not be an issue for cars, but they are a big issue for cyclists!





# **Highways - storyboard**

Councillor Joe sent in a query about some scheduled roadworks on behalf of a resident. He received a response from two different members of staff, which was very confusing for him!





# **Highways - highlights**



- A lack of understanding amongst customers of why a particular decision has been made
- People question the quality of repairs, suggesting faults are resolved just for the short term
- There is a difference between the expectations of the council and customers in relation to road repairs
- Staff dealing with complaints navigate a complex process across multiple teams with Councillors not always following official reporting routes

### **Highways – customer snapshot**

I'm a single homeowner in my 50s who lives alone. I work part time at the local library and commute to work by bicycle. I enjoy cycling and it's my preferred way of getting about in Birmingham. However, my routes and commutes are becoming more difficult with the growing number of roadworks and defects across the city.

I contact the council multiple times a year to report potholes and when my bins haven't been picked up.

#### **Needs**

- My ability to report issues whilst on the move
- To receive updates on where a repair is in process e.g. when they are going to be fixed
- Repairs that are done in a timely way
- A high quality of repairs that are long lasting







#### **Highways – customer snapshot**

### **Output** Positives

- I enjoy a healthy, cost effective and sustainable commute
- I like the community aspect of my job and meeting people
- New cycle lanes are being introduced
- I've a good opinion of the service generally
- Recently I've seen that more improvement works are being carried out

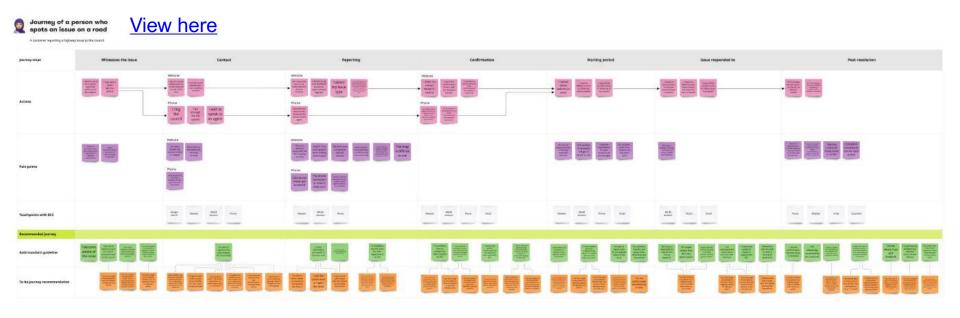
#### Negatives

- The health impact on my knees/joints
- I'm reminded of all the road issues every day on my commute, and I can see if they've still not been addressed
- The quality of the repairs is poor and needs repeating within a few months
- The response time to action repair is lengthy
- I've reported faulty streetlights to the council that haven't been repaired quickly
- I choose to change my route if a road has too many potholes, adding on time to my journey





### **Highways – customer user journey**







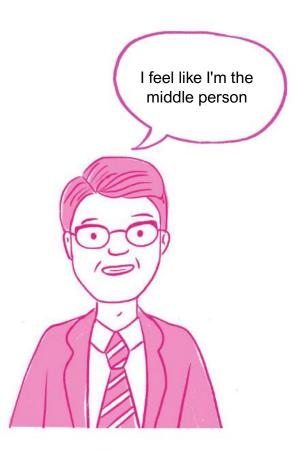
### **Highways – staff snapshot**

I'm a Business Support Manager who lives in Birmingham and has worked for the council for more than 10 years. I directly manage 4 people in my team, and we generally work well together. I provide support for the team in the highways service and help to deal with any complaints that are escalated to stage 2.

I want to ensure that highways is providing a lean and efficient service from end to end, delivering a reliable, good service for customers.

#### **Needs**

- To communicate with the other teams in a collaborative and unified way
- Effective communication between relevant teams
- To track the progress of contractors
- For complaints to be responded to, ensuring a high quality
- Access to other systems
- To have a system in place to inform customers that we're already aware of an issue when a request has been previously logged







#### **Highways – staff snapshot**



#### **Positives**

- I really enjoy my job
- I take pride in the work I do each day
- I have a good relationship with my team and the management team
- I know my job makes a difference to the people of Brimingham
- I think iCasework works well
- I can offer follow up calls for distressed customers



#### **Negatives**

- Unnecessary manual processes
- Duplication of work
- Inability to access other systems
- Difficult to deal with the volume of complaints about PCN/CAZ
- Not everyone in the team uses the iCasework system
- There is a backlog due to service area resources
- Councillors don't always use the digital form provided, creating additional work for the team
- Inability to check the quality of a complaint response
- There is a lack of clarity about where responsibility lies



# Highways/housing – staff snapshot (resident facing)

I'm a Contact Centre Agent who deals with a range of service area enquiries including housing repairs and highways. I'm currently working remotely and live in Birmingham. I cover incoming calls and sometimes the webchat from customers. I'm confident with using technology as part of my role, including Northgate and Keyfax.

I try my best to be helpful and proactive with customers and am apologetic when needed.



- For customer's issues to be resolved quickly
- To be able to efficiently diagnose the issue and give an accurate timescale to the customer
- To have the right answers to provide to the customer
- To be able to track the progress of a repair
- To be able to manage the expectations of the customer
- For contractors to keep customers informed of any updates relating to a repair
- To have the capacity to deal with a call correctly





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### Highways/housing – staff snapshot (resident facing)

#### Positives

- Reference numbers help me to deal with the call quicker
- I have access to contractor diaries to look at availability and book repairs in
- The daily report helps management review contractor performance
- Management can intervene to support if necessary

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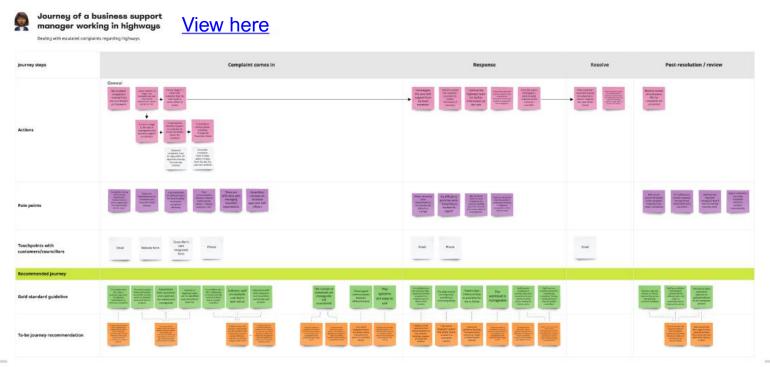
#### **Negatives**

- The relaying of information between customers and contractors isn't very efficient
- Having a heavy workload and being on constant calls
- Customers tend to think everything is an emergency
- Keyfax can be clunky
- Timescales for repairs can be too lengthy
- When the customer gets quality that is anything less than 'gold', they will reach out to the contact centre
- The website is a bombardment of information.





# **Highways – staff user journey**





### Housing repairs – storyboard

Jillian and her son, Jake, have had a water leak in their flat, which has caused damp for several months now. They are starting to get mould in some rooms and the air is not nice to breath. It is affecting their health and they feel embarrassed to invite friends to come over.

Getting a suitable appointment is tough as Jillian has shift work and she needs to juggle looking after her son and her elderly father.

It's most frustrating when they wait in all day for a repair to be done and no one turns up! You can't contact the repair team directly and must go through the BCC contact centre... it's a long-winded, lengthy process.





# **Housing repairs - highlights**



- Communication and flexibility around appointment times is key
- People want their needs to be considered holistically
- People want to share feedback about their experience in the right way, at the right time
- Expectations around repairs, including emergency repairs, need to be managed
- There are some examples of good practice where repairs were proactively undertaken



### Housing repairs - customer snapshot

I'm a busy single parent in my mid 30s. I have one child who is at school, and I work shifts at the local hospital. I'm on Universal Credit and have been living in a council flat in town for the past three years. We have a smart phone, a tablet, and we have broadband internet at home. We've had a regular problem with a water leak and damp in our flat over the past few months, which remains unresolved.



#### **Needs**

- Flexible appointments that fit my schedule
- Efficient diagnosis of the issue and when it's raised
- Updates on when the repair will take place
- Quality repairs that will last for a long time
- Friendly staff members that I can trust and who make me feel trusted
- Staff that show empathy towards my situation
- Repairs that take place in a timely manner
- Contractors with the right skills to attend my repairs
- For how the issue impacts me and my life to be recognised

"I need to make sure our home is a safe and healthy environment."







#### Housing repairs – customer snapshot

### **Positives**

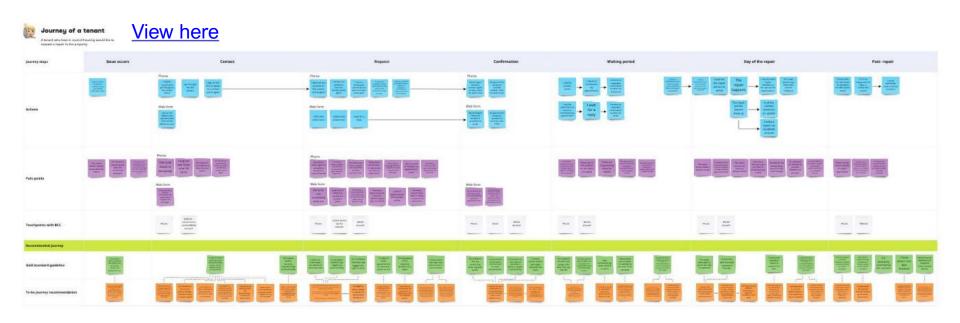
- Staff are sometimes very friendly
- Proactive repairs are received well (though rare)
- Confirmation texts from contractors

# Negatives

- Limited opening hours and long waiting times on the phone
- The ability to change/reschedule or cancel appointments
- Contractors with the wrong skills are turning up for the repairs
- Contractors not showing up to do the work
- Poor quality repairs that don't last
- It is time consuming to complain
- I need to wait for an appointment if I'm reporting a repair online



# Housing repairs – customer user journey







#### **Housing repairs – staff snapshot**

I'm a Senior Service Manager who manages a team of over 120 people. I'm from Birmingham originally and still live within the city. I help to oversee over 250,000 repairs a year, supporting my team by dealing with escalated complaints and managing and reviewing service KPI's. I really care about the service my team delivers for the people of Birmingham and want to improve things on the ground and in people's homes.



- For customer issues to be resolved
- To manage the expectations of the customer
- For contractors to keep customers informed about repair updates
- For enforcement to take place when tenant behaviour results in property damage
- To be able to track the progress of a repair
- For customers to be able to easily contact the council
- To have the capacity to deal with complaints to a high standard
- To be able to deliver a service that improves customer satisfaction
- For contractors to consistently meet KPIs
- For tenants to take responsibility of their properties and comply with the tenancy agreement





#### **Housing repairs – staff snapshot**

#### **Positives**

- We're able to provide flexible time slots for customers, considering what suits each person's circumstances
- We're currently mobilising a new contract, so that contractors will have to send reminders 48 hours and 2 hours before a repair appointment
- KPI's are in place, refined and leave no room for error
- We receive a broken down KPI report every month

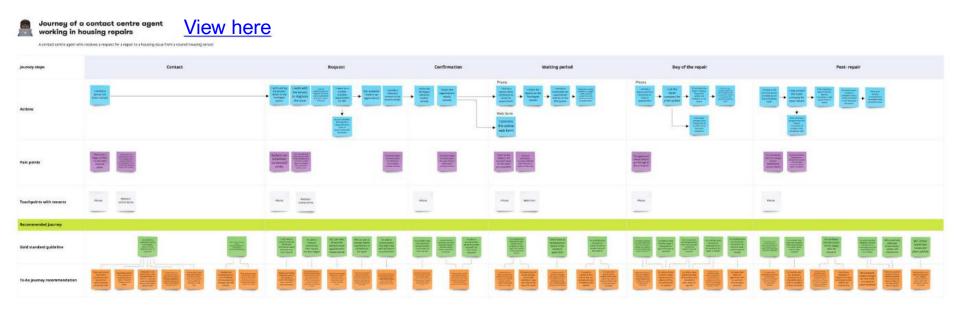


#### **Negatives**

- Northgate measures repair activity, but not workloads e.g. it doesn't record conversations
- We don't proactively maintain our stock
- The council don't always make it easy for customers to contact us across multiple departments
- Councillors don't consider the volume of repairs done each year when reviewing complaints data
- Complaints take up a lot of the team's time
- We don't have the capacity to deal with complaints to a high standard
- The current process of receiving information for complaints is to go through lots of emails
- Tenants are not looking after their properties
- We're waiting for something to go wrong, instead of maintaining our housing stock
- We get a high volume of complaints



# Housing repairs – staff user journey







### What good customer service looks like

- People don't often submit a formal complaint when things go wrong
- People want to hold the council to account but won't always search out information to do that
- Examples of good customer service include being kept informed, being treated with empathy and ease of use
- A general 'hope' that the council can achieve 'good customer service' but expectations are low
- Customers expect the council to make improvements around training and culture



# What data did we uncover - summary

Data type	Data source	Summary
Customer satisfaction data	Omni channel, Cirrus platform	<ul><li>✓ Waste</li><li>✓ Highways</li><li>✓ Housing repairs</li></ul>
Volume of service requests	Contact centre, Cirrus platform (Jan 21 to Dec 21)	<ul><li>✓ Waste management calls</li><li>✓ Highways calls</li><li>✓ Housing repairs calls</li></ul>
	CXM Jadu platform, (Jan 21 to Dec 21)	<ul><li>✓ Waste management missed collections</li><li>✓ Highways online requests</li></ul>
Customer complaints	iCasework system, (01 Jan to 31 Dec 21)	<ul><li>✓ Waste</li><li>✓ Highways</li><li>✓ Housing repairs</li></ul>

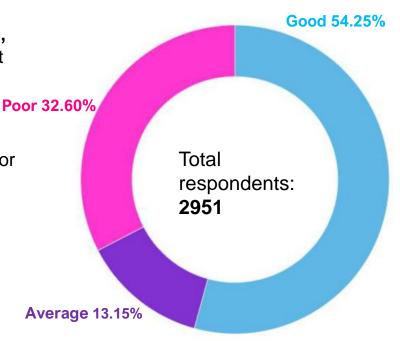




#### **Customer satisfaction data - Waste**

Common themes and response numbers from **SMS**, **email**, **web** and **webchat** satisfaction data for waste management and recycling:

- Data on website not up to date
- That the council are unsure if a bin has been collected or not
- Lack of follow ups
- Target of 48 hours for a missed collection is not being met
- Unable to reach managers
- Agents unable to provide the answer





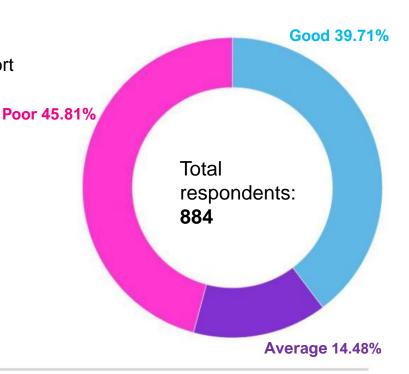


<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: Omni channel, Cirrus platform, (01/01 to 01/12/2021)

# **Customer satisfaction data - Highways**

Common themes and response numbers from **SMS**, **email**, **web** and **webchat** satisfaction data for Highways and Report Road & Pavement Issues:

- Usability of the website is not good
- Its noticeable when something is not resolved over long periods of time
- Long complaints process
- Service hiding behind policies and procedures
- Issues of reporting issues online (website & forms)
- Agents are unable to provide the answer





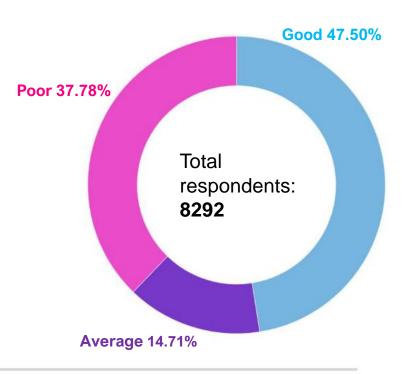


<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: Omni channel, Cirrus platform, (01/01 to 01/12/2021)

### **Customer satisfaction data – Housing Repairs**

Common themes and response numbers from **SMS**, **email** and **web** satisfaction data for housing repairs:

- Unprofessional staff
- Poor behaviour of contractors
- Delays getting through to staff
- An 'us and them' attitude (contractors vs BCC)
- Scripted responses
- A perception that everyone doesn't get the same service
- Not proactive, causing things to get worse
- The usability of online forms is not so good especially for those with accessibility needs







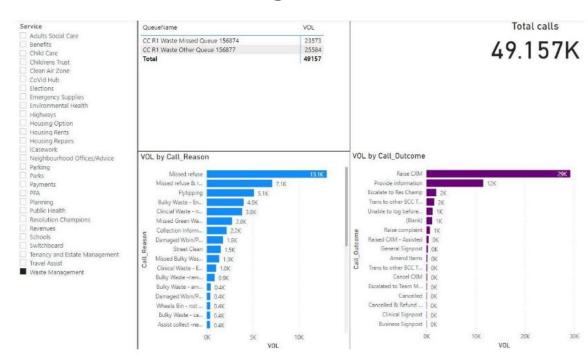
<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: Omni channel, Cirrus platform, (01/01 to 01/12/2021)

#### Volume of calls/requests – waste management

49,157 calls received in 2021

Top 5 reasons for call:

- 13,058 missed refuge collection
- 7,122 missed refuge & recycling collection
- 5,148 fly-tipping
- 4,010 bulky waste enquiry
- 3,842 clinical waste new request







<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: Contact Centre, Cirrus platform, (01/21 to 12/21)

#### **Volume of calls/requests – waste missed collections**

**88,732** missed collections were reported in 2021

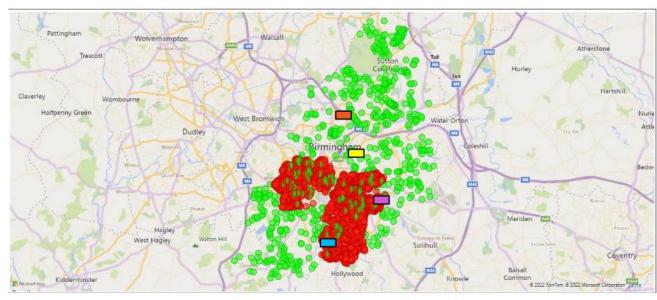
87,837 (98.99%) of all cases were closed: next collection due 895 (1.01%) of cases were assigned to depot for re-collection



Montague Depot

Redfern Depot

Lifford Depot



\*\*Data source: CXM Jadu Platform, (01/21 to 12/21)



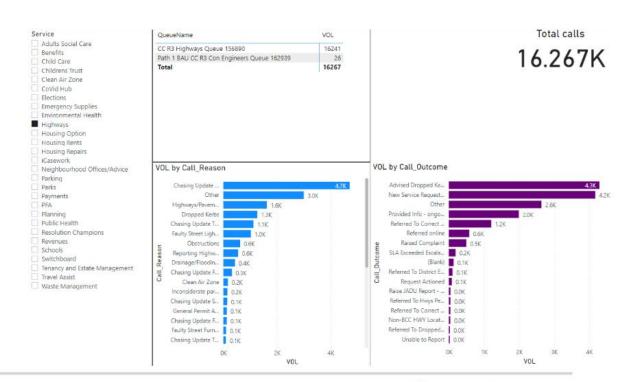


#### **Volume of calls requests - Highways**

**16,267** calls received in 2021

Top 5 reasons for call:

- 4,717 chase update disable bay/H marking/ report
- 3,004 other
- 1,628 highways/pavement
- 1,264 dropped kerbs
- 1,125 chasing update tree pruning







<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: Contact centre, Cirrus platform, 01/21 to 12/21)

### **Volume of online requests – Highways PFI**

50.25K

**50,250** online requests received between Oct 2020 – Oct 2021

Total requests

Highways PFI online service requests

Form type

FireAndSendOnly

CXM

Top 5 online requests:

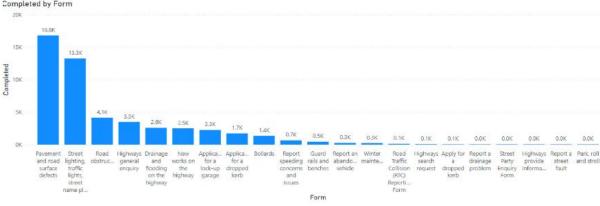
16,806 pavement and road surface defects CRM FIREARDS CRM

 13,257 street lighting, traffic lights, street name plates and signals

- 4,143 road obstructions
- 3,516 general highways enquiry
- 2,599 drainage and flooding on the highway

\*\*Data source: CXM Jadu platform, (10/20 to 10/21)







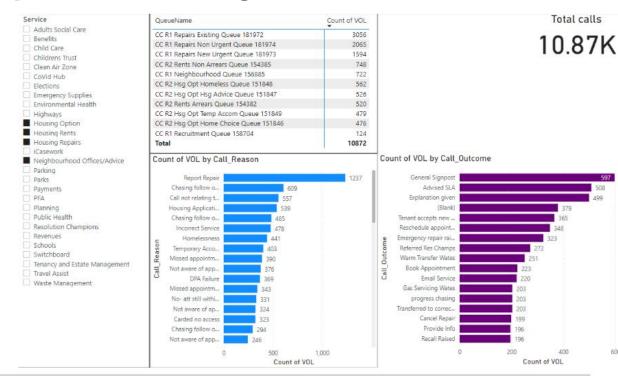


#### Volume of calls/requests - Housing

424,532 calls received in 2021

Top 5 reasons for call:

- 157,866 Report repair
- 72,384 Housing application
- 23,967 Homelessness
- 20,064 Balance enquiry
- 15,919 Incorrect service







<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: Contact centre, Cirrus platform, (01/21 to 12/21)

#### **Customer complaints data - Waste**

**8,468** customer complaints **216** member complaints

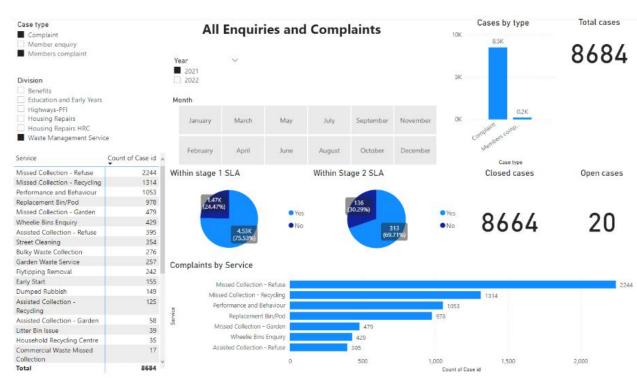
The top 3 service complaints:

- 2,244 missed collection refuse
- 1,314 missed collection recycling
- 1,053 performance and behaviour

The top 3 root cause problems:

- Efficiency of service
- Not to the standard or quality expected
- Failure to do something

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: iCasework system, (01/01 to 31/12/21)







#### **Customer complaints data 201 - Highways**

514 customer complaints2 member complaints

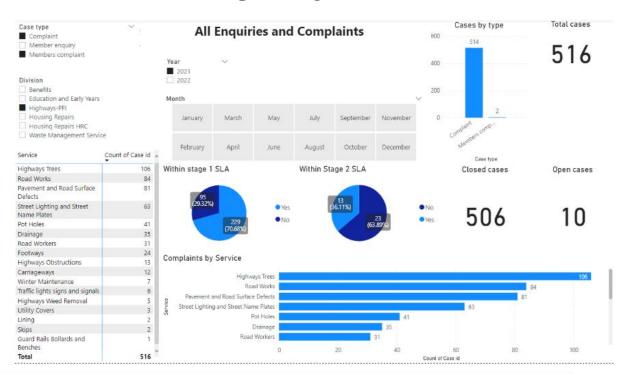
#### Top 3 service complaints:

- 106 highways trees
- 84 roadworks
- 81 pavement and road surface defects

#### Top 3 root cause problems:

- Efficiency of service,
- Failure to do something
- Inadequate services provided by a thirdparty

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data source: iCasework system, (01/01 to 31/12/21)







#### **Customer complaints data 2021 - Housing**

**5,097** customer complaints **174** member complaints.

Top 3 service complaints:

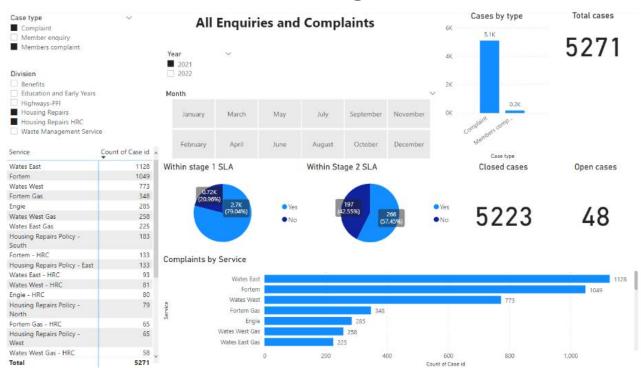
- 1,128 Wates East
- 1,049 Fortem
- 773 Wates West

Top 3 root cause problems:

- Delay in doing something 5
- Delay in doing something
- Repair delay in doing something

The data suggests the main issue is service delays by third-party contractors.

\*\*Data source: iCasework system, (01/01 to 31/12/21)







### Recommendations

What we think the findings mean and our recommendations for next steps



**BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM** 



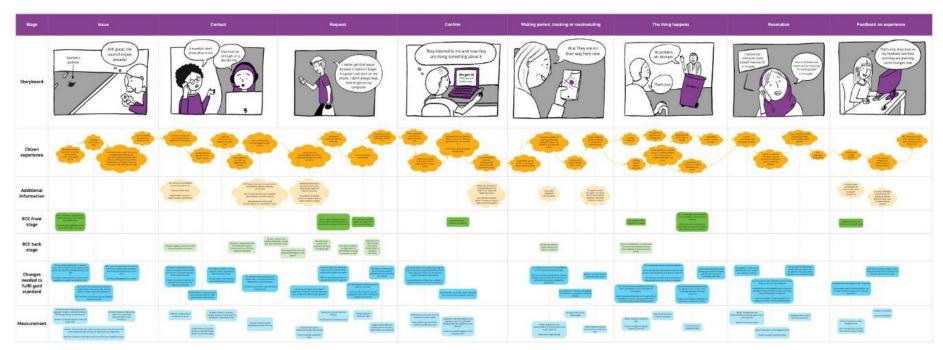
### Introducing the 'gold standard'

This discovery set about to understand the common experience of customers with BCC and to establish a high-level standard that is intended to be broadly applicable to any service area.

- We have developed a detailed map of what this target 'gold standard' experience should look like, which is based on evidence from the research we have undertaken during this process
- We have consolidated this into a high level, visual that brings to life the future customer service experience
- We have developed a set of recommendations that detail how to realise this target experience



View here





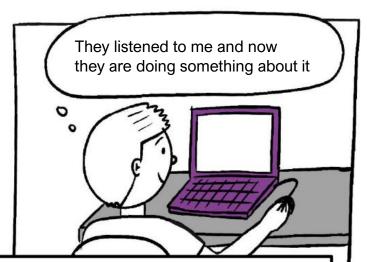






People can contact us, make requests and report issues through a contact method of their choice via the BRUM, account, telephone, email or social media.

We respond quickly and are always approachable and happy to help. We provide realistic timelines and advice, so people always know what to expect and what they can do while they wait for the issue to be resolved.



Written acknowledgement is given as well as information and advice where appropriate, so people can refer back to it if they need to.

People always feel acknowledged, have confidence that we are on their side and know we are helping them.



People are always kept updated on the issues they want to be notified about. They never have to chase us and can check progress easily online.

People feel empowered. They can get things done independently online, including rescheduling or cancelling appointments, if they need to.

People can trust us to do as we promised, in a timely manner.



Interactions with the council and our associated partners are always pleasant. We go the extra mile to ensure everyone is looked after.



People always feel looked after. Their concerns are addressed or answered properly and they are clear what they can expect from us.

People feel involved and valued, they are always provided with additional support if needed and their feedback is always asked for and reflected upon in the service.

Insight		Recommendation	Success measure
1	Customers feel poorly informed about BCC's processes and how to navigate them. They often don't understand what to expect or why something is happening. There isn't always an explanation for a situation and how BCC are dealing with it. There is a feeling of things getting lost in a big black hole.	Services must have clear, up to date content detailing the process of interacting with a service. IT&D should develop content governance to guide the creation and maintenance of all information, advice, guidance and policies. Roll out this governance across the organisation to ensure content is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Information, advice, guidance and policies should always be made available in a range of accessible formats, online and offline	Compliance with content governance approach e.g. content is submitted following GDS style guidelines to the web team. Content is reviewed regularly in line with the governance.
2	Customers aren't sure if their contact has been received by BCC. Often they get no response at all, and they think that their contact has gotten lost.	Establish automated emails to be sent out confirming receipt of an enquiry, setting out an expected timeline and next steps. Conduct user research with email content to ensure user needs are being met. Include specific advice to help with the specific issue (where appropriate). Include contact details for people to address any errors in the enquiry.	Rate emails are read, rate links are clicked on in email content. Rate of follow up contact from customers to discuss a case.
3	People aren't aware of what issues have previously been reported to BCC. This leads to duplication of reporting and processing, which costs both customers and staff time.	Develop a cross directorate tool to track known issues in the community, that the public are able to view and contribute to. Ensure we clearly detail the eligibility criteria for taking action on an issue.	Number of times customers contact us online about a known issue in the community (those who call may not have access to a digital tool). The rate that customers contact BCC about issues that aren't eligible for action from the council.

Insight		Recommendation	Success measure
4	There's a perception amongst customers that BCC are often not proactive in maintaining assets, leading to issues being left longer than they should and becoming worse as a result.	BCC are already exploring how they could make use of smart technology to track and maintain its infrastructure and assets e.g. in housing and highways. This would enable the council to proactively address issues as they arise, often before they become a major problem that is expensive to fix.	The number of issues arising that a service should have proactively addressed within a set timeframe.
5	People aren't aware of when there will be works in their area, leading to frustration when parking is suspended, roads are closed, or there is noise and disruption.	Regularly maintain the existing webpage on roadworks and closures ensuring up to date details of planned works. Content should be clear and easily understood. Consider displaying works via Googlemaps rather than road name. https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/roadworks	Compliance with content governance approach e.g. content is submitted following GDS style guidelines to the web team. Content is reviewed regularly in line with the governance.
6	BCC have a huge number of phone numbers and email addresses. In addition citizens can contact the council via the BRUM account and social media. This is costly and ineffective for staff and confusing for citizens, resulting in varied quality of service.	As part of work already underway, consolidate all contact routes to a single point of contact per channel. Contact through any of these must be easy and quick. Online forms must be functional on all devices/browsers and regularly maintained.	There is a single point of contact per channel. There are no ineffective or broken forms.





Insight		Recommendation	Success measure
7	Customers often spend a long time waiting to speak to someone or on hold, with the line sometimes going dead during a call.	Consider reviewing the IVR system using tree testing techniques to ensure it is clear and easy to use. Customers should reach the right person within a few minutes.	Length of time a customer spends on hold before they speak to a call centre agent. The length of time a customer has to wait to speak to the right person about their issue.
8	Customers can feel the silos that exist within the council, and this negatively impacts the experience they have of services. They have to repeat their information and the details of why they are ringing multiple times, which is frustrating and time consuming.	The Data Programme is already underway to demonstrate the value of joining up BCC's data and making it available across the organisation. Investment in building a fit-for-purpose data function to ensure teams have access to relevant, appropriate data across directorates is essential to the effective running of a modern council.	Number of times a customer contacts us about an issue that has already been reported by them. Overall customer satisfaction data about an interaction with us.
9	Customers can feel the silos that exist between BCC and its partners, it feels like an 'us' versus 'them' scenario. Often the service is not joined up, with the wrong person being sent to do the repair and repairs not being carried out to an expected quality.	BCC and its partners need to review current processes and consider how to better join up delivery and work effectively together across organisational boundaries. Data must be appropriately shared across organisational boundaries to ensure customers experience a consistent, joined up and effective service.	Overall customer satisfaction data. Results of mystery shopping research carried out. Speed of resolution.



Insight		Recommendation	Success measure
10	The existing map functionality to report an issue is difficult to use, clunky, often inaccurate and incompatible with some devices/browsers.	Consider improved ways of getting location data on issues, for example what3words, address/post code, coordinates. Customers should not have to use a map to locate an issue.	Accuracy of BCC correctly identifying a location first time.
11	The quality of an interaction with a customer service agent varies. Some customers experience helpful, understanding staff with a can-do attitude. Others find the language used by staff to be alienating, they sometimes feel fobbed off and unsupported by the agent, and sometimes they feel that the agent thinks they are lying or stupid. There are inconsistencies in how customers experience BCC and our partners.	As part of the Customer Programme and New Ways of Working, all staff will undertake Customer Centricity training in the coming year. This training must support the cultural shift needed in the council to put the people of Birmingham at the centre of everything we do, in practice as well as in what we say. Contractors and partners should also be in scope for this training to ensure consistency across the board.	Delivery of customer centricity training. Quality of advice given (measured through call listening). Overall customer satisfaction data.
12	Customers have to escalate to BCC when things don't go right, putting the burden on them to get things sorted.	Where services are not delivered as expected, BCC has a mechanism that allows us to proactively escalate internally before hearing from our customers.	Rate of internal versus customer escalation.





Insight		Recommendation	Success measure	
13	Customers are unclear on the difference between an issue and a complaint, typically they just want to get the thing they have a problem with resolved.	BCC should consider publishing clear information on the processes of escalating an issue and making a complaint, so that customers are able to judge which route is most appropriate.	Rate that customers accurately escalate an issue or make a complaint	
14	For some customers it is a lengthy process scheduling in an appointment via the contact centre. Some customers wish to be able to self serve and book/manage their own appointments.	BCC is already developing an online booking system showing available appointments that customers can self book in Housing. Use the user stories developed as part of this work to ensure this system is user need led and fit for purpose.	Design, development and implementation of booking system that is user needs led	
15	Customers need to be kept up to date with changes to an issue that they care about. Some find the website is not updated quickly enough, and sometimes it's not updated at all.	Live updates are sent out via email/BRUM account, when something changes. Live updates are recorded and available for customers to view when something changes	Design, development and implementation of a live updates system that is user needs led. Read rate of update emails. Number of hits on live update pages	





Insight		Recommendation	Success measure	
16	Customers experience varying standards of quality from BCC and its partners, some of which is poor. This results in the need for repeated contact about the same issue.	Service level agreements detail the agreed standards of quality and timeframes expected. These are known, documented and publicly available in an accessible format. Customers are served information about the SLA and expectations via the service, and don't have to hunt through the website for them. BCC/partners consistently meet them.	Compliance with SLAs by BCC and its partners. Overall customer satisfaction data. Results of mystery shopping research carried out.	
17	Sometimes customers are asked for feedback before their issue has been resolved - this is frustrating and suggests BCC aren't joined up. Customers are often asked for on the spot feedback (particularly by housing repairs contractors). This can be intimidating and uncomfortable for some customers.	Once a request has been fully completed, an email is received inviting customers to give feedback. Feedback forms are designed to give customers the opportunity to feedback flexible on as many areas of the process as they wish. For those who are not online, they receive a call from the contact centre the following day to check in and get verbal feedback. People are not asked for feedback on the spot by a contractor or officer.	Rate of response to email feedback forms and feedback calls. Overall customer satisfaction data	
18	Currently customers are often asked for feedback immediately. Customers also want to be able to retrospectively feedback on their experience. Customers want to know that the feedback they are sharing is being listened to and acted upon.	BCC has a mechanism for customers to lodge feedback later if they wish. Service areas regularly review feedback and consider changes to improve the customer experience. Each service area has a page to share what we've heard from customers and what we have done as a result.	Rate of response to online feedback forms. Pace, rate and type of service improvements taken forward. Frequency of and view rate of updates.	
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#### What is a user story and why do we use them?

User stories start off as short, simple and informal descriptions of software features from the key end user's perspective. End users can consist of stakeholders within the organisation and those external to the organisation.

User stories help to articulate what value a product feature can bring and have a better understanding of why users want certain functionality. It helps product owners, delivery/ development teams shift their focus from writing about software features to discussing features. A user story helps to define the who, what and why of a product feature.

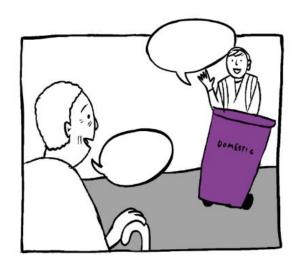
As a <user role> I need <goal> so that <benefit>

As you move into build/configuring the new system the user stories will be developed further to include more details e.g., acceptance criteria that helps to identify if the story has been delivered.





As a customer...



I need to know what day my rubbish is collected, so that my rubbish isn't out on the street all week

I need to know when the council will pick up my missed bin so that I don't leave my bin out on the pavement all week

I need to know why my bins haven't been collected so that I can make sure my rubbish is picked up next time

I need to know how the council will deal with pests so that I get any problems fixed quickly

I need a reliable garden waste collection so that I can get rid of my garden waste easily



As a customer...



I need to know when the council has picked my missed bin up so that I don't need to chase the council

I need to know what to do if my cardboard cannot fit into the pod so that all my recycling gets taken away

I need to know which faults the council are already aware of so that I don't waste my time putting in a duplicate report

I need to report cars parked on the pavement so that I can use the pavement safely

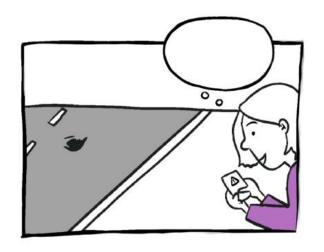
I need to report damaged pavements easily so that I can use the pavement safely



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As a customer...



I need to report a fallen tree whilst out and about so that it can be made safe for everyone

I need to be able to report faulty traffic lights whilst out and about so that they can be fixed quickly and safely

I need to know what is happening with my report so that I know someone is looking at it and when it has been fixed

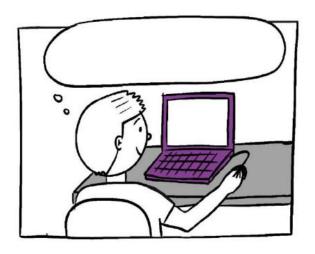
I need to know what happens to my feedback so that I can see how the service will improve

I need an accurate way of sharing a fault location so that BCC can send someone to the right place to fix a fault





As a customer...



I need an easy way to pay the right Clean Air Zone charge so that I don't get fined

I need to know how much time I have to pay the Clean Air Zone charge so that I don't get fined

I need to know which area the Clean Air Zone operates in so that I don't get fined

I need to know whether I have to pay the Clean Air Zone charge for my vehicle so that I don't get fined



As a customer...

I need a simple way to tell the council if something hasn't worked so that I get the right repair and feel heard

I need an easy way to feedback about my experience so that I can help the service improve

I need to know whether the issue in my report will get fixed and how long it might take so that I don't chase it up or complain

As a new customer...

I need to know what I can and can't recycle so that I don't put things in the wrong bin

I need to know what day my collection is so that our bins don't overflow and become a problem





I need to know how to ask for help with my bins so that my bins As someone with a disability...

are collected with everyone else's

As a live out carer... I need notifications when a collection is missed so that I

can make arrangements for the person I look after

As someone who isn't online... I need to report missed bin collections on my phone so that I

can get my rubbish picked up

As someone part of a large I need to get rid of our cardboard regularly so that I'm not family...

having to put it in the normal rubbish bin



As a waste loader...



I need to be able to easily request my holiday so that I can take annual leave when I want to

I need to know there is nothing dangerous like asbestos in the bins so that I can keep myself safe

I need customers to know what they put in the recycling bins so that I haven't got to miss collections

I need any problem bins we can't empty to be logged so that they do eventually get fixed for the customer



As a waste driver...



I need 'slab in the cab' to work without technical issues so I can provide the best service to customers

I need to have the right training to use 'slab in the cab' so that I can make full use of the technology

I need to know anything that could impact my normal round before I start my shift so that I am aware of anything that has changed or could impact the service

I need a reliable team I can trust so that we can get our job done quickly and to a high standard



As a waste driver...

I need confidence that when I report fly-tipping that it is acted on so that I keep reporting it and keep the city clean

I need confidence that I'll be backed making decisions that follow council policy so that my crew and I feel trusted to the job

As a waste manager...

I need my staff to feel safe and not be abused at work so that morale doesn't drop even lower

I need to trust my teams to pick up waste accidentally dropped so that we can reduce the number of complaints





As a business support manager...



I need waste crews to be available later in the morning so that we can pick up dropped work

I need crews to have everything they need digitally so that they are more efficient and use less paper and ink

I need crews to have access to payslips digitally so that they have a permanent digital record and we use less paper and ink

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As a complaints team member...

I need the system to be flexible when dealing with complaints so that the customer gets the right outcome

I need all waste depots to follow a consistent process so that I can deal with complaints efficiently

I need a consistent complaint reference number used by contractors so that we can easily track what happens with a complaint

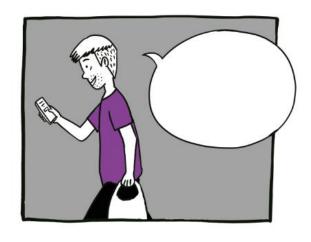
As a resolution champion...

I need to easily find HR data so that I save time which can be spent with crews





As a tenant...



I need to know when my fault will be repaired so that I am at home when the worker arrives

I need to pick a suitable time for someone to visit so that I can manage times around work and school runs

I need the council to recognise how a fault impacts me and my life so that I get treated with respect and care

I need to send the council a photo/video of my fault so that BCC know what repair/s are required

I need the right contractor/s to turn up first time so that I haven't got to wait in more than once



As a tenant...



I need the person on the phone to effectively diagnose my fault so that I get the right repair and feel heard

I need to receive live updates about my repair so that I know what has happened and next steps

I want help to diagnose my own fault so that I can get the issue resolved as soon as possible

I need repairs to be fixed as soon as possible so that the fault doesn't cause more damage

I want the council to be proactive with maintenance so that faults stop happening in the first place

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As a tenant...



I want the council to take ownership of the process so that I know where to go if something goes wrong

I want the council to take ownership of the process so that it doesn't become a problem again that needs further attention

I need a simple way to tell the council if something isn't working so that I can quickly get it fixed



As a contact centre agent...



I need a view of what has happened across a repair so that we can deliver an end-to-end service

I need to know how we monitor repair work so that I know all repairs are attended to

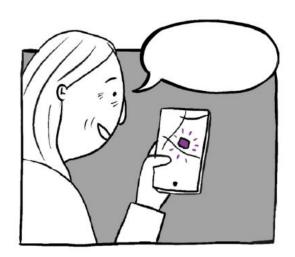
I need forms to be automated wherever possible so that we can use our time to better support customers

I need to be able to access a translation service so that all customers can communicate with us

I need to give customers advice about what they can do before a repair is carried out to makes things easier in the meantime



As a contact centre agent...



I need live updates of the progress of repairs so that I can help customers when there is an issue

I need to offer customers flexibility around appointment slots so that I can find a slot that works for them

I need to accurately locate a tenant's property so that I can send someone to the right location

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As a housing manager...



I need more investment in housing stock so that we can maintain our properties and prevent future repairs

I need to understand more about the complaints customers have so that we can reduce complaints going forward

I need a funded yearly maintenance schedule across stock so that we can save money in the long run

I need to make sure we are measuring customer satisfaction accurately and effectively so that we can make improvements and deliver the best service

As a housing manager...

I need something to capture extra information about cases so that the council have a better idea of the workload

I need time to deal with customer complaints properly so that we can provide a genuine response to customers

As a contractor...

I need feedback from the council on our complaints process so that we can make improvements and deliver the best service

I need the council to check new possible repairs before booking them so that there are fewer duplicate orders

As a business support officer...



I need a single system used by the council and contractors so that all complaints can be tracked

I need to know who is responsible for what so that we don't duplicate work and deliver a better service to customers

I need updates from the contractor so that I can keep track of open cases

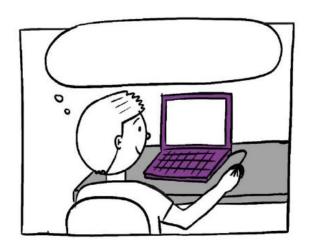
I need rules around parking fines and the Clean Air Zone to be clear and publicly available so that more customers understand the rules

I need councillors to always report faults using our official process so that we treat all reports fairly and reduce duplication





As a business support officer...



I need access to information about historic parking fines so that I can help to clear the backlog of existing Clean Air Zone fines

I need to make sure complaints are handled by contractors in a consistent way so that all complaints are dealt with according to our standards

I need reports with accurate location information so that the contractor can find the fault straight away

I need to give customers consistent, quality information about their report so that customers feel their voice has been heard

I need full access to all details about a case so that I can efficiently deal with enquiries





### Recommended next steps

#	Action	Who	Target end date
1	Service area to review outputs in detail, including deck and gold standard (on Miro: https://miro.com/app/board/uXj VO_OivcU=/)	Service area	Early May
2	Service area and programme team to come back together to discuss findings and next steps	Service area & programme team	Mid May
3	Agree next steps including what the service area is able to take forward, and what the programme can support on	Service area & programme team	Mid May















### **BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM**

