Enabling and Customer Services

Customer and Digital

Service Plan 2026 – 2027

Dumfries and Galloway COUNCIL

Purpose of the Service:

The Customer and Digital Service is a key enabler for Dumfries and Galloway Council. By integrating ICT and Digital, Customer Access and Organisational Development, the Service supports the Council to operate sustainably while delivering reliable and inclusive services.

During 2026/27, the Service will focus on simplifying customer journeys, increasing digital self-service and ensuring customers can access Council services in a way that works best for them. The service will lead the delivery of the joint action plan through a single transformation programme arising from the Customer Strategy, Digital Strategy and People Strategy, aligned to the Council Plan. These interlinked strategies provide the core framework for the Service Plan, bringing together improvements in customer experience, digital capability and workforce development.

The focus will be on pace, accountability and measurable impact - improving customer experience, strengthening the use of insight and data, and delivering sustainable savings and efficiencies that support the Council's financial resilience.

Service Focus

The Service focus is shaped by delivery of the Customer Strategy, Digital Strategy and People Strategy, aligned to the Council Plan. Together, these strategies define how the Customer and Digital Service supports the Council to improve outcomes for communities.

- **For residents:** Supporting accessible, consistent and reliable service delivery across all channels.
- **For staff:** Providing the tools, digital foundations and organisational development needed to work effectively.
- **For the Council:** Supporting a whole system approach to digital, data and technology that is safe, proportionate and inclusive.

By aligning these functions, the Service contributes to:

- **Customer experience:** More consistent and joined up journeys for customers.
- **Operational efficiency:** More co-ordinated and effective ways of working across Council services.
- **Governance and assurance:** Stronger oversight and improved management of information and risk.
- **Continuous improvement:** A clearer view of how services operate, supporting improvement and better ways of working.

Scope of the service

The Customer and Digital Service bring together a range of functions that support delivery of the Council Plan through the Customer Strategy, Digital Strategy and People Strategy. The scope of the Service reflects its role in enabling consistent customer experience, effective use of digital and data, and workforce capability across the Council.

Customer access and contact

The Service leads and coordinates how residents, businesses, visitors and partners interact with the Council via face-to-face, telephone and digital channels.

- **Sets standards:** Establishes customer experience benchmarks to support consistent and accurate responses and continuous improvement of our services
- **Leads delivery:** Manages the Contact Centre, Customer Service Centres and Single Access Point to reduce avoidable contact and support "right first time" delivery.
- **Defines experience:** Works with services to streamline customer journeys and promote effective demand management.

ICT and digital

Acting as a core enabler, the Service manages the Council's digital infrastructure, key corporate systems and platforms, supporting service improvement and organisational efficiency.

- **Enables strategic delivery:** Translates corporate ambition into resilient, usable digital tools for staff and residents.
- **Strengthens data and insight:** Supports the Council's ability to use data and information effectively for decision-making.
- **Leads cybersecurity risk mitigations:** Provides leadership in cyber security, through understanding and implementing national cyber risks. To provide assurance and digital resilience to protect Council data and assets.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** To explore opportunities for responsible use of AI to improve customer experience, productivity and efficiency.

Organisational development

The Service leads the cultural and organisational change required for the Council to improve, adapt and deliver its priorities.

- **Build organisational capability**: provides leadership, talent, performance and wellbeing frameworks that enable a skilled, resilient and future-ready workforce
- **Shaping culture and behaviours:** encourage collaboration, innovation and strength-based ways of working across the council aligned to our vision and *SUPPORT* behaviours
- **Enhance employee experience and engagement:** to improve morale, retention and feeling heard to support new ways of working and continuous improvement

Libraries, registration and heritage

The Service manages statutory and community-facing services that support inclusion, local access and community wellbeing.

- **Delivers registration:** Provides statutory birth, death and marriage services.
- **Supports communities:** Operates libraries and heritage services to support access, inclusion and lifelong learning.

Strategic and corporate support

The Service provides professional advice and support to Elected Members, the Council Management Team and Council services, contributing to the delivery of corporate priorities. This includes supporting effective governance and compliance within the Service's remit, contributing to corporate assurance arrangements, and working with services to support delivery of priorities within agreed resources and frameworks.

Delivery, performance and workforce

Sustained improvement is underpinned by strong leadership, clear standards and effective performance management. The Customer and Digital Service will maintain a focus on pace, delivery and accountability, supporting services to deliver priorities set out in the Council Plan and the Customer, Digital and People strategies.

This is supported through clear performance management and reporting arrangements, underpinned by strong governance and a capable, engaged workforce that enables delivery and continuous improvement across the Council.

Workforce engagement and planning

Delivering this Service Plan depends on a skilled, resilient and engaged workforce, underpinned by strong leadership, clear standards and a focus on capability and capacity.

Through its organisational development role, the Customer and Digital Service support delivery of the People Strategy by working with services across the Council to develop leadership, build workforce capability and capacity, and support organisational change. This helps ensure the Council, and the Customer and Digital Service are well positioned to deliver its priorities and continue to improve outcomes for communities.

Conclusion

This Service Plan sets out how the Customer and Digital Service will provide leadership and enable delivery of the priorities set out in the Council Plan, through the integrated delivery of the Customer Strategy, Digital Strategy and People Strategy during 2026/27.

By maintaining a focus on pace, accountability and workforce capability, the Service will support Council services to improve customer experience, strengthen digital and data capability, and develop a skilled and resilient workforce, contributing to improved outcomes for the communities of Dumfries and Galloway.

Resource Plan

The following resources underpin the delivery of the Service Plan:

Budget:

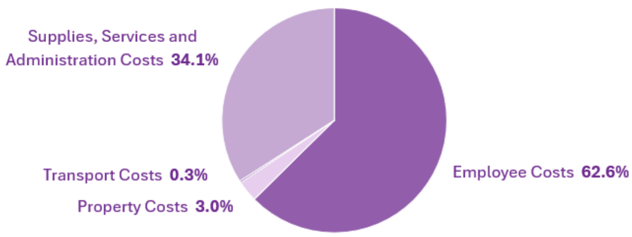
Resource Plan

The following resources underpin the delivery of the Service Plan:

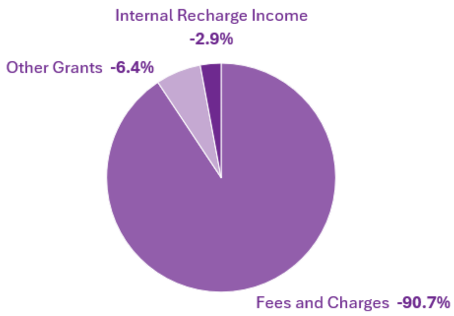
Budget:

Customer and Digital Budget Estimates Summary Service Analysis		Budget Estimates Customer and Digital £
Expense		
Employee Costs		7,750,098
Property Costs		376,617
Transport Costs		31,242
Supplies, Services and Administration Costs		4,220,370
Expense Total		**12,378,327**
Income		
Fees and Charges	-	1,949,984
Other Grants	-	137,463
Internal Recharge Income	-	63,000
Income Total	**-**	**2,150,447**
Grand Total		**10,227,880**

Expenses



Income



Workforce:

Customer and Digital

Our People, our positions

Our People as at 1 April 2026

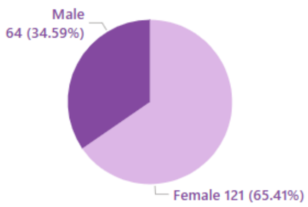
Number of people

185

Number of Positions

185

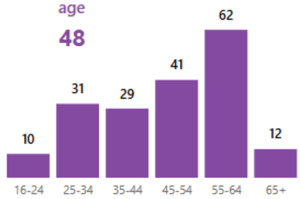
Gender



Age Range

Average age

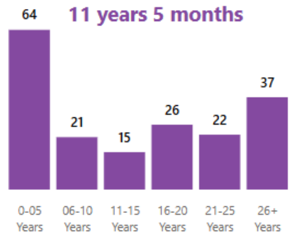
48



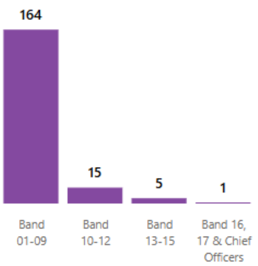
Length of Service

Average Length of Service

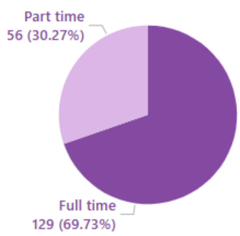
11 years 5 months



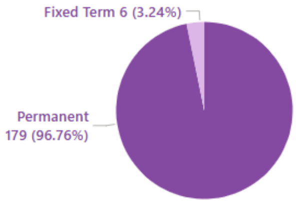
Pay Band of Employees



Employment Basis



Employment Type



Highlights of workforce engagement and planning in 2026/27:

- Workforce Engagement – the service has developed and continues to drive forward engagement based on the service results through the employee voice and People Experience Framework. The service will continue to discuss the outcomes of the Public Services Improvement Framework improvement plan and all You said, we did communication document.

- The Customer and Digital Service is committed to deliver on the Council's People Strategy and the CORE BEHAVIOURS detailed within.

Through our SUPPORT framework we will work together so we all thrive and flourish:

  - **S**trengthen - our communities
  - **U**nderstand – our children's needs
  - **P**rotect – our vulnerable people
  - **P**romote – equality and diversity
  - **O**pen and transparent – at all times
  - **R**espect – our environment
  - **T**reat – each other with kindness

- Workforce Planning – a Service People Plan was produced providing detail on action to develop our workforce linked to the six outcomes in the People Strategy this will be continuously reviewed.
- The People Plan will cover metrics, succession planning, and priority areas to inform the required workforce planning and development for the service. The service will monitor their Check-In completion dates and use the relevant information to develop individual and team capability and capacity plans.
- The service through its people plan will drive forward on other key principles:
- Succession planning – particularly where there is an older age profile or temporary posts, we need to plan to ensure service continuity.
- Diversification of the workforce - We will work to ensure it is representative of the population and the people that we work within the region as well as provide opportunities for young people and career changers
- Training and development – building leadership and management capacity as well as professional qualifications and skills throughout our teams
- Promoting our culture and behaviours – continue to place a high priority on staff engagement, communication and our commitment to public service and supporting those who need help the most Customer and Digital service delivers workforce engagement through a variety of channels including:
- Service Development workshops
- Visible Leadership – to truly understand what is happening
- Regular Staff Communications by Head of Service
- Strategic Team meetings
- Regular Check – In meetings throughout the year

Customer and Digital Service Plan 2026/27 – all data will be recorded and reported through Pentana

Council Plan Delivery 2026/27

Strategic Outcome 2: Our workforce and their skills base are growing.

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
NEW - Implementation of the People Strategy	Organisational Development	Council Plan/People Strategy

Strategic Outcome 11: People have access to services that are modern, efficient and responsive.

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
NEW – Implementation of the Customer Strategy	Customer Services Customer Contact	Council Plan / Customer Strategy
NEW – Implementation of the Council Digital Strategy	ICT and Digital	Council Plan / Digital Strategy

Strategic Outcome 12: Digital connectivity supports thriving rural communities.

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Leverage the community benefits available under the SWAN Framework (5G Small Cells, Street Hubs, Volunteering Days and Digital Partnership Bursary Fund) to help support our digital strategy ambitions and those of Borderlands.	ICT and Digital	Council Plan

Strategic Outcome 17: Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Deliver story time sessions and linked activities which includes partnering with the Scottish Book Trust.	Customer Services	Council Plan

Strategic Outcome 21: People are active, resilient and improving their health and wellbeing

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Support staff health and wellbeing	Organisational Development	Council Plan / People Strategy

Service Delivery 2026/27

What are we planning to do?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
CARRY FORWARD - Organisational Talent – launch and cascade the organisational talent framework	Organisational Development	People Strategy
MULTI YEAR - Workforce Planning – develop a holistic overview of information provided in Service People Plans	Organisational Development	Council Workforce Plan/People Strategy
MULTI-YEAR - Leadership Development - OD Programme for Council Management Team	Organisational Development	People Strategy /Organisational Development Framework
MULTI-YEAR - Employee Engagement – Supportive Workforce Conversations Programme 2026 aligned with Wellbeing	Organisational Development	People Strategy
MULTI YEAR - Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to career pathways and talent management across Customer and Digital services, including the Contact Centre, Single Access Point, Registration, Libraries and Heritage.	Customer Services/Customer Contact	Council Plan/Customer Strategy/People Strategy

Change and Improvement Activities 2026/27

What are we planning to do and what is the intended outcome?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Enable all staff to access key applications (e.g. iTrent, intranet, My Learning etc).	ICT and Digital/Organisational Development	Digital Strategy/People Strategy
MULTI YEAR - Learning and Development – Roll out of My Learning and formal learning needs analysis across services	Organisational Development	People Strategy
MULTI YEAR - Building Team Performance and Productivity – Continue to provide development through the psychometric tool Insights Discovery to all service management teams	Organisational Development	People Strategy
NEW - Delivery of an Archive Strategy (2026–31) and Policy Framework to ensure the service meets all statutory obligations under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.	Customer Services	Customer Strategy
NEW - Learning and Development – Develop and implement a commissioning model for how we provide training and development opportunities	Organisational Development	People Strategy/Agreed Budget Savings
NEW - Achievement of Public Sector Network certification and alignment with UK Cyber Assurance Framework (CAF) other relevant national cyber assurance frameworks	ICT and Digital	Digital Strategy/Corporate Risk

Customer and Digital Success Measures 2026/27

Measures

Success Measure	Annual Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Percentage of NEC new, renewal and replacement applications made online via GetyourNEC.scot	20%	Annual	External
Number of active Library Members (Children and Adults)	2800	Annual	Internal
Percentage of marriages and civil partnerships registered in Scotland that take place in Dumfries and Galloway	14%	Annual	External

Number of visits/usages of Integrated Customer Service Centres in Dumfries and Galloway (Regionwide)	410,368	Annual	Internal
Minimum Satisfaction levels with Customer Service Centres in Dumfries and Galloway (Regionwide)	70%	Annual	Internal
Council Employee Engagement Index	60%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of statutory and legislative training compliant	75%	Annual	Internal
Percentage of corporate information systems available during core working hours	95%	Monthly	Internal
ICT & Digital Service Desk Customer Satisfaction Short Survey	6	Monthly	Internal
Percentage of calls answered – Contact Centre	82.5%	Monthly	Internal
Average call answering times – Contact Centre	6 minutes	Monthly	Internal
Average call answering times – Single Access Point	2 minutes	Monthly	Internal
Percentage of calls answered – Single Access Point	90%	Monthly	Internal

Council Wide Indicators

Success Measure	**Annual Target**	**Timescale / Frequency**	**Benchmark**
People			
The average number of days lost per all other (non-teacher) local government employees through sickness absence	9 days	Monthly	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of days lost per employee through sickness absence as a percentage of total possible attendances	4%	Monthly	Internal
Percentage of staff who have completed an appraisal in the last 12 months	95%	Monthly	Internal
Enquiries/Complaints			
Percentage of Elected Member enquiries dealt with through the Elected Members Enquiry Service within the agreed timescales	85%	Quarterly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Community Council enquiries dealt with through the Community Council Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale.	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of MP/MSP enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal

Percentage of Youth Councillor enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations requests received that have been responded to within 20 working days of receipt	90%	Monthly	Internal/External
Percentage of requests for subject access requests completed within one month	85%	Monthly	Internal
Finance			
Revenue Budget Outturn - Projected Outturn as a % of Budget	100%	Quarterly	Internal
Health and Safety			
Number of Head of Service Safety Visits	4	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Number Significant Health and Safety Risk Priorities with Actions Overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Number HSE/SFRS Interfaces resulting in legal enforcement action	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of HSE/SFRS Interfaces with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents outside of HSE legal reporting timescales	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Serious Incident Investigation Reports Overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Number of Serious Incident Reports with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal

Number of RIDDOR Reportable Dangerous Occurrences, Employee Injuries and Diseases	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of 3rd Party RIDDOR incidents	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Reported Near Misses	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Employee Reported Accidents	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Reported Violent Incidents to Employees	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal

Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators

Success Measure	Annual Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Cost per Library visit	LGBF Scotland figure	Annual	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries	LGBF Scotland figure	Annual	Internal / External: LGBF

Customer and Digital Risk Register

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
Failure to deliver Critical/Essential Services	Disruption to the following functions, beyond the identified maximum tolerable period of disruption: • ICT and Digital • Customer Services (Including Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages) • Organisational Development • Contact Centre • Single Access Point	**Mitigation Plan** – All constituent elements of the Service have undertaken a Business Impact Assessment and a Vulnerability Assessment in order to identify existing mitigations embedded within normal business practices, as well as any further mitigations which may benefit- from being developed. This will include procedures and action cards as identified by respective service areas.

	Disruption may lead to: • Loss of life, property, infrastructure & environment • Interruption to service provision • Disruption to daily life of wider community • Increase in complaints from public and Elected Members • Possible loss of reputation • Possible negative media coverage • Possible Legal impacts • Potential Inquiries	**Contingency Plan –** Dumfries and Galloway Council has adopted a single Incident Management Plan, which provides the model of response for all Service or Organisational level disruption. Any significant Business Continuity interruption may also be in parallel with a Major Incident response, managed through D&G LRP
Customer and Digital not delivering an enabling customer centric service and advice	• Extent of investment in employee development, knowledge and skills to deliver future Council services. • Balancing a reducing workforce with increasing demands. • Sufficiency and timing of advice relative to Customer Needs. • High levels of sickness absence impacting on a healthy, engaged and effective workforce through a time of significant change. • Difficulty in recruiting to critical posts. • Securing the efficiencies that technology provides. • Effectively managing our property estate effectively to secure savings and agreed changes in service delivery.	**Internal Controls** • Business Intelligence Team to deliver Council Plan and regular monitoring through the Directorate Management Team – monthly reporting and monitoring on all resources. • Service Plan focuses on improving Customer and user experience and responsiveness as well as external benchmarking for improvement. • Active participation in improvement and quality initiatives e.g. Public Service Improvement Framework. • Anticipate new or incidental demands on our resources to assist or address issues. Pausing or re-prioritise activity to accommodate this, we accurately reflect any impact on our delivery of the Service Plan for unplanned but necessary activity.

	• Diverting funding from delivery of agreed Council Priorities on significant unanticipated expenditure	• Budget Development, monitoring and control arrangements as part of regular financial controls. • People Plan and succession planning is considered through regular Directorate Management Team meetings and through positive interventions to secure roles and skills. • Learning and development plans exist for the whole Directorate based on Strength based conversations for each member of staff through the Check-in process. • Wellbeing Action Plans are in place and wellbeing champions work with managers to ensure Council policies are supported. • Our People Strategy sets out our ambition to be a great employer where we can do our jobs well and make a difference to the people of Dumfries and Galloway. • Strategic Asset Board oversees asset management and use. • Capital Asset Class development, monitoring and control is in place for asset classes delegated to the Directorate. • Regular reporting takes places with Members on financial and other performance, risk and health and safety measures. • Business Intelligence Team review our effectiveness on a programmed basis.
Overspending on the ICT and Digital budget to meet needs and demands	• We don’t achieve committed savings. • Savings put forward by services are unrealistic or there is optimism bias in the likelihood of achievement.	• Budget process which incorporates the development of detailed service and financial plans, the identification of required savings, the development of

	• Funding is diverted away from delivery of agreed Council Priorities on significant unanticipated/unbudgeted expenditure. • Costs of core services including energy, fuel, broadband, telephony, rates, etc are significantly higher than forecast and subject to inflation and price increases during the financial year.	budget proposals and the agreement of annual budgets through Full Council. • Budget process includes the development of budget plans over three years to ensure ongoing financial sustainability. • An agreed five-year Financial Strategy. • Agreed policy for the retention of a prudent level of General Fund Balances to support unanticipated expenditure demands. • A modest level of contingency funding is retained to support specific issues. • Established insurance arrangements, including element of self-insurance, to help offset costs associated with insurable events. • A comprehensive Treasury Management Strategy with arrangements for the investment and deposit of Council funds, with appropriate counterparty limits, to minimise the risk of loss. • Directorate Management Team – monthly reporting and monitoring on all resources. • Financial monitoring and control. • Regular reporting to Members on financial monitoring against agreed budgets and clear forecasting of outturn.
Digital exclusion is not suitably addressed	• Poorer households are left behind with no internet access. • Future job prospects for residents are impacted through a lack of internet access. • Unlevel playing field due to the large rural areas across the region.	• The barriers to digital inclusion can vary on individuals and families depending on life events e.g. losing a job. • Digital inclusion can require different elements for different communities of interest. Whilst affordability and connectivity may be the key barrier for some, it may be fear of being vulnerable to

	• Affordable connectivity for deprived communities and those experiencing data poverty. • Lack of co-ordinated activities between the Council and other key partners.	scams and frustrations at poor broadband speeds are the concern for others. • Digital inclusion efforts need to be embedded into Core Services for them to be sustainable.
Failure to deliver transformation	• Failure to deliver agreed customer, digital and workforce transformation • Reduced customer satisfaction • Inability to achieve savings	• Agreed transformation programme to deliver on agreed action • Service Plan focuses on improving Customer and user experience and improvement. • Regular reporting takes places with Members on financial, performance and transformation programme • Programme Board oversees progress and priorities to deliver required objectives