



# Customer Service and Access Strategy

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# Introduction

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**Our Customer Service and Access Strategy has been developed to simplify the way we provide services to the people of Warwickshire. The Strategy is about responding to our customers' current and future needs; tailoring services to meet local needs; improving access to services by engaging with the community and empowering them to be fully involved in providing solutions.**

Our services need to be valued by those that use them and also be responsive to the changing needs of our customers and to emerging technologies that enable services to be delivered in new ways. Delivering seamless services in partnership with key public service agencies and the voluntary sector will be our approach to providing excellent services to the public and value for money to the taxpayer.

In order to meet the needs of our customers, Warwickshire County Council and its partners must provide services that are:

- **Easily accessible**
- **Simple to use**
- **Streamlined**
- **Convenient**
- **Cost effective**
- **Reliable**

Delivering localised public services across Warwickshire is a complex business involving a number of agencies in the public and voluntary sectors. The resources used to deliver services, be they buildings, people or technology have been organised over time to suit organisational structures. Similarly, over the years a complex structure of systems, policies and practices has developed within the Council.

It is vital, if we are to ensure future service delivery meets the customers' demands, we listen to what they are telling us and respond positively to their steer. We will need to revise these structures and approaches to align our combined resources and match peoples' needs and distribution.

If we collectively deliver the workstreams identified in this Strategy then we will rise to that challenge and offer services that reflect the changing needs of our citizens and communities.

If you are reading this Strategy as a colleague or partner, we look forward to working with you to implement the proposals contained within it to make the vision a reality.

If you are reading this as a customer, we look forward to working with you in creating the services that you require now and in the future.

We will review the Strategy, and the underpinning plans to change the services, annually in consultation with our customers and partners.



**Cllr Hayfield**

Portfolio Holder -  
Customers, Access  
& Physical Resources

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**David Carter**

Strategic Director  
Resources Group

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**Kushal Birla**

Head of  
Customer Service

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# The Customer Vision

**Our Customer Vision is to make it easy for anyone living, visiting, working or studying in Warwickshire to access services where and when they need them. We will deliver a quality experience for all our customers, regardless of when or how they make contact and we will offer appropriate and relevant services that are joined with other agencies.**

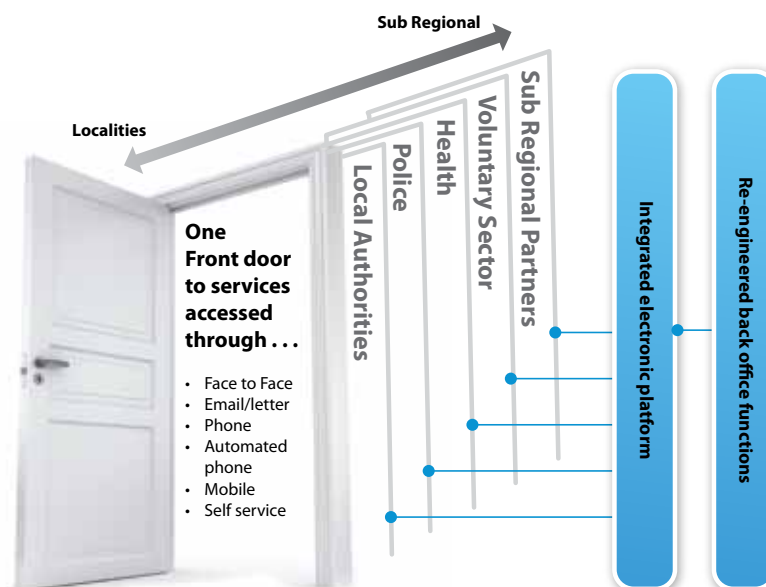
We recognise that “one size fits all” is not an appropriate response to our public service offer in Warwickshire.

The realisation of this vision will result in improved, simplified, seamless cost effective systems, buildings and staffing. Key to this is the development of the One Front Door through which our customers can access our services and those of our partners through a variety of channels. The One Front Door will provide a firm foundation and impetus for the re-engineering of services both

within and across Warwickshire’s public bodies and the adjacent partners for the rationalisation of their property resources.

In the future we will need to decide in consultation with our customers how and where our services are best delivered. Opportunities for significant service transformation and efficiency gains will exist where specific customer groups’ needs are met by multiple service providers working together.

We need to engage with our customers and empower them to help us make changes to our service delivery that reflects their wishes and to maximise the effectiveness of our available budgets.

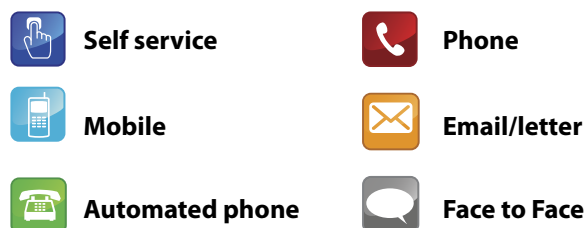
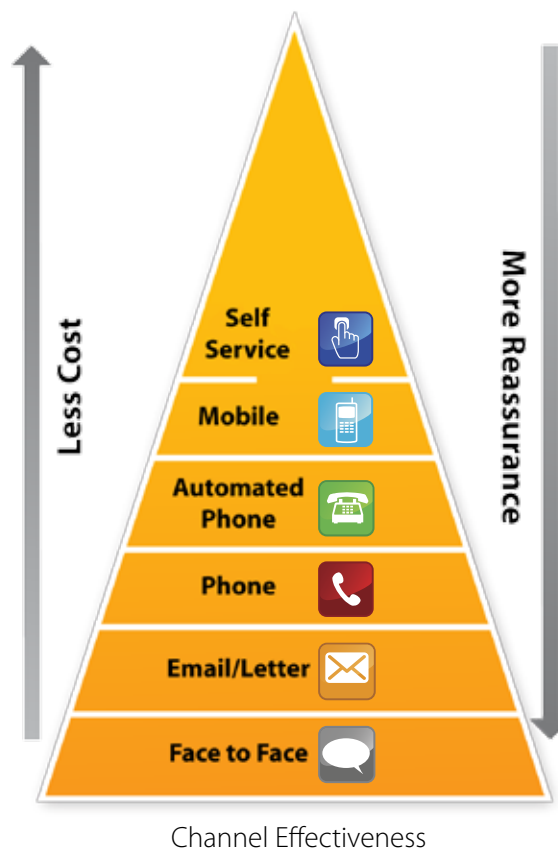




Our Customer Vision is to make it easy for anyone living, visiting, working or studying in Warwickshire to access services where and when they need them. We will deliver a quality experience for all our customers, regardless of when or how they make contact and we will offer appropriate and relevant and sustainable services that are joined up with other agencies

Our approach will be to influence the way our customers interact with us and help them to move to more efficient means of accessing services. We will focus on developing high quality digital services from beginning to end which will be easy to use and delivered a timely manner. Self service will enable access to an increasing range of information and services available 24/7.

We do recognise that some of our customers have varying needs and or more complex needs will continue to require our face to face and phone channels. We will assist these customers in accessing our services and will strive to gradually build their confidence, trust and skills enabling them to ultimately become self serving.



We are also aware that some customers may reach a stage in their transactions with us where they need to have the reassurance of speaking to a member of staff and we will ensure that this option is easily available to them.

The successful delivery of this Strategy will result in significant changes to the way in which our customers will access our services. Staff will be focussed on meeting, even exceeding customers' needs. Local knowledge will enable services to be tailored to the communities' requirements. New technologies will be exploited to make access even easier and a wide range of agencies will be working together to integrate service delivery.

Later in this strategy this vision of the future is underpinned by a number of scenarios which serve to illustrate the possibilities that will be open to customers in the near future.

“ The following workstreams provide a framework, which will allow for the development of an informed approach leading to the delivery of customer centred services. This will, in conjunction with the principles and standards identified within this Strategy, be the catalyst to produce detailed plans that will ensure that customers will be able to interact with the Council and via efficient, effective channels, be able to access services. ”

# Delivering the Vision

**Delivery of the Vision for 2015 within the Customer Service and Access Strategy will require significant work over the next three years across a range of workstreams:**

## **Strategic Leadership**

*Providing a strategic customer focus for the organisation:*

- by leading the implementation of a clear Customer Service and Access Strategy that reflects the Council's objectives.
- by providing an evidenced based approach that supports the strategic decisions necessary to deliver efficient and effective, tailored services.
- by personalising services to meet the needs of individual customers thus increasing their confidence, skills and employability.
- by initially focusing on the development of an informed approach to service change for the One Front Door to public services in Warwickshire.

## **Understanding and Empowering our Customers**

*Ensuring we understand who our customers are or may be, how they interact with us, what the customers think of the services we offer and how we offer them:*

- by developing reliable customer insight allowing us to understand the characteristics needs and

preferences of the groups of current and potential users. Particular efforts will be made to identify hard to reach groups.

- by creating and securely maintaining an accurate record of all our customers
- by making planned customer consultation, using a range of methods appropriate to their needs, integral to continually improving our service. Our strategies and opportunities for consulting will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results
- by setting challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and judging our performance against them by asking specific questions relating to the key areas identified in this strategy as well as ones informed by customer insight to ensure we are improving.
- by publicising our performance.
- by making positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.

## The Culture of the Organisation

*Culture change is required if customers are to be at the heart of all that we do:*

- by ensuring there is commitment across the organisation to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate customers by empowering and encouraging all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer-focussed culture of our organisation.
- by leaders and managers demonstrating that they value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer-focussed services
- by prioritising customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff and evaluation of the performance of individual and team commitment. Staff must be polite, friendly and professional and understand customer needs.
- by using customer insight, including the experience of customer-facing staff, to inform policy and strategy development and service improvement activity that supports the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.
- by using feedback to ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly.
- by protecting the customers' privacy both in face to face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.

## Information and Access

*Creating and encouraging a dialogue with our customers through the provision of accurate and detailed information*

- by making our services accessible to all our customers and providing them with the information and services they need in a number of ways and evaluating how they contact the organisation in order to identify possible improvements and offer better choices to meet their needs and preferences.
- by working together with our Borough/District/Health/Police partners and other providers to deliver co-ordinated services with clear lines of accountability, and demonstrating that these arrangements have benefits for our customers.
- by providing accurate and complete information about the range of services available, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge. We take reasonable steps to ensure our customers have received and understood the information we provide but if this is not the case we will advise them when they will receive the information they need
- by informing our customers how much they will have to pay, where charges apply
- by ensuring that where customers can visit our premises in person, facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.

- by interacting within wider communities and demonstrating the ways in which we support those communities



## Delivery

*Ensuring that we deliver on our promises and learn quickly from our mistakes so that we maintain the trust of our customers*

- by consulting and involving customers, citizens, partners and staff, we have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of national and statutory standards and targets. We monitor how well we meet them, and tell our customers about our performance.
- by agreeing with our customers what they can expect from the service we provide and delivering what we promise with outcomes that are positive for the great majority of our customers.
- by explaining any variance in performance against our standards to customers, together with the actions we are taking to put things right.
- by ensuring that customers only need to tell us once about changes to their circumstances.
- by demonstrating that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complimentary organisations and learn from best practice to improve, publishing our examples externally where appropriate.
- by having an easy-to-use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible

within a defined time limit. Well trained staff empowered to investigate and put things right at first point of contact.

- by regularly reviewing and improving our complaints procedure taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff and identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments, to learn from mistakes and to improve services, publicising any action taken.

## Timeliness and Quality of Service

*Developing a customer focussed culture requires our customer service standards to be visible and embedded:*

- by setting comprehensive, measurable standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation including timeliness of response and ensuring that they are well advertised. We will monitor our performance against our own standards and those of similar organisations and will publicise the results, taking action to improve when required.
- by responding to initial enquiries promptly, and if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.
- by identifying individual customer needs at the first point of contact and ensuring that the customer is dealt with by an appropriate person

who can address the reason for contact. If not resolved initially the member of staff will agree with the customer the next steps and the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.

- by promptly sharing customer information with partners and colleagues within our organisation whenever appropriate and demonstrating how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.





# Delivering the Council's ambitions to our customers

## Council Drivers

Joined up service delivery at a local level

Information needs to be readily available to deliver excellent service to the public

Working collaboratively with colleagues and partners to maximise input and resources

Many public services have direct impacts on people's health and wellbeing; we need to work together to maximise the impact

Identify opportunities to use our property assets to help develop services

Ensure on-demand access to information and systems to improve service delivery

As services shift, so too must the way we communicate with our audiences



## Outcomes

*Provide excellent customer access and high levels of satisfaction with services by:*

- Ensuring that the customer is kept at the heart of everything we do
- Targeting resources where there is greatest need
- Providing accurate information and timely services
- Sharing information and resources with partners to maximise customer benefit
- Using customer insight to refine services and how they are delivered
- Establishing a common customer record
- Keeping customers informed and engaged with service changes

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF OUR CUSTOMERS

Here are some day to day stories giving a flavour of how accessible services will have a positive impact on the lives of Warwickshire customers, citizens and employees in the future.



## MONDAY 9.30 AM

It's a boy! Tom and his wife Julie have become proud parents for the first time, and are keen to tell everybody the good news about Jacob arrival and show them pictures. Later that day they are given a baby welcome-pack which contains details of how to register a birth. At the end of the day Tom's leaves Julie to catch up on some sleep.



**Tom and Julie**

## TUESDAY 3.00 AM

As Tom is having a sleepless night himself with all the excitement he decides he might as well log on to his computer and follow the simple on screen instructions to book an appointment to register Jacob's birth. Within minutes he is booked in for two days' time.

## TUESDAY 2.00 PM

He returns to the hospital see how his new family are doing and he tells Julie what he has done. As all is well, he is able to bring both of them home that afternoon.

## THURSDAY 11.00 AM

At the registrar's office his contact details are entered and checked against those already held on the County Council databases and the information from the health authority. Jacob's registration is quickly processed and his own record is created. He also used the Tell Us Once Service to claim for Child Benefit and to create a membership of the library for Jacob.

## FRIDAY 7.00 AM

Tom checks his e-mails over breakfast as he was up early! He finds one from the council, triggered by Jacob's registration that contains information and further links to a series of useful sites including accredited child-minders and nurseries. Another link goes through to a community database highlighting mother and baby groups. A separate email is from the local library, which prompted by Jacob's registration, informs Tom and Julie that they can drop into the library any time to pick up a gift pack of first books and Jacob's first library card.

## FRIDAY 3.00 PM

Later in the day the Primary Care Trust email through with a link to an electronic diary so Tom can book a Health Visitor appointment. Tom and Julie are impressed how information has been shared across key agencies saving them a lot of time and effort.

*\* For key to icons see page 15*



#### TUESDAY 10:00 AM

Mabel had been struggling to manage at home for quite a while. She was neglecting herself and had fallen a couple of times. Mabel's friend, Elsie, pops round regularly and has been encouraging Mabel to get some help, but until recently Mabel didn't want to - she was scared she would be 'put in a home'. After a slip in the shower which really bruised her hip, Mabel's confidence went completely and she agreed for her friend to seek help.

#### THURSDAY 2:00 PM

During her next visit to Mabel, Elsie used her smart phone to search for the general phone number for the council and she rang through. She was put through to Steve, an

advisor in the Customer Service Centre. After a brief conversation Elsie passed the phone to Mabel who answered a few questions about her difficulties. Via the electronic diary booking system, Steve was able to confirm an assessment visit with a member of the Reablement Service for the next day at 11am.

#### FRIDAY 11:00 AM

The next day Helen from the Reablement Service arrived on time and showed Mabel her identity card to prove who she was. Helen talked with Mabel to identify what she needed to assist her to be as confident and independent as possible again. Helen used her Tablet computer to record all the information and order some equipment that would help Mabel quickly, including a shower stool and a kettle pourer. She also made Mabel an appointment for a home visit from her doctor to check her general health.

#### OVER THE NEXT THREE WEEKS

Reablement support workers regularly visited Mabel to help her learn to use the new equipment and regain confidence in the shower. They also provided her with various other options to support her and keep her safe, such as arranging a fire safety check and installing a Telecare line and pendant alarm, so she could

quickly make contact for help if she fell again. On one visit Jane, the support worker asked Mabel if she liked to read. Mabel said she did but found the print too small these days. Jane called the library service and arranged for Mabel to be added to the housebound reader services so that large print editions could be brought to her home.

#### TWO MONTHS LATER

Mabel felt much safer and more confident now. She agreed that she was confident using all the equipment and that she no longer needed anyone to visit. When Elsie next visited, after telling her all about her latest book, Mabel commented 'I never thought I would feel in control of my life again, and if anything happens again, I know how to get the support I need'.



I never thought I would feel in control of my life again, and if anything happens again, I know how to get the support I need.



**Mabel**



## Sandra



**TUESDAY 10:00 AM**

Sandra has arrived at her local Warwickshire Direct One Stop Shop she is waiting to speak to a Customer Service Advisor about her Council Tax benefit. She occupies her time by watching the plasma screen in the waiting area. Sandra's attention is caught by a health message about giving up smoking – she had wanted to do this mainly due to the effect on her finances but was finding it very difficult. The screen gave a link to a website for more information which Sandra noted down.

**TUESDAY 10:30 AM**

After speaking to the advisor about her benefit Sandra mentions the website address she saw so the advisor takes into the adjacent library to use the computers. Sandra is not confident with technology so the advisor helps her log into the internet and then shows her how to find the site she is looking for.

Sandra goes through the information carefully noting down some useful information and advice. She watches some on-line videos and then spots a link that lets her enter her telephone number

so that she can have future information feeds directly to her phone.

Sandra also finds a page with a programme of upcoming health related events in the area. She is pleased to find that a Stop Smoking Advisor is going to be in attendance at the children's centre next Monday and is able to make an online booking there and then. By pure coincidence Sandra is due there that afternoon to talk to a representative of CAB who is going to help her improve her prospects of getting a job.

**MONDAY 2:30 PM**

Sandra arrives at the Children's Centre which is another part of the community hub that houses the library and One Stop Shop. It is buzzing with children and their parents accessing tailored services. Sandra meets James from CAB who was very patient and listened to her problems and was able to make some really helpful suggestions of how to prepare to get on the employment ladder again, pointing out free basic IT training; even bringing in a member of staff from the children's centre to advise on her childcare issues.

**MONDAY 3:30 PM**

Sandra then found Julie, the Stop Smoking Advisor, who sensitively discussed Sandra's smoking habit

with her. She was very supportive and signed Sandra up to a stop smoking programme with her. Julie asked if Sandra had a smart phone which she had despite being uncomfortable with new technologies. Julie shows Sandra how to put a "Quit Smoking" app. onto her phone. It gives her daily support and instant tips, it even tracks how much money she is saving and provides a direct line to the NHS Stop Smoking helpline.

**MONDAY 4:15 PM**

On her way home Sandra gets a message on her phone about local health events and is surprised to see that they have been tailored to where she was due to satellites being able to pinpoint her mobile phone.

Sandra smiles all the way home – it had been a really useful day!







**THURSDAY 10:30 AM**

Mandy is preparing for a meeting with her adoption social worker, downloading the documents she needs. Next Wednesday she will find out if Chelsea, the girl they hope to adopt, has been made the subject of Care and Placement Orders so she can be with their family. This is the second time that Mandy and her husband, Paul, have adopted.

Following the adoption of their son two years ago Mandy was invited to sign up to a protected website with links to other adoption related sites giving information about support groups and activities that will support her family's changing circumstances. Mandy has found the information on specialist training for adoptive parents particularly useful. She had felt "on her own" and Mandy appreciates that she can now have a confidential exchange with the Adoption Services Team in a safe environment and tap into the knowledge and skills of other adoptive parents and professionals. This support helped her and Paul feel confident enough to apply to adopt again.

**THURSDAY 11:00 AM**

Mandy and Paul now know that the

matching decision has been made and that Chelsea will be placed with them once the Placement Order has been confirmed. The process with Chelsea has been a lot faster and smoother as all the information they needed was accessed 'on line' and they could make their comments directly onto the Adoption Support Plan and Adoption Placement Report.

The foster carers had started to keep an online diary about Chelsea's likes and dislikes, photos, and a video of her. This helped Mandy and her family in preparing for Chelsea's arrival; especially her son who was soon to have a little sister. The on-line Carer's Report also highlights Chelsea's behavioural and emotional needs which Mandy and Paul need to discuss with their adoption social worker in advance of the placement.

**WEDNESDAY 10:00 AM**

The Pre Placement Meeting including the social workers and foster carers is taking place at the local Children's Centre. Here there are well-equipped meeting rooms with video conferencing facilities that will enable the nursery worker, who can't attend, to make her contribution from another site. Mandy thought she would have difficulties talking to a video screen, but the Children's Centre staff had invited her in earlier to meet them and use the technology.

**Mandi**



**WEDNESDAY 11:30 AM**

Mandy's adoption social worker arrives and connects her tablet PC to the wireless network so that she can access and update the case file. They quickly work through the Parental Responsibility Agreement and Adopters Undertaking while waiting to hear from the Children's Team.

Mandy feels tense – there shouldn't be an issue with the court orders, but you can never be 100% sure. The social worker receives an email; the Placement Order has been granted. Within minutes the foster carers have also heard and send a new photo of Chelsea to the social worker's PC for Mandy to see. All parties confirm with each other electronically that the Placement Planning meeting will be in 2 days' time. The online diary is to stay open and Mandy is going to send some family photos to the foster carers so Chelsea can see what they look like prior to their first meeting.





#### **TUESDAY 9:00 AM**

A keen twitter user Jane spots @WCCbuservices. She notices that WCC is conducting a review of the County's bus routes, and bus users are being asked for their views.

#### **TUESDAY 11:00 AM**

Jane mentions this to her friends at the local mother and toddlers group as she is concerned that the review may put the P832 route at risk. This route is vital to a number of the parents in Harbury who use it to reach their local Children's Centre in Southam.

One of the mothers, Julie, sets up a Facebook group campaigning to keep the route open. Word spreads and before long the group has attracted 270 Likes.

#### **TUESDAY 7:00 PM**

Jane and her husband, Steve, discuss the events of the day over dinner. Steve is a software developer and has recently been looking at data published by the WCC Open Data website. After dinner, he has a look on the site and finds some really useful statistics on bus service usage and congestion data. He spends a couple of hours with the information and, soon he has

created a website showing where the most heavily used services have affected congestion across the County. He puts a link onto the Facebook group so everyone can see how well used the P832 service is.

#### **WEDNESDAY 8.30 AM**

John, a Council communications officer, is alerted to the P832 Facebook group through his automated daily monitoring of social media. When viewing the site, he sees that some of the comments on the discussion forum are not complementary about the Council and after talking with the Public Transport team, John notes that the details of the discussion are inaccurate and so contacts the group directly via the official WCC Facebook site.

John sends a message to the Facebook administrator to explain that a review of bus routes takes place regularly. He comments that he is pleased the P832 has such support and encourages the group to join in the formal consultation, providing a direct link to the Council website. That message is then shared with everyone on the site. The residents now have a formal route to express their concerns and so thank John for his assistance.

#### **WEDNESDAY 2:30 PM**

Later in the day, John notices the website Steve has created and sends the details to the Public

Transport team so they can check the information is accurate. This is useful for the consultation. He also shares the details on @wcc\_news and on @wccbuservices

#### **FRIDAY 500 PM**

Within a couple of days the consultation questionnaire has received over 150 responses. The popularity of this consultation has seen awareness of other consultation exercises increase and the WCC Consultation Twitter feed has gathered new followers, which will alert them of any other consultations run by the Council.

#### **TWO WEEKS LATER**

As soon as the consultation closes John logs back on to the Facebook group and thanks the members for taking part. He tells them that the results of the review will be posted on the 'You Said, We Did' section of the Warwickshire Direct website in due course.

**Jane**



## Key to icons

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**Self service**



**Phone**



**Video conferencing**



**Mobile**



**Email/letter**



**Tell us once**



**Face to Face**



**Self service - Mobile**



**Self service - Web**



**Consultation**



**Partnership Working**



**Social Networks**



**Personalization**



**Shared Information**



**Open Data**

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