West Suffolk Council

Overview and Scrutiny Review Website

February 2021

Purpose of the review (from Cllr Clements' original request)

- What are the main issues/concerns for consideration?
  - How easy is it for customers (including residents, businesses and visitors) to be able to do some of the most common transactions on our website?
  - How easy is it for customers to find commonly asked for information?
  - Can customers easily understand the information on the website (does it avoid Council lingo)
- Potential benefits of undertaking this review are:
  - Support to residents in being able to use our website more easily
  - Reduced cost / time for Council staff in dealing with queries because residents are unable to find information / undertake transactions on the website

Customer access since March 2020

- Customer access to Council services has changed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and this is reflected in the data (slides to follow)

- Gathering and responding to customer feedback is important to improve online information/accessibility

- Due to the pandemic customers no longer have the option of face-to-face services and are using telephone, email and online to self-serve methods

- The trend was moving towards online and phone contact in the years before 2020 but the shift has accelerated

Digital support for customers post March 2020

- How customers contact us and access services is set out in the Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022.

- Digital support is offered to customers who may not be digitally enabled or as confident using online services (phone support Monday-Friday 8.45am -5pm)

- New services have been developed and delivered online, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, for example business grants applications, enabling customers to access services online 24-7

- No-formal complaints have been received about service accessibility (online, over the phone or in person) since March 2020

How are customers accessing the website?

West Suffolk Council

- 53% of website users access the site via their mobile phone. Must be mobile friendly.

- 58% of website users are using Google search. BUT social media now higher than search engine Bing.

- Google is known as the home page of all websites. Where people go first to search and look for the right page rather than the actual website.

Devices Used Jan to Dec 2020	
Device	Users
Mobile	300,364
Desktop	215,868
Tablet	46,696

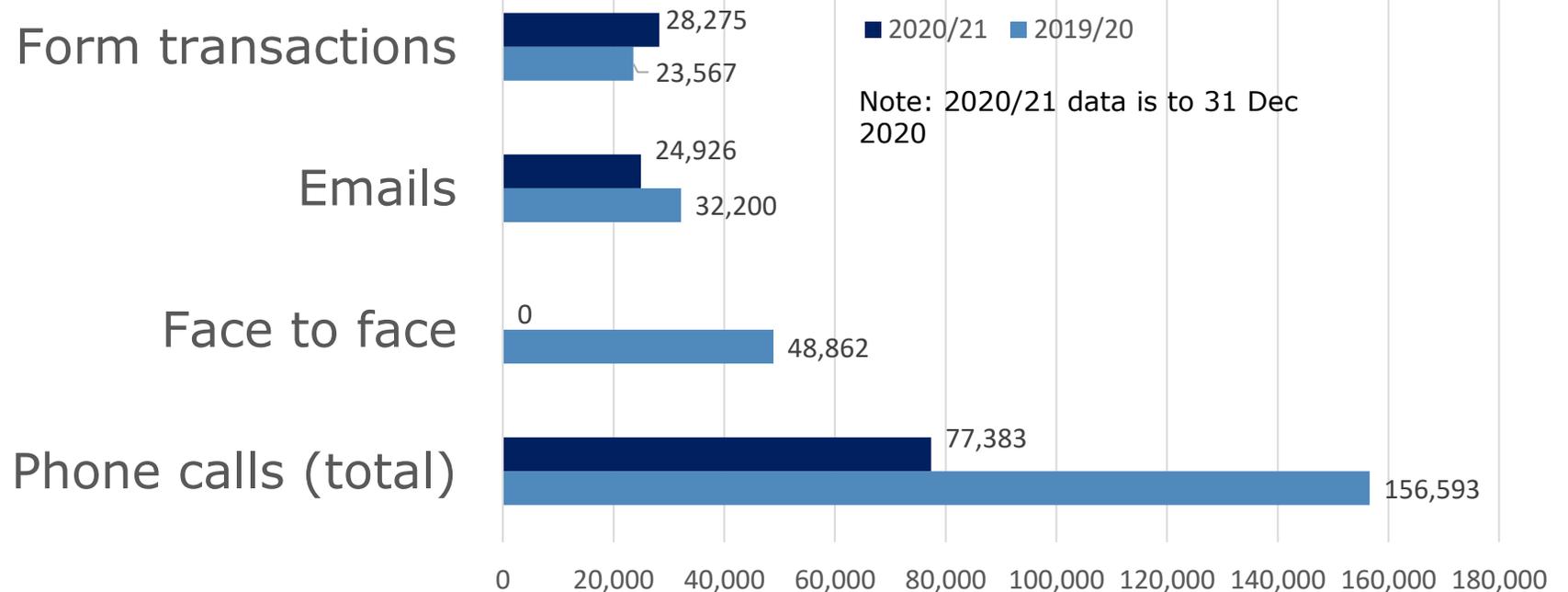| Source/ medium	
Google/ Organic	358,224
Direct/ none	121,370
Gov.UK/ referral	39,190
Social Media/ referral	27,371
Bing/organic	22,981
West Suffolk/ online form	19,631

How are customers accessing the website?

- The website has been refreshed twice in recent years, the latest in 2019 to reflect the change to West Suffolk Council. Changes and updates are made several times a day.

- In 2020, the website received nearly 2.5 million page views and was visited by 559,000 customers.

- Customers are generally spending longer looking at website content

- We consider the kind of key words customers will use to find what they are looking for; and take them straight to the page they need

- We design and layout the website to make it easy for customers to navigate

Making our websites accessible

- New legislation means our websites have to be accessible; if not, we can be fined up to £150,000

- Currently the website is at 97% and this is constantly reviewed

- We write for a reading age of 8-10. This is standard.

- Our accessibility statement says we want:
  - our websites to be easy to use for as many people as possible, regardless of ability or technology; and
  - to make the website text as simple as possible to understand

- We provide guidance and training for our web content editors

- We make navigation as easy as possible. You should be able to:
  - listen to most of the website using a screen reader;
  - navigate most of the websites using just a keyboard;
  - navigate most of the websites using speech recognition software; and
  - zoom in to 200% without text spilling off the screen.

Customer Service facts and figures

Note that this first contact data has been recorded by the Customer Service team. It does not include customer contact data to other council services

West Suffolk Council

Customer contact pre and post Covid Volume and trend

■ 2020/21 ■ 2019/20

Note: 2020/21 data is to 31 Dec 2020

Category	2020/21	2019/20
Form transactions	28,275	23,567
Emails	24,926	32,200
Face to face	0	48,862
Phone calls (total)	77,383	156,593

0   20,000   40,000   60,000   80,000   100,000   120,000   140,000   160,000   180,000

NEW Covid-related services since March 2020

Covid-related inbound calls handled	2,039
Home But Not Alone outbound calls	458
Business Grants proactive contact	663

Please note that these are volumes only and are not representative of the time spent by Customer Service Advisors managing the contact, which could be a few minutes for a straightforward referral or upwards of half an hour for a more complex case.

Customer Satisfaction

2019/20	2020/21	
76%	89%	

- This measure is taken from a mixture of email and telephone survey data
- It is a measure of the experience the customer has at the point of first contacting the council
- We ask the customer to express how satisfied or dissatisfied they are on a numbered scale

What is the data telling us?

- In the past 12 months there has been an increase in online traffic and the number of transactional visits customers are making

- There is no correlating increase in complaints from people saying they cannot find what they need online.

- The customer data shows that face to face contact is zero and it is reasonable to suggest that this contact has diverted to the other options of phone, email and the website/online, based on the data

- The data suggests that customers have been able to fulfil their requirements online or over the phone, given that we haven't had any feedback otherwise over the past 10 months.

- More proactive support is being provided through calls made to vulnerable individuals and businesses in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Most popular webpages

Priority order	Most clicked on webpages in 2020	Most clicked on webpages in 2019
1	Homepage	Homepage
2	Planning – view/comment on application	Planning – view/comment on application
3	When are my bins emptied	My West Suffolk – find my nearest
4	My West Suffolk	When are my bins emptied
5	Bins – new bin collection days	Epayments – pay on the web
6	Bins – Garden Waste Index	Contact Us
7	Council Tax	Parking – Bury St Edmunds
8	Bins – Index	Council Tax – Pay Now
9	Contact-Us	Council Tax - Index
10	Council Tax – Pay Now	Planning - Index

What does the webpage data tell us?

- The Home page remains the top place to visit with planning, bins, Council Tax and parking consistently in the top 15.

- The Contact Us page has moved from 4th to 9th on the list in 2020.

- More customers are using search engines which take them straight to the page or service they need.

- Much of the places people are going are transactional, information or planning where they can have their say or learn more.

- This has been helped by redesign and use of icons to reduce clicks

We can do more…food for thought

- This group offers a positive and welcome opportunity to further improve the website which is vital to our residents and businesses
- The human touch – the user's journey and insight is vital to go beyond the data and stats – have we missed a journey?
- The Amazon experience – customers who bought this were interested in this…Can we join up the dots better on pages
- Use the learning from this group to spread best practice to web editors and improve the site, including language
- Is everything that can be online, online – i.e forms and are they easy to use?