Customer Contact Preferences Survey

- **Objective**: gain insights into customer communication/engagement preferences - 580 Survey Responses (38 Hard to Reach)
- **Focus Areas**:
  - Preferred communication channels
  - Frequency and performance measurement of contact
  - Methods of engagement – Website focus.
- **Goal**: Inform customer service strategy actions and provision of services based on customer preferences (Design with, not for).

Key Takeaways
Based on 580 responses

Survey Insights

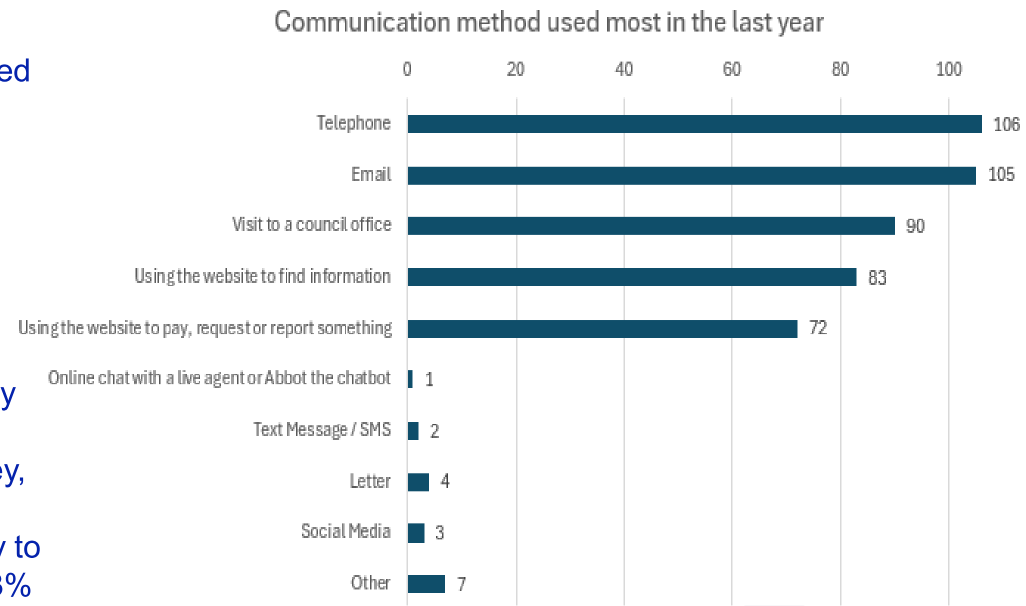
- 81% has contacted council in last 12 months, so important to get engagement right.
- Telephony and eMail still popular but declining, digital strong and more transactional but still a strong preference for in-person contact and not much appetite for AI yet.
- Providing fast, responsive and accessible services is of paramount importance. Customers are interested in hearing how we perform on this.
- Website hugely important and largely well regarded. Big unmet appetite for social care online services. Instagram is the coming force in social.

Question 1

Have you contacted the council for any reason in 2024 using any channel?

- **High Engagement**: A large majority of respondents (80.6%) have contacted the council in 2024, indicating strong engagement with council services.
- **Opportunity for Improvement**: The 19.4% who have not contacted the council may represent an opportunity to engage or understand barriers to communication.
- **Insight for Service Strategy**: Customers are actively using council services, which suggests the importance of maintaining or improving communication channels.

Question 2
Which of these methods did you use the most to contact the council in the last year?



- **Telephone and Email still dominate**: with a combined 44.68% of individuals preferring them, though this is down 5% on the post pandemic survey.
- **Digital Adoption**: reached a new high during the pandemic and has remained there with 35.4% of customers using a digital channel for information or transactional purposes.
- **In Person Communication:** had reduced significantly to 11.7% as a result of the Service Point closures in pandemic, but has bounced back to 19% in this survey, though this may be the result of extra efforts made to ensure Hard to Reach Customers had the opportunity to give their inputs. Letter writing continued to fall from 3% to only 1%.
- **Underutilised Methods**: Methods such as online chat (0.2%), text messages (0.4%), and social media (0.7%) remain marginal as an interactive medium . This may indicate that either people are not yet accustomed to using these channels for official purposes, or they do not support transactionality well.

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Question 3

If you had to contact the council, which of these methods would you most prefer to use? (Chose one)

- Telephone **29.1%**
- Email **23%**
- Visit to a council office **22.3%**
- Using the website to find information **14.9%**
- Using the website to pay, request or report something **7.1%**
- Online chat **1.4%**
- Text Message/SMS **0%**
- Letter **1.4%**
- Social Media **0%**
- Other **0.7%**

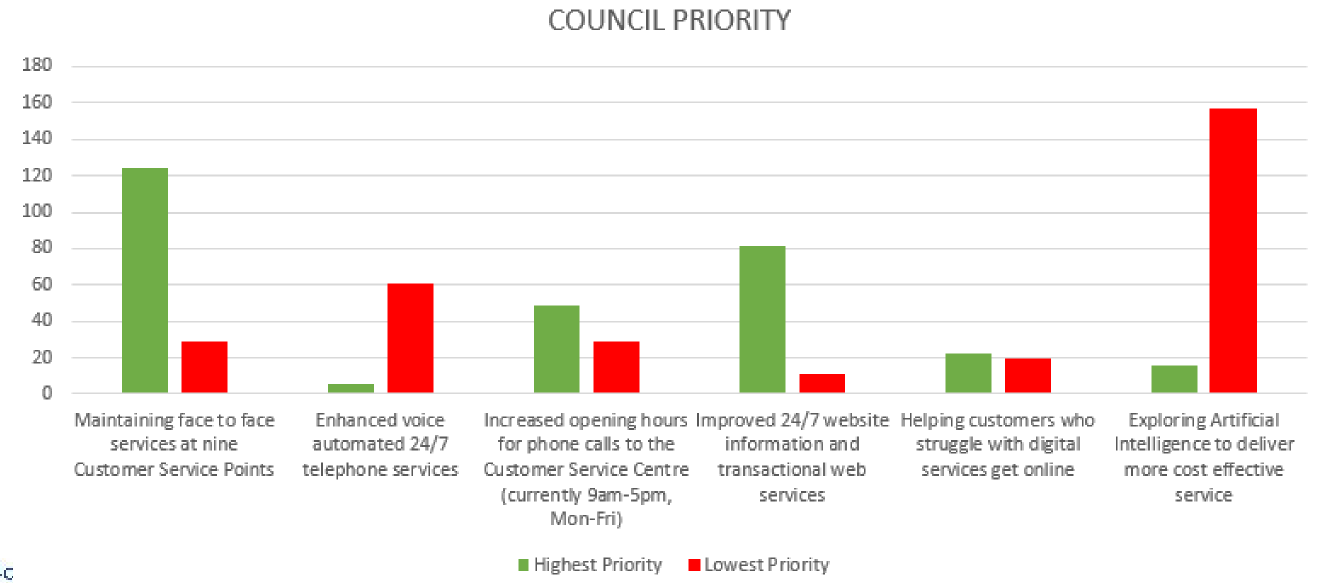
- Interestingly digital is not largely the medium of choice by customers, and interpersonal channels are the channels of choice if given a preference. Note however the demographic of survey completers in a later slide!

Classification: OFFICIAL

Question 4

In the next three years what should be the Council's customer contact priorities? Rate 1-6 (1 being the highest)

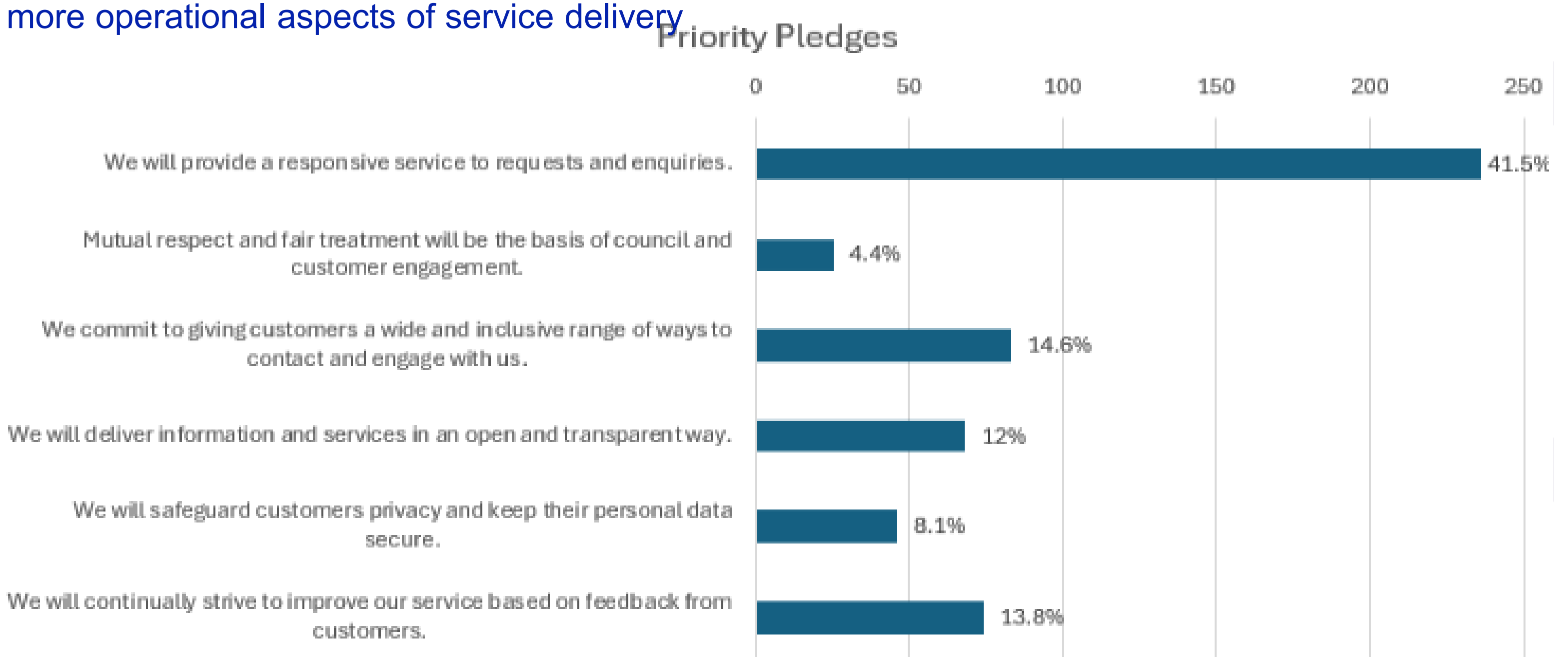
- Face to Face services and improving website are the most prioritised options, with face-to-face services receiving the highest number of Rank 1 votes (43.5%) and website improvements (28.4%)
- 24/7 automated services and extended phone hours also received moderate support, but they are less prioritised than in-person services and digital enhancements
- AI exploration ranks the lowest, with the largest portion of respondents ranking it as their least preferred option Rank 6 (55.4%)



Question 5

The Council's Customer Service Charter has pledges on these six Customer Service Standards. Choose the ONE that you think is most important:

- Responsive service is voted the top priority for respondents, emphasising the need for timely and effective interaction with customers (41.5%)
- Inclusive communication options (14.6%) and continual improvements based on feedback (13.8%) indicate a desire for accessibility in customer engagement and responsiveness to customer needs
- Transparency, privacy and mutual respect are still valued but are seen as less important compared to the more operational aspects of service delivery



Question 6

Which of these elements of good customer service are most important to you? Rate 1-7 (1 being the highest)

- Ease of access to information or services (37.3%) and fixing problems properly (25%) are top priorities, indicating customers prioritise simplicity and convenience coupled with addressing issues correctly
- Timely delivery and professionalism of staff also play important roles, though not as crucial as access and problem resolution
- Fairness, friendly staff attitude and communication are important but tend to take a backseat to more operational service requests

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Question 7

Are you interested in how the council measures and reports its levels of customer service performance?

- **Yes (60.6%) No (39.4%)**

1. **Public Engagement:** There is a notable level of public interest in transparency and accountability regarding customer service performance. This could mean that customers want to understand how well services are being delivered and how performance is being assessed.
2. **Opportunity for Communication:** Given the high percentage of interest, the council may have an opportunity to provide more information to the public on how customer service performance is measured. This could involve sharing performance stats, reporting processes, or improvements made based on customer feedback.
3. **Area of Improvement for Non-Interested Group:** For the 39.4% who are not interested, it might be useful to explore whether their lack of interest is due to a lack of awareness, perceived irrelevance, or other factors. Understanding this group could inform better communication strategies to engage them.

Question 8

Which of these measures of customer service are most important to you in the reporting of performance?

- Fast response time is the highest priority (41%) indicating a focus on efficiency and timeliness. Fast response and resolution times are key to how respondents perceive customer service performance.
- Customer satisfaction is also highly rated (25.8%) though slightly less important than response times.
- The most respondents (43.8%) ranked number of complaints received as the least important. While it's useful for understanding performance, it seems to be of lower priority compared to other metrics such as response times or satisfaction.
- A significant number of respondents (26.9%) ranked failure demand as the least important, suggesting that while important, is seen as secondary compared to other service performance indicators.

Question 9

Do you have any other suggestions on how we improve the council's customer service in the future or specific feedback you would like to give on the topic?

- **Key insights;**

1. **Improved Communication:** Providing response and **resolution times for enquiries**. More use of email and text notifications instead of traditional letters. Giving clear timelines for when accepted projects will be implemented. Regular updates on issues, such as missed bin collections, with timely notices.
2. **Staff and Service Points:** There is a strong desire to maintain or extend in-person customer service, particularly in remote areas. People emphasised the importance of face-to-face interactions for clearer communication and resolving issues effectively. This may be the result of the demographic of respondents.
3. **Website and Online Services:** Avoiding the use of chatbots and automated systems, unless they truly enhance customer experience.
4. **Speed and Efficiency:** Quicker response times, particularly for services like road repairs or planning applications. Fewer delays in resolving issues, with a focus on "getting it right the first time" to avoid repeated contacts and frustration. Many respondents highlighted the need for quicker responses, particularly for issues like missed bin collections or delays in road repairs.
5. **Transparency and Accountability:** Being transparent about council actions and decisions, especially regarding projects and public works. Accountability was also mentioned—ensuring that the right person takes ownership of an issue and keeps the customer informed
6. **Community Focused Services:** Some suggestions focus on how services should cater to an ageing population, including maintaining in-person assistance and having help vans for rural areas.

Question 10

Have you used the Council's website in 2024?

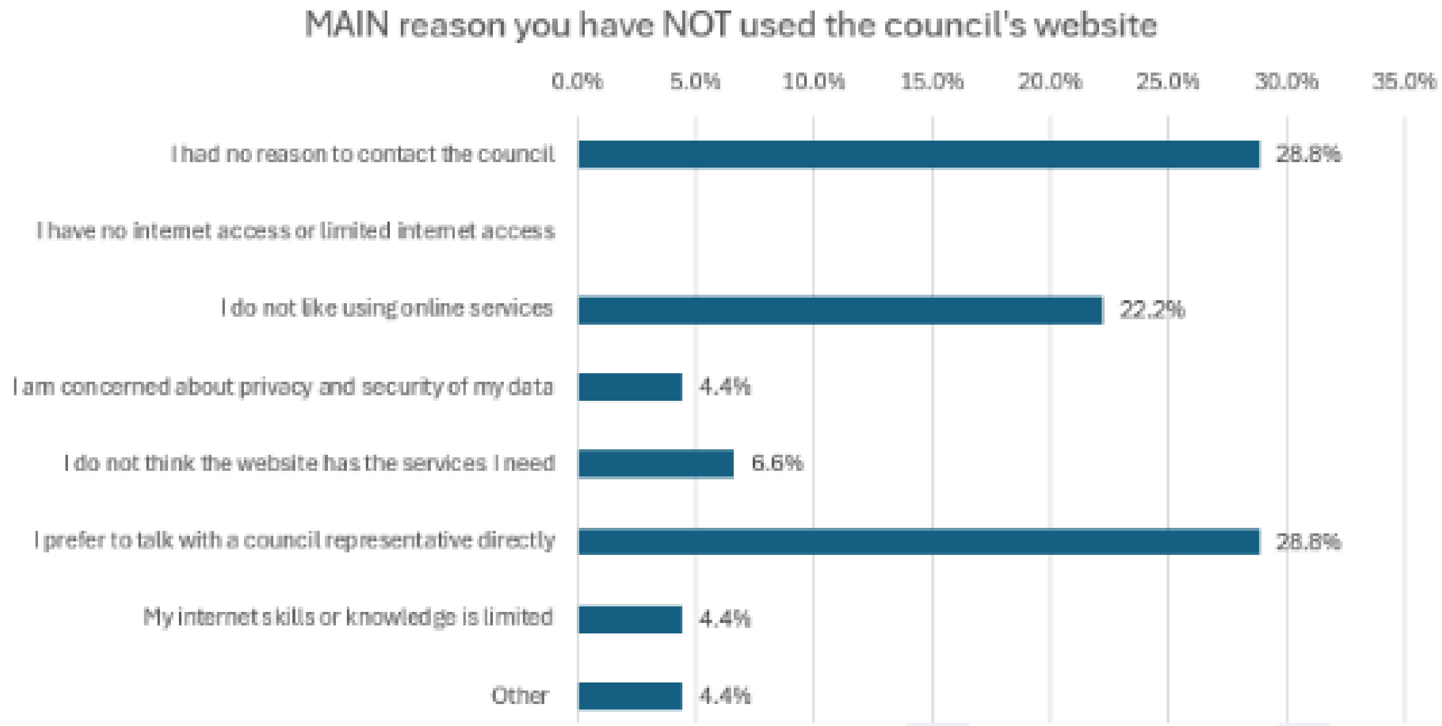
- **Yes (91.8%) No (8%)**

1. **Strong Usage:** The overwhelming percentage of users (91.8%) shows that the website is a primary tool for customers to access services, information, or updates from the council. It suggests that the site is well-integrated into their daily routines or needs.
2. **Satisfaction:** With such a high usage rate, there may be a correlation with satisfaction, as people tend to use websites that are useful or effective.
3. **Potential Areas for Improvement:** Although the usage rate is high, the 8.0% who haven't used the website so it is important to know why – see next slide!

Question 11

Please tick the MAIN reason you have NOT used the Council's website recently?

Key Insights



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Question 12

The council offers a wide range of services that can be carried out on the website. Please tell us if you would have used/would consider using/not consider using

	Answer Choice	Have Used	Would consider using	Would not consider using
1	Making Payments e.g. Council Tax, Invoices, Parking Fines	189 (37.6%)	225 (44.8%)	88 (17.5%)
2	Planning Portal e.g. making planning applications, viewing weekly planning lists	216 (42.9)%	183 (36.3%)	104 (20.6%)
3	Reporting Issues e.g. road faults, dog fouling, fly tipping	237 (46.8%)	235 (46.4%)	34 (46.7%)
4	Requesting Council Services e.g. bin requests, licensing applications, pitch booking	199 (40.4%)	235 (47.7%)	58 (11.7%)
5	Managing Council Tax Payments and Related Benefits e.g. having a personal Council Tax account to see payments	167 (33.7%)	215 (43.4%)	113 (22.8%)
6	Democratic Services Information e.g. Councillor information, Council and Committee Meeting reports	134 (27%)	274 (55.2%)	88 (17.7%)
7	School Information and School Websites e.g. information on schools, school holidays and early years places	177 (35.9%)	130 (26.4%)	185 (37.6%)
8	Social Care e.g. Social Care places and self-directed support	33 (6.8%)	310 (64.4%	138 (28.6%)
9	Bin Day Uplift Information e.g. online bin day lookup and downloadable bin calendars	450 (85.7%)	58 (11%)	17 (3.2%)
10	Keep in the loop servicee.g. topical and local information and service disruption notification service	284 (56.2%)	185 (36.6%)	36 (7.1%)

Question 13

Thinking about your recent uses of the Council's website, how satisfied were you with the following:

Answer Choice	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Overall Satisfaction	Response total
The content of the specific webpage/s you were looking for	113 (21.8%)	328 (63.2%)	85%	538
Topical news and information on council activities	34 (16.7%)	138 (66.7%)	83.4%	271
How easy it was to find the information or service you needed	44 (17.1%)	144 (55.6%)	72.7%	271
How well online forms worked to request or apply for services or licenses etc.	32 (19.3%)	97 (58.4%)	77.7%	271
The look and feel of the website	39 (15.5%)	155 (61.5%)	77%	272
The experience of making a payment	40 (33.6%)	68 (57.1%)	90.70%	271

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Question 14

Which social media channels do you frequently use to gather information? (responders were able to select multiple channels)

- **None (28%):** A significant portion of respondents do not use social media channels to gather information. This could be due to personal preference, age, or reliance on other forms of media like email or traditional news sources.
- **Facebook (59%):** Facebook is by far the most frequently used social media channel, with more than half of respondents relying on it for gathering information. This indicates that Facebook is still a dominant platform for information-sharing among this group
- **WhatsApp (36%):** WhatsApp also plays a notable role, potentially highlighting the importance of group communication and more personal forms of contact.
- **Instagram (16%):** While less dominant**,** it could be more effective for reaching certain demographic or interest groups. This platform could be particularly relevant for visually-driven content, such as events, announcements, or community highlights
- **X (Twitter) (11%):** A smaller percentage use X (formerly Twitter) for information gathering. This may suggest that X is more niche or that its usage is concentrated in specific demographic or interest groups.
- **LinkedIn (9%):** LinkedIn, often used for professional purposes, is less popular for general information gathering, with only 9% of respondents selecting it.
- **Pinterest (3%):** Pinterest is the newest and least used platform, with just 3% turning to it for information.

Question 15

The Scottish Government is introducing a free new, online identity and authentication service called ScotAccount that will allow enrolled users to securely access national and local public services online. Would you use it?

- **Yes (47%) Maybe (37%) No (16%)**

1. **Positive (47%):** A substantial portion of respondents are willing to adopt ScotAccount, which reflects openness to new digital services, particularly if they offer convenience and security in accessing public services.
2. **Uncertainty (37%):** A large "Maybe" group indicates that while there is interest, there is also a need for more clarity, trust-building, and perhaps education around the service. People may want to learn more about its features, benefits, and security before committing.
3. **Resistance (16%):** A smaller percentage of people are against using the service. Addressing concerns, especially around security, privacy, and the perceived necessity of such a service, could help alleviate some of this resistance.

Question 16
Demographic responses:

- **Gender:** Female (49.1%) Male (47.8%) Prefer not to say (3%)
- **Age:** 18-30 (3.2%) 31-50 (13.6%) 51-65 (29.1%) 66-75 (34.8%) 76-85 (14.5%) 85+ (4.3%) Blank (4.3%)
- **Area:** Helensburgh and Lomond (20.7%) Oban, Lorn and Isles (19.3%) Bute and Cowal (24.3%) Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and Islay (31.7%) Blank (3.7%)