

Public Document Pack

Mid Devon District Council

Community Policy Development Group

Tuesday, 22 August 2023 at 2.15 pm
Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Next ordinary meeting
Tuesday, 24 October 2023 at 2.15 pm

Please Note: This meeting will take place at Phoenix House and members of the Public and Press are able to attend via Teams. If you are intending to attend in person please contact the committee clerk in advance, in order that numbers of people can be appropriately managed in physical meeting rooms.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Membership

Cllr G Cochran
Cllr C Connor
Cllr A Cuddy
Cllr A Glover
Cllr B Holdman
Cllr H Tuffin
Cllr C Harrower
Cllr D Broom
Cllr S Robinson

A G E N D A

Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place

- 1 **Apologies and Substitute Members**
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).

- 2 **Public Question Time**
To receive any questions relating to items on the agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.

Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.

- 3 **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**
To record any interests on agenda matters.

- 4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *(Pages 5 - 8)*
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 27 June 2023.
- 5 **Chairmans Announcements**
To receive any announcements that the Chairman may wish to make.
- 6 **Vulnerability Statement** *(Pages 9 - 16)*
To receive a report from the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement. This report has been requested to provide members with clarity on existing practices around customer vulnerability and a proposed statement for publication.
- 7 **Customer Service Front Desk** *(Pages 17 - 46)*
To receive a report from the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement. This report has been requested to provide members with clarity on existing opening times, customer transaction levels and future service activity for the Customer Services department which provides face-to-face, telephone and online presence for the residents of Mid Devon.
- 8 **Regulation of Investigatory Powers**
To receive a verbal update from the District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer.
- 9 **Climate Emergency**
To receive a briefing from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist.
- 10 **Work Programme for 2023/2024** *(Pages 47 - 50)*
To discuss the current work plan for the Community PDG.
- 11 **Finance and Performance Update**
To receive a verbal update from the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change and to receive further training designed to provide greater clarity on the financial responsibilities falling within the remit of this Policy Development Group.

Stephen Walford
Chief Executive
Monday, 14 August 2023

Meeting Information

From 7 May 2021, the law requires all councils to hold formal meetings in person. The Council will enable all people to continue to participate in meetings via Teams.

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to Committee@middevon.gov.uk by no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting. This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

Please note that a reasonable amount of hardcopies at the meeting will be available, however this is a limited number. If you are attending the meeting and would like a hardcopy of the agenda we encourage that you notify Member Services in advance of the meeting to ensure that a hardcopy is available. Otherwise, copies of the agenda can be found on our website.

If you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Sarah Lees on: ahowell@middevon.gov.uk

Public Wi-Fi is available in all meeting rooms.

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MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 27 June 2023 at 2.15 pm

**Present
Councillors**

S Chenore, C Connor, A Cuddy, A Glover,
B Holdman, H Tuffin, C Harrower, J Cairney
and M Farrell

**Apologies
Councillor(s)**

E Buczkowski and G Cochran

**Also Present
Councillor(s)**

D Broom, R Gilmour, J Lock and D Wulff and S Keable
(online)

**Also Present
Officer(s):**

Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and
Climate Change), Lisa Lewis (Corporate Manager for
Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Lee
Chester (Operations Manager Leisure Services), Angie
Howell (Member Services Officer) and Sarah Lees
(Member Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR (00:25)

RESOLVED that Cllr B Holdman be elected as Chairman of the Community PDG for
the municipal year 2023/2024.

(Proposed by Cllr A Glover and seconded by Cllr A Cuddy)

2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR (06:04)

RESOLVED that Cllr C Connor be elected as Vice Chairman of the Community PDG
for the municipal year 2023/2024.

(Proposed by Cllr J Cairney and seconded by Cllr M Farrell)

3 CONFIRM START TIME OF MEETINGS (08:03)

It was **AGREED** that the start time of meetings for the remainder of the municipal
year continued to be at 2.15pm.

4 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (08:30)**

Apologies were received from Cllr G Cochran - Cllr M Farrell attended as his substitute and Cllr E Buczkowski – Cllr J Cairney as her substitute.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (09:03)**

Nick Quinn – local resident

A long term court case has ended with the agreement that payments for Council Leisure Sessions are VAT free.

Your Finance Officers are in the process of claiming a refund of the overpaid VAT on Leisure sessions, going back to 2011.

An estimate of the amount being claimed is shown on the Corporate Management Table, on page 28, of your papers, where there is an entry for “Corporate VAT Refund” (under 'Major Changes to Income Levels').

The total shown is £2,998,700.

There will, no doubt, be debates over how this Leisure Refund is used, if it ever arrives, but my question relates to whether this Community PDG wishes to consider how the removal of this VAT requirement should affect Leisure session payments.

As Cllr Holdman might remember, in November 2022 after excluding the public, the previous Community PDG voted to give away its delegated authority to set the Leisure Pricing Strategy, for the remainder of 2022 and for 2023/2024, to the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing.

But, there is no longer a Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and the removal of VAT will produce a significant (20%) reduction in session prices.

My question is: In the light of the change in Cabinet responsibilities and the removal of the requirement to charge VAT on Leisure sessions, will this Community PDG consider taking back the responsibility for the Leisure Pricing Strategy and the setting of Leisure Session Charges?

It was confirmed that a written response would be provided and attached to the minutes of the meeting.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (13:39)**

There were no declarations of interest received.

7 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (13:56)**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 March 2023 were **NOTED**.

8 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS (14:34)

The Chairman thanked the two outgoing Chairmen – Cllr Mrs C Daws and Cllr Mrs M Squires for all their time and effort working on this Policy Development Group (PDG) over the last four years. He also hoped to bring in some constructive policies moving forward.

9 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORTS FOR 22/23 (15:45)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report* presented by the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change which provided Members with the Revenue and Capital Outturn figures for the financial year 2022/2023 for both the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The contents of the report were outlined with reference to the following:-

- This was an historic report for noting which showed the outturn achieved for 2022/2023.
- Outturn position for the General Fund was an overspend of £190,000 and for the Housing Revenue Account an underspend of £312,000 – both were considered good achievements in the relevant economic circumstances.
- There were variances to note – the cost of living crisis which had had an effect on staff pay. Much higher staff turnover and sickness in the year 2022/2023 which resulted in higher staffing costs. Additional grant payments have been awarded such as the Home for Ukraine Scheme and also had to account the VAT refund which was currently being audited by HMRC.
- There were 4 services that report through this PDG
 - i) Customer Services which had an underspend due to staff vacancies
 - ii) Public Health – significant amounts of grant funding for Homes for Ukraine Scheme and some funds had rolled forward and were earmarked for reserves in 2023/2024.
 - iii) Planning - there was an additional grant income – £180,000 feasibility works on Junction 28 and Section 106 Air Pollution earmarked for 2023/2024.
 - iv) Leisure Services had shown an overspend. The Salix funding trying to decarbonise Leisure Centres was slippage in terms of maintenance work. Income remained lower than budget.
- Capital outturn position the bulk of this was leisure spend and the Salix project. A considerable achievement largely on budget and timeframe and benefits would be seen shortly being brought into the two Leisure Centres and would make a significant difference to the carbon used on these sites as well as a significant financial difference.
- A lot of the capital programme was not planned for 2022/2023 as it spanned over a number of future years.
- Bidding for a grant for Culm Valley Leisure Centre was also underway.

The following was discussed by the Committee:-

- Welfare of staff to ensure retention. The Performance Report was due to go to Cabinet on 4 July 2023.
- It was commented that the Council should be applauded for having the foresight to go ahead and make these changes at the Leisure Centres to keep costs down for our residents.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

10 **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (31:12)**

The Group had before it a report* presented by the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement with the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and accompanying Media and Social Media Policy and highlighted the following:

- The report was a review of the Policy which took place every 2 years and this Group was being asked to recommend to Cabinet the revised content of the Strategy and the Policy.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the content of the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and Media and Social Media Policy be approved.

(Moved by the Chair).

Reason for decision: As set out in the report.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

11 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING 33:27)**

The following items were identified by the Group for items to be brought to the next Meeting:-

- Leisure Pricing Strategy and VAT
- Vulnerability Statement – the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement would bring a report for discussion at the next meeting.
- Customer Service Front Desk – the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement would bring a report to the next meeting to outline the current usage of customer services for calls and how the Council's services were utilised. It would also include a Community Survey.
- Climate Emergency – a standard item for the Environment PDG, the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change would look into arranging a briefing for this Group.

(The meeting ended at 14:56pm).

CHAIRMAN



Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	22 August 2023
Subject:	Vulnerability Briefing Report
Cabinet Member:	CLlr Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	n/a
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Draft Vulnerability Statement

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report has been requested to provide members with clarity on existing practices around customer vulnerability and a proposed statement for publication.

Recommendation(s):

That the committee note the report on MDDC definition of Vulnerability and activities in support of residents.

Section 2 – Report

- 1.1 A briefing report on Mid Devon District Council's (MDDC) understanding and current practices around customer vulnerability was requested at the Community PDG meeting of 27 June 2023.
- 1.2 Definition of Vulnerability - A vulnerable person is a person who, by characteristics and/or circumstances, is unable to act or interact appropriately with Council service, or for the same reason is unreasonably affected by them. The Council recognises that vulnerability can come in many forms and it can also be multi layered. Vulnerability can be temporary, permanent or come in a series of episodes and anyone at any time could

potentially be deemed vulnerable. It is important to note that residents may not self-identify as being vulnerable.

1.3 A draft statement has been created for publication on the MDDC website and was circulated to Community PDG members on 21 July 2023 for advance comment. This statement has been amended in the meantime and is detailed at Appendix 1.

2.0 **MDDC Policies and Procedures** – MDDC aims to make reasonable adjustment in dealing with customers as vulnerabilities are identified. In some instances an amended services approach is covered by legislation e.g. Corporate Recovery. In others it is guided by best practice or guidance such as the Housing policy below.

2.1 MDDC has specific policies for dealing with customers and/or vulnerability which are publicly available alongside signposting information and are listed below:

- [Corporate Recovery Policy](#) – how we will deal with those customers experiencing financial hardship and debt – see section 5.
- [Mid Devon Housing Vulnerability Policy](#)
- [Customer Care Charter](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)

3.0 **Current and Upcoming Activity**

3.1 Customer Welfare Officer – This officer provides additional support to customers who are experiencing difficulties around financial hardship and supports customers applying for MDDC related benefits and grants. The officer also signposts customers to other agencies such as CAB, CHAT, Navigate and food banks for those in need. Referrals are made from other services such as Housing and Customer Services as need is identified.

3.2 MDDC has commissioned work with partner agencies CAB, CHAT and Navigate to provide additional support on our refugee schemes.

3.3 Customer Services provide an assisted application service over the telephone or in person by appointment for those needing to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments or Exceptional Hardship payments.

3.4 The Customer Care Charter is due for review autumn 2023. As part of this review reference to activities around vulnerability will be included and the policy will come to Community PDG for approval and recommendation to Cabinet.

3.5 The Safeguarding Policy is due for review autumn 2023. Members will have an opportunity to comment and discuss as the policy goes through the

committee cycle. Where the policy interlinks with others, e.g. Domestic Abuse policy we will review those together.

- 3.6 Safeguarding Awareness and Training – In conjunction with the policy review an assessment will be made on improvements to staff and member training around safeguarding. In this piece of work we will also include strengthening staff awareness around Modern Slavery.
- 3.7 [Community Safety](#) – Alongside Safeguarding activities member’s attention is drawn to the work that MDDC do as part of the East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership. Our web pages contain information and helpful links around Modern Slavery, signposting for victims of domestic abuse, and various other issues which can contribute to a resident becoming vulnerable or increasing vulnerability.
- 3.8 [Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption](#) – At the time of writing a report is due to go to Cabinet 1 Aug 2023 requesting a recommendation to full Council to grant discretionary reductions to Council Tax liability for Care Leavers. The outcome of the decision can be found on the link above.
- 3.9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group – The annual review of the Single Equality Scheme was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. Currently the group is refining and standardising the Equalities Impact Assessment form and procedure to ensure that MDDC policy and operational decision making is robust. Members of the current administration participate in this group and include Cllrs Colthorpe, Glover, F. Letch and Lock.

Financial Implications

The report does not have any specific financial implications. Future decisions on any increase in activity around Vulnerability may incur additional cost.

Legal Implications

The report does not have any specific legal implications. However it is important to note that failures to deal sensitively and/or appropriately with customers presenting with an identified protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 may be a discriminatory act.

Risk Assessment

This report outlines activities and policies surrounding council delivery of services to vulnerable residents. Failure to deal sensitively and/or appropriately with customers presenting with an identified protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 may be a discriminatory act.

Impact on Climate Change

There is no impact or opportunity for improvement/adaptation in conjunction with MDDC Climate Action Plan.

Equalities Impact Assessment

This report outlines current policies and activities around MDDC services and vulnerable residents and evidences our understanding and approach to those with vulnerabilities or protected characteristics.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

MDDC's approach to vulnerability underpins the delivery of many of the Council's services and aims around improving the health and wellbeing and prosperity for all.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151
Date: 08/08/2023

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 08/08/2023

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 08/08/2023

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 10/08/2023

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lisa Lewis – Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement
Email: llewis@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01884 234981

Background papers:

Appendix 1 - Vulnerability Statement

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Appendix 1

Vulnerable Person

This statement sets out the Council's understanding of vulnerable or potentially vulnerable persons. Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) will follow all legal and policy obligations in the delivery of services to MDDC residents aligning with our behaviours framework. MDDC aims to provide reasonable adjustment to service provision when a vulnerability is identified. Policies involving the handling of vulnerable persons include, but are not limited to Corporate Recovery, Mid Devon Housing Vulnerability, Safeguarding, and Customer Care Charter.

Definition

A vulnerable person is a person who, by characteristics and/or circumstances, is unable to act or interact appropriately with Council service, or for the same reason is unreasonably affected by them. The Council recognises that vulnerability can come in many forms and it can also be multi layered. Vulnerability can be temporary, permanent or come in a series of episodes and anyone at any time could potentially be deemed vulnerable. It is important to note that residents may not self-identify as being vulnerable. The characteristics or circumstances that **may** lead to identifying a person as vulnerable are as follows:

- Carers
- Cognitive Impairment
- Debt Management Agency involvement and overall debts need to be managed
- Disability
- Financial Impoverishment
- Learning Difficulty (including literacy difficulties)
- Language Difficulty
- Late Term Pregnancy
- Medication
- Mental Health (including personality disorders)
- Physical Health (including fragility due to advance years)
- Possession Proceedings
- Probation Service Involvement
- Recent Bereavement
- SMI (Severely mentally Impaired)
- Substance Abuse
- Social Services Involvement
- Terminal Illness
- Victim of Abuse/Domestic Violence
- Victim of War

- Care Leaver - defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.



Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	22 August 2023
Subject:	Customer Services Briefing Report
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	n/a
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Customer Services Briefing July 2023 Appendix 2 - Community Survey Results

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report has been requested to provide members with clarity on existing opening times, customer transaction levels and future service activity for the Customer Services department which provides face-to-face, telephone and online presence for the residents of Mid Devon.

Recommendation(s):

That the committee note the report on Customer Services at Mid Devon District Council (MDDC).

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction – Customer Services

1.1 The Customer Services department provides an enquiries, switchboard and sign-posting service for internal and external customers and visitors. The service is based on the ground floor of Phoenix House and staffs the reception area whilst we are open to the public.

- 1.2 Phoenix House Opening times are listed below. The contact centre is open 09:00 – 17:00 Mon – Fri.
- Mon 09:00 – 13:00
 - Tue 09:00 – 13:00
 - Wed – Closed
 - Thu 09:00 – 13:00
 - Fri 09:00 – 13:00
- 1.3 Members of the team also staff reception for public meetings 09:00 – 17:00 or during any council activities which result in increased footfall for a temporary period of time e.g. Elections Candidate Nominations
- 1.4 The team is made up of the following:
- Service Manager
 - Team Leaders – 1.81 FTE
 - Customer Service Project Support officer
 - Senior Customer Services officer (temp)
 - Customer Services officer – approx. 50% are part-time
- 1.5 A recent member briefing on the service was provided for members on 6 July 2023 and the slides are attached at Appendix 1. This attachment provides some metrics of how our customers have changed the way they are accessing our service over the last five years.
- 1.6 With the increase in digital transactions there has been a reduction in footfall and customer behaviours have changed; so too have staffing levels. MDDC's requirement to achieve value for money has seen the customer service team shrink from 25.43 FTE in 19/20 to 20.04 FTE in 23/24.
- 1.7 Resourcing and service levels are actively managed. The service works as flexibly as it can depending on corporate need. An example of this was secondment of staff during the pandemic to help administer the Covid relief grants and applications overseen by the Revenues department.

2.0 Current Service

- 2.1 The service is aware that there is some disquiet about the reduction in opening times post-pandemic. The original reduction in hours post-pandemic saw public opening in the afternoons, but after listening to customer and partner feedback this was changed to mornings. This will be

reviewed should a corporate, prospective tenant or significant customer need be identified.

- 2.2 The service actively monitors footfall and is currently offering an appointments based service. However, we are also seeing 'walk-ins' without an appointment if we are able. Customers can request an afternoon appointment if a morning slot is not convenient.
- 2.3 The staffing of the Reception area unfortunately restricts our ability to provide a full service to our customers due to confidentiality, the requirement to deal with visitors and the inability to deal quietly and succinctly with telephone queries. Footfall is low and staffing of the reception with reduced functionality is expensive in comparison to customer service via other channels of communication used by customers.
- 2.4 We hope that the implementation of the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system over the coming months may change this by shifting significant numbers of telephone queries to digital which can be dealt with appropriately at reception.
- 2.5 **Community Survey** - The recent independent community survey provided some interesting insight into our customer contact preferences. Respondents were largely digital and it is interesting to note that over 50% of respondents were over 65 years.
- 2.6 Over 50% of respondents interacted with MDDC a few times a year, which gives us a good indication that respondent survey responses were based on repeated customer experience with MDDC.
- 2.7 As expected our older population prefers interacting via phone call or email. But it should be noted that respondents aged 65-74 and 75+ preferred online over 40% and over 30% respectively. In person transactions grow as the *least preferred* method of interaction as people grow older.
- 2.8 Member attention is drawn to the summary findings on the last page of Appendix 2.
- 3.0 **The Future** – CRM and Service Reviews
- 3.1 MDDC is currently in the process of implementing a new CRM system. Work commenced on this in quarter 4 of 22/23. Working with our system supplier work was done on understanding our customer behaviour and their use of digital means of interacting with us. A community survey also took place to understand MDDC's customer experience with an aim to informing the CRM project. The results of this can be found at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The main objectives of the project are to enable self-service for customers to log and report issues and procure services as far as possible 24/7. If the

channel shift to digital can be achieved this will result in fewer telephone queries and avoidable contacts. This will leave staff able to deal with more complex customer requirements, shift initial service customer contact to Customer Services and reduce overall costs of customer transactions across a number of services.

3.3 Whilst channel shift is the aim, it must be noted that this does not mean that we will close our doors, or prevent our customers from calling us. The aim is to provide an omni-channel service, allow customers to access straightforward services, and track them easily online at their convenience whilst reducing the cost of those transactions to MDDC.

3.4 Estimated costs on average contact times for the different channels are as follows:

- Face to Face - £7.45 – based on 15 minute appointment slot
- Telephone - £3.15 – based on average call length
- Online/Self-Serve – estimated cost £1.50

NB. This is the cost of the customer services interaction and does not include any service delivery from the back office. The project aims to reduce front and back office costs by automating the processing of customer transactions and communications as far as we are able.

3.5 **CRM Timelines** – The new CRM customer portals are due to go live in the autumn. The customer will be able to request services and log enquiries via a portal. If the customer registers an account with us they will be able to view their waste collection dates, identify who their councillor is and track their most recent requests. The following services are due to go live in the Autumn:

- Bulky Waste collection requests
- Clinical and Assisted Waste requests
- Local Welfare Assistance signposting
- Complaints Logging
- MyAccount Rents for Mid Devon Housing (MDH)

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications within the report. However, changes to the way we provide the service such as an increase in opening hours will either increase cost due to additional staffing requirements, or incur longer call wait times for customers as we staff reception for longer hours.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications within this report.

Risk Assessment

There has been no increased/decreased risk identified as a result of this report as it is for information only.

Impact on Climate Change

There is no impact or opportunity for improvement/adaptation in conjunction with MDDC Climate Action Plan as this report is for information only.

Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no Equalities impact as the report is for information only.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The Customer Services department provides support to almost all services in their delivery of the corporate plan. The service aims to provide access via multiple channels and support our communities in access to council services.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 08/08/2023

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 08/08/2023

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 08/08/2023

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 10/08/2023

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lisa Lewis – Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement

Email: llewis@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234981

Background papers:

Member Briefing Slides

Community Survey Results

Customer Services



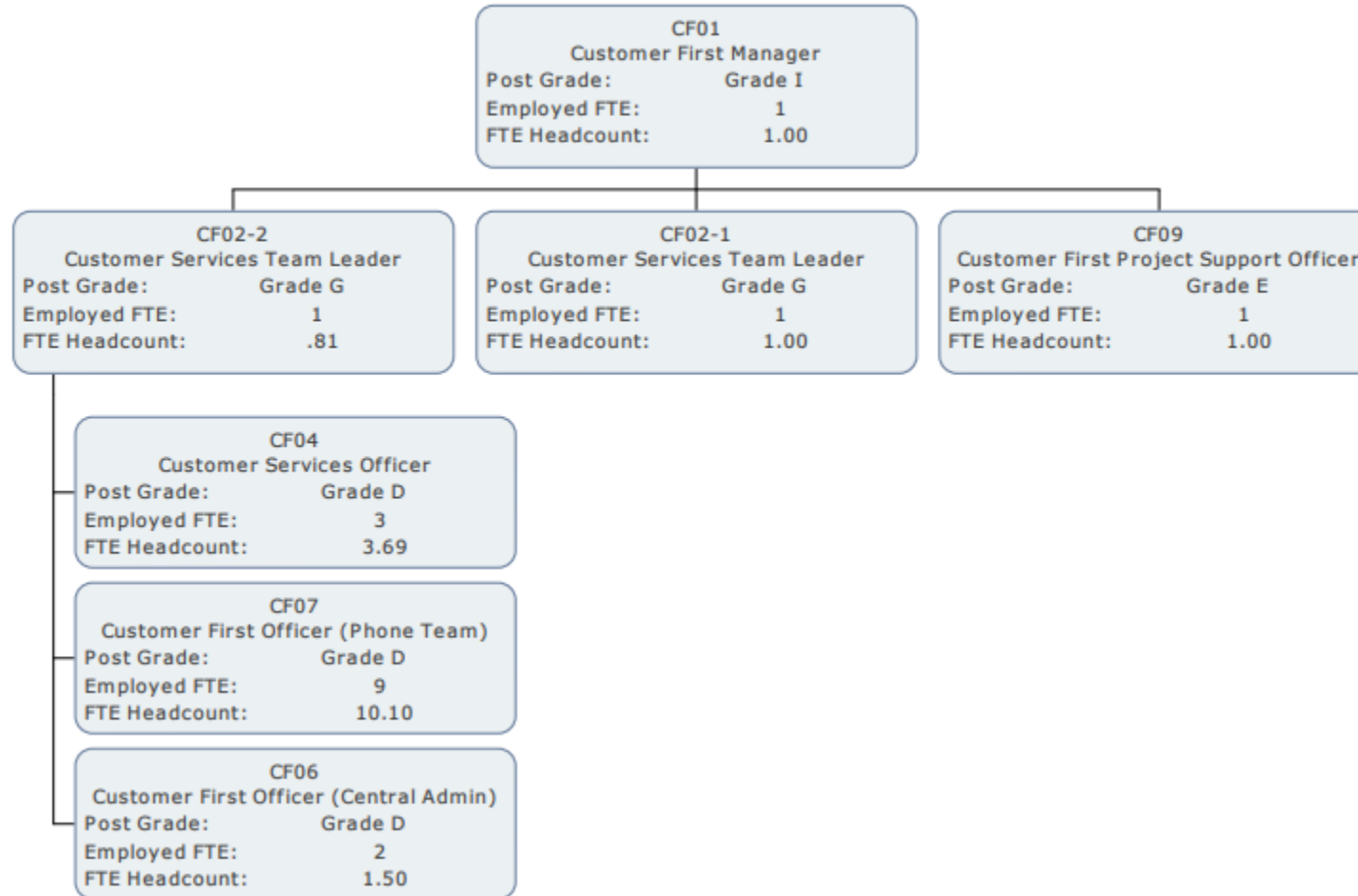
Lynsey Chilcott

Customer Service Manager

Agenda

- Structure of Customer Services
- What We Do
- How things are changing
- Reporting issues
- Q&A

Structure



What we do

Staff trained to answer wide range of enquiries:

- General enquiries
- Housing
- Housing Repairs
- Waste & Recycling (including Trade Waste)
- Garden waste permits
- Housing benefits – assisted form completion
- Electoral Registration
- Care Services
- Environmental Services
- Payments
- Compliments comments and complaints
- Visitors/interview rooms
- Appointments for enquiries
- All incoming and outgoing post
- Printing and copying

What we do

Accessibility – Meeting Customer Needs

- Assessing Customer Needs on Arrival/contact
- Providing appointments for assisted claims
- Providing appointments where face to face is needed
- Arranging access to Interpretation Services – Language Line
- Type Talk for hearing impaired
- Providing information in alternative formats, e.g. large print

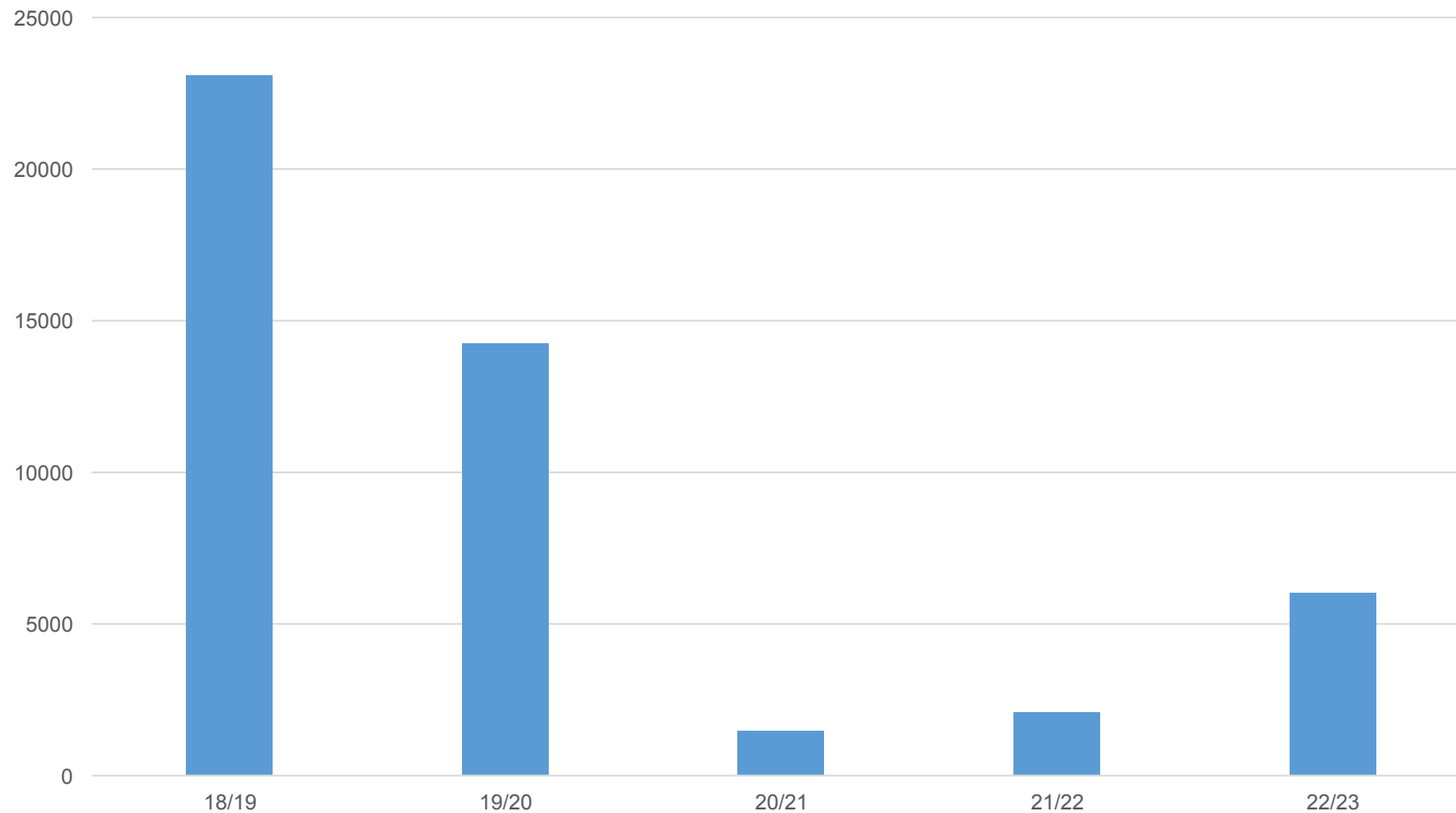
What we do

From 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 customer services:

- Answered 91867 telephone calls
- Saw 6021 customers face to face
- Received 20129 emails
- Sent 89057 items of franked mail
- Sent 72380 clean mail items
- Scanned 22911 items of incoming mail

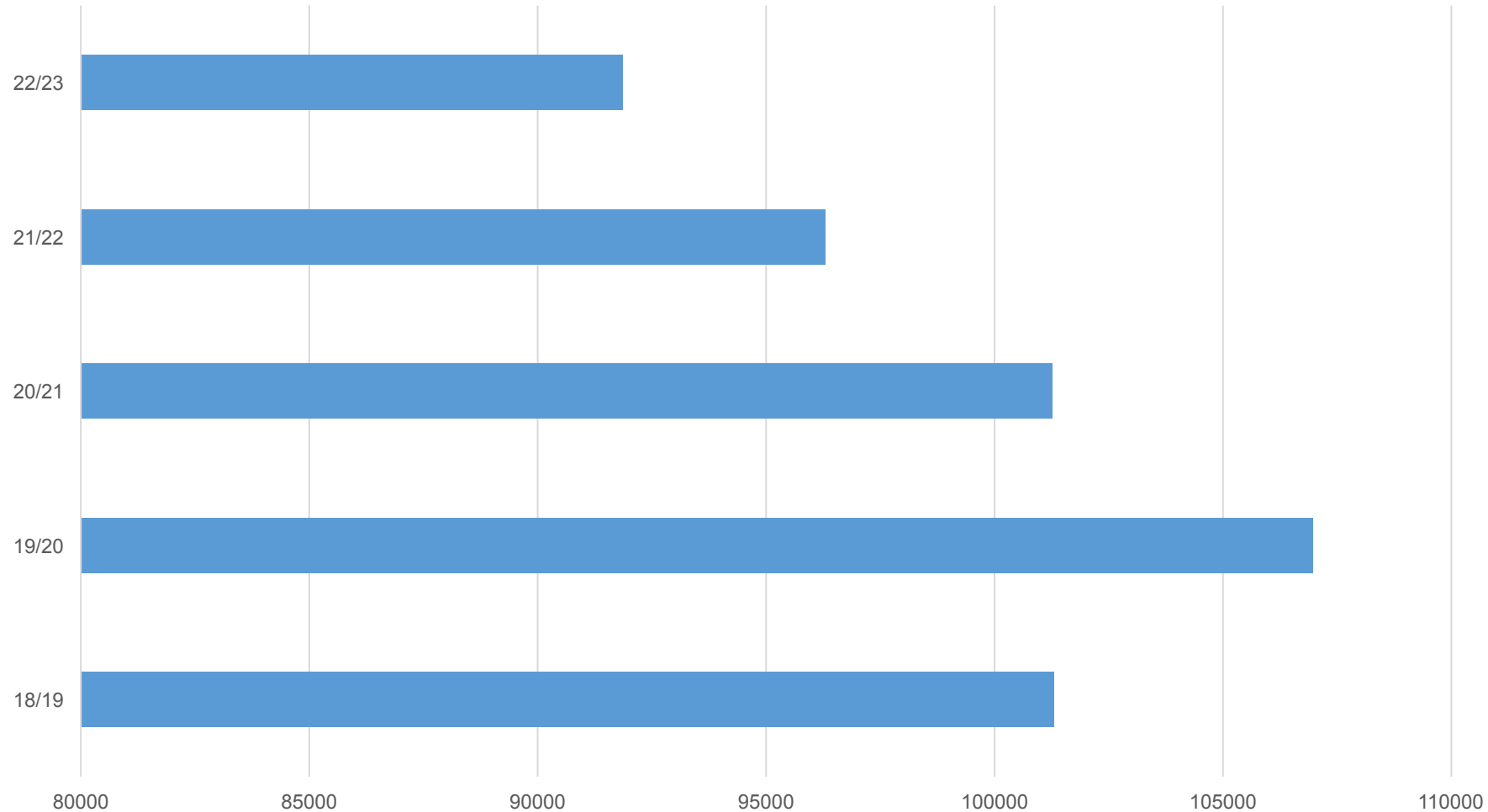
How things are changing

Visitors for enquiries



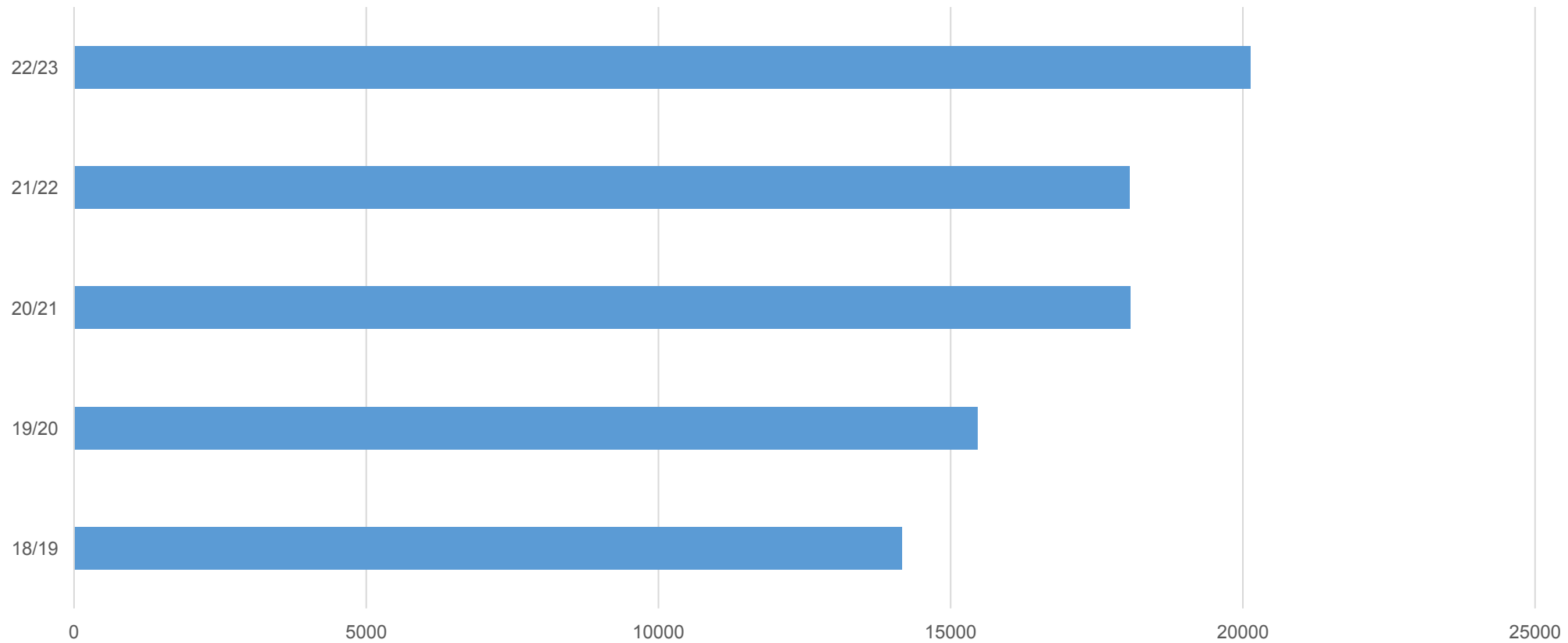
How things are changing

Telephone calls



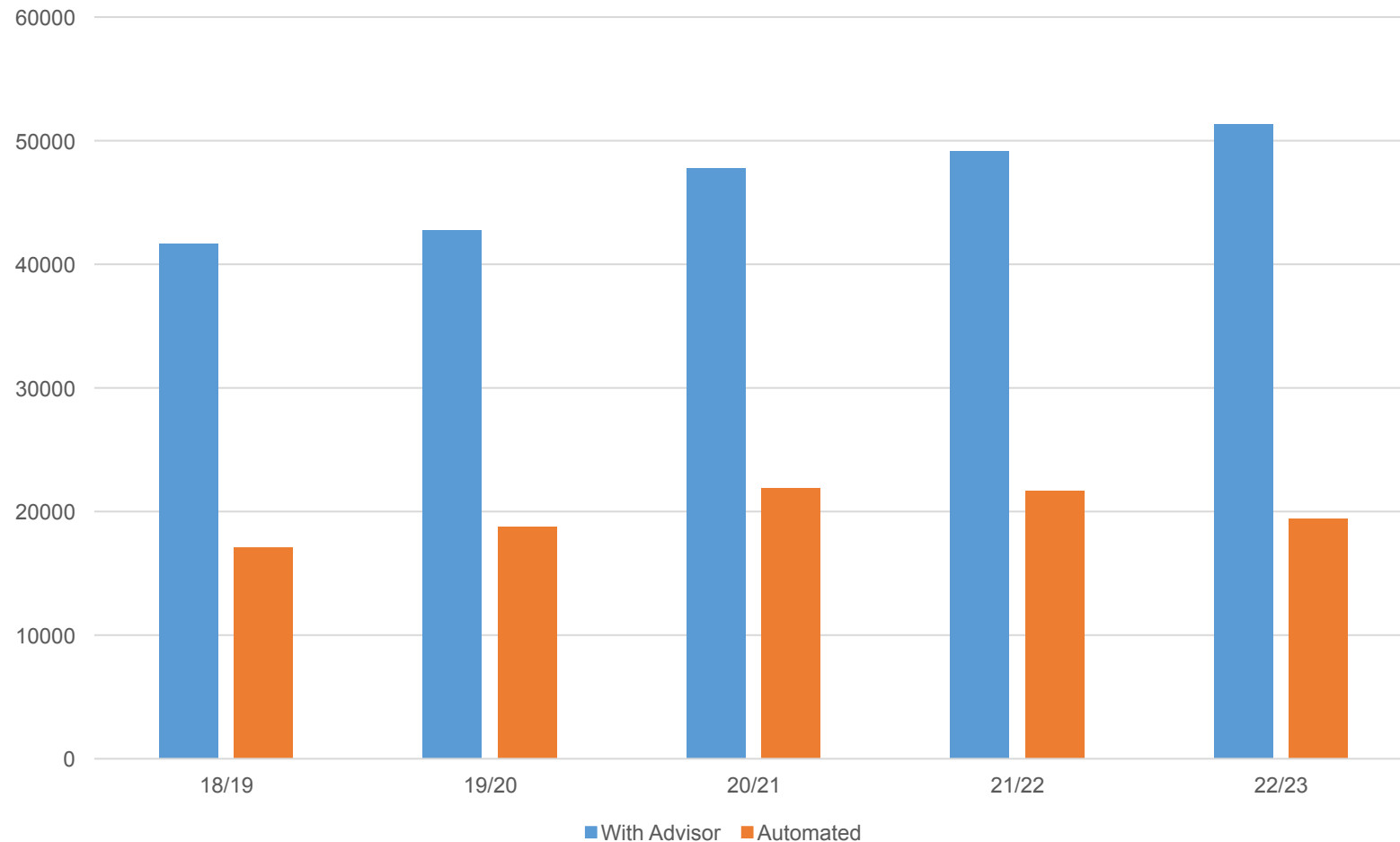
How things are changing

Emails to Customer Services



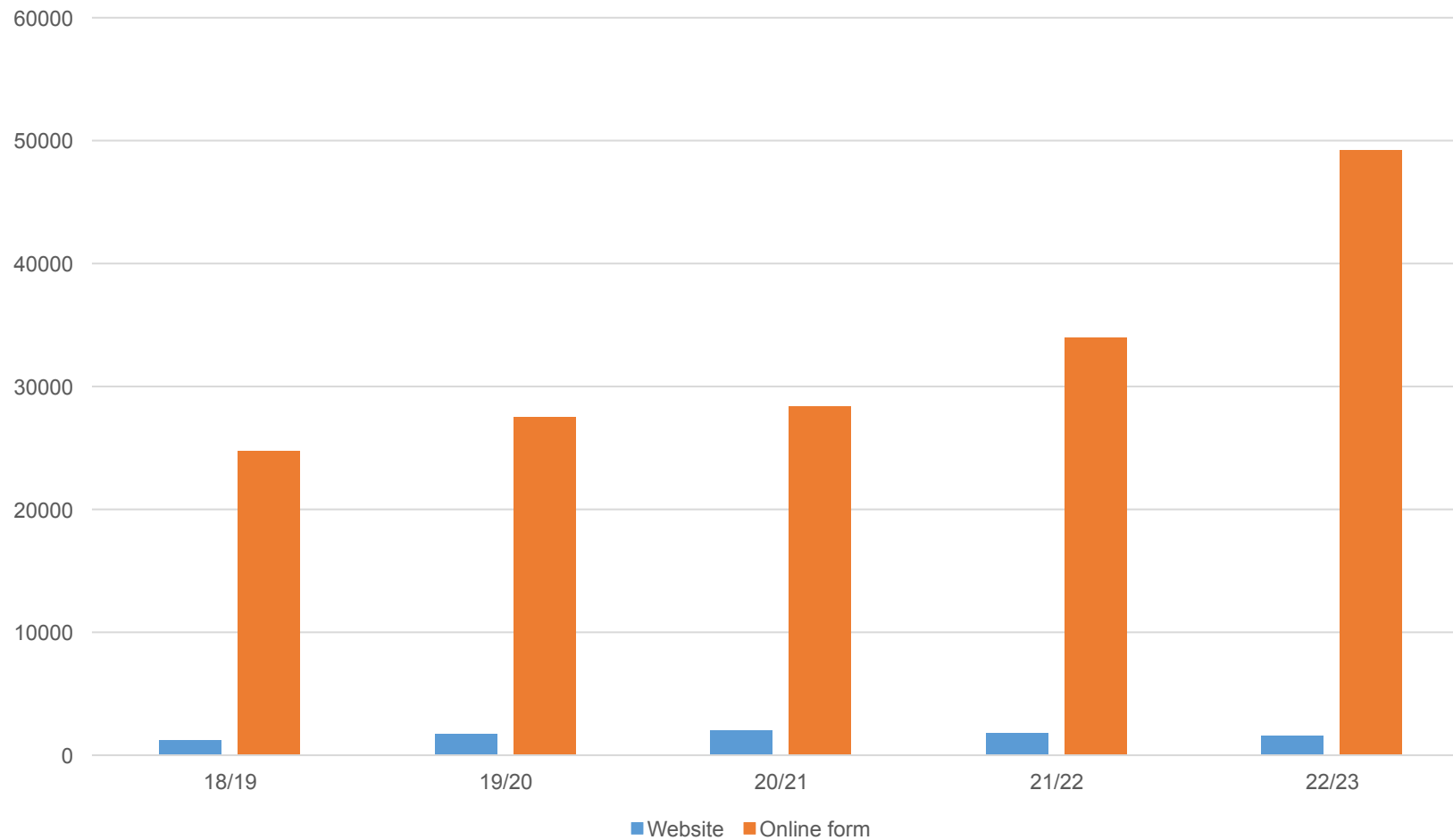
How things are changing

Telephone Payments



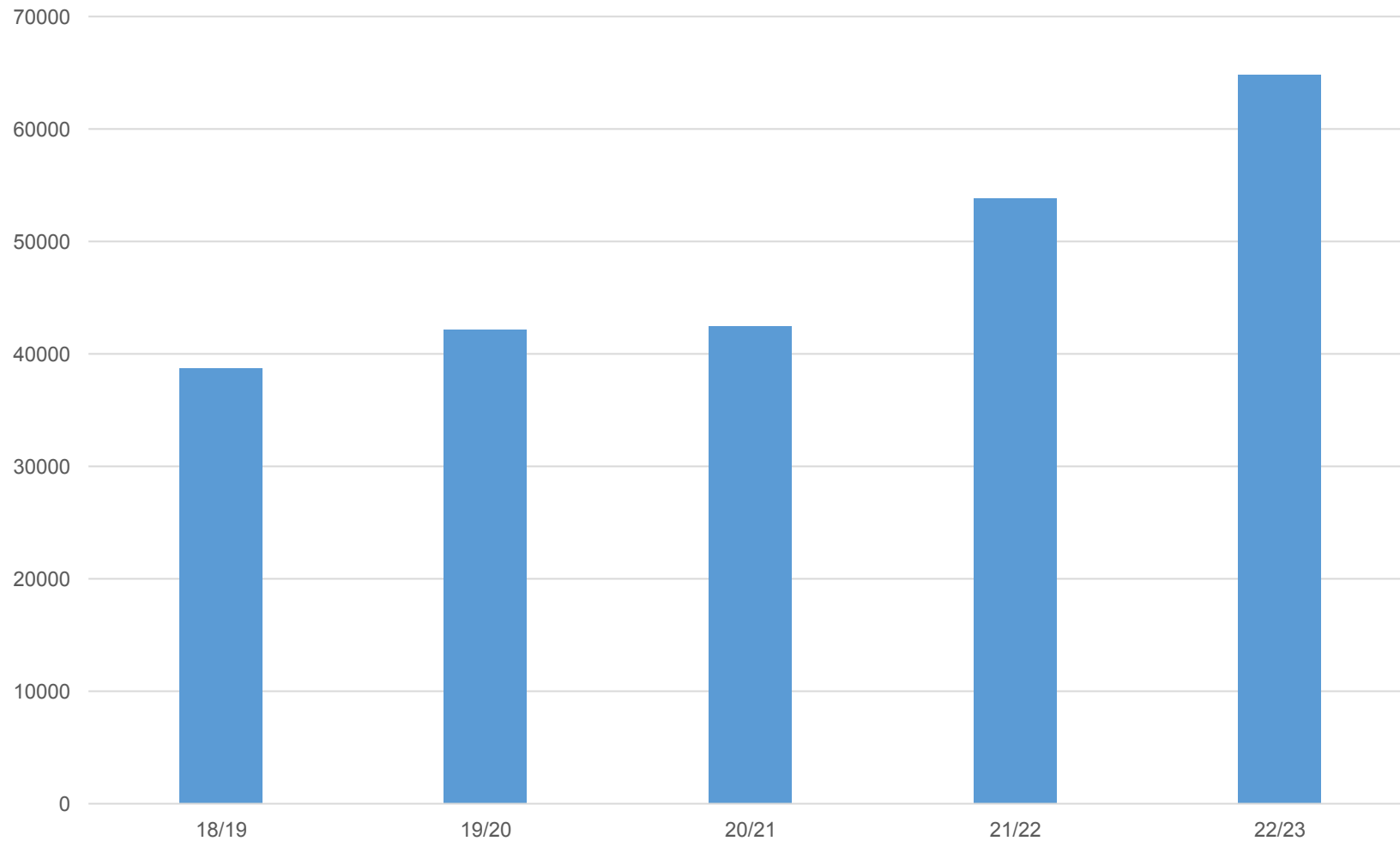
How things are changing

Digital payments



How things are changing

Online form submissions



Questions



Mid Devon Community Survey

March 23, 2023

Purpose and Context

Community Survey

Purpose: Survey Mid Devon District Council service users to learn who they are, what services they use, and how they prefer to request and receive those services. Identify key trends and opportunities for deeper investigation through virtual focus groups.

Distribution

- Open from March 1 to March 17
- Distributed via email, online form, on the website, and via customer service phone calls

Reception

- 62% of participants completed the 37-question study, with 644 people abandoning before they finished
- Median time taken to complete the survey: 7:03.
- 275 people provided an email or a complete phone number for a followup conversation

Today: Who took the survey, how they prefer to complete tasks, and ease of completing tasks. We'll use the extent of the detailed survey data in the Digital Transformation Roadmap.

What do we know about your survey respondents?

Community Survey



Number of Participants:
1,072 (62.5%)

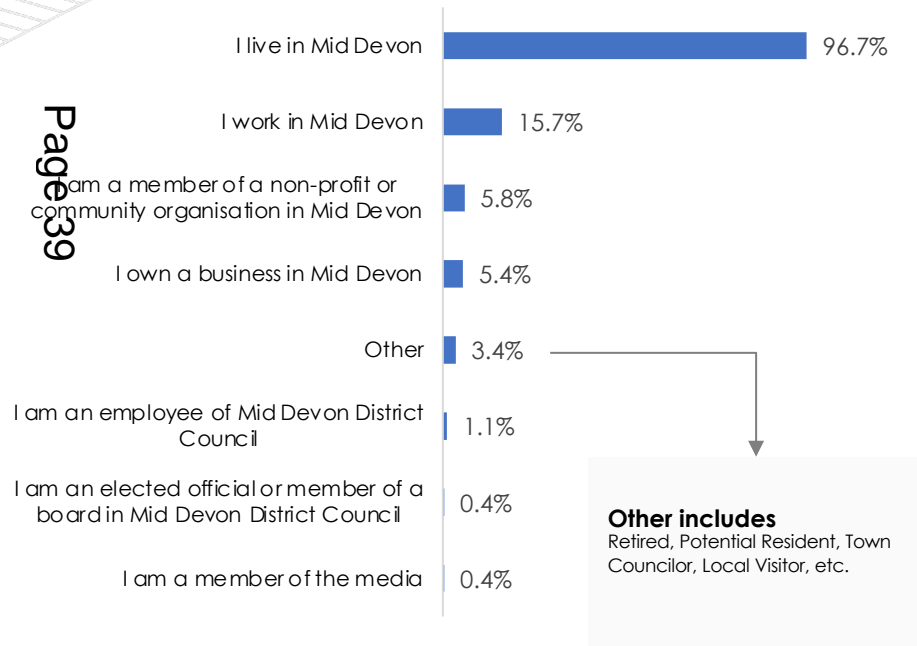


Mid Devon Residents:
96.7%

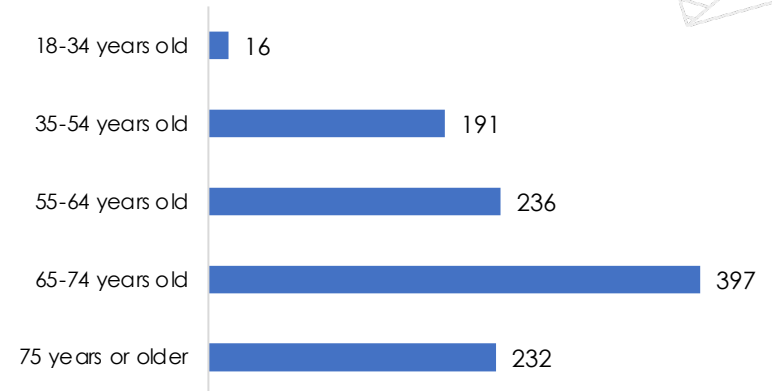


Respondents 65 years and older:
58.7%

Select all that describe you.



What is your age?

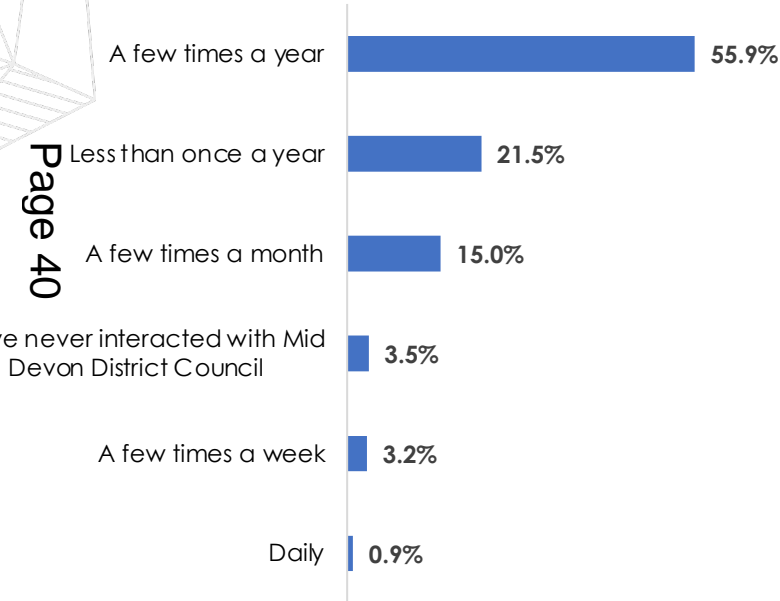


How are survey respondents interacting with the website?

Community Survey

How often do you interact with Mid Devon District Council?

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How would you prefer to complete a task with Mid Devon District Council? Rank from 1 – Most prefer, to 5, least prefer.

Most Preferred Method

- 1 Online
- 2 Email
- 3 Phone Call
- 4 Post
- 5 In Person

Least Preferred Method

- 1 In Person
- 2 Post
- 3 Online
- 4 Phone Call
- 5 Email



1,072 Respondents



19.1% Respondents interacting with MDDC at least monthly



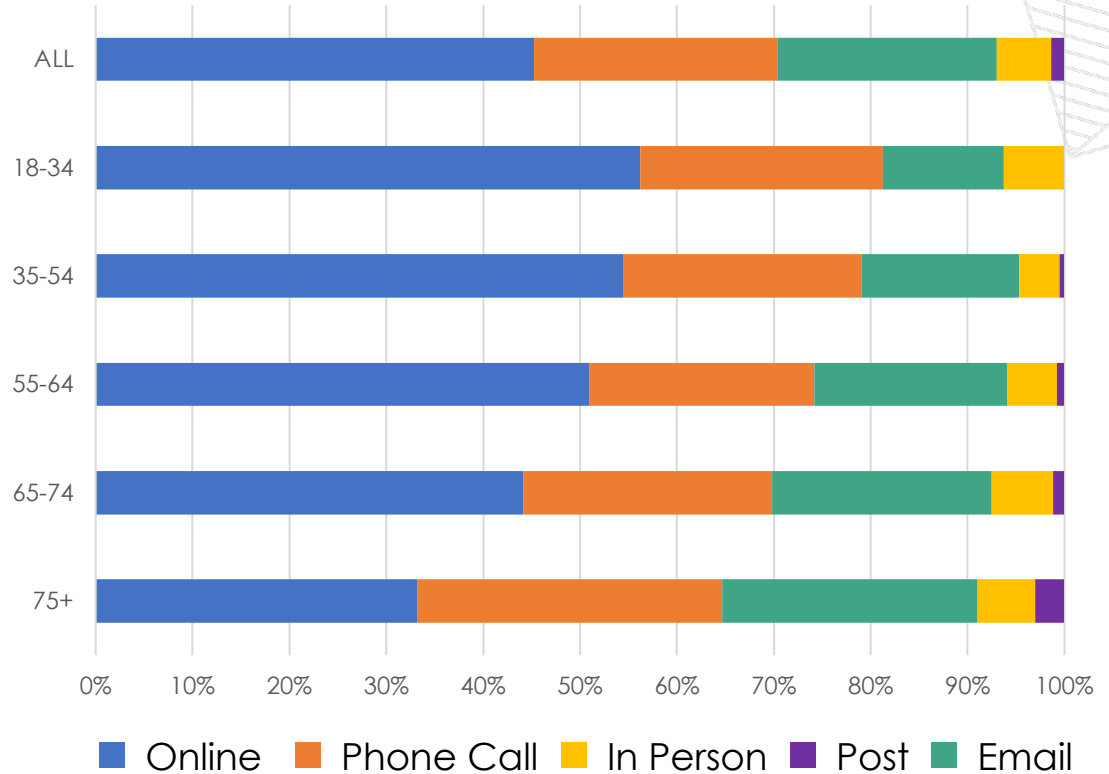
93% Prefer digital methods to complete a task.

What is the most preferred method for completing a task?

Key Takeaways:

- **Online** is the preferred method for at least 50% of respondents under 65 years old.
- **Phone call** and **email** grows in preference in later age groups.

Most Preferred Method by Age



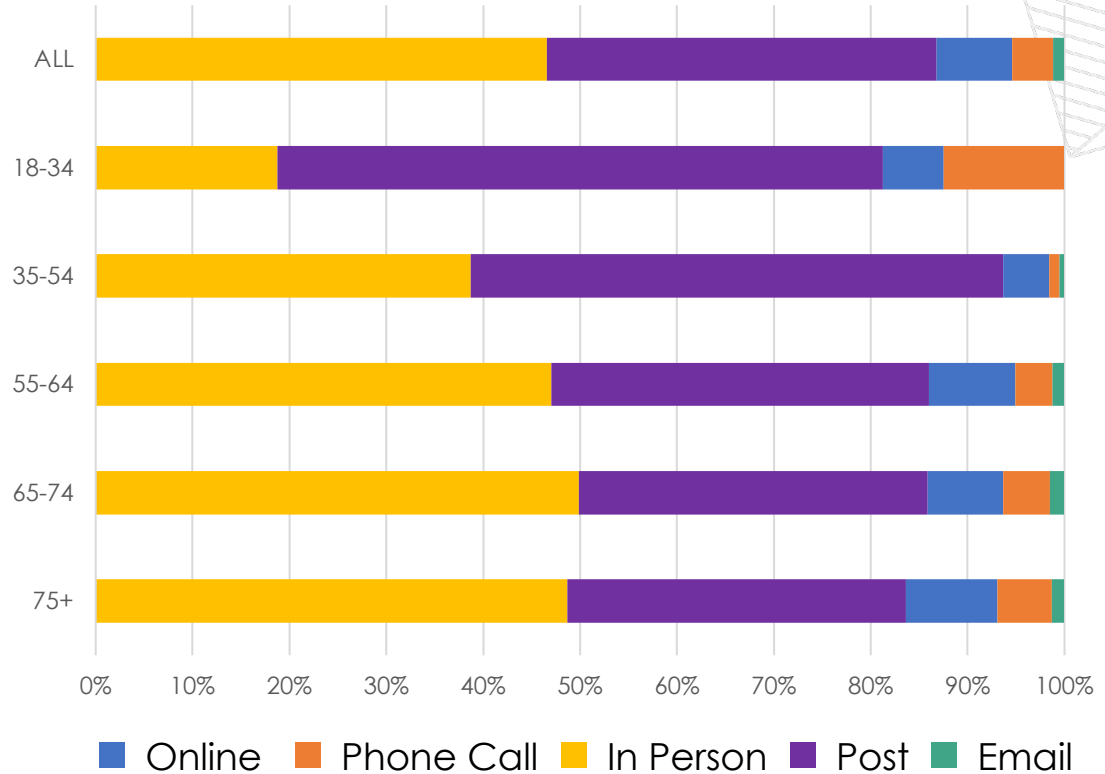
What is the least preferred method for completing a task?

Key Takeaways:

• **In Person** grows as the least preferred method for respondents to complete a task as they grow older.

- Younger respondents indicated a lowest preference in **Post**.

Least Preferred Method by Age



What is the preferred method for completing a task?

Community Survey

Key Takeaways:

- 91% of respondents **completed a task** with Mid Devon District Council in the last 2 years.
- **Online** and **Phone Call** is the most used method by respondents to complete a task.

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Number of Participants:
1,072



Completed at least 1 task?
Yes: 980 | No: 92



Used 2 or more methods?
Yes: 693 | No: 287

Have you completed a task ___ with Mid Devon District Council in the last 2 years?

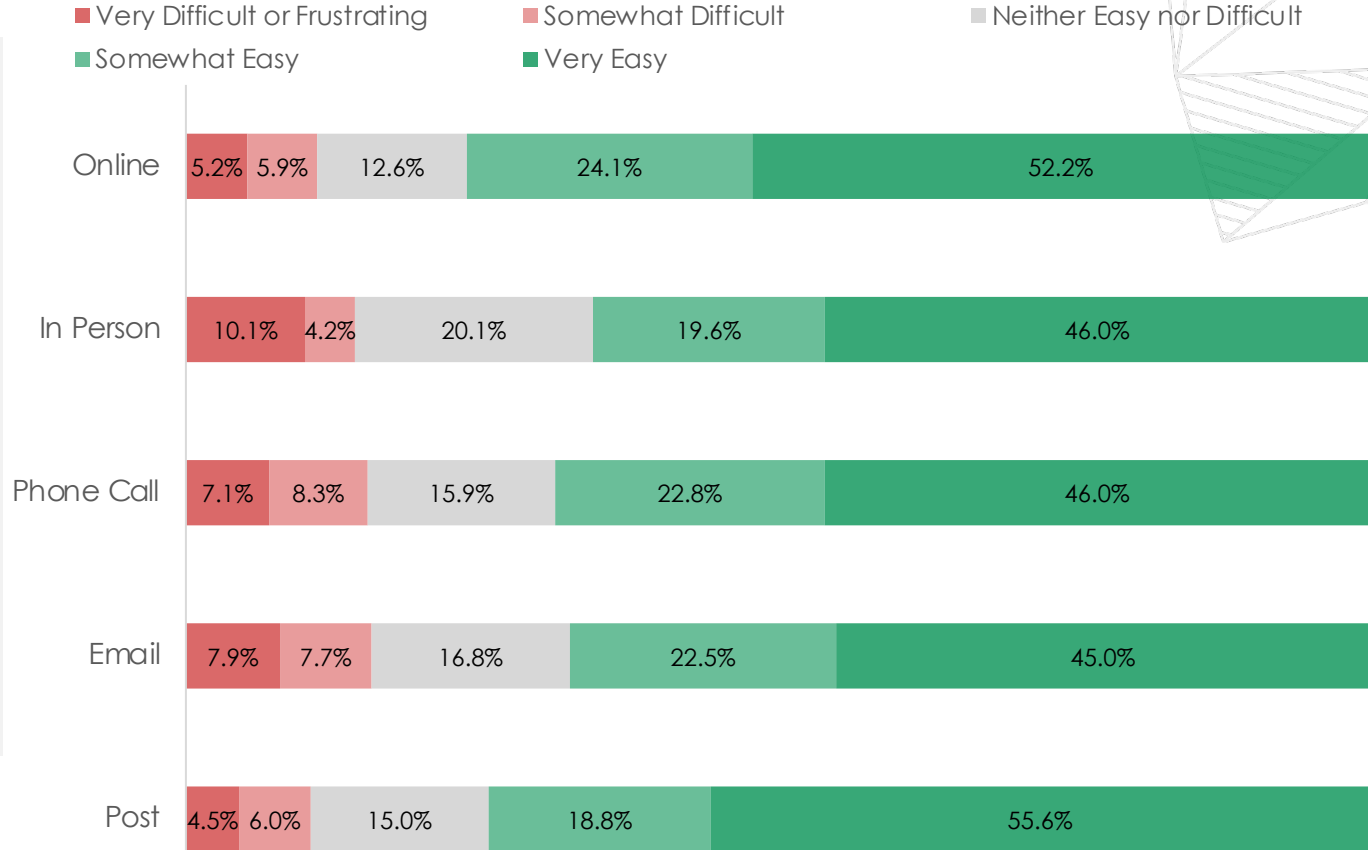
Method	Yes
Online	71.6%
Phone Call	52.9%
Email	42.3%
In Person	17.6%
Post	12.4%

How easy is it to complete tasks?

Community Survey

Key Takeaways:

- **In Person** was the only method to not receive at least 2/3 easy responses.
- **Online** and **Post** were the easiest method to use to complete a task.



Summary of Findings

Community Survey

The survey audience is engaged.

- 91% had completed at least one task with MDDC in the past two years.
- Most respondents have used multiple methods to complete those tasks.

There is a strong preference for online services across users.

- Across all age groups, online is the most popular method to complete a task.
- Phone calls are the second most popular option for all age groups.

Users prefer online methods over in-person and postal methods.

- As people age, they look less favorably on visiting an office in person.
- Post is the least preferred method overall. Post and the phone are particularly unpopular among the 18–34 age group, compared to other age groups.

MDDC's online services are the simplest route for most users.

- In person visits, emails and phone calls inspired the most frustration in the respondents.
- The few people who prefer to do business by post are very pleased with it.
- Online ranks as the easiest method. ("Very Easy" + "Somewhat Easy")

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COMMUNITY PDG WORKPLAN 2023/2024

Agenda Item	Theme	Lead Officer	Comments
Meeting Date: 22 August 2023			
Customer Services Front Desk To receive a report from the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement to also include the Community Survey.	New Process	Lisa Lewis Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement	
Vulnerability Statement To receive a report from the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement	New Process	Lisa Lewis Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers To receive a verbal update for Regulation of Investigatory Powers.	Annual Review	Maria De Leburne District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	
Climate Emergency To receive a briefing from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist		Jason Ball Climate and Sustainability Specialist	

Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
<p>Finance and Performance Update To receive a verbal update and training.</p>		<p>Paul Deal Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change</p>	
<p>Meeting Date: 24 October 2023</p>			
<p>Draft Budget 1st Version</p>	<p>Annual Budget proposals.</p>	<p>Paul Deal Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change</p>	
<p>Meeting Date: 5 December 2023</p>			
<p>Town and Parish Charter To receive the 3 yearly review of the Town and Parish Charter and if appropriate make recommendations to Cabinet 9 January 2024.</p>	<p>3 year policy review</p>	<p>Andrew Seaman Member Services Manager</p>	
<p>Customer Care Policy To receive a 3 yearly review of the Customer Care Policy and if appropriate make recommendations to Cabinet on 6</p>	<p>3 Yearly Policy Review</p>	<p>Lisa Lewis Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement</p>	

Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
Meeting Date: 23 January 2024			
Draft Budget 2nd Version	Annual Budget Proposals.	Paul Deal Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change	
CCTV Policy To receive a 3 yearly review of the CCTV Policy and if appropriate make recommendations to Cabinet on 6 February 2024.	3 Yearly Policy Review	Andrew Jarratt Deputy Chief Executive (S151)	
Enforcement Policy To receive a review of the Enforcement Policy and if appropriate make recommendations to Cabinet on 6 February 2023.	To be reviewed as and when required	Simon Newcombe Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing	A Special Joint PDG meeting (to include Community/Environment/Homes) to combine the update on the Enforcement Policy.
Corporate Health and Safety Policy	3 Yearly Policy Review	Chris Hodgson Health and Safety Officer	

Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
Meeting Date: 28 March 2024			
Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objectives To receive the annual review of the Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objectives and if appropriate make recommendations to Cabinet on	Annual Review	Matthew Page Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste	
Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	3 Yearly Policy Review	Simon Newcombe Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing	
Chairman's Annual Report		Chairman	