

Appendix 4: Web Improvement Report for Performance and Contract Management Committee

Reason for this report

At the meeting of the Performance and Contract Management Committee on 17 November 2015, the Committee requested a paper on actions being taken to improve customer satisfaction with the Council's public website.

1. Background

1.1. Our ambition

Currently, 90% of the council's contact with customers is over the phone or face to face, and the majority of people who get in touch speak to a member of staff. Yet Barnet residents are amongst the most web-savvy in the country - national data says that 81% of Barnet adults have 'digital skills'. Most people are now used to shopping and banking online – using websites like Amazon and First Direct is the norm and is easy. Our aim is to make Barnet's website the first choice for our customers. It will save our residents time and save the council money.

To do this, we will work to improve the website and the ability to contact us and make transactions digitally – at a time that's convenient to them - to a level where it is so good that 80% of transactions are undertaken by this channel. The aim, outlined in the Customer Access Strategy¹ is to achieve an "Amazon-like" service where residents can track progress and get updates without having to phone.

1.2. Recent changes to the website

The Barnet website underwent an extensive revamp for the launch of MyAccount in the spring of 2015, with each Delivery Unit being asked to review the content of the pages for their services.

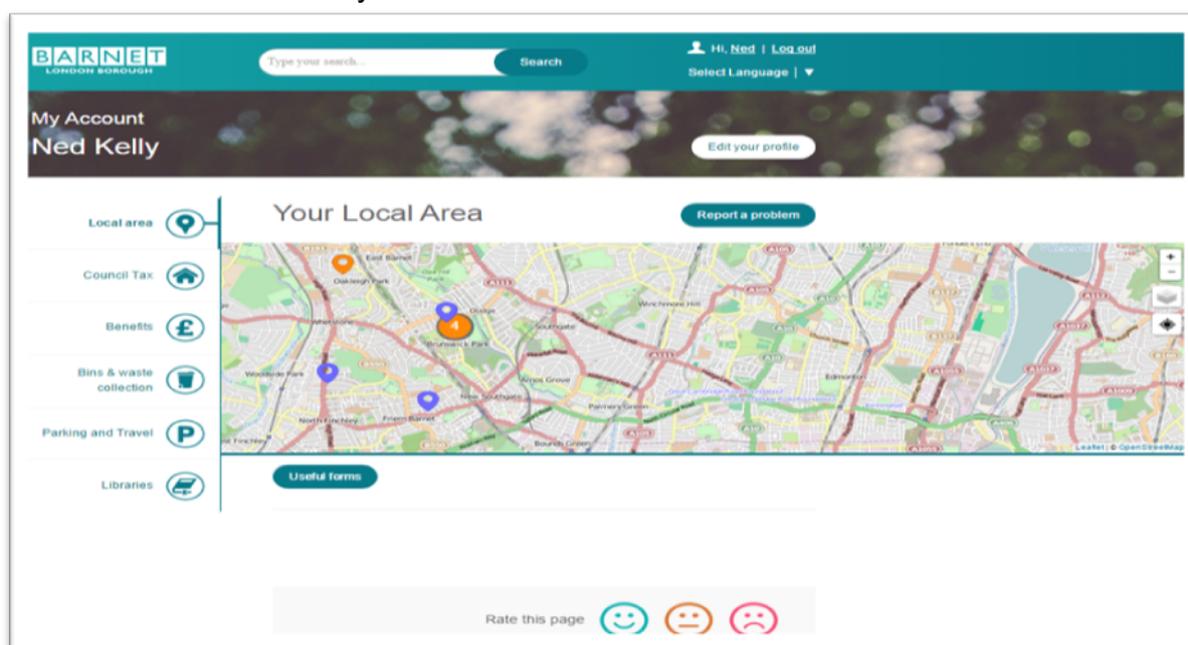
My Account is the secure website facility (www.barnet.gov.uk/myaccount) that enables a citizen's multiple council accounts to be viewed in one place using one password (council tax, parking, libraries, housing benefits), and for users to track the council's progress in resolving the environmental problems that they have reported. My Account holders save time on new forms because their registered contact details are automatically entered for them each time they request a new service or make an enquiry.

¹ Policy and Resources Committee – 16/12/15

The first phase of My Account includes the following services:

- Report a Problem – and track how it's being dealt with
- Bins & Waste collections – keep a check on the dates of bin collections, seasonal changes and report a missed bin
- Parking – request, renew & pay for parking permits and vouchers
- Libraries – request membership, reserve and renew books and films.
- Council Tax – register, check balance and make a payment
- Housing benefits – check your account and apply for benefits
- My Area – find out about services and events in the area
- Useful Forms – Find forms for a range of services with pre-population if you are logged into My Account

Table 1: Illustration of My Account



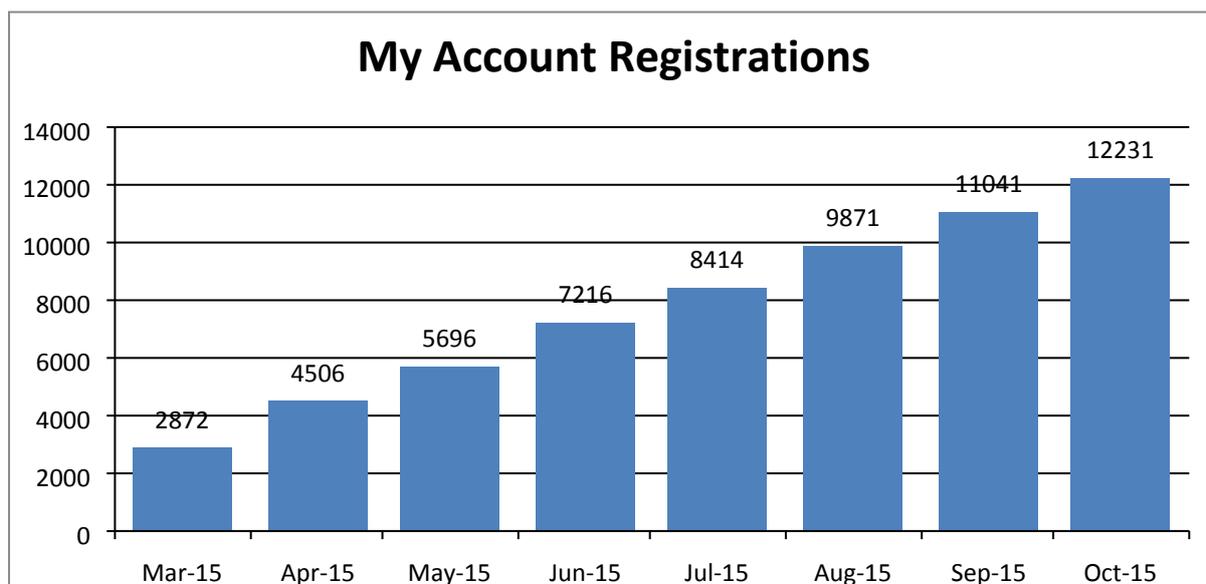
1.3. Growth in My Account registrations

As of December 2015, over 13,300 residents have registered for MyAccount and the number continues to grow month by month. Despite this there has been limited progress in general satisfaction with the website.

The growth in take-up for MyAccount is shown in the diagram below. To achieve the 80% of transactions being done online by 2020 there would need to be around 40% to 50% of households to be registered. The current figures represent 10% of Barnet households.² A 10% growth per year would deliver this number by 2020. There is an on-going marketing campaign to encourage people to register.

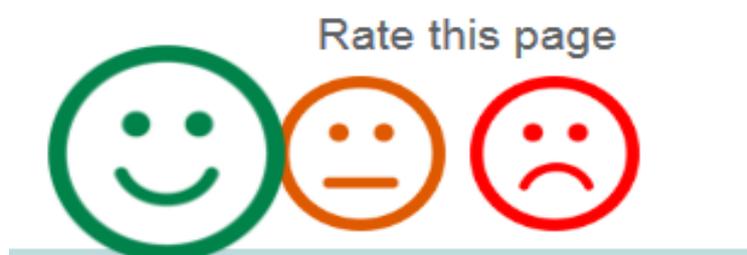
² This assumes that, on-average, only one person per household is registered.

Table 2: My Account Registrations



2. Measuring satisfaction and how Barnet compares with other councils

The main source of data for the measurement of satisfaction is through a tool called GovMetric, which is used by a number of local authorities so enables us to see how Barnet is performing compared to others. Residents have the opportunity to comment on any page they use by clicking on the icons below. Once a resident clicks on an icon, they are then taken to a page where they can add comments to explain their feedback.



The way the data collected is using a simple scoring system, where each customer rating is attributed the following score:

- Good = +1,
- Average = 0
- Poor = -1

All scores are combined into an average score (net satisfaction). This is comprised of the result divided by the total number of responses to provide a net satisfaction score, meaning that net satisfaction will always be within the range of +1 to -1. The percentage satisfaction is calculated as the percentage of people scoring the page as good.

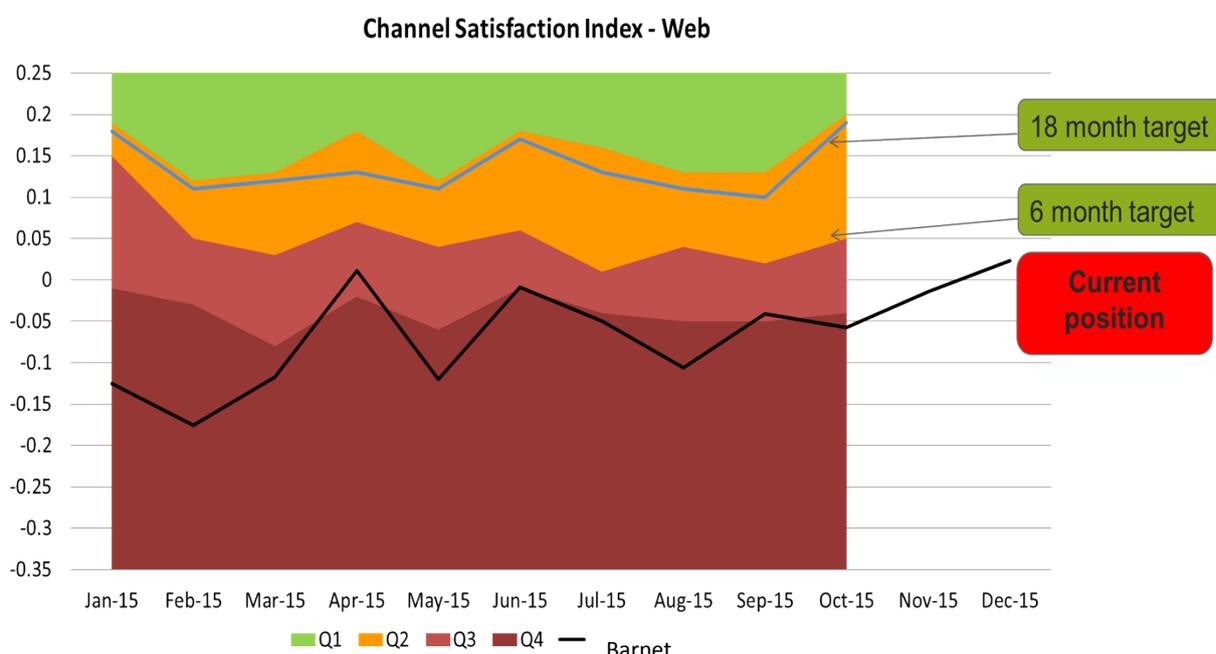
When comparing performance with other Councils during 2015, satisfaction with Barnet's website has been in the lowest quartile and second lowest quartile. The latest score for

Barnet is 42.8% compared with an average of 47% for all Councils that use Govmetric tool. The top performing authorities score in the range 55%-60% and this is something the council aspires to.

A particular success of the new website is that it has made it very easy to comment so number of responses has increased from around 1,300 per month before launch of new site to around 3,300 per month for the new site. With the exception of two authorities, the top 10 authorities are getting scores based on between 100 – 200 responses per month.

The chart below shows that Barnet is currently in the lower quartile for satisfaction. The chart identifies potential targets in the next 6 months and 18 months to increase satisfaction.

Chart 1: Comparative customer satisfaction with the web.



The satisfaction across all channels for the period September 2015 to November 2015 is shown in the table below. This does show some improvement in recent months, but it is too early to conclude if this is a real trend.

Table 3: Recent performance trends

All channels	Target	Phone	Email	Web	F2F	Total
September	80%	88.4%	42.4%	41.8%	82.6%	70.9%
October	80%	88.7%	43.8%	40.8%	87.3%	70.1%
November	80%	88.1%	49.0%	42.8%	85.6%	74.0%

3. Existing work to improve the satisfaction score

There has been recognition of the need to take action to improve the usability of the website based on resident feedback. Each page on the web has a content owner

depending on the service, with overall control of content being with the council web manager.

Residents feedback gathered from Govmetric highlights the common causes of dissatisfaction with the Council's website:

- Content
- Service delivery
- Technical issue
- Strategic decision (i.e. no phone number on homepage)

The following improvement actions are currently in place:-

Action	Owner	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monthly tracking of progress at Director level through the Council's Delivery Board and a weekly customer bulletin to all senior managers that includes all customer web feedback – this ensures that senior managers are aware of the feedback and that they can be held to account for taking the necessary action to address issues raised by resident.</i> 	Lead by Customer Services/ Delivery Unit Lead Officers	Monthly / weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creation of a web content group attended by senior Delivery Unit leads to share best practice and increase awareness of need for improvements. This group has been tasked with reviewing the content of the most accessed pages on the website. This group will also receive refresher training in using the content management system to make sure they have the right skills to update content in a timely manner.</i> 	Lead by Customer Services with Delivery Unit input	Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Refresh of GovMetric categorisation of data to reflect council's Delivery Unit structure. As the structure of the council has changed it is important to ensure that the feedback is getting to the right officers and that there is absolute clarity about who is responsible for each page of the website.</i> 	Web Manager	WB 11th January
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing feedback sent to Delivery Unit contacts for responses that are published on the site at www.barnet.gov.uk/customer-web-feedback. This means that residents can see that we take their comments seriously and that we have a record of which DU's are responding and which are not.</i> 	Customer Services	Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure web technical issues are resolved quickly – there is work taking place to ensure there is clarity around the technical support for the web-site and for fixing problems in a timely manner.</i> 	Customer Services	End of January

A number of other improvements are also underway. All web feedback is monitored on a daily basis. A regular report is created that focuses on the top 10 pages that contribute to poor scores to again focus on areas to improve. A review of the top 200 pages will also

be undertaken with a potential rewrite of sections if required. Research into other websites is being undertaken to ensure we pick up on best practice across all sectors.

Further progress reports against this action plan and web satisfaction can be provided to future meetings of P&CM Committee.

4. Future Proposed Action

In addition, the Customer Access Strategy presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 16 December 2015 and currently out to public consultation, recognised while there is always room for improvement to the content, the systems and processes behind the web need to be effective. Residents expect an “Amazon-like” experience, getting regular updates when they report issues and being able to track progress of services requests. While some progress has been made on this (schools admissions, parking permits, road repairs) this is not consistent across all services. This will require some further investment to ensure there are seamless end-to-end processes that integrate the web with more back-office systems.

Specifically we know the following improvements are needed:-

- ***Making information easy to find.*** Many residents still seem to find it easier to phone than find the information they need on the web
- ***Introduction of dynamic FAQ’s relevant to service.*** An initial set of FAQ’s were introduced at launch, but these have not been updated as often as needed. A more resident-driven, service-specific approach is needed
- ***Improve prominence of search tool (Transversal) and investigate merging with the main search function.*** Transversal search is a technology that responds to more “natural language” so that residents can ask questions in the form “how do I make a planning application”. To-date, this feature of the site has not been promoted
- ***Improved transactional web forms for more services, with integration to back office systems.*** A common complaint is that residents are not getting feedback on what has happened when they fill in a web-form. This is because in many cases the form is not linked to back-office system that actually processes the service request and this is an area for longer-term improvement
- ***Additional functionality and services added to Myaccount.*** To achieve a higher take-up it would help if some more high volume services were accessible through MyAccount. The first phase of the customer access strategy development will look to see if there is a business case for some key services such as housing and some elements of social care to be added
- ***Improved Google analytics reports.*** There is a need for a better understanding of how the website is being used. Google analytics contains a wealth of data that tells us what people are searching for and how they are navigating the site. Work is needed to commission reports that extract the relevant information that is

needed to understand how the structure of the site can be improved to make it easier for residents

- ***Implementation of an online booking system with integrated payments*** – *many simple services such as pitch bookings or pest control require a better approach to making bookings/appointments and being able to pay on-line at the same time*
- ***Improved location based functionality***. *The Graphical Information System limitations make it difficult to present dynamic information on maps. For many services being able to click an icon on a map (e.g. planning applications in my street, planned roadworks) is easier than having to enter text into search box.*

A further report on the Customer Access Strategy will be presented to Policy and Resources summer 2016. This will identify the extent to which there is a business case for further investment in the website.

5. Conclusion

There is a joint ambition for the Barnet website to be seen as one of the best in the country and work has started on those areas, such as content, that can be improved without major investment. The Customer Access Strategy recognises that to be as good as some of the best in the private sector will require investment in IT and some re-design of the end to end delivery processes so that residents get sufficient updates that they trust that using the web is the best way to get a quick service.