

Embedding a Data-Informed Approach to Customer Service



Context

North Lanarkshire Council's Planning Service recognised that effective customer care and efficient processes are interdependent. To strengthen both, the service embarked on a data-informed transformation designed to improve consistency, transparency, and responsiveness. The aim was to shift from a reactive service to a proactive one, using live data and clear, standardised processes to enhance both staff confidence and customer experience.

What Happened

The planning service identified inconsistent processes across teams, overloaded mailboxes, and limited real-time performance insight, which made it difficult to ensure efficiency and consistency. To address this, a full process review was undertaken through staff working groups, leading to the creation of standardised workflows, templates, and a comprehensive process map to guide case handling. Technology within the Uniform system was optimised, supported by a full suite of Enterprise workforce tasks, while validation targets were added to the Customer Charter to strengthen accountability. Internal consultee access and monitoring tools were introduced to track response times, and technicians were upskilled to process householder applications. Power BI

dashboards now provide live data on workloads, bottlenecks, and trends, enabling proactive management and continuous improvement in performance and customer service.

Areas of Collaboration

The transformation was underpinned by strong internal collaboration across all levels of the service. Staff were engaged in process reviews, testing workflows, and refining templates to ensure practicality and consistency. Externally, communication with customers was enhanced through improved website content and step-by-step video guides.

Overall Result

The Planning Service now benefits from standardised processes, improved data visibility, and stronger overall performance. Streamlined workflows and templates have reduced duplication and administrative burden, freeing capacity for planning and customer-facing work. Staff confidence and consistency have increased, while customers experience clearer communication, faster validation, and greater transparency.

Lessons Learned

1. Good customer care and efficient processes must evolve together; one cannot succeed without the other.
2. Embedding technology effectively depends on well-informed and engaged staff who understand its purpose and value.
3. Real-time data empowers teams to manage workloads proactively and make evidence-based decisions.
4. Consistency and clarity build both staff confidence and public trust. Cultural change takes time, and staff must feel supported throughout transitions in process and practice.

This case study has been prepared in collaboration by North Lanarkshire Council and the National Planning Improvement Team at the Improvement Service. We publish good practice case studies identified through our work on the National Planning Improvement Framework and the National Planning Hub. They aim to support the sharing of good practice and build collaboration across the sector in addressing common challenges. Please email us at npi@improvementservice.org.uk if your authority has a good practice case study to share.

