

Digital principles

Our goal is to build digital services that enable our internal and external customers to self serve, this will mean they choose to use digital first next time. Digital is everyone's business. We will turn off non-digital channels for .services where appropriate

We want to give everyone that uses our digital services an excellent and consistent experience, and our digital design principles will enable us to do this.

We will revisit these principles frequently throughout the Digital by Design programme to make sure we remain on track.

We will learn from the best and make sure we do not reinvent the wheel.

These design principles provide high-level guidance for everyone involved in shaping digital services at Warwickshire County Council.

Their aim is to help inform and shape the majority of the decisions we make when creating or improving our digital services.

1 Start by identifying our users' needs

By users we mean everyone using our digital services. This could be customers, residents, partners and staff. If we don't know what their needs are we won't build the right service. Do the research, analyse the data, talk to them and do not make assumptions. If we understand the needs of our internal and external customers we will design better services.

2 Align user needs with our business objectives

We should clearly define our objectives for all our digital services and relate these back to our business strategy and One Organisation Plan (OOP) 2020.

"User-centred design is not about giving users what they want. It's about leveraging the natural behaviour of users to get what the business wants"

3 Keep it simple

Our services and communications should be simple, straight-forward, logical and consistent. We need to keep it simple, giving our users what they need but remembering that 'less is more'.

"Simplicity is the art of removing everything that doesn't have to be there."

4 Build digital services not websites

Digital service design means designing the whole service not just the digital bits. If you're redesigning a service, you need to think about what the user is trying to achieve and then build a service that meets those needs. It goes deeper than just improving our website. The digital world needs to connect to the real world and all aspects of your service.

5 Use evidence not judgement or opinion

We can learn from looking at how existing services are used in the real world. Rather than hunches or guesswork, we should use a combination of data and customer stories to make decisions.

6 Design, launch, test, repeat and build for reuse

Our approach will be to release early digital services that meet basic needs, test them with users, delete what doesn't work, identify quick wins where possible and make refinements based on feedback. We will make sure our approach is consistent and will help people become familiar with our services.

"Iteration reduces risk. It makes big failures unlikely and turns small failures into lessons."

7 Build it for everyone

Good design is accessible design that is inclusive and easy to understand. Designing to meet needs is more important than style. The people who most need our services are often those who find them hardest to use. Let's think about those people from the start.

8 Design for context of use

We're designing for people, not designing for a screen. We should design our digital services around:

- how and when people will use them
- the task a user has come to complete
- looking to signpost where possible and focus on the part that is relevant and unique to a person or business in Warwickshire.

"All information must be presented in the context of a user task to be useful."

"If you don't deliver simplicity for users in seconds they leave. If they have to do business with you then they'll send you an email, make a call, or walk into your office."