

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		CSC/27/18
Committee:	Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	27 February 2018	
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MEMBER ENQUIRIES/HIGHWAYS REPORT IT TOOL

Action required by Members at this meeting:

Members to receive a briefing from Officers on the recommendations put forward by the Task and Finish Group in 2017.

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Committee with an update on the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group in 2017.

2. Recommendations

Approval is sought to close this item from the Committee's work programme by considering and noting the responses below to the recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Diarise further member training sessions on the Report It Tool and highways matters.

Response

Essex Highways continue to provide occasional County Member Briefings on Highways service delivery matters. We will take the opportunity to consider what further topics we could offer to County Members to improve understanding and awareness at the next briefing, which is likely to be in May 2018.

Additionally, there is an open invitation for Members to visit the Member Enquiries team on E2 Zone 3, County Hall.

Recommendation 2

Acknowledge Cabinet Member commitment to further review Report It tool and the production of more timely and regular responses and updates and indicative timescales for action.

Response

Following Cllr Mitchell's review, Essex Highways are working on re-introducing the option for customers to add their email address when they use the Report It Tool. This will provide those customers with a record of the unique reference number for their enquiry. The addition of email necessitates some technical and data protection work to make this possible as the current tool was designed and developed without this functionality, as part of the specification agreed 18 months ago.

Separately, consideration is being given to how Essex Highways could further alert customers when their enquiry has been resolved, either because a repair has been affected, or that their issue has been assessed as low priority and will not be acted upon until future resources allow. We are also considering whether it is possible to add the date of either the last or next inspection.

To help reduce avoidable contact and manage customer expectations, there have been a number of website improvements, including but not limited to:

- Street lighting assets and bridges added to the Highways Information Map
- Winter information, Local Highways Panel and ITS webpages have been revised and updated
- A UK Power Networks map has been added, which shows the power-related street light faults (lights, lit bollards etc) that have been passed as their responsibility to deal with, and their status
- 'Renewing road surfaces' section has been updated to include information about Tow Away Zone implementation. When we intend to carry out surfacing works in the future, the road will be classified as a Clearway for the duration of the works, which will enable any vehicle left parked to be removed. This completes the customer journey from the homepage to the Live Traffic Map, traffic cameras, car parks map and highways information.

Recommendation 3

Heartened by first indication of joint training with Highways and strongly encourages further, regular such initiatives are pursued with all service areas.

Response

A continuing programme of joint training and information sharing between ECC teams and Essex Highways; further training is being planned on a range of topics, including:

- Vegetation and grass cutting – February 2018
- Road surface dressing – February 2018
- Flood management – February 2018
- Street Lighting – March 2018
- Permits – TBC 2018

We are also reviewing the information provided to ECC Contact Centre agents during the induction on highways matters.

Recommendation 4

Further clarification to be provided on ECC's relationship with the Parking Partnership, in relation to accountability and responsibility of reporting incidents.

Response

A briefing from Essex Highways has been arranged for a Tuesday 27 February 2018.

Recommendation 5

Cllr Mitchell to factor in a method to advise Members if projects are delayed.

Response

Essex Highways are continuing to consider what additional or complementary online processes can be introduced to provide updates for Members, residents and road users where schemes change significantly. Twitter is being increasingly used to provide real time updates and Roadworks.org continues to be developed.

Recommendation 6

Encourage further differentiation between the management and response to non-complex and complex issues.

Response

The Member Enquiries team introduced an email acknowledgement and reference number from 1 November 2017. All enquiries received prior to midday (weekdays) are recorded on the same day and reference number issued. During this process, cases are triaged to differentiate complexity in order to expedite responses where they can be responded to quickly.

Recommendation 7

That the Ringway Jacobs SLA be amended to include customer information timescales and quality of responses as part of 5+5 negotiations.

Response

This recommendation will be taken into account when contract negotiations around extension commence.

Recommendation 8

Further integration of Highways and Member Enquiries I.T systems to be investigated.

Response

Joint working continues to improve information sharing across ECC and RJ I.T systems, where there is no confidentiality, data protection or conflict of interest issues. During January 2018, a cloud-based space is being launched, where RJ Highways employees can access ECC policies, which would otherwise have been inaccessible.

Recommendation 9

Welcome commitment that there will be a further member survey and that it needs to be designed so that it is comparable to the previous survey.

Response

Member survey issued by Democracy and Transparency team. Overall outcome was positive with areas of improvements reflect the areas highlighted in these recommendations.

As part of the organisational design, the Member Enquiries team will transfer line management from Customer Services to Democracy and Transparency by 1 April 2018.

3. Action required to be taken

For members of the Committee to agree that progress has, and continues to be made on this item and that this can now be closed from the Work Programme.