

ES/013/12

Committee:	Executive Scrutiny Committee
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Customer Satisfaction Arrangements	
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Customer Satisfaction Arrangements**1. Background**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide Executive Scrutiny Committee with an overview of surveys which are carried out with our customers so as to evaluate the services which are delivered, traded or commissioned by Essex County Council and support service improvement.
- 1.2 This paper follows previous discussions which have been held by Executive Scrutiny Committee in December 2009 and May 2012 in relation to measures of overall satisfaction with Essex County Council. This is collected as part of the Essex Tracker Survey sent to Essex residents. The Committee has reviewed the format of method and collection of this information alongside results. It has been recognised that this measure of satisfaction collected through the Tracker Survey can be heavily influenced by external factors to Essex County Council.
- 1.3 As a result of these discussions the Committee have expressed an interest in understanding what local surveys are carried out to assess (from a customer perspective) the effectiveness of services provided as measured through customer satisfaction. This incorporates services which are provided or commissioned and arrangements in place to report and act on the findings of these surveys.

2. Summary of Existing Feedback Mechanisms

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is therefore to provide Executive Scrutiny Committee with an overview of those surveys that are in place. Work has been undertaken by Research and Analysis to gather information on all consultation activity across Essex County Council. This has informed discussions at the Public Engagement Steering Group who are tasked with developing a Public Engagement Strategy and looking at the technical ways in which Essex County Council conducts engagement.
- 2.2 The outcomes of this review are outlined within Appendix A including headline results (quantitative analysis) where these are currently available. The surveys which are captured as part of these will be a mix of both statutory and non-statutory surveys and given the change in performance frameworks nationally may include new surveys which are planned but have not yet been carried out (and therefore no information is available at this time), or for which only one survey has been carried out (and therefore no historical information for comparative purposes is yet available). Only national surveys will support benchmarking against other areas.

- 2.3 The review considered arrangements where we currently collect feedback from customers on the services delivered, traded or commissioned. This covered feedback from external customers, partners as well as internal customers as appropriate for the service in consideration. On the whole, these tend to be survey based many of which are either delivered annually or in real time i.e. available for completion once the service has been delivered to the customer. These results collect both quantitative and qualitative feedback. The review did not therefore consider consultations on either the design of services or consultation relating to changes in policies.
- 2.4 In addition, the review did not consider compliments, comments and complaints monitoring. This is carried out within Essex County Council and monitored on a regular basis through existing complaints handling arrangements. Progress against these is also included within Directorate Leadership Team Balanced Scorecards to support effective management of complaints (statutory and non-statutory) across the organisation.

3. Existing Reporting Arrangements

- 3.1 The existing Balanced Scorecards (available for each Directorate within Essex County Council) are used to report headline results from key surveys (those indicated in Appendix A). This customer feedback sits alongside performance against key processes and outcomes as well as workforce and financial information to provide an overview of performance at a Directorate level. This information is reported to each Directorate Leadership Team on a monthly basis (although given the frequency of survey information this is reported when the information becomes available). These reports are shared with the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees' on a monthly basis to enable discussions to take place about performance and are also available on the Essex County Council Intranet pages.
- 3.2 Given the breadth of services provided within each Directorate only the key surveys are incorporated into DLT Scorecards and only report headline results as it is not possible to cover every question or every survey within these DLT reports. The Scorecards are regularly reviewed to ensure they are capturing the information needed and also to reflect organisational changes. More detailed information is available on many of the surveys included within Appendix A. Service areas take responsibility for managing performance and acting on the feedback received from customers and in some cases action plans are put in place (for instance for the staff employee survey) to ensure that areas of concern are taken forward.
- 3.3 In addition, some elements of customer satisfaction have been incorporated into the 2012/13 Corporate Plan (and have been reflected in previous Corporate Plans) and will therefore be reported through existing quarterly and annual arrangements to Cabinet and Executive Scrutiny Committee whose role is to oversee delivery of the Corporate Plan. This ensures that a balance is struck between delivery against specific outcomes (e.g. reducing waste and increasing recycling) alongside satisfaction with services delivered. This will help in demonstrating progress in delivering our Corporate Plan priorities.

4. Planned Future Arrangements

- 4.1 There are a series of areas where further work is planned to develop the surveys and feedback arrangements identified:

- As well as including customer experience information on existing Scorecards, we are exploring the possibility of services uploading survey results (alongside focus groups, consultations etc.) onto Essex Insight – our neighbourhood information system, data observatory and home of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This would raise visibility of the information, especially where customer feedback information would be valuable to others and would support easy analysis of key results.
- Streamlining of surveys where it is appropriate and possible to do this. The diversity of services provided, traded or commissioned by Essex County Council means that this may not be possible in every circumstance but is being explored. This includes (through planned Corporate Services activity) reviewing whether it would be possible to undertake one survey for corporate services either annually or bi-annually.
- Addressing areas where there is a need to improve on customer insight - either where no mechanisms for customer feedback are in place or where we can improve the wording, design or layout of surveys so as to improve quality of feedback via Research and Analysis.
- Development of post-call surveys at the Customer Contact Centre and online pop up surveys on the website. This is being incorporated into the Customer Programme, with timescales for completion and reporting of data and information to be confirmed. This would provide an opportunity to gather real time information on high volume areas reviewing customer experience. This could also include real time feedback related to front line services which could be targeted as part of the questions.
- Work undertaken to ensure that evaluation arrangements are consistently built into contracts when we commission services. This is currently in place for key commissioned services but work is underway with Supply Chain Management (within Procurement) to ensure that, where appropriate, evaluation of services from a customer perspective forms part of the key performance measures when services are commissioned.

5. Headline Summary of Results

5.1 Appendix A provides an overview of the headlines from key surveys. It is not possible to compare results between surveys which are carried out due to different wording of questions and different services delivered. Instead, the surveys are intended as a starting point from which further evaluation can be undertaken.

5.2 In some instances results are from the first survey and provide a baseline from which to review progress moving forward. Further information is available to support each of these surveys and the appendix is intended to provide an overview of the surveys which are currently carried out across Essex County Council.

5.3 In summary, the key surveys across the service areas are as follows:

- **AHCW:** Adult Social Care (including key surveys for service users and carers), Mental Health Commissioning and Transitions all engage in a range of consultation and customer feedback. Findings are used to measure customer satisfaction plus review and improve services or strategies. Some of these are statutory (from the Department of Health) and input into national returns.
- **ESH:** Most service areas have a single annual survey (specific to each service area) to measure overall satisfaction. This includes key surveys such as the National Highways Survey relating to highways and transportation which is being taken forward by the new Highways Strategic

Transformation contract. Most other service areas have relevant customer feedback mechanisms in place. The highlights are discussed in the monthly Directorate Scorecard.

- **Deputy Chief Executive:** Customer Services is about to introduce new survey software to evaluate and improve customer contacts by phone and online (as indicated above). Libraries, Registration and Heritage & Arts all have customer surveys in place to monitor usage of and satisfaction with services, some of which are national such as the CIPFA Public Library User Survey for adults and children.
- **Finance:** A new arrangement to gather internal satisfaction with services was carried out in 2011 which covered the whole of the Directorate. This was the first baseline year and actions have been taken forward and communicated to customers based on the findings. This is supplemented by local surveys such as Pensions Surveys for scheme members and employers.
- **SCF:** There is a wide range of quantitative and qualitative customer feedback collected from children, young people, parents and partners within SCF. This reflects the diversity of services provided by the Schools, Children and Families Directorate. The results are used to measure satisfaction with services, to inform service design and as a key input into needs analysis for children and families. Many service areas have long-established feedback mechanisms in place and there are a number of service areas which have developed or improved their feedback in the last 12 months.
- **Strategic Services:** Apart from the Tracker survey which is used to assess wider resident perception of services and delivery of outcomes and sports delivery feedback arrangements there are not yet customer survey arrangements in place to assess the services provided by the Directorate particularly given recent a recent restructure and the re-launch of the Directorate. The feedback arrangements are being reviewed and may be considered as part of streamlining survey arrangements for all Support Services.
- **Transformation:** Information Services collect feedback in order to improve services and inform the direction of the ICT modernisation programme. The Employee Communication and Engagement Service carries out a range of employee surveys/consultations for all staff including the annual employee survey. HR and Essex Shared Services also undertake bi-annual satisfaction surveys.