

Report to: **Executive**

Date: **19 September 2019**

Title: **Customer Satisfaction Action Plan Progress**

Portfolio Area: **Customer Satisfaction and Improvement**
Cllr Nicky Hopwood

Wards Affected: **All Wards**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision) **N/A**

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1. Note and comment on the progress made to date in improving customer satisfaction as detailed in section 3 of this report.**
- 2. Support the next steps as outlined in section 5 of the report.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report is presented by the Executive Lead for Customer Satisfaction and Improvement and details progress made since June 2019 on improving customer satisfaction.
- 1.2 The report also includes recommended next steps to continue to improve the customer experience by further honing the Council website, to pre-empt customer needs and manage expectations.

2. Background

- 2.1 In October and November 2018 Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Executive resolved to note the results from the Institute of Customer Service Customer Satisfaction Survey, and endorsed an action plan to improve customer service.
- 2.2 The Executive also resolved in June 2019 that a Customer Satisfaction Progress Report be presented to the Executive each quarter. This report therefore provides an overview of progress made since June 2019 when a report was last presented to Executive.

3.0 Outcomes/outputs

3.1 Weekly Customer Satisfaction Team Meetings

The introduction of standardised customer satisfaction agendas began on the 1 July whereby every team leader was instructed to conduct a 30 minute weekly meeting focussing solely on customer satisfaction.

3.2 Meetings have been well received by staff and primarily focussed on the following:

- *What's gone wrong for our customers this week? Think about complaints received both formal and informal, whether there has been increased contact from customers and why.*
- *What have we done to fix it and what can we do better next time?*
- *Any further action needed and who is responsible for sorting it and by when.*
- *Has it been communicated to the people who need to know?*
- *Are we satisfied that we have done everything to put this right for the customer? Think about the whole customer journey.*
- *What have we done to improve customer experience in the last week?*

3.3 Outcomes from each meeting are centrally recorded to promote best practice and shared via the Friday Flash – the Council's weekly staff e-newsletter. To view a list of service improvements see appendix A.

3.4 Website Improvements

2 September saw the start of a full time web editor role, seconded from the Council's Communications team. Work undertaken to date includes:

- a. Improving results for regularly searched terms for example "bin day" will now bring up the collection calendar as the top result.
- b. Checking stats regularly to see if there is something that people are searching for and not finding.
- c. Removing a series of broken links, including incorrect social media icons.
- d. Contact forms created and currently being tested for Benefits, Elections and Dartmouth Lower Ferry.
- e. Continued building of Council Tax pages, including proof reading and developing contact forms for some of the more unusual processes – death & probate, financial hardship etc.
- f. Reorganised the "Top Tasks" and "Report It" tabs so that the most popular pages are on there. Removed pages that weren't getting a lot of clicks, and changed wording to be a bit clearer – so for example "search for a planning application" and "tell us if you have moved house" instead of "where can I find details of current planning applications" and "tell us about a move into, out of or within our area."

- g. Added additional buttons to "Report It" tab for some of the more common items that are reported – so "Tell us about a problem you may have found on our streets" has now been replaced by "Report an abandoned vehicle/ Report a Full Litter or Dog Bin / Report Dog Fouling / Report Something Else.
 - h. Updated a number of pages that have been flagged as containing out of date information.
 - i. Mock-ups of reorganised planning pages produced and being checked for completeness and ease of use.
 - j. Mock-up of Environmental Protection pages underway.
 - k. Trade Waste pages for South Hams completed and live on the site.
 - l. Developing new site headings for Residents, Business and Your Council
 - m. Social media campaign launched to invite members of the public to come forward and test www.southhams.gov.uk and provide feedback on areas we might improve.
- 3.5 Visuals have been drawn up for an improved home page for both desk top and mobile devices, some of these improvements are already under way, see visuals in appendix B attached. Advertising has also been removed from the site and the prominence of the sign up facility changed to improve user navigation.

4 Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The Council is committed to improving customer service. It is therefore considered prudent to continue with the implementation of the Customer Satisfaction Action Plan. Evidence suggests actions taken to date are contributing to improved customer service.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 Weekly customer satisfaction team meetings continue to ensure customer satisfaction is foremost in staff's minds and continual improvements are made.
- 5.2 The weekly team meetings have highlighted the need for clear customer communication. With this in mind it is proposed an in house, online "Effective Customer Communication" course is produced and is completed by all staff by the end of the year.
- 5.3 Continued focus on the website ensuring regularly searched information is quick and easy to access and service changes clearly communicated.

- 5.4 Participation in the Institute of Customer Service's National Customer Service Week, 7-11 October 2019. During this week it is proposed the Council hosts its annual Staff Awards, in recognition of staff delivering exemplary customer service. It is also proposed the Council launches its Institute of Customer Service benchmarking survey during this week.
- 5.5 Improvements be reported to this Committee in November along with the results of the benchmarking survey.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Executive has a responsibility to provide Leadership to the overall activities of the Council and has responsibilities regarding Council performance and customer satisfaction.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	N	There are no financial implications as a result of this report that have not already been budgeted for.
Risk	Y	A failure to review and act upon the Customer Satisfaction Action Plan could lead to: Lack of coherent delivery Reputational harm Ineffective use of resources Poor quality service These risks are mitigated by: The recommendations outlined in this report
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	This report supports the Council theme i.e. <i>Delivering efficient and effective services</i>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality & Diversity		None – no policy or service change is proposed.
Safeguarding		None – no policy or service change is proposed.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None – no policy or service change is proposed.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None – no policy or service change is proposed.
Other implications		-

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Service Improvement
Appendix B – Website visuals