

Making Sure Positive or Negative Customer Feedback Is Valued and Used to Improve Services

STRATEGY STATEMENT 2008 – 2009

To be read in conjunction with the Warwickshire County Council Compliments,
Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedures 2008, and the Handling
Representations Policy and Procedures 2008

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Service: Customer Relations Service

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

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1. Objective

In line with the County Council's vision of *"Working in partnership to put customers first, improve services and lead communities"*, Warwickshire County Council will focus on how positive and negative customer feedback can be effectively used across the County Council to manage risk, encourage performance improvement and organisational learning, and improve customer satisfaction. This County Council will demonstrate that it wants to be open and honest, that it cares about providing good services, and that it genuinely values feedback on its services. It will also demonstrate its commitment to developing and supporting staff who respond positively, are understanding, open-minded, helpful and sympathetic.

2. Context

This strategy, and the accompanying policy and procedure documents, replace the existing Warwickshire County Council Complaints Procedure.

3. Aims

Over the next 3 years, our aim is to:

- Capitalize on best practice in handling positive and negative customer feedback in all service areas
- Develop integrated complaints and representations handling processes across Directorates,
- Embed a pro-active, problem-solving culture across all staff groups across the County Council through organisational learning and workforce development
- Enable more consistent and effective complaints and representations monitoring across all Directorates, linking across to the corporate performance management framework
- Ensure effective consideration of compliments, comments and complaints-handling issues in the ongoing development and delivery of the Customer Service Centre, One-Stop Shop Services, and web-enabled service delivery
- Consider compliments, comments and complaints as part of a broader commitment to the development of the County Council's customer care agenda
- Ensure a more robust approach to the management of risk related to complaints, and ensure that contracted and partner-delivered services are appropriately designed to ensure effective handling of positive and negative customer satisfaction

The Customer Relations Service will become a centre of customer care excellence and expertise within the County Council. This centre could provide a range of different support services to meet the needs of different Directorates and services, such as:

- professional advice and support in dealing with individual difficult customer situations
- systems and process development support to enable effective handling and registration of compliments, comments and complaints activity
- policy and procedure development
- development and dissemination of best practice guidance
- staff training, guidance and support
- customer advocacy, mediation and advice
- customer consultation

How the service develops will depend on:

- the extent to which different Directorates feel they would benefit from and would wish to resource this service,
- to what extent we want to have a consistent approach across the County Council,
- how much benefit we would derive through improved customer satisfaction and greater impact on performance improvement,
- and to what extent this would enhance the County Council's reputation with customers and enable improvement of the CPA score.

A key aspect of this future development would be the framing of Service Level Agreements to ensure clarity of expectations.

4. Key Elements of the Strategy

The following will be key elements of the overall strategy for the next 3 years:

2008:

- Research, consultation and review of current complaints procedures
- Publication and launch of new strategy, policy and procedure for the handling of positive and negative customer feedback
- Development of shared corporate ICT infrastructure for the registration and monitoring of positive and negative customer feedback, based on the current Customer Relationship Management system, Northgate
- Development of benchmarking and best practice networks to support performance improvement

2009:

- Improved publicity and advice for customers, focusing on the preferred channels of communication with customers – Customer Service Centre, Web Site, One-Stop Shops, kiosks, digiTV, etc.
- Improved advice and guidance for staff, focusing on linkages with the New Ways of Working customer care work stream, and the Front Line First initiative
- Improved linkage to performance management and organisational learning work streams, and in particular the development of the Customer Insight initiative
- Exploration of the potential for closer partnership working on handling positive and negative customer feedback, and possible joint services, with local Borough and District Councils, and local PCTs.
- Further development of the functionality of the ICT platform to ensure effective corporate monitoring, review and analysis of customer feedback activity.
- Review and evaluation of the new policy and procedure.
- Exploration of improved mediation, advocacy and support alternatives for customers
- Exploration of the possible synergies or links to be made with the revised social care complaints procedures due to be finalised by Department of Health in 2009

2010:

- Roll out of the ongoing training programme for all staff on how to improve handling of positive and negative customer feedback.
- Evaluation of impact of new system on service improvement and customer satisfaction
- Review of system to ensure continuing future-focus.

5. Links and Interdependencies

This strategy, and its associated policy and procedures, will need to take account of the proposed work streams within the following key documents:

- Corporate Business Plan 2008-2011
- Customer Service and Access Strategy 2007
- Corporate Consultation Strategy 2008
- Race Equality Scheme ()
- Disability Equality Scheme () to be replaced by the WCC Single Equality Scheme
Gender Equality Scheme () May 2008
- ICT Strategy 2007
- Risk Management Strategy 2007
- Business Continuity Management Strategy 2007

There is also a key dependence based on the timing and extent to which the current Customer Relationship Management system, Northgate, can be developed to support the objectives of this strategy.

Karen Smith

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April 2008.

Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedures Review

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE 2008 - 2010

The timescale below identifies the key elements required to develop, launch, monitor and improve an ICT based Corporate Complaints Strategy over the next three years.

2008	2009	2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, consultation and review of current procedures. • Publication and launch of a new strategy, policy and procedure for handling of positive and negative customer feedback. • Development of benchmarking and best practice networks to support performance improvement. • Development of shared corporate ICT infrastructure for the registration and monitoring of positive and negative customer feedback, based on the current Customer Relationship Management system, Northgate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved publicity and advice for customers, focusing on the preferred channels of communication with customers – Customer Service Centre, Web Site, One Stop Shops. • Improved advice and guidance for staff, focusing on linkages with the New Ways of Working customer care work stream and the Front Line First initiative. • Improved linkages to performance management and organisational learning work streams and in particular the development of the Customer Insight Initiative. • Exploration of the potential for closer partnership working on handling positive and negative feedback, and possible joint services with local Borough and District County Councils and local PCITs. • Further development of the functionality of the ICT platform to ensure effective corporate monitoring, review and analysis of customer feedback activity. • Review and evaluation of the new policy and procedure. • Exploration of improved mediation, advocacy and support alternatives for customers. • Exploration of the possible synergies or links to be made with the revised social care complaints procedure due to be finalised by Department of Health in 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of improved impact of new system on service improvement and customer satisfaction • Review of system to ensure continuing future focus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll -out of the ongoing training programme for all staff on how to improve handling of positive and negative customer feedback. 		