Committee:	**Performance Select Committee**	**Agenda Item**
Date:	**14ᵗʰ May 2009**	**5**
Title:	**BI & P Report –** **Customer Feedback Management - Update**	
Author:	**Paula Evans – Business Improvement and Performance Manager** **Ext: 636**	Item for consideration and approval

Summary

This report follows the initial presentation of the BI&P Summary report recommending the implementation of a Customer Feed-back process and system within the authority.

Following Members approval of the recommendations it was requested that regular updates on the progress of the project be given to the Performance Select Committee.

This report details progress to date on all approved recommendations.

Recommendations

That Members review and consider this report giving comment as necessary.

Background Papers

LGO Annual Letter 2008	Local Government Ombudsman
Running a Complaints System – Guidance on Good Practice	Local Government Ombudsman
Remedies for Justified Complaints – Guidance on Good Practice	Local Government Ombudsman
How to Deal with Complaints	Cabinet Office
UDC Customer Care Standards	
UDC Customer Contact Strategy (February 2005)	
UDCP001 – UDC Corporate Complaints Management Policy – DRAFT	
UDC Customer Feed-back Management Report	BI&P Team

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Internal and external bodies will be consulted during the development of a Customer Feedback process. This process will be communicated both internally and externally once approved.
Community Safety	None identified
Equalities	The Customer Feedback process will ensure that all Equalities requirements will be addressed and monitored regularly to guarantee adherence.
Finance	All costs involved with recommendations will be reviewed and agreed at appropriate levels.
Human Rights	None
Legal Implications	The process will adopt appropriate quality assurance controls to ensure legal implications are limited, or preferably, non-existent.
Sustainability	No direct impact resulting from report findings.

Situation

1. Since the approval of the recommendations contained within the Customer Feedback Management report presented to the Performance Select Committee in February by the Chief Executive, a number of key activities have commenced and are being progressed by a designated project team.

2. The project team is made up of representatives from a number of customer-facing services including, Housing Management, Democratic Services, The PA's group, Environmental Street Services, Uconnect, Building Control and Development Control. There is also support being given by our Equalities Champion to ensure all equalities requirements are addressed and subsequently monitored to ensure adherence at all levels. The team also has 2 members of the Business Improvement and Performance Team within it.

3. The team has also been split into 2 sub groups; one group focusing on system investigations and recommendations and the other process. The full project team has been endeavouring to meet regularly (fortnightly) with the sub groups also meeting in between these times to progress particular actions.

4. Within the sub groups progress has been as follows:

    4.1   **System** – Various system options have been discussed at some length with regards to developing a system internally, developing a currently used system or purchasing an 'off the shelf' package. Initial thoughts were that the cost of acquiring a generic system needed to be identified before a

decision could be made. To this end a number of 'market leaders' have been identified and demonstration sessions fixed for mid-May. A councillor representative from the IT working group has also been invited to attend the sessions. A supplier questionnaire has been developed to ensure consistency in the information obtained and its subsequent use for any potential purchase.

The possibility of partnership working with Essex County Council is also being considered. The team will be meeting with the Customer Services Manager at ECC to discuss system sharing opportunities on the 14th May. At the very least, there may be an opportunity to obtain a discount if we were to independently purchase the system currently being used by ECC (CDC Respond).

4.2 **Process** – a high level process has started to be identified for all enquiries that could be managed via a Customer Feed-back system (see Appendix One attached). This includes enquiries such as Freedom of Information requests, complaints, compliments and comments as well as Members enquiries. Note: This is a working document as some enquiry types are still to be process mapped as they can be quite complex in their nature.

Process controls such as escalation responsibilities and response times have been discussed however these will need to be investigated further to ensure that they are both manageable and suitable for the authority. A number of benchmarking activities will be undertaken with regards to customer standards within other local authorities.

A detailed process cannot be identified and approved until a system is sourced – however, the work completed so far for the process will be used to support the system selection process to ensure that any ICT solution can manage enquiries in a manner that is suitable for our requirements.

5. The team have also discussed introducing a number of support documents, for both internal and external use, to promote and support the Customer Feed-back process. Some of these are already in existence such as the current general feed-back form (hard copy and website) and just need suitable alteration to suit any new process. Others will need to be developed in conjunction with all potential users i.e. revised set of customer standards.

6. Discussions have taken place within the team as to where the responsibility for the management of a Customer Feed-back process should lie within the authority. The group identified 3 key areas for consideration; Uconnect, the PA's group or the Business Improvement and Performance Team. Further investigation will be undertaken prior to the team making a formal recommendation for consideration.

7. It is anticipated that regular progress updates for the project will be given to the Performance Select Committee at future meetings.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That customer complaints and enquiries are not responded to and/or resolved in a timely manner and customer satisfaction levels will worsen	3 = significant risk or impact – action required At least in the short term, resources may not permit swift adoption of all the recommendations	3 = significant risk or impact – action required Customer satisfaction levels would not improve as quickly as desired	Implementation of a corporate customer feedback process Identification of key process performance measures Reporting of complaint and enquiry data to service, strategic and committee level