		Agenda Item
Committee:	PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE	**7**
Date:	28 July 2009	
Title:	**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK UPDATE REPORT**	
Author:	Paula Evans, Business Improvement & Performance Manager, ext 636	Item for information

Summary

This report details the progress to date on all previously approved recommendations relating to the Customer Feedback project.

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 Feedback Management Report – PSC 14.05.09	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

Project Logistics

1. A number of activities are currently being progressed by a cross-functional project team which now includes a Member from the IT Working Group.

2. These activities have been split into 2 different focus areas: system and process. Individual project plans for each of these areas of focus are currently being developed. The plans will be used to allocate responsibility for all identified tasks and the subsequent monitoring of progress of them.

3. The team have been endeavouring to meet on a monthly basis (or more frequently if certain tasks need to be discussed/progressed) to ensure continued progression of all key project tasks.

4. Progress reports are being presented to the Strategic Management Board as and when required.

Project Tasks - Progress to date

System

5. A demonstration of customer enquiry/feedback software packages has been given to the project team by 2 providers; Tagish and CDC Respond. These providers were primarily sourced following a benchmarking exercise that established which systems other local authorities were using.

6. Following the demonstrations the team conducted an initial evaluation of each package which included a review of the provider's ability to:

   - Deliver UDC's project aims
   - Provide a comprehensive support service (both during and post implementation
   - Keep costs (purchase and on-going maintenance) to a minimum
   - Provide suitable reference sites

In addition to this the 'look and feel' of the systems and the general approach and attitude of the providers were assessed.

7. Following the demonstrations each provider was asked to produce a quote based on the anticipated process steps and user numbers to be adopted by the authority.

8. So that they could formulate an accurate quote, CDC Respond offered a free 1 day business review to establish what processes were currently being adopted for them to then make a justified proposal for the use of their system. 1-2-1 interviews were conducted with each service area as well as the PA group and the Business Improvement & Performance Team. This review provided both them and us with a comprehensive examination of the 'as-is' situation and led to a greater understanding of what enquiries were currently being logged, monitored and reported by, and to, whom.

9. There is also a possibility that Uttlesford may be able to enter into a partnership type working arrangement with Essex County Council. They are currently piloting CDC Respond within the council and are willing for any district or borough councils within Essex to work alongside them as they look to implement the system authority-wide. This may mean that any initial procurement costs will be reduced as well as creating opportunities to reduce both license and maintenance costs. Further investigations need to be carried out to determine how any administration processes would be managed and the project team will be working with the Customer Services Manager at ECC with regards to this matter.

10. To date initial quotes have been received from both providers (although a 'partnership' quote has not yet been received from CDC Respond). However, due to the anticipated level of spend required, a third provider will need to be sourced to meet the authority's current procurement regulations. The team are therefore currently sourcing a suitable additional supplier and will endeavour to arrange a demonstration as soon as possible.

Process

11. There has also been progression of some of the tasks the team have identified that are not associated with a system. These are essentially the 'culture change' type activities that will support the team's key objective of improving customer service throughout the authority.

12. The team's main focus to date has been around reviewing the council's current set of customer standards. These were developed in 2005 and have not been re-published since. There are currently 30 of them each relating to a different aspect of customer service activity such as call answering, face-to-face visits and enquiry response times. These standards have previously been promoted to our residents in the form of leaflets and a page on the internet as well as internally via the intranet and notice boards. The standards however, are not all monitored or measured regularly to ensure they are being met.

13. The team are suggesting that 30 is an unmanageable amount of standards for the authority to adopt and that a smaller number of more meaningful principles be developed. They have recently completed a brainstorming exercise that identified a number of ways that customer service could be improved within the authority.

14. Using the results of this brainstorm they are currently compiling a number of new standards that will be sent out for consultation to both residents and officers before being brought to both the Strategic Management Board and Performance Select Committee for approval.

15. It will be recommended that there are suitable performance measures identified (either existing or new) for each standard that are then linked to any relevant corporate or divisional plan actions and subsequently monitored via the performance management framework.

16. A large amount of benchmarking activity has already been completed on the standards that other local authorities have adopted, in particular how they have presented and managed them. Examples of best practice will be adopted wherever possible.

17. There are also a number of smaller project activities that are being progressed at present. These include investigating the current use of voicemail and formulating recommendations for it's future use as well as working with IT to develop template email signatures that would ensure any external emails would always identify an officer and give their service area and phone and email contact details.

18. A further update will be brought to the Committee for information in September.

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