

Surrey Highways – Customer Service Excellence

Proposed Terms of Reference for Member Reference Group

Introduction

As an organisation providing a service we need to put customers at the heart of everything we do. Highways are using the national Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard, previously Charter Mark, to help us achieve this goal.

CSE is a practical national tool with 57 criteria to help us review what we do and drive continuous customer focused improvement. The standard has a focus on who our customers are, how we inform and interact with our customers, how we deliver our services and deal with problems, and how committed we are to customer service. There are currently no other County Council Highways services that hold the award.

The Shared Service Centre became the first service within Surrey County Council to be awarded the CSE Standard in 2010, creating a culture of continuous improvement. Business Services have recently commenced their own CSE journey but Highways have taken the lead as the most complex operational service.

What are the benefits?

This project, which commenced in May 2013, forms one strand of the new Highways for the Future: People Strategy programme and by achieving accreditation will:

- drive customer-focused change and culture
- improve the accuracy and detail of the information we provide
- put the customer at the heart of everything we do
- encourage us to consult with customers in a meaningful way
- increase our internal and external customer focus to improve handling of customer queries/complaints
- demonstrate our commitment and professionalism in the way we provide our services

Improvements in customer service should increase satisfaction and lead to a reduction in enquiries and complaints for officers and Members, allowing resources to be more focused on delivering the core service.

Other benefits include highlighting customer service successes and areas for improvement; allowing individuals and teams to acquire new customer focused skills; and achieving formal, external recognition of excellent customer service by accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence standard.

What are we doing?

- Project team set up and active
- We have created a team of volunteer Customer Service Champions (CSCs) from within the service to support the collation of evidence and to share the message of customer service excellence throughout Highways, in addition to their day to day work. Although this places additional pressure on those involved, improvements made within the workstreams will deliver more efficient processes. A series of workshops and focus groups are being undertaken with all teams to explore customer interaction
- Collation of all evidence of good customer service across Highways
- Workstreams set up to address areas identified for improvement

- Internal self assessment carried out in September and a detailed action plan produced
- Pre-assessment meeting held in December with accreditation body to gauge level of readiness for assessment

The CSE journey has already highlighted a number of areas where work is required but has also confirmed that there are many areas of good internal and external customer service across Highways. There is still a lot of work to do to achieve the award but we are confident we will be able to do so with support from across the service.

Proposed Role of the Member Reference Group

The project team believe that a Member Reference Group will add value to this important project. The Group can:

- Share the perspective of users and the general public on customer service within Highways
- Challenge and validate the project's objectives
- Provide advice on how to approach wider engagement with the public and stakeholders
- Put forward recommendations on the action plan
- Act as advocates for CSE with Member colleagues and customers
- Provide a Member perspective on future performance criteria, the levels of service and priorities
- Help maintain CSE as a priority once the award has been achieved

This is a continuous improvement project with annual assessments following accreditation. Therefore we expect that the Group should meet as required during 2014 and 2015 to regularly review progress and set challenging targets.

Timescales

A detailed project plan for 2014 is being prepared, but the key milestones are:

Jan 2014	First briefing of the Member Reference Group
Jan/Feb 2014	Staff awareness sessions and focus groups
Jan/Feb/March 2014	Workstream implementation
March 2014	CSE Assessment
March/April 2014	Assessment review and target setting
Ongoing	Programme of continuous improvement

Officer Support and Contacts

Project Sponsor:	Trevor Pugh, Strategic Director Environment & Infrastructure
Project Director:	Richard Bolton, Group Manager Local Highway Services
Project Manager:	Mike Dawson, Customer Service & Improvement Manager

Project Team/Service Champions:

John Pateman, Systems and Service Improvement Team Manager, Local Highway Services

Francesca Dennis, Senior Project Coordinator, Directorate Programme Group

Letitia Newton, HR Consultant

Gemma Lloyd, Senior Business Support & Customer Care Officer, Local Highway Services

Nick Healey, Area Team Manager, Local Highway Services

Sarah Sumner, Project Manager, systems & Process, Asset Planning
Jason Lofty, Project Engineer, Projects & Contracts
Maureen Robson, Senior Structures Engineer, Projects & Contracts
Nick Hindes, Performance Manager, Finance Change & Performance
Rikki Hill, Parking Project team Leader, Local Highway Services
Christine Forss, Highways Maintenance Technical Officer, Operations
Adam Lee, Process Improvement officer, Local Highway Services

This page is intentionally left blank