

Improve how we engage with our citizens and listen to what our customers tell us about our services

1. The outcomes we hope to achieve for the people of Caerphilly are:

Our citizens will have a better understanding of their engagement role with the council and recognise they can influence and shape policy and services by their engagement.

We will improve the way we engage and feedback to citizens.

By the next Household Survey in 2013 customer perception of our services will improve, with an increasing % of respondents to the Household Survey being satisfied or very satisfied with overall services.

We will achieve a more representative mix of citizens that take part in our consultation / engagement activities which better matches the local population demographics.

We will provide feedback that shows clear evidence of change or improvement as a result of the engagement process. Through our reporting procedure we will identify where we have used the results of the engagement process to influence our decision making for the improvement or change of services.

We will have evidence that Citizens feel they are listened to and their opinions count. Our database recording of our public engagement activities will show the levels of interaction with citizens. At each activity we will ask citizens involved to provide feedback which will be recorded and analysed.

We will have an established corporate complaints process, which we can use to gather intelligence and improve the way we do things. We will learn from our mistakes and over time this should impact upon our customers perception of the type and quality of the service we provide them. The number of complaints will reduce and the proportion of services that are delivered right first time will improve, reducing the current levels of avoidable customer contact.

We should be able to demonstrate and make clear links with action we take resulting from the complaints intelligence.

2. Why we chose this?

Delivering value for money services against the background of an increasingly challenging budget is a priority for the Council and is detailed in our 3 year Improvement Plan 2009/12. There are many activities to improving value for money so this objective focuses on a few particular activities that will make a difference over the next couple of years.

We recognise the need to create customer-centric services and put our customers and what they can tell us about the services they receive at the heart of service improvement. How we engage with our customers and what we choose to do with the information they tell us about the services they experience is critical to the future development of public services.

Consultation with citizens and elected members indicates that this objective is still valid and relevant. The council will develop its own public engagement strategy and it will embrace the qualities and standards of engagement set out in the Local Service Board (LSB) Citizen Engagement Strategy. The LSB is a partnership of public sector bodies who aimed to provide real synergy in delivering services locally.

The purpose of developing our own strategy is to clearly demonstrate to our citizens how their views, opinions and ideas can influence and shape policies and decisions.

Under this improvement objective we also want to better understand what customers complain about and how we can translate this learning and understanding into improvement. Implementing a well-documented Complaints procedure, which is supported and complimented by a set of customer service standards for key services across the Authority, is essential in delivering highly valued public services.

We are introducing specific actions that would give a smarter service to our citizens such as the 'Tell Us Once' service. This allows registration officers, when registering a birth or a death, to notify other central and local government departments on behalf of the citizen. This means the citizen only has to provide their information once thus avoiding duplication of effort with a more 'joined-up' service to the public.

3. Changes to 2010/11 objectives for 2011/2012

As part of the review of the medium term financial plan and following detailed consultation the council is now investing in combined library and customer service centres, thus making it easier for citizens to interact with the council in local centres. The shape of this service is as a direct result of citizen engagement.

During the year we recognised our desire to move people to low cost channels, as set out in last year's objective is not singularly the only rationale for improving our engagement with citizens. We now believe it is about offering a range of choices to the citizen on how they can interact with the council whilst also being mindful of cost.

Regarding complaints management, there are no major changes to this improvement objective, however the authority will be required by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to implement an All Wales Model Complaints Process, which means we will have to take this into consideration when improving our own system.

4. Who did we consult with?

We consulted the View Point Panel in March 2011 to challenge our perceptions on how we are engaging with citizens and discussed this internally and with partner agencies. Several points were made regarding the complaints process, which is currently in place.

We also carried out a number of other service specific consultations and in particular as part of the review of Customer Service provision we engaged with local communities, Town and Community Councillors, Trade Unions and elected members. We also entered into a dialogue with frontline staff who, gave valuable contributions which helped in formulating our decisions

5. Who will work with us to achieve it?

The majority of this work will be conducted within council service areas, stakeholder engagement and cross directorate groups to develop the council's public engagement strategy and action plan. However there will be a need to work in co-operation with a number of other agencies such as our LSB partners to deliver the improvements.

6. Key actions

Outcomes	Key Actions
We will improve the way we engage and feedback to citizens through this our citizens will have a better understanding of their engagement role with the council. They will recognise they can influence and shape policies and services by their engagement.	Agree and implement a corporate Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop standards of public engagement and good practice guidance across the authority and with partners• Further develop Public Engagement Database - Caerphilly Asks, Caerphilly Listens• Develop and implement new techniques around social media• Develop a process for monitoring whether public engagement activities meets the required standards
We achieve a more representative mix of citizens that take part in our consultation / engagement activities which better matches the local population demographics.	Develop a process for monitoring whether public engagement activities meets the required standards, particularly in relation to local demographic representation

Outcomes**Key Actions**

<p>We will provide feedback to show clear evidence of change or improvement as a result of the engagement process</p>	<p>Develop standards of public engagement and good practice guidance that ensure that all engagement activities include a feedback mechanism</p>
<p>We will have evidence that citizens feel that they are listened to and their opinions count.</p>	<p>Deliver engagement activities to gauge Citizens perception on the subject</p>
<p>By the next Household Survey in 2013 customer perception of our services will improve, with an increasing % of respondents to the Household Survey being satisfied or very satisfied with overall services</p>	<p>Conduct additional research and analysis to establish what are the drivers of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction across the authority and to map out satisfaction levels across service areas.</p> <p>Continue to deliver the current Customer Services development plan.</p>
<p>Citizens will enjoy more focused service delivery with an elimination of duplication in providing information together with a supportive approach to providing information to other government departments</p>	<p>Introduction and publication of contact service standards so the customer knows the service they can expect to receive and how we are performing against them.</p> <p>Make significant progress in delivering:</p> <p>Customer Insight Project Public Engagement Action Plan Information Sharing Project Tell Us Once Service</p> <p>Nationality Checking Service</p> <p>We will also introduce a Nationality Checking Service to help applicants applying to be citizens, prior to their applications being submitted to the Home Office. Like the passport checking service, our help will enable new citizens to have a more stress free experience and streamlined completion process</p>

Outcomes

Key Actions

<p>Improving and reducing Complaints</p>	<p>Develop a robust Corporate Complaints Process, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reviewing the receiving and processing of complaintsRecording more about the complaints we receiveIntroducing a 'Listening and Learning Group'Reducing unnecessary contact for the customerIntroduce methods for collecting data to understand why unnecessary contact occurs
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7. How will we know we are succeeding?

Evidence / Performance	09/10		10/11		11/12
	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target
How much did we do?					
Established Corporate Complaints process			100%		N/A
Decision making process shows links or influence with intelligence gathering by % of complaints made and found to be correct			20%		20%
% response rate to View Point panel survey	44%	46%	40%	50.5%	
Number of new consultations on the consultation database	50	56	55	69	65
Number of complaints to the local government ombudsman		51	No Targets		
Number of complaints upheld by the local government ombudsman		3	No Targets		
Tell us Once Service live	By June 2011				

Evidence / Performance	09/10		10/11		11/12
	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target
Public Engagement Strategy agreed	By September 2011				
Public Engagement Strategy is produce and adopted by council	N/A		N/A		100%
Action plan is rolled out	N/A		N/A		100%
Social Media Strategy Agreed	Part of the Communications Strategy				
Risca Library/Customer Service centre opened	By end of 2011				
Bargoed Library/Customer Service centre opened	By end of 2011				
Caerphilly Library/Customer Service centre opened	By end of 2012				
How well did we do it?					
The strategy was well received by the public and partner organisations and is recognised as good practice by % of those engaged in council business			65%		100%
The complaints system has improved the way the public can use it and they have indicated it is simple to use by % of those using it feeding back -			50%		75%

Evidence / Performance	09/10		10/11		11/12
	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target
Of those people attending the View Point Panel meetings, the percentage who find the discussions/workshops fairly or very interesting	85%	92%	90%	95%	
% Complaints across the Authority responded to and resolved within target times		Not recorded	80%	94.3%	
Is Anyone Better Off? (Has what has been done/achieved effective)?					
Perception in household (2011 & 2013) survey improves by %			3%	3%	5%
% of people who feel satisfied with the level of service we provide.	52	60%	57	60%	67%
<p>This will be identified from our public engagement activities to:</p> <p>Measure any improvement in the proportion of our citizens who feel that they are listened to and their opinions count. (% increase in a baseline which will need to be established in 2011)</p> <p>Measure any changes in customers satisfaction with our services</p>	N/a	N/a	N/A	N/A	+ 2.5%
As part of the Complaints review process the service will shortly be analysing the information from the current measures and will use that information to help develop new ones, which will tell us if anyone is better of. We will give a progress update the next time we publish.					

8. Progress Update – 2010/11

General progress statement to date

Engagement & customer service overall summary statement needed in here.

Throughout 2010/11 the council has taken important decisions using information gathered from residents, from switching off Street Lighting, to closure of a Residential Home, to determining customer service provision on our high street to where we will locate a piece of public artwork. All of these demonstrate our consistent engagement processes.

Over the last year we have reviewed our consultation processes and have built on our success and we are learning to develop more focused outcomes to support the Improvement Objective. To this end we are developing a robust Public Engagement Strategy, which will adopt the standards set out by the Assembly and build upon the LSB Citizen Engagement Standards. Our corporate toolkits for engaging with various audiences have been well used and the Participation Toolkit for Children and Young People has been well received by the county borough's engagement and participation network of practitioners.

A review of the complaints process is currently underway and a report is being prepared to clarify whether funds can be found to adapt the current complaints recording system. The 'tell us once service' goes live in June and we hope for 45 to 50% of people using the system within the first year.

We said we would...	So far we have...
Progress Public Engagement Database - Caerphilly Asks, Caerphilly Listens	Developed and activated the database and we are now encouraging use of it by all LSB partners and council services
Developing and agreeing standards of public engagement and good practice guidance	The LSB agreed standards early in 2011 and recently WAG have issued a consultative document on a national standard proposal. Once finalised we are intending to adopt these as part of the Public Engagement Strategy in the interim we will use the LSB standards
Develop a process for monitoring whether public engagement activities meets the required standards (as above)	As part of the Public Engagement Strategy action plan we are developing a process for monitoring
Develop a draft communication plan to inform the wider audience of the consultation database and public engagement project	The communication plan has been embraced as part of the Public Engagement Strategy action plan

We said we would...	So far we have...
Introduction of the Tell Us Once Service	This will go live in June and we will be able to notify a wide range of local authority and central government departments such as the DVLA and Passport agency, council tax etc on behalf of the citizen when they come into register a bereavement.
Introduction of the Nationality Checking Service	Once we have introduced the Tell Us Once service we will focus on introducing the Nationality checking service later in the year.
Moving customer contact to low cost channels where appropriate	<p>The “Looking Local” service has been introduced which gives access to some council services via interactive TV. These services are now also available via an iPhone app, which includes location based services using Google maps and GPS. A number of projects have been completed or are in progress to encourage customers to use lower cost payment methods when paying council bills</p> <p>Direct Debit campaign for Council Tax</p> <p>Improvements to interactive phone payments</p> <p>Introduction of PayPoint cards</p> <p>All web forms are being reviewed to improve consistency and to allow more effective uploading of data to the CRM, reducing the cost of contact.</p> <p>A programme is in place to encourage customers to fill out web forms rather than free format e-mails as this ensures that all data is captured at first point of contact avoiding the need for customers to be asked for additional information and to reduce the cost of contact.</p>

We said we would...	So far we have...
<p>Develop a robust Corporate Complaints Process</p> <p>1. Reviewing the receiving and processing of complaints</p> <p>2. Recording more about the complaints we receive</p> <p>3. Introducing a ‘Listening and Learning Group’</p> <p>4. Reducing unnecessary contact for the customer</p>	<p>1. A major review of the Corporate Complaints process is underway. In the longer term the Authority will be required to implement an All Wales Model Complaints Process. This has yet to be finalised and signed off by the Welsh Assembly. Consequently the Authority is undertaking an interim review of its current complaints process, which will involve some of the elements incorporated in the Model Complaints Process.</p> <p>2. Early investigations have indicated that the current systems used for reporting complaints will require a significant overhaul in order to achieve this aim, a Report is being prepared to clarify whether or not funds can be identified to meet the costs of adapting the current system or purchasing externally a new system.</p> <p>3. Currently considering the make up of this Group and whether or not this role is a logical extension to the current role of the Council’s Standards Committee.</p> <p>4. This will be part of the new Corporate Complaints process, as we will be looking to include a “Quick Fix” stage.</p> <p>Introduce methods for collecting data to understand why unnecessary contact occurs</p>

We said we would...	So far we have...
Introduction and publication of contact service standards so the customer knows the service they can expect to receive and how we are performing against them	A set of standards has been agreed and a programme of work to raise awareness of them amongst CCBC staff will be put in place followed by a series of measures to increase the external visibility of these standards. Work is underway to develop process to monitor compliance with Customer Service Standards, the results of which will be reported through our normal committee processes. We will then look at methods of placing this information in the public domain and updating it on a regular basis.
Customer Insight Project – understanding our customers needs through market segmentation analysis	A number of pilot projects have been completed to learn more about how we can use commercially available demographic data with the data we already hold to deliver more targeted customer services and marketing. A further tranche of projects is currently being developed

9. What else does this objective contribute to?

What does this objective contribute to?	Why this contributes?
Caerphilly Community Strategy Review 2010/12	Improving citizen involvement and engagement in decision making and using our citizen's opinions to shape the future of public services is central to both this Improvement Objective and our Community Strategy.
Councils Improvement Plan 2009/12	Making improvements to our complaints and consultation processes will help us to understand what our citizens needs are and therefore target our efforts, this will deliver more focused value for money services.