

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 04 September 2017

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Local Service Agreements
Report of:	Director of Finance and Resources
Strategy/Policy:	Corporate Strategy 2011-2017
Corporate Objective:	All Corporate Objectives Apply

Purpose:
To provide an overview of the Council's performance for the 2016/17 financial year.

Executive summary:
The Council's strategic framework includes Local Service Agreements to provide details of actions delivered by individual services. The Local Service Agreements provide an overview of how the Council is performing alongside the Corporate Strategy. This annual review is an opportunity to consider how well the whole Council is performing as well as in key service areas.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) notes the Council's performance for the 2016/17 financial year; and
- (b) agrees that the 10/10 survey results be reported annually

Reason:

To provide details of Fareham Borough Council's performance for the 2016/17 financial year.

Cost of options:

There are no cost implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Appendices

A: Local Service Agreements April 2016 to March 2017

Background papers:

None

Reference papers:

Corporate Strategy 2011-2017

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	04 September 2017
Subject:	Local Service Agreements
Briefing by:	Director of Finance and Resources
Portfolio:	All Corporate Objectives Apply

1. The Council's strategic framework includes Local Service Agreements to provide details of the actions delivered by individual services. The Local Service Agreements provide an overview of how the Council is performing alongside the Corporate Strategy. This report is the fifth update since the Local Service Agreements were implemented in 2012.
2. Overall, performance across the indicators is comparable to previous years. There have been some significant changes in several areas as outlined below:
 - a. Recorded crime within Fareham increased 11.7% from the previous year.
 - b. An additional 96,000 visitors were recorded as visiting a Leisure Centre. This increase follows the opening of Holly Hill Leisure Centre in October 2016.
 - c. The time taken to re-let Council homes has reduced by 15 days. This is the second year of reporting following the Vanguard Intervention and follows a significant increase in the time taken, because of the new method of measuring the end-to-end times.
 - d. There has been improvement in the time taken to complete housing repairs, between January and March 2017. The figures show an improvement of 3.7 days on the previous year.
 - e. Expenditure on community funding has dropped by approximately £129,000 since 2015/16. There were also 21 fewer grants awarded in 2016/17 than 2015/16.
3. Appendix A is a copy of the Local Service Agreement document updated with the details for the 2016/17 financial year.

10/10 SURVEYS

4. It was agreed at a meeting of the Executive on 7 December 2015, that the 10/10 surveys would replace the biennial Residents' Survey, which had been running since the year 2000, as the major way for measuring resident satisfaction.

5. The Residents' Survey has proven useful in providing a general overview of resident satisfaction with the whole Council. However, it only provided a snapshot of satisfaction every two years, often on services which were never or rarely used by residents. The questions, in the survey, were closed and did not provide specific information on how services could be improved.
6. The introduction of the Vanguard Method in 2013, has since required a clear understanding of what matters to customers and their personal journeys. This, combined with the rise of social media which allows people to give detailed and timely feedback on services, brought into question the value of the Residents' Survey.
7. The 10/10 customer satisfaction surveys were identified as an approach that would enable individual service areas to collect high quality feedback in a timely and less resource intensive way. The 10/10 surveys have so far focused on those service areas that have worked through a Vanguard intervention.
8. The 10/10 survey approach involves Heads of Service/Intervention Leads telephoning customers and asking three questions:
 - a. **Question 1:** What does good service look like to you?
 - b. **Question 2:** Please rate the service you received from 1 to 10, with 1 being very bad and 10 very good.
 - c. **Question 3:** If we didn't get 10, what can we do next time to make sure we do?
9. These open-ended questions allows us to track satisfaction levels and analyse comments on specific areas that could be improved further. Service leads can then action these where necessary.
10. The following have so far conducted at least one round of 10/10 surveys:
 - a. Housing
 - b. Building Services – responsive repairs
 - c. Benefits
 - d. Development Management
 - e. Environmental Health
11. Some areas that have undertaken a Vanguard Intervention, such as Parking Enforcement, are less likely to provide useful customer satisfaction data. This is because people are not likely to be satisfied about anything to do with being issued with a Penalty Charge Notice. More service areas will begin undertaking 10/10 surveys as they proceed through their own Vanguard interventions.

Housing

12. The Housing intervention focused on the housing allocation process. Using the 10/10 surveys, the following areas were shown to be the most important to customers accessing the service:

- a. Good communication –officers both listening to their needs and keeping them up to date
- b. Simplicity of process
- c. Speed of process
- d. Finding a property that meets their needs

13. The average overall score given by customers was 9.5. The lowest score received was 7 out of 10. Looking at the comments given, a majority focused on the quality of service provided by the officers e.g. 'everyone was wonderful' and 'absolutely brilliant.'

14. Employees within the service have reflected on the feedback given and will use it to further improve the service.

Building Services – responsive repairs

15. The Building Services Team maintain the Council's properties and respond to customer requests for repairs. The service is primarily delivered by Council operatives supported by contractors when needed.

16. Using the 10/10 surveys, the following areas were shown to be the most important to customers accessing the service:

- a. A quick response
- b. Attend on time
- c. Polite operatives
- d. Get the job done

17. Only two respondents gave a score of less than 10, with the average being 9.4. Several respondents praised the swiftness of our response and the politeness of the operatives. Only one respondent gave a relatively poor score of 5 out of 10. This customer made several comments explaining the score they provided.

- a. The repair did not stay fixed
- b. We did not attend when we said we would
- c. We did not call to say that we would not be attending on time

18. Sometimes a repair does not stay fixed. When this happens, someone will always make a return visit to identify and fix the problem. Responsive Repairs currently attends approximately 90% of the appointments they say they will. The lack of feedback about being unable to attend an appointment has been reviewed and will be used to help prevent similar problems occurring in the future.

Benefits

19. The Benefits intervention team reviewed the process for handling new claims and changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support.
20. The new approach sees a Benefit Assessment Officer assigned responsibility for each claim, which they process to completion.
21. When 'change of circumstances' customers were asked, what was important, the following themes emerged:
 - a. Help me understand how changes affect my benefits
 - b. Quick service
22. Using the 10/10 surveys, customers informing us of a change of circumstances gave the service an average score of 9.8. Comments included, 'very helpful' and 'officers gave advice that I wanted to know and made sure I understood'. Every customer gave a score of 10 apart from one person who gave a 9. When asked, what could be done to get a 10, the customer could not think of anything we could do to improve.
23. When asked, customers making a new claim, said the following were important to them:
 - a. Having someone understand my situation
 - b. Understanding what I'm entitled to
24. Using the 10/10 surveys, customers making a new claim gave the service an average score of 9.8. The supporting comments were very positive. For example:
 - a. "You were brilliant, I was in a financial mess and facing homelessness. Everyone worked so hard to help me"
 - b. "...I came in not knowing anything and within half an hour I really understood what I was entitled to and how much I would need to pay on my council tax and rent."

Development Management

25. The intervention within Development Management focussed on the planning application decision process. The new method has increased communication with officers, giving good advice to applicants and their agents throughout the application process. Officers look to make decisions as soon as practically possible, rather than rigidly focusing on targets.
26. Responses to the survey highlighted the following issues as important to customers:
 - a. Getting a quick decision
 - b. Quality and consistent advice
 - c. Good communication with officers throughout the process

27. The average score given by customers was 9.3 out of 10. Several customers praised the amount of contact provided and the quality of the advice offered. There were also several respondents who favourably compared the Council's performance to neighbouring planning authorities.

28. The lowest score given, by a respondent, was 7. The customer said that they would have given a 9, based on how their application was handled, but there were some inconsistencies in the advice they received at the pre-application stage. The customer did point out that this case was an exception and that most of their applications go through the Council without fault.

Environmental Health

29. The Environmental Health team deal with different service areas such as pollution, infectious diseases, pest control, health and safety and dog control. The initial intervention focused on the Pollution Team and noise complaints.

30. As part of the intervention, the team moved to a more informal, personal style, with officers meeting face-to-face with customers and neighbours. The new approach is significantly faster and generally takes 2-3 weeks to complete.

31. Customers raised the following themes, as important to them, during the surveys:

a. Resolve the problem quickly

b. Get some peace and quiet

32. The average score given by noise complaint customers was 8.8 out of 10, with 8 being the lowest given. The comments were generally positive, but a couple of respondents were concerned about a recurrence of the noise. When questioned further the customers were confident about who to contact and how to obtain a successful resolution.

33. Several other services within Environmental Health have also worked through an intervention. The Pest Control service received scores mostly between 8 and 10. A Dog Control customer gave a score of 5. When asked for a reason why, the customer stated that they wanted more reassurance, but were otherwise vague on what could be done better. The combined overall score for Environmental Health was 8.9.

NEXT STEPS

34. As the quarterly 10/10 surveys progress it will be possible to analyse performance over time. More service areas will carry out 10/10 surveys as they complete interventions. It is proposed that the results will be annually reported back to the Executive.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

35. There are no anticipated financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

36. The Council's performance across most Local Service Agreements is broadly comparable or better than in previous years.

37. The 10/10 surveys indicate a high level of customer satisfaction with those services that have undertaken a Vanguard intervention. The results of future surveys will be reported annually to the Executive.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Annette Rickman, Customer Service Manager (ext. 4418).