

HIGHWAY REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

Overview: In Spring 2022 the Customer Service Programme conducted user research with our customers to understand the current customer experience by targeting high demand services accessed digitally and offline, in order to identify a model customer experience, based on best practice, to increase/improve customer satisfaction.

Code	Original Insight	Original Recommendation - detail Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group <i>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</i>	Priority Rating	Delivery Accountability R = issues / blockers A = underway and on track G = completed
44	The response to complaints from contractors isn't always to an acceptable quality.	<p>Explore how the service might establish a shared quality standard for responses to complaints, and how we can hold ourselves and our partners to that standard. Consider making adhoc checks of complaint responses to ensure quality standard is acceptable.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Customer Responses in general from the BCC Customer Services are not of sufficient quality in the view of the responsible service area (i.e. Highways). Whilst much of this issue can be resolved through improved wording in responses (particular automated responses), some quality improvements will require process and/or systems changes in conjunction with BHL/Kier as a our highways services provider. Outbound response from CXM shared with service, pair writing to commence. Identify any system changes front office/back office. Iterative content development i.e. released as signed off.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: At the moment systems don't talk to each other as well as the should do; systems need to be joined up and quality of responses needs improvement - needs to be clear on the request and timescale of outcome and aligned to contractor responses; part cultural piece with Keir - subscribed updates on the progress of repairs raised; new technology that can be embraced and a common approach/consistency between services e.g. Housing repairs. The PFI contract will be lever for alignment with contractors.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: <i>There has been a change of Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure since the original insights were gathered and previous updates were made. The new AD has affirmed that he is passionate about the customer and will inject pace and effort into putting these recommendations, and additional measures to improve the customer experience, in place. A customer improvement group has been established with senior managers to develop a Highways Customer Improvement Plan which will look to address not only this insight but all those gathered below and any additional insight gathered through the course of this work and to drive that plan forward. A representative from Kier attends the group. The customer service programme also has a seat on the group. The group has been tasked with producing a draft Highways Customer Improvement plan by the end of September 2023</i></p> <p><i>A detailed piece of work is underway with business support, to analyse the root cause of complaints which is scheduled to conclude at the end of August 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Work has also commenced to exploit the technology we now have and to maximise communication between internal systems, ensuring information can be accessed first hand, giving greater visibility and enabling quicker and more robust responses. It is envisaged this will be an ongoing, continuous exploitation and improvement process.</i></p> <p><i>A series of engagement sessions have been held with Kier's customer and leadership teams - covering improvements to processes, quality of responses and the need for BCC values, attitudes and behaviours to be reflected in these.</i></p> <p><i>An understanding is in place on the Customer Service strategy, behaviours and use of information and technology with bidders for the procurement of the remainder of the term of the PFI contract, to ensure that there is no further hiatus when the contract is awarded.</i></p>	Medium	Programme
45	Councillors are not always using the form that has been created for them to submit their requests, instead using the highways or general complaints inboxes (resulting in delays in responding due to additional processing time and time spent on manually copying content from councillor's emails into iCasework)	<p>Reinforce messaging to councillors that they must use the correct process, and when they don't respond by asking them and making it very easy for them to do so - e.g. include link to the form and instructions on what to do</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: To deliver the recommendation Highway Service needs see a clearly defined set of outcomes and an agreed delivery plan from D&CS to address this issue. Comms & engagement piece to reinforce the process of Member enquiries. Review of current content, information, advice and guidance required.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Members are generally starting to use the systems in place but they won't use the forms as they don't have the time - use of the complaints teams is the corporate approach. 85% come through the complaints team exceptions for urgent/critical items that will go direct to services. Most Highways are enquiries and not complaints which takes time from the complaints team. New system/process - clarify the route to enable better processing of requests that are not complaints - narrative needs to better reflect the expectations of Members (members need to work out which complaints team to send their queries to); some requests need multiple services to be co-ordinated to resolve as a priority.</p> <p>Status Update 07-Jul: <i>Note, this insight applies across services and is not specific to highways. Approximately 90% of member enquiries to the complaints teams are first time service requests, rather than complaints. The complaints teams are not sufficiently resourced to handle these enquiries. A working group has been established to address this issue. The first meeting of the group is scheduled for 10th July (chaired by AD for Customer Services and Business Support). The group will map current access routes and identify how enquiries can be handled differently. The portfolio lead and informal cabinet have also been briefed on the issue and on the measures being taken to resolve it.</i></p>	High	Programme
46	In Highways there are two business support teams broadly doing similar work. They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively	<p>If our understanding of this situation is right, review the roles, responsibilities and function of these two teams and consolidate into one, redirecting freed up resource elsewhere in the service should it be found that there is duplication of effort.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: In Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) there are two teams doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints. They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively. Review of the current business support structure, policies and working practices in Digital and Customer Services on behalf of the Highway service required.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: <i>Need one team to own it and close the task down</i></p> <p>Status Update 07-July: <i>Business Support to the highways service is operating as a single, amalgamated team. Updated as complete.</i></p>	High	TBC should be DCS not programme COMPLETE

47	The service reported finding it difficult to prioritise activity because sometimes everything is considered 'urgent'.	<p>Consider how the service might establish more effective prioritisation processes. Test these with staff to ensure they will be effective and allow staff to focus on things that are a genuine priority.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Short Discovery piece to inform current process, pain points and opportunities from the end to end dropped Kerb service.</p> <p>Business requirement need to be provided by Highways to identify the needs for the new licencing scheme</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: From a process perspective there is a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise work. Members need to be able to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge - it is a more difficult process to evoked highways enforcement (catching people in the act, capacity to resource), Section 184 Highways Act - letters are currently issued to the address. Preventative action (fencing, bollards, etc) may be an option and there is funding available to support this type of activity but resources are limited. Use of a transportation capital budget for rare instances where Members identify as a priority - requires further exploration</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: An internal review is being carried out using insight that is now available into all Highway enforcement functions (including parking, permits and licences). The review will establish the current demand for these services, how these requests are reported and presented and how resources can then be prioritised and are deployed most appropriately. A bolder approach to enforcement will be taken. Messaging will also be improved - both in terms of communicating what is being done but also managing expectations where action is not taken. The draft from the internal review of Enforcement is scheduled for the end of October 2023.</p>	Medium	Service with Programme support
48	The Clean Air Zone website is confusing, and it is unclear if zones are in the CAZ or not. CAZ charges are not clearly explained on the website. There is no pre-notification or warning of a CAZ fine. Fines come as a surprise to many customers, which can be confusing and distressing.	<p>Review the webpages and quality of communication about the CAZ. Use a content designer to ensure all written communication is clear and accessible. Test the new content with customers to ensure there is no ambiguity. Ensure zones and times are clearly indicated online so charges do not come as a surprise to customers. Should the development of a BRUM account app happen in the future, the service could consider making use of push notifications to alert customers that they have entered a CAZ and give them, for example 10 minutes to exit the zone should they have entered if unintentionally.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: This needs to be worked through with the CAZ team. Highways and Infrastructure are only responsible for penalty charge notices if drivers do not want to pay the 'fine'. The CAZ charge and communications and messaging about payment of the charge is dealt with by the CAZ team. However staffing of customer frontline in Parking needs to be investigated.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Tell Us Once - single view of customer, if a citizen tells 'The Council' something they believe their data will be updated for every dept. Front end visibility and communication of CAZ</p> <p>Enforcement of CAZ has a dependency of the frontend</p> <p>O&S - we acknowledge there are two teams in two different directorates and this needs to be resolved.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: CAZ and its communications (website, signage etc) sits with transportation. Highways are responsible for enforcement when drivers incur a CAZ penalty charge. Feedback has been provided to the CAZ team within transportation and web pages / Brum Breathes website content has been improved. A CAZ colleague was also invited to customer panel and feedback was provided by the Panel on improvements to the FAQs, to be issued with PCNs. Communications have therefore been refined with the customer in mind, albeit there are legal constraints around what must and can be said. Whilst the two teams sit in different directorates, they do not sit in silos and communications between the 2 teams are joined up.</p>	Low	COMPLETE
49	Complaints can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service.	<p>Status Update 07-July: Insights 49 to 51, as well as the recommendations and updates against these insights, are all interlinked.</p> <p>Contract variations to complete the delivery of new technological solutions are in progress. The service is looking at how it will exploit the new technology to get greater visibility and provide better access to services for customers. There will be a cost involved to exploit the new technology which will need to be agreed. When delivered and fully exploited, it will be possible to identify if a request has already been raised for the same service (e.g. pothole) and to opt in to receive updates against this request. It will also be possible to be more pro active (e.g. raise requests around broken streetlights before the customer has flagged the issue). This will help reduce duplication and avoidable contact. Principles including user centred design, accessibility, automation, harnessing and integrating available technology and pro active communication with customers and members will be embedded across service offerings to ensure that solutions provided meet user and stakeholder needs. Contract Variations are being discussed with Procurement and subject to approval will be followed by a 9-12 month project to deliver the revised customer offer.</p>	High	Highways and Business Support with programme support
50	Customers want to be able to easily report issues on the go. Currently the reporting solution is clunky, customers find the map difficult to use and it doesn't work at all on some devices.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	High	Inflight with service - programme to support customer elements
51	When the service area seeks to engage with service users, they typically use the same group of customers to represent the people of Birmingham.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	Medium	Programme
52	Customers found there is sometimes a lack of communication on why something has happened or why a decision has been made. This keeps customers in the dark about things they care about and isn't open or transparent.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	Medium	Solution review inflight by Service, programme to support once finalised

53	Customers report that the quality of repairs is not always to a good standard.	<p>Ensure the SLA between us and partners is clear and known. Consider including information online about the expected quality of repairs, what qualifies for a repair and what repairs we will/will not make, e.g. why we only fill in a large pothole when there are other smaller potholes within the immediate area. This will help to better manage customer's expectations and will be information the contact centre and the service can refer customers to.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Understand the current performance standards are for the service, how these are raised and reported on. Do customers know these standards, how does this feed into the contractual agreements with Contractors and managed. Do we need to make this data visible and transparent. what is the mechanism of reporting defect quality issues? Opportunity to offer a commercial service offering through our suppliers/contractors to offer an enhanced service.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Being taken forward as a performance measure discussion with the service provider and ensure repairs are conducted by contractors in a timely way; quality of responses reviewed to ensure they are meaningful and in plain language - how the data is managed and fed back to contractors and customers; providing visibility of the standard of performance. Member example to be provided as to where the system hasn't worked - stewards are not engineers they are customer service/engagement experts - test the process.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: As referenced under the update against insight / recommendation 44, there is an ongoing piece of work to analyse the root cause of complaints which is due to be completed by the end of August 2023. This root cause analysis will feed into the Highways Customer Improvement Plan also referenced which is due to be drafted by end of September 2023. This more pertinent information is also being fed back to contractors who are receptive to the messages that are being received. End to end satisfaction is not currently being measured but this will be possible with the updated technology solution which means the service will no longer be dependant on the contractor agreeing to provide information back to BCC, Member examples have been provided where the system hasn't worked.</p>	Medium	Inflight by Service, Programme to advise
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