

**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



Assessment Report  
Customer Service Excellence

## **Highland Council Highland Council Customer Services**

Successful  
2 November 2016

## Assessment Summary

### Overview

Overall Self-assessment	Satisfactory
Overall outcome	Successful

RP2 - 2016: Highland Council operates a network of Service Points covering the whole of the Highlands, stretching from Fort William in the south to Bettyhill in the north and from Portree in the west to Nairn in the east. In addition the Service Centre offers a telephony service to customers during working hours and at weekends to complement the Service Points. Customers can also contact the network via the website or direct by email and now social media. Service Points also carry out a large range of Registration duties in co-operation with the General Registrar for Scotland. Around 90 staff are employed through the network. Significant challenges have faced managers and staff in the Service Point network, particularly in relation to the budget cuts and review in the reduction in the number of sites. Considerable effort was made to engage with stakeholders, staff, customers and partners and implementation has gone smoothly.

Considerable effort has been made to take on board comment made by the assessor on the presented evidence at RP1 and overall the current evidence is considered to be of a good quality. All areas previously identified as a partial compliance have been addressed and the assessor considers that all areas are now fully compliant. However the client is reminded of the need to maintain this high standard to fully demonstrate continuous improvement in future. Re-accreditation to the CSE Standard is well deserved.

### 1: Customer Insight

Criterion 1 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 1 outcome	Successful

RP2 - 2016: This Criterion covers Customer Insight gathered through a variety of consultation and engagement methods used and resultant customer satisfaction. Customer Insight gathering continues to be effective, despite the pressures of implementing the Service Points closures and re-deployment of resources and responsibilities. The introduction of the new CRM system, despite the initial delay problems, has proved to be a very effective tool to provide additional data which is easily interrogated for identifying improvements in service delivery. Consultation continues to have a very huge impact on service delivery. The outcome of the Service Point Review shows the degree of involvement at all levels, but the assessor found the level of commitment by middle managers in the implementation process to be highly commendable. Delivering a high level of service to a satisfied range of customers is a top priority for all staff. A number of developments and improvements have been made to the Web Site, which has attracted external plaudits, and the Digital access has also been expanded with considerable success. The compliance plus rating at 1.3.5 previously awarded remains.

### 2: The Culture of the Organisation

Criterion 2 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 2 outcome	Successful

RP2 - 2016: This Criterion outlines the culture of the organisation and the emphasis on customer service priorities shown by leaders, managers and staff. There is a huge commitment to listening to and learning from customer insight feedback. The ethos of first class service delivery is clearly evident throughout the organisation. Customers are consistently treated fairly and evidence on customer feedback is now in place, rendering element 2.1.4 fully compliant. Providing services sensitively remains a strong feature, including the privacy of interaction and engagement. Staff have faced a difficult year with uncertainty and apprehension, but managers are to be commended for the way in which staff have been supported and developed to face greater challenges with fewer resources. The assessor detected at all locations visited an immense pride and commitment to deliver improved services, despite the strain of less resources. This is commendable and element 2.2.5 warrants a compliance plus rating.

### 3: Information and Access

Criterion 3 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 3 outcome	Successful

RP2 - 2016: This Criterion deals with the provision of information to customers, accessibility of service provision and joint working arrangements with other providers. Information continues to be provided very professionally, including about charges levied for services provided. Several appropriate channels are used to ensure information provided is both received and understood. The extensive consultation and engagement provides a wealth of data, which is analysed thoroughly and very professionally. Reports are prepared and published with clarity in mind and clearly outline areas for improvement. The extensive range of partnership working remains in place, providing a seamless service to customers. A strong example here is the 'out of hours' arrangements with Aberdeen City Council. Consequently the compliance plus rating at 3.4.1 remains in place.

#### **4: Delivery**

Criterion 4 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 4 outcome	Successful

RP2 - 2016: This Criterion deals with setting and publishing standards and how you perform against them. It also includes dealing with problems and complaint handling. Your standards are clearly set to suit the requirements of a customer service provider for Highland Council. This includes interaction with customers on a front line basis involving digital channels, telephony and direct face-to-face engagement. Although the standards set outline your commitment to deliver service requirements, it is necessary to differentiate here between these service standards and customer satisfaction targets. The level of engagement and monitoring performance is satisfactory, and sufficient activity has been demonstrated to move 4.1.3 to full compliance. Promises in service delivery are clearly made and delivered and in some areas well above requirement. Problems and complaints are tackled with clear commitment and professionalism.

#### **5: Timeliness and Quality of Service**

Criterion 5 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 5 outcome	Successful

RP2 - 2016: This Criterion deals with customer satisfaction in the delivery of standards on timeliness and quality of service. Promises on both aspects are clearly outlined and commitment to deliver is very obvious. Response to initial enquiries is swift and professional. Additional evidence has been presented to show that where delays do occur, action is taken to keeping customers informed. Consequently element 5.2.5 is now considered full compliant. Overall customers are well informed and well served in every aspect.

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## **1: Customer Insight**

### **1.1: Customer Identification**

#### **1.1.1: We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **1: CRM Demonstration**

This is a demonstration of our CRM system. It holds the details of all customers who have contacted the Service Centre and their reasons for contact. The information on customers is reliable and up to date. When a customer contacts the council for the first time, a new record is created.

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##### **10: Evidence of email enquiries**

This is a selection of emails received from customers who have a query and use this method for contacting the Council. All requests are actioned. a number of customers are repeat customers using the same methods for contacting the council

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##### **13: Translation of Web Page link**

The web page can now be translated by customers into the language of their preference. By clicking on the link at the bottom of the web page, the drop down menu allows a language to be selected for translation of the visible web page or document

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##### **2: Customer Engagement Strategy**

The vision for improving our services to customers. Simplified customer access to all Council services and an increased number of services delivered at the first point of contact. This will include simplified and standardised eligibility and assessment processes to accelerate decisions and service.

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##### **3: Registration Survey 2014**

This is the Registration Survey conducted in 2014. It demonstrates the understanding we have of our customers and their requirements. The information provided by the customers in their answers to the questions, enables registration to plan for the future

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##### **5: Annual Performance Survey 2014**

The Councils Annual Performance survey for 2014. Not only does this give information on how the council is performing it also indicates how customers want to contact the council in future. These are our potential customer groups and service are developed to meet their needs.( see pages 10-20)

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**1.1.2: We have developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**134: Citizens Panel 2015 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

This is the 2015 citizens panel survey results. Showing improvements on 2014 particularly with our website and with our service centre found on page 2 section 2.3. This report also highlights areas for improvement based on the feedback page 5 section 2.4.

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

This is a demonstration of our NEW CRM system Netcall CXM. It holds records of customer contacts from request for service to complaints. The data stored allows us to analyse and look at root cause of contacts and identify ways to improve. The new application brings further security features.

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**12: Council Tax CD for customers with a sight disability**

This CD is available for customer with a sight disability. The CD is available on demand and there has been a slight change to the provision of the CD. This is still available on demand but it will be completed by Royal National Institute for the Blind for the Council

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**2: Customer Engagement Strategy**

The Customer Engagement Strategy has been developed following feedback from customers on how they wish to contact the Council. The feedback has been gathered from Surveys, customer comments, focus groups and The Annual Performance Survey produced by feedback from over 2000 respondents

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**3: Registration Survey 2014**

The survey of registration customer in 2014. This gives customers the chance to tell us how they perceived the service. It also allows them to make comments on the service and any future improvements they see would be beneficial to the service.

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**4: Scotlands PeoplesHub Survey**

This is the first survey undertaken on the PeoplesHub service. It is important to know if we are getting it right for the customer using the service. The feedback has been positive and although we can make small changes, the rules are set by the GRO in Edinburgh regarding cost and access printing.

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**1.1.3: We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**10: Evidence of email enquiries**

This is a selection of emails sent to the service centre where customers have contacted the Council using the email service. This method of contact is popular with customers living in remote rural areas and the overall web technology including the new web site is being developed further

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**11: Global Language Chart and Leaflet**

This is the Language Chart and Leaflet to assist customers who are unable to speak English. By using the chart and leaflet they can identify their country and language and the customer adviser can then phone the corresponding number for assistance

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**6: Free School Meal/Clothing Grant Polish**

There is a large Polish Community in Inverness and efforts are made to ensure they do not miss out on any benefits available to the whole community. This form has been translated into Polish to make it easier for Polish families to apply

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**7: Free School Meals/Clothing Grant Gaelic**

The Highland Council places great Emphasis on the Gaelic Language and a number of forms have been produced in Gaelic. This is one of the forms being produced to assist Gaelic Speakers in the Highlands.

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**8: Special Diet Request**

Not all school pupils are able to eat the school prepared meals. A special diet request form has been prepared to enable pupils to order a meal consistent with their diet. This has been very popular and pupils from both primary and secondary schools make use of the system

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**9: Council Tax Large Print**

The Council Leaflet is available in large print for customers with a sight disability. This can be printed off in any service point or council office for a customer requesting a copy.

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## 1.2: Engagement and Consultation

### 1.2.1: We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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#### 112: Consultation and Investment CSR 3

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This evidence demonstrates our commitment and engagement with customer groups to consult on future service provision and understand customer behaviours and expectations. This feeds into the overarching business cases an example of which is evidence 113.

#### Active Evidence

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#### 10: Evidence of email enquiries

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A selection of emails from customers sent to the Service Centre requesting service. This method of contact by customers has increased over the years and is now a preferred method of contact by a large section of the population in particular the age group 25-44.

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#### 13: Translation of Web Page link

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The latest innovation to assist customers accessing the council website. A simple operation can translate the web page or document into the language required by the customer. This

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#### 2: Customer Engagement Strategy

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The present Customer Engagement Strategy. This involves how we are planning ahead and involving customers especially through consultation and inclusion (see Page 20-21). The strategy also details how identified customers groups contacting the council (phone, email, face to face etc) are developed.

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#### 3: Registration Survey 2014

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This is the Registration Survey conducted in 2014. It demonstrates how we engage with our customers on services being used by particular groups. The answers can assist in future planning on how the service is delivered and correct any deficiencies in the service highlighted by customers

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#### 4: Scotlands PeoplesHub Survey

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This is the first survey of this service which was introduced in 2014. It operates from the Archive Centre and customers were offered the chance to complete a short survey on the location, cost of the service, level of help and assistance available, and suitability of the opening hours.

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**1.2.2: We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**134: Citizens Panel 2015 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

The Councils Citizens Panel Annual Performance survey is sent to the Councils Focus group. The number of responses received along with the sampling method gives a 95% confidence level of the result. This demonstrates the level of consultation undertaken to gain views of the customer year on year.

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**135: Redesign Board FAQs**

Due to increased pressures with a reduced budget the Council have instructed a Redesign board to look at Council service provision. Page 3 section 9 outlines public consultation in the process and updates are posted to the website to keep the public informed of progress.

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**137: New Customer Comment Card 2016**

Following on from last years audit feedback our customer comment card has been redesigned and issued to service points. Data is collated at a central source and actions and improvements identified are passed onto the relevant person or service and outputs tracked. These can be viewed on site.

**Active Evidence**

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**15: Customer Survey 2014 Results**

This is the second of the surveys completed in 2014 alongside the registration survey. This was undertaken in 29 of our Service Points and joint offices. In the remaining offices customers views were captured by means of an exit survey and these are a separate entry

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**16: Budget Consultation**

This is the Budget Consultation launched by the Council involving the local population on how best to achieve the savings to be made by the council over the coming years. The questionnaire was completed on line and the results have been published. (see evidence number 21-23 ...)

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**21: Budget Consultation Results Citizens Panel**

This is one of the results of the budget consultation. Three different groups were consulted, Citizens Panel, Web survey and Focus Groups. The results have been published for all three groups

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**1.2.3: We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**14: Customer Comment cards**

Comment cards are a good opportunity for engaging with customers and seeking their views on the service they have received. This also includes suggestions which are passed on to management where the customer has made a comment to improve service

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**16: Budget Consultation**

A budget consultation strategy involving member of the public. They have been asked to tell the council which services the axe should fall on to enable the council to make the necessary savings as part of the overall budget savings. See pages 3 to 16 for the questions

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**2: Customer Engagement Strategy**

This document lays out our strategy for consulting and engaging with customers. It explains how we will consult with our customers and the strategy behind the consultation. See pages 20 and 21 for the process behind the consultation. This strategy has been updated

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**22: Budget Consultation results Web Survey**

This is the results of the budget consultation. The web survey was a good opportunity to engage web customers at the same time as the written survey was sent to the Citizens Panel and Community Focus Groups. The results are representative of 4601 respondents and have been published

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**23: Budget Consultation Community Groups**

This is the results of the budget consultation. The opportunity was available for consulting three different groups at the same time to gauge the best possible results of the consultation. This is the results from the Community Groups Consultation and is from 193 returns

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**5: Annual Performance Survey 2014**

This survey on Council performance is reviewed each year before it is sent to the Citizens Panel. Services are consulted on the questions to be asked, the information required from the survey and how the results are to be presented. Each year different or additional questions are asked of the group

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### **1.3: Customer Satisfaction**

#### **1.3.1: We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **14: Customer Comment cards**

These are available in all our offices and customers are encouraged to use them to record how they feel about the level of service they have received. They are also used for customer suggestions on how we can better improve the service

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##### **15: Customer Survey 2014 Results**

This office based survey provided an opportunity for measuring customer satisfaction in light of the Customer Service Review 2. Would a reliable service still be provided by staff despite the threatened closure of their Service Point? The results confirm high levels of customer satisfaction.

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##### **26: Email customer Comments**

This is a comment from a customer regarding the service she received. Comments such as these are received on a regular basis and they are a good measure of how unsolicited satisfaction from customers

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##### **3: Registration Survey 2014**

The method of registration is continually changing and it is important that we are aware of how customers want to see the service delivered. This gives a comprehensive overview of how customers perceive the service provided.

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##### **4: Scotlands PeoplesHub Survey**

This survey was undertaken for two reasons. One: It was a new service and it is important that customer views are sought on the service provided. Two: There were complaints about the slowness of the service in relation to internet access. The customer replies indicated an internet problem.

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##### **5: Annual Performance Survey 2014**

This is a regular survey conducted independently of the Council. It measures how the council is performing across all services by the Citizens Panel and the results are consolidated and sent to the Council. See pages 20 to 25. Service Points and Registration scored high at both 73% satisfaction

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**1.3.2: We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**139: High Points Issue 3 December 2015**

High points magazine is published on our website for public view and covers a wide spectrum of information on Councils services and performance. Pages 16-17 detail satisfaction levels and areas for improvement based on the results.

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**134: Citizens Panel 2015 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

Satisfaction levels and improvement actions can be found on pages 3-7. This report is based on feedback from the citizens panel survey carried out in 2015 and is reported to committee as well as being published on the website.

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**140: Annual Complaints Performance Report 2014-15**

This is the annual report publicised on our website detailing performance to the Complaints Handling Procedure and three KPI's set out by the SPSO. Improvements have been made on previous years results and are documented throughout along with actions taken to improve service as a result.

**Active Evidence**

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**15: Customer Survey 2014 Results**

This is a paper based survey in all our Service points and associated offices. The results are very good across all offices and it demonstrates customers are satisfied with the level of service provided. This is the main area of our business conducted in the service points

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**3: Registration Survey 2014**

This is a survey of one of our most important customer groups. Registration is a complex subject involving births, deaths and marriages and partnership and same sex marriages. There are times when we do not get it right (see evidence 31) but the majority of customers are pleased with the service

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**74: Housing Repairs Improvement Log**

This improvement log demonstrates focus on cross-working with internal partner services to improve the end to end service delivery for our customers. Highlights issues identified and key actions and outcomes required to improve.

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**1.3.3: We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service, as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **20: Customer Survey questions**

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This is the question sheet for our last office based Customer Survey. The questions cover delivery, timeliness and key areas as well as the last question formed by customer insight where a customer asked why there is no telephone payment system. This has been included as a question this time

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##### **28: Consultation on Customer Service Review 2**

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This is a Customer Consultation on Service Points. Customer Review 2 has plans to close 22 and this consultation was to canvass customer views. Questions included views on access, delivery and information and how closure would affect the local community.

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##### **3: Registration Survey 2014**

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This is a main area of our service delivery. The survey contained a question formed by customer insight regarding the playing of the background music. Most customer are happy with the music provided and this is reflected in the customer answers

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##### **34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

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This is a report on how customers found using the complaints system when they made a complaint to the Highland Council. The survey asked questions about delivery, timeliness, information, access and quality of customer service. The council scored high in all categories.

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##### **4: Scotlands PeoplesHub Survey**

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This survey asked questions relating to satisfaction with services, helpfulness of staff, value for money, access and opening hours. The survey also asked customers what we could do to improve the service around the Hub and the answers have been collated with some requests being sent to GRO

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##### **5: Annual Performance Survey 2014**

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This is the Councils Annual review of its performance by the Citizens Panel. Questions asked have been set with consultation with other services and customer insight. See pages 10 to 20 and in particular section 8.1 on page 20 for additional services customer would like to see provided.

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**1.3.4: We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**15: Customer Survey 2014 Results**

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This is one of a number of surveys conducted in 2014/15. The satisfaction rates for customers with satisfaction in small and rural service points is 96%. This is a very difficult target to improve upon but it demonstrates that satisfaction rates among customers are high

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**27: Customer Charter**

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This is our Customer Charter and it details the service customers can expect to our offices. Our targets are challenging and we are meeting these. Our satisfaction levels are a good indication of how we are meeting our targets

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**33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

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This is the report on complaints to the Highland Council. The target set for answering Stage 1 and 2 complaints within the recommended time line is 80%. This is a high target and compares very well with other councils. See page 2 for the results against this target.

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**5: Annual Performance Survey 2014**

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Pages 15,20 and 24 are examples of customer satisfaction with services. Satisfaction levels continue to vary but the targets for providing customer satisfaction are being met.

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**2: Customer Engagement Strategy**

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Please refer to pages 5 to 7 of this report demonstrating stretching targets and customer satisfaction.

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**91: Website Review Report**

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Please refer to section 2 and 3 of the report highlighting customer satisfaction.

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**1.3.5: We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**159: Website Enhancements and Best Practice Sharing**

This is an email request from Kettering Borough Council requesting to replicate some of our Website features. Heathers response identifies what we have done to make the customer journey easier when completing online transactions with us. Midlothian Council have also adopted our website approach.

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**149: Apply Once Online Form Communication**

Our new Apply Once online form, allowing customers to identify all the council benefits they may be entitled to and apply for them in a single form. Evidence required can be scanned or photographed and uploaded - avoiding a trip to a service point. Saving customers time and improving the process.

**Active Evidence**

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**11: Global Language Chart and Leaflet**

A New updated version of the help available for those customers whose first language is not English. This assists customers from ethnic minorities in being able to access assistance from an interpreter. This has proved to be very popular - and expensive for the Council

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**18: Direct debit form updated**

This form was altered as a result of customer comments. The number of options how customers can pay their council tax with taking breaks of payments when required and the dates the payments are taken from their accounts has been increased to 18 different options

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**19: Net Call - Demonstration**

The net call system allows for the operator to view customer demand on the incoming calls at the Service Centre and move resources appropriately to meet customer demand. This works very well during peak periods of high demand

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**24: New School Closure web information system**

This is a new innovation to keep parents up to date with the school closures. The school information is submitted by phone by the school headmaster (secure pin numbers for each school) and this information is uploaded to the web and the headmaster can change this if the school reopens or closes

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## **2: The Culture of the Organisation**

### **2.1: Leadership, Policy and Culture**

#### **2.1.1: There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **133: Corporate Development Forum**

Minutes from the employee forum demonstrating that senior managers within the organisation are focussed on steering employees to enable the delivery and development of customer services.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **2: Customer Engagement Strategy**

This is our Customer Engagement Strategy which has been approved by the full Council. It puts the customer first and outlines how the council will do this. It details the methods to the benefits of the customers we will use to make this happen

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##### **33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

This complaints report puts customers at the top end of service delivery. The council engages with all its customers and sets stringent targets for answering complaints and enquiries. The Chief Executive Weekly Business Meeting discusses all complaints outstanding

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##### **36: Corporate Service Plan**

This is the Corporate Service Plan. It indicates where services will be developed for the good of the communities in Highland Council area. It is quite specific what it will achieve for citizens and communities. See pages 10-15

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##### **37: Highland Council Corporate Plan**

The vision for Highland Council and how it will plan for its citizens and communities. This demonstrates the 7 core values of the council and how it will develop these over the next 5 years. Pages 6-10 are most relevant here with regard to putting the customer first

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##### **28: Consultation on Customer Service Review 2**

This document demonstrates the principals and method used to for consultation to seek the views of Service Point users, Community Groups – including Community Councils, Highland Council tenants, Members and any other interested parties in regards to the customer service review.

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## **2.1.2: We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

### **New Evidence**

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#### **113: Bonar Bridge Business Case**

This evidence is a clear demonstration of the process undertaken, information gathered and considerations made in relation to changing service provision for customers. The sample business case is one of 23 (full doc can be viewed on site) completed as part of the review.

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#### **141: Listening - budget facebook chats**

This document provides data on a series of facebook chats held with the public. Utilising social media allows more instant feedback and can reach the wide demographic of the Council area in the same forum with reaches of up to 5200. Along with live chat there was also polls taken on the page.

### **Active Evidence**

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#### **11: Global Language Chart and Leaflet**

This improvement to services was as a result of customers whose first language is not English communicating with the council. This updated map and chart was introduced in all Service Points to provide help and assistance to ethnic minorities

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#### **13: Translation of Web Page link**

This is a major improvement. Not only does this translation link assist ethnic minorities to listen to the web page in their own language, it assists people who are learning a foreign language.

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#### **35: Web Page Improvement letter**

The web page was updated and reformed as a result of customer feedback. The improvement has also resulted in a major increase in the number of face book and twitter feeds. There has been a 367% increase in Face book "likes" up from 1431 in September 2014 to 6680 in February 2015.

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#### **24: New School Closure web information system**

This link directs you to the area on our website associated with school closures. Up to date information is posted here for parents and carers to easily see what emergency school closures have been made and also links into social media feeds to widen the communication channels.

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**2.1.3: We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**24: New School Closure web information system**

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This is the latest information system for school closures. This informs the customer on the web page, Facebook and Twitter if their children's school is closed or open. The school headmaster can input information to the state of the school throughout the day.

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**27: Customer Charter**

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This is our Customer Charter which lays down the level of service customers can expect when they visit our offices. It details waiting times and how customers will be received and treated by staff

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**32: Out of Hours Police Scotland**

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The Out of Hours agreement with Police Scotland. This delivers an out of hours service for Highland Council customers and they will receive the same level of service from Police Scotland staff as they would from Highland Council staff. There is no difference in the service provided.

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**33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

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This report to the Council details how the Complaints Procedure has been working for customers. It outlines the measures taken to ensure that all customers who make a complaint against a council service receive the best possible advice and a resolution to their complaint

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**36: Corporate Service Plan**

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The Corporate plan for our service is laid out by the Deputy Chief Executive. Pages 9 to 14 indicate how the service will deliver its plan for Empowering the Community. This is the different parts of the service working together to provide a service to customers

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**43: HMPO Agreement Passports**

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Our SLA with HMPO. This enables customers to conduct a first time Passport Application Interview from a Service Point in their local area rather than travel to a designated Passport Office. The SLA outlines the service the customer expects and receives. The SLA is being updated from IPS to HMPO

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**2.1.4: We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**115: Fairer Highland Leaflet**

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This is The Highland Councils commitment to ensuring a fair service is provided to all customers. Outlining the standards and processes the organisation will work to; treat people fairly.

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**116: Citizens Panel 2014 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

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This evidence is a demonstration of the fairer highland principals being applied when gathering information to make decisions on service provision and to understand our customer groups. The information is used to help improve service provision.

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**136: CHP Customer Satisfaction Survey Method Document**

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New customer complaints satisfaction survey (page 2) with specific question on fair treatment. This survey is new and has been rolled out within the last month, results of the survey can be viewed on site during audit visit. The results are input into a tracker where improvements are driven from.

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**137: New Customer Comment Card 2016**

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Based on feedback from last years audit we have revised our customer comment card which was deployed in August 2016. We ask directly whether they have been treated fairly or not and seek further comment to help us improve and recognise good practice. A central tracker can be viewed on site.

**Active Evidence**

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**33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

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This report to Committee is how Highland Council handled the group of customers making a complaint against the council. Paragraph 2 explains how their complaint was handled and the outcome. Evidence 34 below is the results of a customer survey on complaints.

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**4: Scotlands PeoplesHub Survey**

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This is a new service and it is important that customer experience met with their expectations. However in some cases this proved not to be the case. Although the customer group was treated fairly as in other councils, IT restrictions meant we provided a lesser service. This is being reviewed

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### **2.1.5: We protect customers' privacy both in face-to-face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **138: Inverness Service Point - New Location**

Inverness Service Point offers privacy pods for those wishing to use the online functionality as well as acoustic panels at the service desk to minimise noise. There is also a private room for use where required and the windows have frosted glass. Template SP for roll out across the network.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **1: CRM Demonstration**

This is a demonstration of New Netcall CXM. It holds records of customer contacts from request for service to complaints. The new application brings further security features where compartmental security architecture which allows sensitive complaints to be handled on a need to access

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##### **29: Interview Room poster**

All our offices and service points have an interview room. This poster offers customers the option of having a private interview with a customer service officer.

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##### **30: Inverness Window Lettering**

This is the details of the Inverness service point. The lettering was placed on the windows to provide privacy for the customers sitting in the waiting area of the service point. The same lettering has also been applied to the Dingwall Service Point to provide privacy for customers.

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##### **43: HMPO Agreement Passports**

First time applicants for a passport can make use of the Service Points in 5 locations. The security of customer information is encrypted using laptops from HMPO and the room for the interview is monitored by staff to protect customer confidentiality. All rooms have blinds for the interview.

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##### **44: Email Benefit forms demonstration**

Customer information for Council tax, housing benefit, clothing grants and free school meal applications are email to respective services. This enables quicker and onscreen delivery of forms. It also saves costs in there is no requirement to photocopy evidence.

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**2.1.6: We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

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This demonstrates how staff interact with customers on receiving their call at the Service Centre. It is the same for face to face contact. Staff actively engage with customers to deliver the best possible service. This can be viewed in the service points on assessor visit.

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**25: Photography Complaint and Resolution**

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This is a complaint about uploading photographs to the web. The customer wanted to upload a photograph to back up a complaint. However the information to do this was misleading. The Digital services manager replied to the customer and changed the format to make the process easier

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**26: Email customer Comments**

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A request for a residents parking permit on Eigg. This demonstrates the extra lengths the staff will go to ensure delivering a good customer service meeting the requirements of the customer.

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**36: Corporate Service Plan**

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This is the Service Plan for Corporate Services. Pages 11 and 13 outline the measure the service will take to actively promote and engage with citizens and communities. This demonstrates our commitment to a customer focused culture within the service and the council

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**52: Legal department customer email**

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This is an example where the customer had not received a reply from an email forwarded from the Service Centre to another service. Customer services management stepped and raised the issue with the service where action was promised on the issue.

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**80: Customer Service Compliment**

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Some good examples where customers have delivered a service which actively promotes the customer focused culture of the organisation. The customers comments indicate they are happy with the service provided.

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## **2.2: Staff Professionalism and Attitude**

### **2.2.1: We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.**

Applicant Self Assessment:        Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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#### **74: Housing Repairs Improvement Log**

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To continue to deliver a good customer service it is important to ensure staff and systems are fit for purpose. This is a review undertaken of Housing processes with recommendations of where improvements are required to the Housing process for Service Centre staff handling customer enquiries

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#### **75: Contact Excellence Presentation**

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This is a new development and is being presented to all staff. Customer Contact Excellence is a Quality Assurance model and will be incorporated into training for all staff.

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#### **76: Coaching and Feedback Evaluation**

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It is important that staff receive evaluation for any training they undertake and also how they are performing in their workplace. There is a difference between coaching and feedback and staff are made aware of this when completing the form

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#### **77: Telephone Quality Assurance**

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To improve standards Quality Assurance is becoming more important in how staff deal with customers. This form is one of a number being introduced to improve standards and ensure more efficient customer journeys.

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#### **78: Employee Development and Review**

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Another important tool for improving customers service. Every employee has a yearly Employee Development and Review with their line manager. The importance of good customer service is part of each review. A sample ERD is attached.

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#### **79: Recruitment Portal Demonstration**

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All Recruitment for Highland Council is channelled through the Recruitment Portal to reach the widest possible audience. A demonstration of the portal will be available for the assessor where he can view the content of recruitment adverts for Customer Service Vacancies

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### **2.2.2: Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **142: Housing Tennant Survey Results 2015-16**

This is survey results from Council housing tenants. Rows 8- 13 relate to customer service staff handling the calls at first point of contact. For 2015-16 we have a 99.2% satisfaction rating with being polite and helpful and 98% satisfaction at understanding the customers requirements.

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##### **143: Customer Service In Motion**

Visits to several Service Point locations will enable the Auditor to witness customer interaction and the professionalism of or staff at point of contact. At the Service Centre we can also listen to live calls again demonstrating staff skills across another contact channel.

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##### **117: Contact with Customers through Website**

This evidence clearly demonstrates our commitment to customers by being proactive with responses and outcomes of feedback. This feedback is directly responded to by our web development team and therefore feeds directly into the improvements strategies allowing our website ranking to improve.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **77: Telephone Quality Assurance**

This evidence demonstrates our commitment to providing helpful and friendly customer interactions via the telephony channel. Line items 4 to 8 focus on language and communication and the guideline indicate the expected standards to be displayed by our customer service advisors.

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##### **55: Feedback from Facebook**

Customer enquiries being handled through the Face book portal. This is becoming more popular and a review is taking place of how the replies to customers are received. At the moment the customer is being given another number or email to report the enquiry. The enquiry should be dealt with directly

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##### **80: Customer Service Compliment**

A selection of Compliments received at the Service Centre showing that staff are friendly to customers and understand their needs

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**2.2.3: We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**74: Housing Repairs Improvement Log**

This is a piece of work commissioned to better understand the problems customers and staff were having with the current standard for Housing Repairs. This identified the issues from consultation with staff and a programme was put in place to resolve the issues.

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**75: Contact Excellence Presentation**

This is a presentation given to all staff in customer services. It is an excellent presentation and highlights the importance of good customer service and the part it plays in delivering services effectively

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**76: Coaching and Feedback Evaluation**

Coaching and Feedback form all customer services staff have to undertake. It is important that staff understand the reason for coaching and it is also important that the feedback from staff is analysed by management to improve customer service and staff ability

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**77: Telephone Quality Assurance**

A new set of telephone answering standards. These have been overhauled and are now in place for Service Centre staff. They are comprehensive, detailed and working and laid out in an easy to follow format.

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**78: Employee Development and Review**

The yearly review of performance for all staff. This replaced to old Annual Performance Report. The new form is more detailed and gives the staff and the manager more scope for setting out the targets for the coming year and the past achievements more clearly

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**87: Customer Service Qualification Certificate**

This is the qualification that all staff sit as part of their employment training for Customer Services. The qualification was designed in partnership with all Scottish Councils with Highland Council Customer Services contributing to the criteria.

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**2.2.4: We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**144: Service Overview OOH**

Out of hours repairs training was revised using staff insight to provide a more robust training to a new partner Aberdeen City Council who are handling these calls on our behalf. The full package can be viewed on site along with discussion with the staff member who did the redesign and delivery.

**Active Evidence**

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**102: Customer Service Training Programme**

A new training programme being incorporated into Customer Service Staff Training. The SPSO has taken a long hard look at current processes and has instigated change to improve customer services. This is one of an number of initiatives to improve service. See also evidence 76

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**74: Housing Repairs Improvement Log**

This review has been undertaken by SBSO officer. Their experience has been used to look at the present system, monitor its effectiveness and make improvements to how the service could better deliver its service in conjunction with Customer Service staff.

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**76: Coaching and Feedback Evaluation**

This coaching and Feedback evaluation links in to evidence number 102. These are a series of measures being introduced to improve service through input from customer facing staff

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**95: Staff suggestion School closures**

The Service Centre Team Leader is involved in the School Closure system which has been placed on the web. He has put forward some suggestions that required to be considered when the system was being discussed on its trial basis. These have been incorporated into the Web system

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**98: Travel Card Suggestion**

This is where a team leader used their experience to rectify a shortfall in customer service. He became aware of a problem with renewal of travel cards and put measures in place to ensure the applicant received their card on time

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**2.2.5: We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**118: The Wee Picture**

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This is an example of internal recognition. Profiling members of staff in the internal magazine and showcasing the good work completed. Staff who are being profiled are selected by senior managers in recognition of their commitment and hard work.

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**139: High Points Issue 3 December 2015**

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This edition of highpoints show cases the quality award winners including our Digital Services team for the school closures system (award can be viewed on site) on page 7, as well as recognition for all customer service staff on the retention of our CSE accreditation on page 14.

**Active Evidence**

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**59: Chief Exec email to staff**

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This is an email from Chief Executive to all staff after the severe weather had caused disruption across large parts of the highlands. It demonstrates how management recognise the efforts of staff and how much this is appreciated in delivering services.

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**80: Customer Service Compliment**

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A selection of compliments where staff have demonstrated good customer service and the customer has taken the time to highlight this. This is just a selection of compliments received

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**88: Registration Examination Certificate**

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Email highlighting the contribution staff have made to sitting and passing their Registration Certificate. Chief Registrar Diane Minty expressing her delight to management on the commitment of staff

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**96: Head teacher School Closure System**

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This is comments from a Head Teacher complimenting staff on a busy day during the winter period when a number of schools were closed owing to weather. His comments are very complimentary

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### 3: Information and Access

#### 3.1: Range of Information

**3.1.1: We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### Active Evidence

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##### 46: Web page link

The Council's web page contains information about the services provided, who is in charge and when the services are available to the public. Examples are, office opening hours, service points, recycling centres etc. The structure of the Council is also available on our Website.

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##### 47: Extract with Councillors in charge

This page from Working together for the Highlands has the details of the Councillors who are in charge of the Council. It also explains how the council priorities over the next five years

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##### 48: Merkinch Newsletter

This is an article in a local community newsletter. It gives information on council services and telephone numbers. Page three has an article on Service Points and gives customers the details if they want to contact the council share their views

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##### 56: Plasma screen presentation

These screens are available in our main offices and display current and up to date information relating to council services. They are also used for any special promotions services may wish to inform customers about such as recycling updates, special council meetings in the local area.

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##### 60: Highland Council Services CD

This is a CD about Highland Council, how it is run, who is in charge and the services it provides. It is available through libraries council offices and Service Points. It makes information available to customers and potential customers

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##### 82: Link to Opening Hours Service Point

A link to a Service Point displaying opening hours and telephone number. There is also a link displaying a map reference and directions on how to get to the Service Point

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**3.1.2: Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**145: Burial and Cremation Charges April 2016**

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Found on the website this details the cost of burial and cremation from April 2016 in Highland.

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**146: Marriage and Civil Partnership Fees April 2016**

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Published on the website the new fees for Highland Council Marriage and Civil Partnerships. Details also info on how to book a ceremony and payment methods accepted as well as additional information that is required.

**Active Evidence**

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**38: Blue Badge Charge**

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This is an extract from the web page for the Blue Badge Scheme. It tells the customer how to apply for the badge but also the cost.

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**42: Inverness Parking Permit**

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The cost on the application form for a residents parking permit. The application form for Visitor and Business Parking permits also has the cost to the applicant.

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**61: Fees for explosive licence**

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Another example of charge to customers for a service. This is the explosive fee licence which is received from Community Services and sent as a communication to all Sere vice Point staff to keep them up to date with the changes in cost of the licence

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## 3.2: Quality of Information

### 3.2.1: We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### Active Evidence

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##### 10: Evidence of email enquiries

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This is examples of where customers have contacted the council by email to the Service Centre. The request is handled by the Service Centre team and an answer is either supplied direct from them or it is passed to another service to assist and resolve the enquiry.

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##### 11: Global Language Chart and Leaflet

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This is a method used for communication where the customer has difficulty in the use of English as a first language. The member of staff can use the chart to determine the language of the customer and can phone an interpreter for assistance.

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##### 13: Translation of Web Page link

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This is a very good tool for customers. The web page can be translated into a number of different languages and assists not only customers resident in the highlands but customers from outside looking for information on the Highlands. Has been of great use.

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##### 43: HMPO Agreement Passports

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This agreement uses the service Points in 5 locations to provide a Passport Interview Application Service for customers in the Highlands. The customer receives the interview through a video link PC installed in the Service point. This saves a journey to Glasgow or Edinburgh for the same service.

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##### 9: Council Tax Large Print

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Large print copies of the Council Tax are available and can either be sent out to the customer by post or email. They can also be printed in each service point and given to the customer on request.

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##### 5: Annual Performance Survey 2014

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These survey results demonstrate our commitment to provide information to our customers using various media channels to suit individual needs.

---

**3.2.2: We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received and understood the information we provide.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**117: Contact with Customers through Website**

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Evidence of customer interactions between themselves and the web development team. Demonstrates a clear path of understanding issues and ensuring there is an understanding of what is happening next or as a result of the feedback.

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**147: Contact Excellence Complaints Correspondence Framework**

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We have introduced quality assurance for complaint handling via written correspondence. The standards fall in line with the front line telephony quality assurance. This allows us to assess how we have provided information to the customer to ensure outcomes are understood.

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**148: Marriage Guidance Notes and Form**

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When someone enquires about getting married we provide advice over the counter at service points and over the phone as well as issuing guidance notes to accompany the paperwork required to be completed. This is to ensure that all requirements are understood.

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

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This demonstration of the CRM system enables the customer Service operator to ensure the customer understand the information. Through telephone contact with the customer the operator can talk and advise the customer to ensure they understand the information they have been given

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**38: Blue Badge Charge**

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When a customer applies for a blue badge it is important they understand the rules governing the issue of the badge. It is not always possible to speak direct to the badge holder as a member of the family may be applying on their behalf. The guidance notes are issued with the badge to applicants

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**77: Telephone Quality Assurance**

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The quality assurance standards line items 9,10 and 11 focus on ensuring that the customer advisor provides the correct information to our customers via the telephony channel and that more importantly the customer fully understands the information.

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**3.2.3: We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**11: Global Language Chart and Leaflet**

This has been a major improvement on the previous signs available for customers from ethnic minorities who present themselves at the Service Points. This has proved to be an easier system and has made handling enquiries from customers whose first language is not English more efficient

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**13: Translation of Web Page link**

The translation of the web page is another first for the Council. This translates the web page into one of a number of language to enable customers from both outside and inside the Council area to make use of the information available

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**37: Highland Council Corporate Plan**

The Highland Council Corporate Plan. Improved graphic design software enables all graphics to be designed in house a reducing design costs. The improved layout makes it easier for customers to find the correct section in he book easier

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**46: Web page link**

The councils WEB page was completely revamped and has improved content and layout. Customer comments are very positive about the new web page and the information is in a more easily accessible format. The range of information has also increased as more forms/services are available on line

---

**50: Audio translation of Web page**

This is another version of the web page link to assist customers. Evidence 13 demonstrates how the web page being viewed can be translated in a number of languages. This can also be heard verbally by the customer if they highlight the portion of text they wish to hear

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**60: Highland Council Services CD**

This CD is an initiative to provide information to customers in the format they prefer. Although there is the web page which has increased in popularity and twitter and Face book, some customers still prefer to use other means to access information

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**3.2.4: We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

This demonstrates the information given to the customer is accurate and complete and if the information cannot be given to the customer there and then, the assistant will explain the steps being taken to ensure the information will reach the customer

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**51: Clothing Grants Application**

Clothing grants are received and evidenced at the Service Points before being sent to the relevant service. It is explained to customers that there will be a delay in when they receive their cheque as the claim has to be processed which involves checking that the children are eligible

---

**52: Legal department customer email**

An email to a customer informing them of the next steps in their enquiry

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**25: Photography Complaint and Resolution**

This complaint sees an end to end conclusion from addressing the customers requirement to issuing a communication to all customer service staff to enable provision of instruction at first point of contact.

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**86: Customer Complaint example**

Complaint response demonstrating investigation into history and advice on what to do next.

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**77: Telephone Quality Assurance**

Telephone quality assurance standards give guidelines on the expected behaviours to ensure we provide accurate and complete information to meet the customers needs.

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### **3.3: Access**

#### **3.3.1: We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **10: Evidence of email enquiries**

Customers can use email to contact the council. This enquiry line enables customers in remote areas to contact the council when they choose rather than relying on set opening times. They always receive a reply to their enquiry

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##### **46: Web page link**

This is the link to the web page. greater use is being made of the web by customers to access services, pay bills and complete on line forms.

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##### **50: Audio translation of Web page**

Another council improvement for customers. This is an audible translation of web information pages into another language. It can also assist customers with a sight disability to hear the page information in their own language if they are unable to read it

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##### **54: Feedback from twitter**

Twitter is another means by which customers can contact the council. This has grown in popularity and steps are being implemented through Digital Integration to cater for a planned increase in the use of social media.

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##### **55: Feedback from Facebook**

Face book is another method by which customers contact the council. Face book "likes" have increased from 1431 and 18th place on 1 September 2014 to 6680 and 9th place at 19/1/15. This is a 367% increase.

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##### **56: Plasma screen presentation**

These presentations are available in our main service points. They display up to date council information for customers in the waiting areas. They have proved to be a very good investment and the costs of the screens is met from paid advertising from suppliers.

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### **3.3.2: We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements, and offer better choices**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **New Evidence**

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##### **149: Apply Once Online Form Communication**

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With a growing trend towards online transactions we have looked at ways to improve customer journeys. The apply once form allows customers to enter details once and be advised of benefits that may apply to them. This removes the need for completing several forms for council tax; housing benefit etc.

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##### **150: Community Services Facebook chat Report 6-11-15**

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Our facebook engagement with customers has increased our page likes from 6680 in January 2015 to 12,890 in September 2016. This report demonstrates how we interact via this channel to help identify possible service improvements and engage the customer in the decision making process.

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##### **151: Digital First Programme Update 2016**

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The committee report provides data o the digital first programme, documenting channel shift and customer behaviour online and the benefits it brings to Council and customer as well as asking for feedback to further improve service and offer choices to suit.

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **10: Evidence of email enquiries**

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The number of email enquiries continues to rise year on year. By having part of the Service Centre team monitoring the email stream, this ensures a quick reply to customer emails received at the Service Centre. The range of email subjects received from across the world is also increasing

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##### **19: Net Call - Demonstration**

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Net call allows the Customer services team leader monitor the number of incoming calls. The call volume to the Service Centre has increased year on year. The netcall system enables calls to be switched between operators to enable the best possible customer service

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##### **46: Web page link**

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Over the past year 2015-16 the website has been developed to further enhance users journeys. The front page has clear icons for the most common used process - Pay, Report, Request, My Account. Work is also being completed to enhance accessibility and thsi can be evidenced as part of onsite discussion

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**3.3.3: We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.**

Applicant Self Assessment:      Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**57: Cleanliness Service Points**

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A note about cleanliness in Customer Service Offices. This criteria is a visual check rather than a paper based one.

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**58: Interview Room Passport Service**

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This is schedule 3 from the Service Level Agreement with Her Majesty Passport Office. This details that the room in the service point used for interviews must be clean and tidy.

---

### **3.4: Co-operative working with other providers, partners and communities**

#### **3.4.1: We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **32: Out of Hours Police Scotland**

The Out of Hours Agreement with Police Scotland to provide emergency cover for Highland Council Housing and Technical Services. The agreement operates during the hours the Council offices are closed from 1700-0900 Monday to Friday and from 1700 Friday to 0900 Monday

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##### **43: HMPO Agreement Passports**

First time applicants for a passport require to be interviewed by HMPO. Customers have the choice of either attending an HMPO interview office in Glasgow or Edinburgh or using the facilities available in the service points to facilitate the interview. Over 800 customers used the facility last year

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##### **64: Citylink SLA**

This is one of a number of SLAs Customer Services have with Citylink. This provides for customers to purchase Citylink tickets at the Service Points and reserve a seat for Citylink journeys. This also operates In Kyle, Golspie, Kinlochleven, Alness, Invergordon, Brora and Helmsdale

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##### **65: New Deaf Communication Project**

This is on display in all Service Points. It is a new project aimed at helping customers who have a hearing disability. It works well in partnership and the help from the Service Points in displaying this is appreciated by the deaf community

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##### **66: Visitscotland SLA**

The SLA with VisitScotland was updated in 2014. VisitScotland are looking at their provision of service delivery and depending on the outcome of their review, it may be updated in the future. The Dornoch office provides services on behalf of Visitscotland. Durness provides services for the council

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##### **67: Albyn Housing SLA**

Albyn Housing have houses in Aviemore which require card updates to enable residents to use the card for their heating and hot water. Aviemore Service Point provides the facility for residents to update their cards for this purpose, saving Albyn having to open an office in Aviemore.

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**3.4.2: We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**160: HLH - Agreement - January 2016**

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This details the responsibilities between Highland Council and High Life Highland in respect of new customer service delivery at three locations as part of the Customer Service Review which was completed in 2015.

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**161: Partnership Agreement for Out of Hours Service**

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This is the partnership agreement with Aberdeen City Council who commenced our emergency Out Of Hours call handling from November 2015. The document covers responsibilities from quality assurance to complaints handling and training.

**Active Evidence**

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**51: Clothing Grants Application**

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This is where the application is completed by the Customer Services and the application with supporting evidence is passed to Community Services. They then have the accountability to deliver the Clothing Grant cheque to the customer.

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**64: Citylink SLA**

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Page 2 paragraph 3 of this agreement with Citylink outlines the responsibility of service point staff when selling tickets. It states clearly what they do on behalf of the customer and the obligation to Citylink in further pages

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**67: Albyn Housing SLA**

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This is an arrangement with Albyn Housing in Aviemore. The service Point provides a range of services for Albyn in relation to payment for Biomass heating for Albyn Properties. This SLA enables Albyn to provide the service via the Service the service Point reducing staff costs. See para 4

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**68: Police Scotland SLA**

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Our agreement with Police Scotland. It details the service provided in the joint offices where Customer Service staff handle enquiries on behalf of Police Scotland. All CS staff have to be vetted before they are permitted to handle police business. See Page 4 for services provided

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**3.4.3: We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**130: Youth Trainee Thurso**

This demonstrates our commitment to provide opportunities to the community out with our normal role. This example is our work with a Youth Trainee where we have provided work experience and the end result being permanent employment.

**Active Evidence**

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**36: Corporate Service Plan**

The service plan outlines what the service will do to enable communities. See in particular Page 10 1.2, Page 11 1.6 and page 12 for 1.7 and 1.9. These are the some of the aims of the Service Plan to support communities.

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**37: Highland Council Corporate Plan**

The council is committed to assisting and supporting communities. With the spread of population over such a large area it is a difficult task but the council has the resources in place to support Communities. See in particular sections 3, 6 and 7 in the attached booklet

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**69: Reuse fair for Communities**

A Reuse initiative supported by the Council to raise awareness in communities of the availability of how to support communities using the various charitable and voluntary organisations available. These fairs are now a regular occurrence.

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**73: Attitude and Aspirational Survey**

This is a survey of young people in the highlands. 3500 were asked their views and although the survey was commissioned by HIE, it was widely promoted by the Highland Council

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## 4: Delivery

### 4.1: Delivery standards

#### 4.1.1: We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### Active Evidence

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##### 33: Complaints Report to Highland council

This is a report to the Council on how the Council has performed against the Public Sector Complaints Ombudsman Complaints Procedure adopted by all Scottish Councils. Page 2 of the report gives details of how the council is performing against the PSCO standard.

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##### 34: Complaints Survey report to Council

A more detailed study of the Complaints report submitted to Highland Council. In addition to more detailed information it also contains a survey of customers who used the Complaints Procedure and their views on how their complaint was handled.

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##### 43: HMPO Agreement Passports

These National Standards are for conducting Passport Application Interviews by Video Link. Our offices are required to meet these. Failure to observe these standards could jeopardise the interview both for the customer and the Passport Service.

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##### 70: Registration Standards

Registration Standards are National Standards set by the General Registrar for Scotland. All Registrars in Highland work to these standards and comparisons with each Council in Scotland are published annually.

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##### 71: Registration Standards Error Rates

This is the Error Rates for Registrations Standards. It is a comparison against all other Scottish Councils and in this comparison, Highland Council does very well with a very low error rate

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##### 72: Call Handling Standards

The is the Standard used in the Service Centre for handling customer enquiries. They set out exactly how the staff dealing with a customer call will answer it to the benefit of the customer.

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**4.1.2: We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**152: Highpoints Issue 4**

This edition of the Highpoints Magazine can be viewed on site as file size is too large to upload. Page 5 onwards publicises our results to defined local and national performance indicators and this is made available to the public via the website.

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**134: Citizens Panel 2015 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

This is the 2015 results from the citizen's panel survey on performance over the full range of Council services. Paragraph 2.3 details customer service specifics including website. 14% improvement on satisfaction with the home page from last year. This report is publicised to our customers.

**Active Evidence**

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**33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

This report to Highland Council demonstrates how we are meeting the PSCO complaints standards. The report explains in detail the number of complaints that were handled at each complaint stage. The performance is very good and compares well with other councils

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**71: Registration Standards Error Rates**

These are the error rates for all Scottish Council in Registration. It demonstrates how we are meeting the exacting standard set by the GRO and this information is available for public information. The Registration Service compares very well with other councils

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**90: Link to Performance Web page**

This is a link to the Council Webpage where the Performance Targets , Key Performance Indicators and how we compare to other Councils is available for the public information. It includes feedback from Citizens Panel and the Employee Survey

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**93: Telephone Answering Times Service Centre**

A years snapshot of how telephone calls are answered at the Service Centre. The response rate is very good compared to other councils who keep records and is much better than the response rate for the private sector.

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**4.1.3: We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**119: PSIF**

This is the outcome improvement plan as a result of consultation on complaints standards. This consultation involved SPSO feedback, LA network meetings and review of previous complaints handling and customer feedback.

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**120: Website Review Report**

This evidence shows the customer consultation undertaken, reviewed and utilised to inform and improve the website provision.

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**113: Bonar Bridge Business Case**

Sections 6 and 7 in the example business case demonstrate the consultation process and information gathered to help inform the decision making process for the customer service review. AS an example case these sections were completed for 23 service points at an individual level.

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**121: Audit and Scrutiny Committee Meeting**

Please refer to section 2.1 demonstrating past performance on targets set for complaints and an improving trend on performance to this.

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**153: Communications Strategy - Action Plan Progress May 2016**

This is the new communication strategy for 2015-2017 and demonstrates how and what we do with consultation as well as tracking progress against the desired outcomes.

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**154: Redesign Board Email and Links**

This is an email from the Chief Executive to all staff regarding the new Council Redesign Board. Links to the website holds further information on the board purpose, consultation process as well as outcomes and feedback to date.

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## 4.2: Achieved Delivery and Outcomes

### 4.2.1: We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### Active Evidence

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##### 27: Customer Charter

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The Customer Charter outlines the Service the customer can expect when they access services through the council. Our waiting times are clearly displayed. Our standards for replying to customer emails and letters are among the best in Scottish Councils.

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##### 38: Blue Badge Charge

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When a customer receives a Blue Badge the conditions of use are explained to them in the letter they receive. Misuse of these badges is becoming more prevalent and the consequences of how the badge is used when the badge holder is not present in the vehicle is explained to them

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##### 39: Bulky Uplift Charge

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This link to the web page informs the customer what they will get when they order a bulky uplift. It is also explained to the customer on the phone and in face to face service. The customer can see what they are paying for and what will be uplifted.

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##### 42: Inverness Parking Permit

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When a customer applied for a parking permit the rules governing the issue are explained fully to them. Misuse of permits does happen especially with Visitors Permits and the use of these are fully explained to the customer. The payment for each type of permit is also explained

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##### 51: Clothing Grants Application

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With the clothing grant the customer is made aware when the application form is submitted they will need to wait until their application is processed before they will receive the funding for the school uniforms

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##### 81: Food bank voucher scheme

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The issue of coupons for food banks is a sensitive issue. The process for these will be demonstrated to the assessor on his visit. These vouchers are issued in line with the Charity Recommendations and this is explained to the customer

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**4.2.2: We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**137: New Customer Comment Card 2016**

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New comment card and example - more can be viewed on site. We receive comments and compliments via the comments card process across our customer service network demonstrating a positive experience.

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**142: Housing Tenant Survey Results 2015-16**

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This survey demonstrates a 98%+ satisfaction with how we answer housing repair queries based on feedback from the tenant participation groups across Highland. Rows 5 to 20 give results on the customer service experience both in and out of hours.

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**155: Registration Service Customer Thank You Card**

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A thank you card received at the Inverness registration Office for all staff that helped this customer from completing wedding papers to the actual ceremony itself. A great example of team work to ensure the customer has a positive experience. This can be evidenced during site visit also.

**Active Evidence**

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**24: New School Closure web information system**

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This new system has been a hit with both parents and headmasters in the schools. It is a web based information system that enables Headteachers to post information relating to their school regarding closures in winter weather conditions. It also enables parents to see the information on the web page

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**54: Feedback from twitter**

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A customer using Twitter to request a service, receiving the service and leaving a very good compliment for the staff handling their enquiry

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**83: Transport Project email**

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Service Point in Sutherland were asked to take part in a transport Consultation exercise. Notices were displayed in Sutherland area service points and also service points bordering the Sutherland area. The exercise attracted good reviews and this is reflected in the email

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**4.2.3: We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**124: Local statutory Performance Indicators 2013/2014**

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Example of performance to statutory indicators set, benchmarking requirements and our commitment to open and honest reporting.

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**123: Glasgow Complaint Handlers Network Meeting**

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This is an example of minutes of the local authority complaint handler' s network meeting we take part in. It offers peer review, best practice sharing and benchmarking to gauge performance levels.

**Active Evidence**

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**101: Complaints Performance - Benchmarking**

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This is a comparison on Complaint handling and the times for resolving stage 1 and stage 2 complaints for West Dumbarton and Highland Council. Highland Council has resolved a higher percentage of Complaints at both stage 1 and 2 within the time frame than West Dumbarton Council.

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**106: Moray Council Customer Satisfaction**

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Benchmarking with Moray Council where the reports they have published for Customer Satisfaction compares very well with the results from Highland Council. Page 8 of the Moray Council report has some direct comparisons with Highland Council and on the majority, Highland Council are better.

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**35: Web Page Improvement letter**

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This demonstrates the improvement in the Council website and how it compares to other UK authorities. It is now ranked 6th - a considerable improvement on the old website. A great deal of customer feedback was used in creating the new web site

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**91: Website Review Report**

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Website Review Report submitted to Highland Council 25 Feb 2015. This gives more detail on the performance of the website, customer comments and how customers, community councils and focus groups were contacted and how their comments have been used by the Council

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**4.2.4: We have developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**119: PSIF**

Improvement plan set out from best practice session both internally and externally.

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**120: Website Review Report**

Report details website improvements based on customer feedback, best practice from partner Jadu and future opportunities.

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**122: Community Service Customer Services Improvement Plan**

Collaborative approach to improving service provision, sharing best practice and feedback to improve process.

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**125: Quality Framework Best Practice Learning**

A synopsis of where the quality framework came from and demonstrates the utilisation of staffs experience and backgrounds to draw on best practice experience and application of processes.

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**126: Service Centre Improvement Plan**

Improvement plan that highlights the activities in place to aid performance improvements.

**Active Evidence**

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**34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

Experience of using a process adopted from outside the organisation. The PSCO has decreed that councils must consult with Complaints and ask the questions provided as guidance by the PSCO. These questions have been used to gauge customer response to their experience of the complaints process

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### **4.3: Deal effectively with problems**

#### **4.3.1: We identify any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to customers, together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **111: Complaints analysis same sex marriage**

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This is related to Evidence 110 which is a letter upholding the complaint regarding civil marriage. This explains the actions we are taking to prevent the same occurrence happening again by sending out information to staff relevant to the complaint

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##### **34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

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This is part of the main report to Evidence 33. This gives examples of customer views on the complaint system and also some examples of where action has been taken against logged complaints

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##### **63: Complaint Halkirk**

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This is a failure in our repair standards. Customer is disabled and his initial enquiry was not handled correctly and once this had been identified measures were put in place to resolve the issue. It stemmed from a lack of asking the correct question first time around and has been addressed.

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##### **85: Legal Department customer enquiry**

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This is a customer enquiry to the Councils Legal Department. It was ignored by legal staff and left the customer frustrated as she was not receiving an answer. This was below standards and it was quickly addressed.

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##### **98: Travel Card Suggestion**

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This was a dip in our performance. The standard was 14 days for the Travel Card but this was a standard that could be improved upon and measures were put in place to ensure this happened. Although we were meeting our standard it could be improved.

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**4.3.2: We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**136: CHP Customer Satisfaction Survey Method Document**

This is the new customer satisfaction survey for complaints. The method is to conduct surveys on a quarterly basis so information is fresh and actionable where relevant to make service and process improvements. We ask customers and awareness and ease of our complaints procedure within it.

**Active Evidence**

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**109: Link to Online Complaints Procedure**

Link to the online Complaints Procedure. This has an explanation in easy steps on how to use the Complaints Procedure and gives the details and time limits for a reply.

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**25: Photography Complaint and Resolution**

This was a compliment received where the customer had been given the wrong information. It concerned a photograph that customer wanted to up load to support his original request for service. An apology was issued and the information on how to upload photographs reviewed and improved.

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**33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

The report to Highland Council demonstrating how we are performing against the complaints procedure. This demonstrates how we are meeting the targets set by both the council and the PSCO

---

**84: Complaints Leaflet**

This is our comments and complaints leaflet. It provides information to customers if they wish to make a complaint. It tells them exactly what will happen to their complaint, the time frame for dealing with the complaint and further action regarding the PSCO

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**34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

This report provides the results of performance to key performance indicators as well as some case studies showing how we use complaints to improve processes and service provision and customer feedback on the complaints process.

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**4.3.3: We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively, and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**100: On Line Learning - Complaints**

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All staff undergo On Line Training on Complaints. This is used by Responsible Officers and Complaint coordinators. In addition to this training, all staff are instructed in how to receive and process a complaint

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**104: Complaint upheld**

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An example of where a customer complaint has been investigated and upheld and an apology offered to the customer. This is where the complaint has been investigated and the council has been shown to be in the wrong and apologised to the customer

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**85: Legal Department customer enquiry**

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A good example of staff taking a lead and resolving a customer enquiry before it leads to a complaint

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**98: Travel Card Suggestion**

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A good example of where following complaints from customers the procedure for the issue of Travel Cards was reviewed and an improved system, delivering better response times for customers, was implemented.

---

**99: Complaint Handlers Agenda meeting**

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This meeting is attended by staff from Customer Services .It is the Local Authority Complaint Handlers meeting where issues surrounding complaints are discussed with input from all Scottish Councils. Guest speakers give their views on how complaints are handled for special needs groups.

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**4.3.4: We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**31: Courier report of same sex marriage mix up**

This is a mistake on the part of the Registration Service where the new legislation was not fully understood in the case regarding this couple. Steps have been taken to ensure that all registrars in Highland now know of the rules regarding same sex marriage

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**34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

This is an appendix to a report to Highland Council. It demonstrates how we have handled complaints and gives some examples of the complaints received, the time scale for answering the complaints and action to be taken regarding the complaint

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**52: Legal department customer email**

This is a informal complaint where action has been taken to address the customers enquiry. It had been ignored through lack of action from the service concerned. In future if the customer adviser receives the same request a second time this will be passed to management to action

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**63: Complaint, Halkirk**

This was unfortunate for the customer as staff failed to ask the correct questions which could have resolved the enquiry before it led to a complaint. Staff have been given training and guidance on ensuring the customer enquiry is investigated at length before closure.

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**95: Staff suggestion School closures**

A suggestion from staff on how to improve the school closures systems and link it to twitter. Some simple adjustments being suggested to better improve the service

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**98: Travel Card Suggestion**

A good example of where following complaints from customers the procedure for the issue of Travel Cards was reviewed and an improved system, delivering better response times for customers, was implemented.

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**4.3.5: We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure, taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**156: HC Complaint Handlers Meeting Agenda and Minutes**

This is an agenda and minutes from our internal complaints handlers meetings where we discuss the process, customer satisfaction and how we can improve and learn from complaints. Updates from the wider local authority meeting is discussed and attendees are conduits to their service senior managers

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**140: Annual Complaints Performance Report 2014-15**

This is the annual report for 2014-15 referencing performance against the complaints process and the KPI's set down by the SPSO. Data is looked at from timeliness to service improvements based on customer complaints made and satisfaction surveys conducted.

**Active Evidence**

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**33: Complaints Report to Highland council**

A review of the Council Complaint process and how the Council has handled the complaints it has received. The review of the Complaints Procedure is also a good time to look at how the system for complaints can be improved

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**62: Complaints Procedure**

This is the Councils Complaint Procedure as supported by the PSCO. It details how complaints will be handled and there is a time frame for dealing with all complaints.

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**84: Complaints Leaflet**

This is an updated leaflet in line with the recommendations of the PSCO. The two stage complaint procedure replaces the previous complicated Council Complaint Procedure that involved three stages and Ward Managers

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**99: Complaint Handlers Agenda meeting**

This is a meeting organised and chaired by a representative of the PSCO. All Scottish Council who have signed up to the PSCO complaints procedure attend and share views on complaints. Examples are discussed and best practice is used to resolve the examples. A member of Customer Services attends

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**4.3.6: We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**117: Contact with Customers through Website**

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Customer feedback directly into web development team and clear path of improvement actions taken as a result.

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**122: Community Service Customer Services Improvement Plan**

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Refer to appendix 1 in document evidence. This details customer complaint by area and actions required to improve and resolve for future customer contacts.

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**136: CHP Customer Satisfaction Survey Method Document**

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This is the new customer satisfaction survey that is being conducted with customers who have had a complaint upheld. The questions check customers satisfaction with the process as well as the outcome and gives further opportunity to provide feedback to the Council. Data can be reviewed on site.

**Active Evidence**

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**110: Reply for Same sex marriage**

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This is the response to the complaint regarding a mix up of same sex marriage. The customer received his compensation and although still not completely satisfied, accepted the Council apology

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**25: Photography Complaint and Resolution**

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This is a complicated letter and follow up but the Digital Services Manager has replied to the customer and arranged for the web to be updated to enable photographs to be uploaded more easily with easy to follow instructions

---

**34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

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This is a survey of a percentage of customers who had complained to Highland Council. They were contacted, their views on the Complaints Process were consolidated into a report which has been presented to Highland Council Committee

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## 5: Timeliness and Quality of Service

### 5.1: Standards for Timeliness and Quality

#### 5.1.1: We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### Active Evidence

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##### 10: Evidence of email enquiries

Evidence of how we react to enquiries received by email to the Service Centre. A timely response is given to each customer and if delays are experienced, these are rectified as soon as possible.

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##### 27: Customer Charter

Our Customer Charter sets the waiting times for waiting times, email responses and enquiries received by letter.

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##### 33: Complaints Report to Highland council

This report to Highland Council informs councillors how we are meeting the Complaints Standards set by the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman. It compares very well with other Scottish Councils

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##### 84: Complaints Leaflet

Our complaints leaflet informs the customers the time it will take to respond to their complaint depending on the different stage their complaint is at in the system. Our Committee Report to Highland Council on the Complaints Procedure details how we have met our standards on complaints

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##### 93: Telephone Answering Times Service Centre

The Telephone Answering times are linked to the Tel phone Quality Assurance. By using these standards to avoid delays the telephone the quality and response of answering the phones has improved from previous years

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##### 94: Customer Waiting Times Inverness Service Point

Inverness Service Point has a queue waiting/monitoring system. It is due an upgrade and at the moment although the information can be displayed there is difficulty in printing it out. The assessors can see the system in operation at the Service Point

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**5.1.2: We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**27: Customer Charter**

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Our Customer Charter has standards the customer can expect when they visit our offices or when they phone the service centre. Each service now has their own dedicated Customer Service Officer reporting direct to the service director. This post has been beneficial in improving customer service.

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**43: HMPO Agreement Passports**

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Our SLA with HMPO (formerly Identity and Passport Service) sets the comprehensive standards that the Service Points conducting first time passport applications must follow. They include quality of customer service on page 6.8

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**70: Registration Standards**

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Registration Standards are set by the Registrar General for Scotland and all registration officers and staff must, by law, undertake registration duties in accordance with the Standards

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**77: Telephone Quality Assurance**

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Our telephone call handling standards. These have been recently developed and all Service Centre staff are trained in their use. They are also regularly reviewed and staff are encouraged to use their telephone answering experience to contribute to their improvement

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## 5.2: Timely Outcomes

### 5.2.1: We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### New Evidence

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##### 120: Website Review Report

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This report is published on our website for public view, another example of ensuring we advise customers in regards to our customer service.

#### Active Evidence

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##### 84: Complaints Leaflet

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The complaints leaflet clearly tells our customers of the timeliness we strive to meet at all stages of the process and our commitment to provide a quality service.

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##### 10: Evidence of email enquiries

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When emails are received at the service centre if they can be answered by receiving staff, this is achieved. If they cannot be answered at first point of contact, they are forwarded to a colleague to assist and the customers id informed of this and the likely time scale for a resolution.

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##### 27: Customer Charter

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Our Customer Charter is displayed in all our offices. It highlights the time customers will be seen on entering the office and all staff undertake the Professional Qualification in customer care. Our commitment to customers is openly displayed.

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##### 77: Telephone Quality Assurance

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These are our updated Customer Service Standards for telephoning answering at the Service Centre. They have been developed in house and all existing and newly appointed staff are trained in their use.

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##### 34: Complaints Survey report to Council

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The complaints report is published on our website for public view and advises on our performance to the key performance indicators as well as feedback from customer surveys.

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**5.2.2: We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**127: Equality and Rural Impact Assessment**

Please refer to page 17, the case study in the document shows the method used to understand how customer groups use our services and what we can do to further enhance the process.

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

This demonstration will enable the assessor to see how customer enquiries are handled by staff and when they cannot be dealt with at the first point of contact they are passed to a colleague in another service to handle the enquiry

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**11: Global Language Chart and Leaflet**

This chart and leaflet enables staff to correctly deal with any customer where English is not the first language. It may be that an interpreter is required to deal with the enquiry and staff can arrange this from the front counter while they are dealing with the customer

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**26: Email customer Comments**

A normal enquiry regarding a parking permit for the Island of Eigg. Staff have dealt with the enquiry to the satisfaction of the customer

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**42: Inverness Parking Permit**

Parking is an issue in Inverness and Parking Permits are issued only to those Legally entitled to have them. This can lead to over entitlement but Inverness Service Point staff have been given training to ensure they know how to issue permits only to those residents entitled to have them.

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**81: Food bank voucher scheme**

A new service provided through the Service Point. Families and individuals in need are referred to the Service Point for a Food Bank Voucher

---

**5.2.3: We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

The use of the CRM can reduce customer contact within the council. The staff can receive the call at the service centre and either answer this direct or pass it to another service on behalf of the customer. This reduces time and directs the enquiry to the most appropriate service to answer.

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**10: Evidence of email enquiries**

When an email is received at the Service Centre it is passed to the service best suited to deal with the enquiry. A copy is also sent to the customer to keep them up to date on who in the service is dealing with their enquiry

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**24: New School Closure web information system**

This is a new innovation developed for Winter 2014. The web page gives information to customers on which schools are closed and by the means of a pin information system for each school, parents can check if their child's school is closed. It has proved to be very popular

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**44: Email Benefit forms demonstration**

By using this method of sending benefit forms direct to Finance it speeds up the system for the customer. This is an updated version of the system and it Finance now receive the pages individually instead of a PDF file where they had to search through the file for the relevant pages

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**51: Clothing Grants Application**

These are receipted at the Service Points on behalf of Community Services. The form was redesigned with CS input to assist customers as there was previously one form for Clothing and one for school meals. This reduces form filling for the customer and improves service.

---

**54: Feedback from twitter**

A good example of the use of twitter to share information with colleagues. The enquiry is received via twitter and then passed directly to another service on behalf of the customer.

---

**5.2.4: Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**128: Certification of Death (New Process)**

This process was invoked by the GRO and inhibits us from completing the process end to end when a review is requested. We explain to the customer what is happening and what to expect next.

**Active Evidence**

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**10: Evidence of email enquiries**

If a customer requests a Housing Repair there are standards in place for a response time depending on the urgency of the repair. The customer is informed when the repair will be completed. This also applies to bulky uplifts. The customer is given a date when the uplift will take place

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**31: Courier report of same sex marriage mix up**

This was a same sex marriage where both the Council and the customer were at fault. Although neither were satisfied with the outcome the customers had been referred to the Scottish Registrar General advice before they could proceed further

---

**38: Blue Badge Charge**

When a customer applies for a Blue Badge they are given the information relating to the cost and that there will be a delay in receiving the badge. Previously the badge would have been printed in the Service Centre and issued to the customer. Scottish Government now process and issue the badge

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**81: Food bank voucher scheme**

When a customer is being issued with a Food Voucher it is explained to them the process they must go through to receive the food and where to go to collect the it. Service Point staff are aware this is a difficult process for families and treat them accordingly

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**85: Legal Department customer enquiry**

This enquiry was not completed at the first point of contact and it was poor customer service. The staff at the Service Centre did try to achieve a solution for the customer but received no reply from the service. Measures are in place to prevent this happening in future.

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**5.2.5: We respond to initial enquiries promptly, if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**129: DT QPR**

Documented evidence of improvements made. Please refer to the Customer Services Section for details on targets and performance to those.

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**157: Website Banner Online Forms Unavailable**

This is a screen shot from our website when our online forms and payments process was unavailable. We seek to advise customers as soon as possible and then work starts immediately to rectify the problems. This can be explained during the visit to Digital Services.

---

**158: Visit With Chief Registrar**

During the audit visit on 25th October the Chief Registrar can evidence when delays occur due to our registration application FER being unavailable and the actions taken to inform the customers, carry out the registrations and how the issues are rectified. A manual process is instigated adding time.

**Active Evidence**

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**1: CRM Demonstration**

The assessor can listen in to customer enquiries and how the adviser handles the customer enquiry. If there is a delay - such as transferring the customer to another service - this information is passed to the customer so they are aware of where their enquiry is going and the action to be taken

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**26: Email customer Comments**

Customer enquiry where an initial response has been given and action taken to ensure the remainder of the request was completed to the satisfaction of the customer

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**2: Customer Engagement Strategy**

Please refer to page 5 which details the Council's strategy on dealing with first contact resolution and the aspirational time frames the council set themselves.

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### **5.3: Achieved Timely Delivery**

#### **5.3.1: We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we take action if problems are identified.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

#### **Active Evidence**

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##### **14: Customer Comment cards**

Customer Comment cards are a good way to gauge how the service provided is received by customers. Most of the comment cards are complimentary and speak highly of the quality of customer service received at Service Points

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##### **19: Net Call - Demonstration**

The netcall system enables Team Leader to see where the volume of telephone calls are going. They are able to change the route of calls from busy queues to staff better suited to answer particular sets of calls

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##### **1: CRM Demonstration**

CRM is the main tool used to capture customer interactions and is used to monitor performance to time scales for complaints. Data from CRM is used when compiling the annual complaints performance report which feeds into the SPSO and Improvement Service data.

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##### **34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

This report details performance in the complaints handling process and also has details within the case studies where we have taken action to address process gaps and issues that have been identified.

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##### **74: Housing Repairs Improvement Log**

Demonstrates actions taken to address performance issues and problems, in this case the housing repairs process.

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**5.3.2: We are meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**New Evidence**

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**134: Citizens Panel 2015 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

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This report provides details of the 2015 performance and attitudes survey conducted with the citizens panel and is publicised on our website. It demonstrates where we are meeting our targets and what improvements have been identified to focus on.

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**139: High Points Issue 3 December 2015**

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This edition highlights the quality award winners and details the work completed by them. This demonstrates a focus staff have to improve customer experience with the Council across many services. This magazine is published on the website.

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**140: Annual Complaints Performance Report 2014-15**

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This report publicises our performance against standards set for complaint handling by the SPSO. This report goes to committee as well as being published on our website and being reviewed by Audit Scotland and the Improvement Service.

**Active Evidence**

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**15: Customer Survey 2014 Results**

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Customer surveys are a good way of asking customers how they feel about the service they have received. This customer survey undertaken across the service points is very representative of how the service is delivered and received

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**3: Registration Survey 2014**

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Registration is an import part of Customer Services. The GRO office in Edinburgh has recently introduced changes to how the service is delivered and it is important to see if these changes have had any effect on the how Highland Council delivers it registration service. Very well apparently

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**34: Complaints Survey report to Council**

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This survey deals with the quality of customer service for those customers who have made a complaint against the Council services. It is very comprehensive and has the full backing of the Chief Executive when it went to the full committee of Highland Council

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**5.3.3: Our performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.**

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

**Active Evidence**

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**101: Complaints Performance - Benchmarking**

A sample complaints benchmarking against another Scottish Council. It demonstrates how well the complaints process has been handled in respect of timeliness and volumes of complaints processed within the PSCO time frame.

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**105: Benchmarking East Ayrshire Council**

This is a complaints comparison with East Ayrshire Council on the handling of Stage 1 and stage 2 complaints. The number of complaints and the time frame for completion of stage 1 and 2 complaints compares very well with East Ayrshire

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**106: Moray Council Customer Satisfaction**

This is Customer Survey with Moray Council. Our results compare very well with this council. The results are based on their access points and page 8 compares with our evidence 15 Customer Survey. As an example 87% of our customers are satisfied with length of time compared to 43% with Moray Council

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**107: Falkirk Council Satisfaction Results**

This is a Customer Survey from Falkirk Council. Page three details answers to specific questions regarding service. Highland Council Satisfaction survey compares well with the results and our Customer Survey (evidence 15 page 5) betters these results.

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**108: Western Isles Customer Satisfaction Survey**

This is a comparison with Western Isles Customer survey. Page 3 and 4 of this survey has satisfaction rates for customers at 81%. In our evidence 15 (customer survey page 5) our satisfaction rate is 96% for the same type of survey question.

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**90: Link to Performance Web page**

This link is to the Council Web Page where the performance data is accessed. It shows how the Council compares with other Scottish Councils in key areas across the services