



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol**
Cymru
**Natural
Resources**
Wales

**Natural Resources Wales'
Customer Strategy**

Building Trust

// Delivering customer focus excellence

September 2018



//
**Developing NRW into an
excellent organisation,
delivering first-class
customer service**

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01

Welcome - Clare Pillman



This is our first customer strategy, it is ambitious because we understand how important our customers are to us if we are to be a champion for the environment and nature. We have a wide range of roles and responsibilities in Wales, and excellent levels of service should be common to them all.

The development of the strategy and how we will deliver it are important milestones for our organisation as we work towards a customer vision for 2022, following the lifecycle of

our Corporate Plan. We know how important it is to make sure that we get our approach to customer service right with customers and staff making changes and improvements, so we can get better at meeting needs and creating the right experiences.

We want strong relationships, the right tools and channels, high levels of trust and satisfaction, and the ability to make customer focused decisions. All of which create stronger relationships that lead to better outcomes for everyone living and working in Wales, now and in the future.

All our customers should expect:

- **Timely, accessible & easy to use services** built to meet customer needs.
- **Considerate, helpful and knowledgeable staff** that value and thrive on their ability to deliver excellent service.
- All **customer channels** designed seamlessly to **respond effectively at first point of contact** to any customer, wherever possible.
- A strong explicit **commitment to customer and standards of service** to which we hold ourselves to account.
- A **proactive mindset** that encourages staff to 'walk in the shoes of customers' so values getting things right first time and understands the difference excellent service can make - even when dealing with difficult matters

This is a living document that provides the framework through which we are determined to work to improve the experience of any of our customers or staff and put excellent customer service at the heart of our culture.

Every interaction we have with anyone coming into contact with or affected in anyway by our organisation is an opportunity to develop a relationship and an excellent experience. We also know that we are only ever as good as the last experience any customer has of us.

We are a leading public-sector organisation in Wales delivering multiple services, with many interactions with different types of customers every day. Such scope and reach bring with it considerable responsibility and opportunity to make vital connections with our customers daily.

It has never been more important for us to develop and nurture our relationships with stakeholders, partners and the people of Wales. We have an important purpose in Wales that we cannot deliver on our own and need the help and support of our customers. Earning trust through excellent customer service is central to the development of those strong relationships. We want to work with others and develop mutual support, trust and understanding with our many and varied customers.

The principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) are central to the work needed to deliver on our customer vision. In delivering this strategy we will exemplify SMNR in practice, we believe that we can deliver substantial improvements in customer experience by fully adopting the SMNR principles.

We must also evolve to better meet the expectations of our customers who operate in a world of 24/7 digital services, often provided by businesses and organisations who are becoming increasingly sophisticated in understanding and providing for customer needs. Technology and innovation will be used to help us deliver consistently excellent levels of customer service.

I am determined that our organisation will deliver customer service excellence at every opportunity and such a commitment is core to our values and organisational culture. Whilst there is much work to do, I have every confidence in the skills and commitment of staff combined with the passion of so many customers for Wales, our natural resources and the environment. This strategy is the first of many important steps we will take to make sure that excellent customer service is at the heart of all that we do.



02

Why do we need a customer strategy?

We believe that high quality customer service along with staff satisfaction are central to our commitment to all seven of our well-being objectives as described in our Corporate Plan, but particularly #7:

Develop into an excellent organisation, delivering first-class customer service

This strategy sets the direction and ambition for our customer service based on what we know right now, it also demonstrates our understanding that factors both internal and external to Natural Resources Wales will change frequently. Therefore, it is essential that the strategic direction set out here is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. This is a real opportunity as we understand that both the customer landscape and our organisational priorities will change frequently as our work with local communities, Public Service Boards, and other customers and partners develops to deliver shared Well-being Plans in their geographical areas.

By taking a living strategy approach and making sure that the strategy is supported by workplans that cover the long, medium and short-term we will use customer and staff data and insight to constantly review our direction to make sure it is fit for purpose.



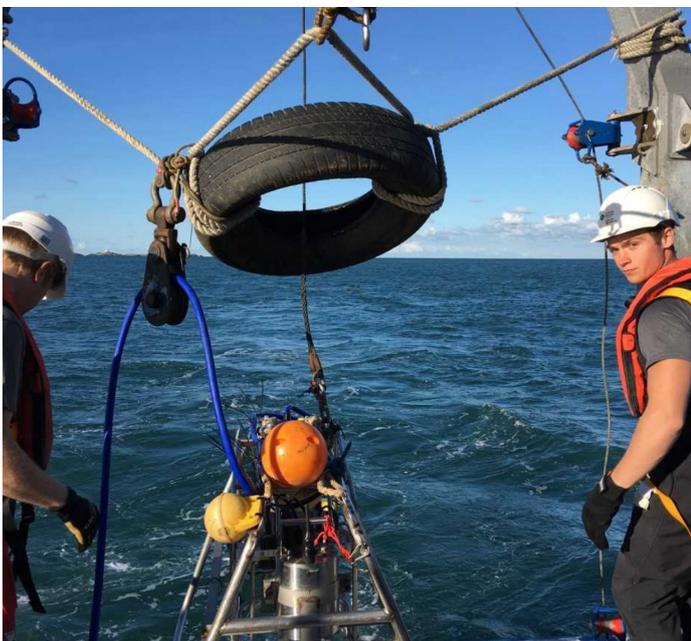
03

Our customer vision

Excellent customer service means we are trusted to deliver now and for future generations

The objectives of this strategy - what will be different?

- All our customers expect and experience consistently high levels of service from every part of our organisation - first time, every time.
- Improving levels of staff satisfaction because of more effective, customer focused ways of working.
- Customer focused ways of working are at the heart of everything we do.
- We will have a single view of the customer.
- We will plan for the future needs of customers to 2022 and beyond.
- Time, skills, expertise and finance is reinvested into our purpose as a result of customer focused quality improvement.
- The people of Wales recognise and understand who we are, what we do, what we stand for and what they should expect from us.
- Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) is supported by improved customer experiences inside and outside the organisation.



04

Who are our customers?

Anyone that we employ, come into contact or interact with or affect through our work is a customer.

We are deliberately taking a broad approach as we believe that regardless of the reason behind the contact or interaction, a good quality experience from us should be standard.

We have a broad range of roles and responsibilities as environmental guardians in Wales, so our customers are many and wide ranging at any given time.

Our role and responsibilities

- **Adviser:** principal adviser to Welsh Government, and adviser to industry and the wider public and voluntary sector, and communicator about issues relating to the environment and its natural resources.
- **Regulator:** protecting people and the environment including marine, forest and waste industries, and prosecuting those who breach the regulations that we are responsible for.
- **Designator:** for Sites of Special Scientific Interest – areas of value for their wildlife or geology, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and National Parks, as well as declaring National Nature Reserves.
- **Responder:** to some 9,000 reported environmental incidents a year as a Category 1 emergency responder.
- **Statutory consultee:** to some 9,000 planning applications a year.
- **Manager/Operator:** managing seven per cent of Wales' land area including woodlands, National Nature Reserves, water and flood defences, and operating our visitor centres, recreation facilities, hatcheries and a laboratory.
- **Partner, Educator and Enabler:** key collaborator with the public, private and voluntary sectors, providing grant aid, and helping a wide range of people use the environment as a learning resource; acting as a catalyst for others' work.
- **Evidence gatherer:** monitoring our environment, commissioning and undertaking research, developing our knowledge, and being a public records body.
- **Employer:** of almost 1,900 staff, as well as supporting other employment through contract work.

Why a customer strategy is important

Every member of staff in our organisation knows from personal experience what great customer service feels like. Walking in the shoes of our customer we can achieve a better experience, better engagement, better outcomes. We want an active excellent service mindset that will be nurtured and encouraged in all staff working in our organisation, as well as it being a

formal part of any role description and personal development plan.

A deliberately broad definition of who our customer is doesn't stand in the way of our teams making sure that have more specific, detailed understanding of customers when working in their local areas, developing services or supporting their colleagues deliver for others.



05

Excellent customer service helps deliver the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR)

Our Corporate Plan takes our seven well-being objectives and describes the steps we need to take to achieve them.

The well-being objectives demonstrate how we want to contribute to the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. We are committed to achieving these by pursuing the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) and applying its principles – our purpose as set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Key to these commitments is our

recognition that how we do things is every bit as important as what we do, and excellent customer service is central to that. SMNR means we look after all-natural resources (which include air, water, soil, wildlife and geological and climatic processes) in a way that ensures they will be available now, and for future generations. This means working in a way that better understands and values the natural environment and is more joined up and proactive. We believe that we can increase the support and involvement of all our customers to help us deliver SMNR by building trust through improving their experiences with us as our customers.



What excellent service should look like

06

Our starting point

Trust is central to our organisation, like many other public-sector bodies. We know that, amongst other things, poor customer experiences undermine levels of trust and our reputation. This creates barriers and distractions that get in the way of the kind of relationships where we encounter less issues and complaints, whilst enjoying more opportunities for understanding, collaboration and co-production - essential to our ability to deliver SMNR.

We recognise that:

- The experience of our customers could be much better across our services.
- That we could improve staff satisfaction by taking a more customer focused approach internally as well as externally.
- We can free up capacity and resources by improving customer experience and getting more right first time.

Our benchmark customer and staff survey, undertaken with the Institute of Customer Service (ICS), gives real insight into the experiences of customers and priority areas for improvement, as well as essential insight into what staff require to help them support delivery of customer service excellence.

Data shows that where customers have direct interaction with staff they are helpful, but less than 28% of our customers believe we get it right first time, our trust and loyalty sentiment data is low and data on correspondence, online services and information and service provision shows a need to focus on getting the basics right including transactional services (digital and otherwise).

For staff, data shows the importance of a strong, strategic direction for customer service, a clear framework and set of standards in which to operate and a need for training, empowerment and recognition in this area.



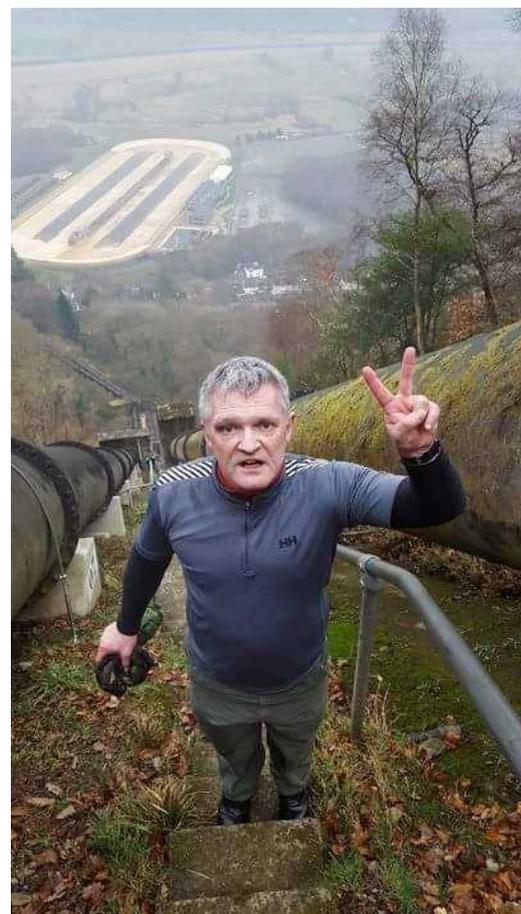
We will improve important aspects customer service making sure that our customers think we are doing the basics well first. The basics range from staff training and service standards, to the quality of our digital and off-line services, quality of our website, accessibility of our information, our ability to listen and respond to our customers.

The development of this strategy and the next phase workplan for delivery (ANNEX A) gives our organisation a purposeful focus on customer service excellence.

Progress in this area will have a positive impact on levels of trust, leading to stronger positive relationships,

better partnership working and truly collaborative development of services (fundamental to SMNR), at a time when we know we need the support of others to achieve our purpose.

The existing customer programme has brought us to a critical stage. It has completed a range of foundation projects, secured the support of the Institute of Customer Service and completed its first cycle of benchmarking customer surveys. The customer programme will benefit from a refreshed and resourced programme approach designed to support successful, sustained improvement and delivery at pace.



07

Why learning from others is important?

We have a crucial job to do in Wales so the bar we have set ourselves for sustained, fundamental improvement in customer service is deliberately high.

Our role is wide ranging and can be contentious, so to help us we have invested in the support of the UK's leading customer service organisation the Institute of Customer Service (ICS). Their support will help us eventually achieve a successful critical path towards an accreditation that means that we have established a strong service culture that is embedded and sustainable.

We will also build strong networks with other organisations with shared ambitions, not only so that we can learn from and share best practice in this fast-developing area, so we can play an active role in driving forward the many opportunities there are for shared services in this area.

In the development of this strategy and our workplan priorities (Annex A), we have utilised a range of different sources of data, insight and expertise:

- Direct customer surveying and data
- Direct staff surveying and data

- Interviews with peer organisations e.g. DVLA, HMRC, Courts Services and Dŵr Cymru
- Specialist guidance from the Institute of Customer Service and our peer organisations
- Businesses that are leading customer service excellence globally (including the Forbes top 10)
- Customer complaints
- Customer contact
- Board feedback and subgroup discussions
- Previous phases of the customer programme



08

Making improvements for our staff

We are setting a clear direction for customer service not only to improve levels of customer satisfaction for all our external customers, but also because it has an important role to play in levels of staff satisfaction.

There is a strong relationship between the two factors, as great customer service is not only directly linked to how trusted we are as an organisation, but also how satisfied staff feel about working for our organisation. We want our staff to feel highly satisfied and for that to be translated into the quality of service they provide to customers and each other.

Research by the Institute of Customer Service demonstrated that a one point improvement in staff satisfaction led to a 0.41 point increase in customer satisfaction.

Establishing a strong customer service ethos and constantly working to deliver the highest quality of customer service possible sits at the heart of our success in delivering on our ambitious purpose for Wales. Excellent services are central to our ability to build trust, have strong relationships, generate involvement in our purpose, demonstrate the principles of SMNR and ensure all of our available resources are focused on things that make the most difference to nature and our environment.

It is essential that our limited resources are focused on delivering our priorities and doing it well, using staff and customer data and insight to inform improvements. By improving the service, process and channel experience of both customers and staff, we get more right first time. Not only does this make for a better, more trusted customer experience, it also frees up resources spent on the consequences of poor service.



09

Putting service at the heart of our culture

Making sure that the mindset and behaviours of anyone working as part of our organisation is customer service focused is key to the success of our customer ambition. As part of our organisation's development, as we build connection to our refreshed values, we will focus on the development of strong customer service orientated behaviours and characteristics that many high performing organisations prioritise as part of their organisational development.

Whilst the world of customer service becomes increasingly sophisticated, the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) has highlighted that customers themselves continue to value several important aspects of service the most:

Professionalism
Problem solving
Timeliness
Ease of doing business

We also know the importance of emotional intelligence in any organisation that aims to deliver customer service excellence:

Patience
Positivity
Adaptability
Empathy
Willing to learn from feedback

These are key attributes underpinning the best possible customer experience and should be core behaviours, supporting our refreshed organisational values. We are building towards a service mindset in every member of staff, at every level of the organisation. Therefore, emotional intelligence is every bit as important and of value to our organisation as any other skill or expertise we look for in staff.

We will be constantly challenging ourselves against those things that customers tell us they want to see most from organisations to get the best outcomes.

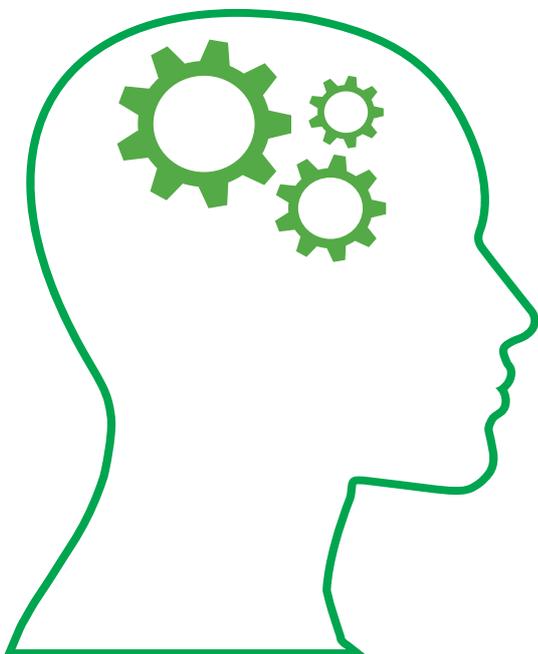
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Why customer and staff data and insight are important

We are an evidence focused organisation, it informs every aspect of what we do. This ethos is particularly relevant when it comes to customer service where we want to fully involve staff and customers in developing projects to improve our customer service.

As important is our insight into levels of staff satisfaction and what our people think about customer service and the contribution they make to delivering excellent customer service every day. As an organisation we will be driving real and sustained improvement to customer service, working with staff to harness their knowledge and expertise to empower them to deliver excellent results for customers.

We will also use customer data and insight as measure for continuous improvement to demonstrate whether we're making progress. Customer data will be reported monthly as management information from our services and customer channels such as complaints, information requests, commendations, social media and our Customer Care Centre. This will drive improvements and help inform decision making and service development.



11

Digital in the right place at the right time

The benefits of digital services, and moving towards increasingly automated services, range from better 24/7 access to services, to freeing up resources and capacity within organisations to focus on other priorities as captured in our Digital Strategy. However, digital technology only delivers such benefits if the services are useful and used by customers and staff.

Careful thought along with staff and customer data and research need to inform the best channel delivery for any service we provide, with full consideration given to the profile of those customers we want to use the service. Customer preference for accessing any services in Wales, because of our unique geography, will be unique to our country and making sure we meet preference, support full bilingual accessibility and deliver satisfaction through service channel choice is a key consideration.

With every service change comes the need for an effective approach to help customers and staff move to something new. Equally as important are the arrangements in place to support customers should a digital service fail

in anyway. The more effective we are in these two areas the more our services will be trusted, attracting customers to adopt digital services where appropriate.

As technology drives us to an increasingly automated future, we also have a responsibility to consider the possible unintended consequences on people, skills and communities and ensure that what we do as an organisation enhances opportunity in Wales. There is no doubt that there are many opportunities for innovation and technology to benefit of the environment, nature and people.

12

How we will deliver this strategy

There are six key components that should come together in any organisation for there to be a genuine, sustained improvement in the customer experience. Those six components will be the workstreams of our Customer Programme and consistent progress and improvement in each will have to be made to deliver on our customer vision and objectives.

We will use these workstreams to form each phased workplan giving us the framework through which we organise the wide range of enabling, tactical and

strategic customer projects between now and 2022 and beyond. See Annex A for the next phase workplan in place for 2018/19-2020/22.

The strategy has a range of dependencies on which we will rely to bring about sustained change and improvement, the connection will be managed as part of the programme governance. Dependencies include but are not limited to: implementation of refreshed values and behaviours; digital strategy; ICT development and innovation programme; continuous improvement workplan; organisational design implementation; organisational development strategy; and learning and development strategy.



Our people and culture

Creating the right customer focused, service led mindset across all parts of the organisation. Led from the very top of the organisation and exemplified at every level. This includes how staff interact and provide services to each other, as well as our relationship with external customers e.g. single definition of customer, recruitment and induction, learning and development, reward and recognition.



Customer experience and involvement

Creating ways to increase how we involve and collaborate with our many customers to help shape what we do and how we do it using data and insight. Building feedback networks where customers can see/feel how their contribution makes a difference e.g. customer development group, focus group.



3 Insight and reporting

Creating effective customer insight approaches that combine customer research, performance reporting and other sources of data to: inform strategic planning; quality improvement; project design and development with strong leadership demonstrating the importance and benefits of such an approach e.g. customer experience reporting as part of management information, improve data into insight approach across the organisation.



4 Process and policy

Establishing a clear customer commitment, standards and structures that drive a proactive and continuous focus on quality improvement to all policies, processes and services to bring about better experiences for customers and staff e.g. clear delivery standards for each of our services, monitoring and reporting against service PIs, continuous improvement customer approach, customer focused approach to project design and development as part of ways of working.



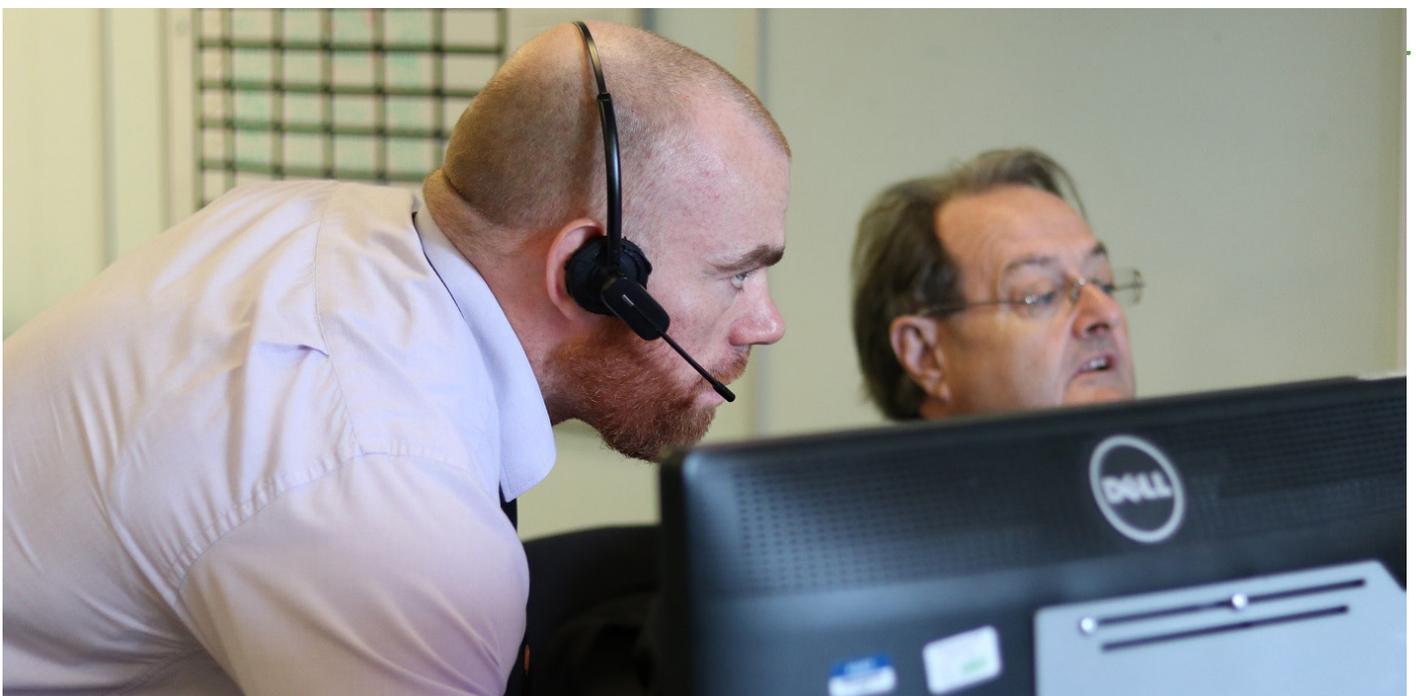
5 Technology and systems

Informing the development of all new systems or services so that they provide the best service experience for customers and staff, who are more likely to have their needs met at first point of contact or receive consistently high-quality service should that not be possible e.g. Integrated customer relationship management, linked telephony, correspondence management systems, improved digital services approach



6 Being seen and understood

Developing a series of campaigns designed to build better understanding of who we are, what we do and why with particular focus on those areas of our work where our roles and powers are particularly misunderstood e.g. Better web content, resourced marketing campaigns, explicit and high-profile commitment to improving customer service.



13

Linking quality improvement to customer service

The six workstreams of customer service illustrate how a full 360° effort is essential to delivering sustained and authentic improvements to services delivering a range of benefits to customers, staff and our organisation. All of which ultimately helps the environment and natural resources of Wales. There is an intrinsic connection between customer & staff satisfaction, quality, resources and strategic planning and the first workplan looks to demonstrate that through benefits realisation.

Every project delivered as part of the customer programme will be expected to identify, track and deliver agreed benefits and efficiencies with a view to reinvesting any resources back into customer improvement and frontline services.

Initially there will be:

- An appropriate alignment of the customer strategy and workplan with the priorities and work programme of the continuous improvement team.
- All projects will be expected to capture, and report benefits against a number of set criteria.
- Consideration will be given to the benefits targets being set across our organisation's portfolio, programme and projects to demonstrate customer quality improvement.



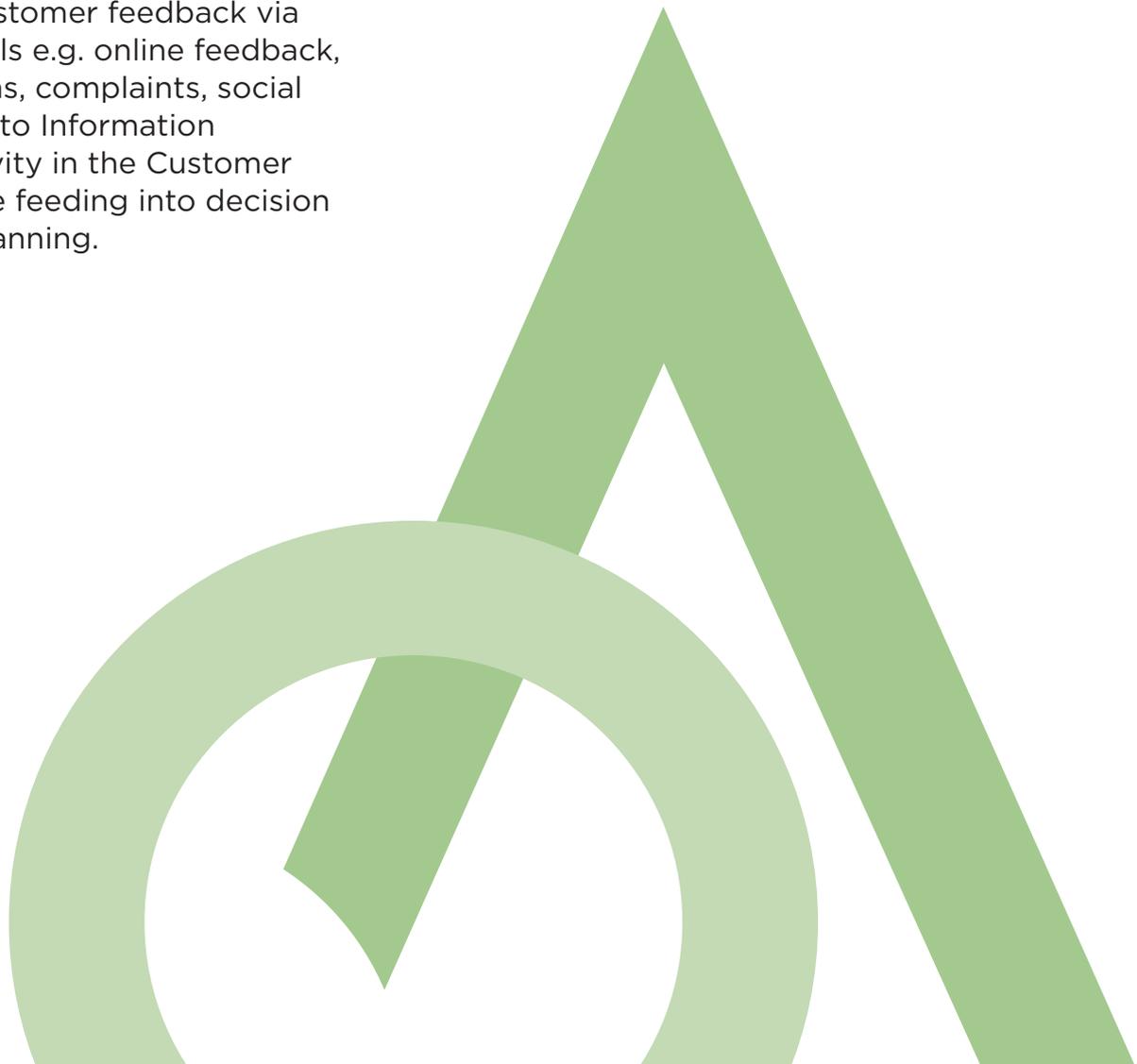
14

Measures of success

From 2018 onwards, we will be working with the ICS to establish an appropriate accreditation pathway.

At the same time, we will be working with the ICS and the Customer Programme Board to track that our progress is meeting the needs of customers and staff using:

- Tracking progress through the experience of customers and staff using the ICS' Business Benchmarking and Serv Check surveys.
- Continuous customer feedback via agreed channels e.g. online feedback, commendations, complaints, social media, Access to Information Requests, activity in the Customer Contact Centre feeding into decision making and planning.
- Progress of projects agreed for each workstream in the Customer Programme workplan.
- Progress on ICS accreditation pathway.
- Customer Programme benefits tracking and reporting.
- Resources captured as a result of customer programme projects being fed back into our frontline services and initiatives to improve customer and staff satisfaction.



15

Living strategy approach

This will inform the annual review and assessment of the direction and priorities being set for each year of this 'living' customer strategy, making sure that we are adapting and responding to the changing needs of customers and staff.

By taking a living strategy approach and making sure that the strategy is supported by phased workplans, we will use customer data and insight to constantly review our direction, making sure it is fit for purpose and informs workplan priorities on a regular cycle. This living strategy approach is

key given that customer needs, the environment in which we operate, and our organisational priorities will change frequently, so our ability to identify and respond to those changes needs to develop as we deliver.

Our ambition is to also challenge ourselves through aspects of business planning from Area Statements and subsequent place-based plans, to future Corporate Plans, demonstrating how each also delivers customer benefits under each of our six Customer Programme workstreams.



16

Customer Programme governance

Delivery of our strategy will be wholly adopted by the existing Customer Programme as its next phase of work. A refreshed programme team and board will be in place. The programme team will report against targets and milestones to Executive Team (ET), whilst Board assurance will be provided through regular reporting at People and Remuneration Committee and, where appropriate, to Board.

