

Annual Summary for the Surrey Highways Customer Panel



Richard Wilson,
Chairman, Customer Service Excellence Member Reference Group

“Residents are at the heart of how services are designed and delivered, with appropriate influence, control and choice on issues that are important to them.

Improving engagement with residents, so that we manage complaints and enquiries effectively, provide high-quality and timely information, and enable members and residents to influence what happens locally.

In the Member Reference Group we regularly review the Customer Panel reports and challenge the Highways Service to deliver the Customer Promise. Your views are important to help shape this and we use the external Customer Service Excellence assessments to test and measure how well we do this.”

Our Customer Panel

The Surrey Highways Customer Panel was established in 2015. Throughout 2016 the Customer Panel has provided a wealth of feedback information. We have used the feedback in a number of ways which we wanted to share within our first Annual Summary.

Three surveys were created and sent out in 2016: March, July and November. Each survey asks standard questions and also covers specialist Highways areas. We have asked you about your experiences with: winter maintenance, our provision of drainage on the highway, reporting issues to us, vegetation and illuminated street furniture and street lighting. In addition to digesting and using the feedback, we also generate a report and publish this on our website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highways-information-online/highways-customer-panel

When we started the Customer Panel in May 2015 we had around 500 members and we are proud to say that our Customer Panel has grown to nearly 1500 members. We have received response rates of up to 70% and our most recent results show that nearly 70% of our Customer Panel are ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with our overall customer service. However, we know that we still have areas to improve, because you also tell us when you are dissatisfied.

Our work...keeping you informed



You told us that you were dissatisfied with advanced notification of our roadworks.

Surrey Highways listened to you and established a Works Communication Team. The Works Communication Team act as a liaison between our operations teams, commercial partners and private developers to: provide letter drops to local residents, make sure that signs are displayed before roadworks begin and keep your local councillors informed of works and changes to works.

The timeframes set for advanced notification are pre-set in our Customer Service Engagement Plan according to the size and length of the works, and the level of disruption our customers may experience.



We continued to listen to your feedback and to continuously improve customer experience we created a way for you to report left over signs on the highway. This is an online tool and can be found on our website www.removethissign.com

We add all of our works to www.roadworks.org and are always looking for new ways to provide you with better online information.

Commercial Partnerships

We used your views during our contract re-negotiations with our supplier, Kier.

Customer Panel satisfaction levels and comments were used to develop partnership training programmes. Working in the Public Eye, or WIPE, is a training programme developed by Kier for all Kier operations staff, teaching them a high standard of customer service skills.



Building on our effective partnership with Kier, customer service performance is checked and approved by our newly created scrutiny boards and where performance is not high, we discuss this and decide a corrective action plan to make improvements.

Satisfaction Scores



Surrey Highways hold the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award.

Part of CSE is to look for ongoing and continuing improvements. We are working with all of our teams to identify how our customer feedback can be used to help us provide a better service.

Some responses to the Customer Panel surveys show that you are dissatisfied with the overall customer service you receive. To help our staff improve their customer service skills we are delivering customer service workshops to all Highways and Transport staff to improve your customer experience and journey.

When we are looking for new staff to join us in the Highways and Transport Service, we now ask them Customer Service Skills questions during our Recruitment process, so we can ensure our workforce is upskilled in line with the increasing requirement to provide current and precise information, when requested.

Our strategy

Our Customer Panel feedback aligns with our Corporate Strategy where we commit to make better use of digital technology to improve resident experience. Our technological developments from 2016 directly link to your feedback:

You told us that you wanted to report issues to us quickly. We responded to this feedback by improving our [online reporting tool](#), so that you can provide us with even more information when you use our website to make us aware of problems affecting you.

You told us that 28 days was too long to wait for an answer to your enquiries, so we are trialling a new way of Mobile working, so we can reduce the time it takes to get back to you. Our testing phase is nearly completed and we are happy to report that when our colleagues use our mobile working app, we have been providing a full enquiry response within five days in 98% of cases.

Our automated systems messages were becoming out of date, so we used your feedback with the critique we received from you and carried out a review of these. We have now expanded and made changes to our suite of system messages so that we and our partners can convey the correct message to you, the first time.

Following feedback about our outdated payment processes we have introduced an online payment facility for our customers to use, to replace telephoning us or using a cheque.

In collaboration with teams across the council we listened to the main areas where information was unavailable. We coupled this with feedback you gave us about Surrey trees and vegetation and made it into a business case for a better information about trees on our Highway. The result is a system that allows us to give you the information you are asking for about trees and vegetation in your area, the first time you ask for it.

Our customer focus

We have been taking proactive steps to contact landowners who hold responsibility to keep their ditches clear, so we can try and prevent flooding in high risk areas. We have been creating leaflets for landowners to inform them of what to do and when. See: [Living next to a watercourse - your rights and responsibilities](#) for more information.

When we have done work to the pavements in the past, you've told us that you were unhappy that there was a missed opportunity to do some works to your vehicle crossover at the same time. Now, when we are fully reconstructing a pavement, we are offering residents the chance to order a new or widened vehicle crossover (subject to our normal application conditions) as part of the works. By doing things this way, we can reduce duplication, disruption and admin work which may have happened before

We asked our Customer Panel customer service satisfaction questions about street lighting and illuminated signs and also to help with our Street lighting consultation in advance of a [Part-night street lighting programme](#) where we obtained your feedback about turning off the streetlights in your area between midnight and 5am. Both sets of feedback were considered within the process of making these changes.

How to get in touch

We welcome all of your feedback. If you would like to contact us about a specific question, you can call us, email us or use our online reporting facility.

Telephone: 0300 200 1003

Email: highways@surreycc.gov.uk

Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/highways

Thank you

We would like to thank all of our Customer Panel members for their ongoing support and look forward to collecting and evaluating more of your views in 2017.