
Report To: Policy and Resources Committee **Date:** 17 November 2009

Report By: Corporate Director
Improvement and Performance **Report No:** POL/53/09/PW/SW

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Subject: Implementation of InForm - Progress Report

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to update members on the implementation of InForm – the Corporate Comments, Compliments and Complaints Framework for the Council.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 InForm is the corporate system for logging, managing and monitoring comments, compliments and complaints within Inverclyde Council. It was approved by Committee on 31 March 2009 and implemented on 1 April 2009.
- 2.2 InForm addresses comments, compliments and complaints across the Council and takes into consideration the statutory elements of complaints within specific services.
- 2.3 The introduction of a corporate approach to comments, compliments and complaints has allowed for the management of information across all services and for update reports to be prepared for the Policy and Resources Committee. These include the monitoring and reporting of statistics from InForm to help the Council identify potential areas of concern or good practice and use these to improve service delivery.
- 2.4 Management information is now starting to be generated as the system has been fully implemented across all services.
- 2.5 The opening of the new InTouch Customer Service Centre means that in the future a large number of initial inquiries to the Council, be they comments, compliments or complaints will come through that medium. Employees at the Centre will be trained in how to deal with these and how to either direct them to the relevant service for attention or log them as part of the corporate system.
- 2.6 The use of the Lagan CRM System will make the management of this information even more effective than the existing system using Customer Liaison Officers (CLOs) in each service area.
- 2.7 This report updates committee on the implementation of InForm across the Council and identifies early figures coming through the system.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the progress made with the implementation of InForm and agree that future management information on the operation of InForm will be incorporated into the Corporate Performance Report.

Paul Wallace
Corporate Director
Improvement and Performance

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 InForm, the corporate comments, compliments and complaints framework for Inverclyde Council was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 31 March 2009 and implemented on 1 April 2009.
- 4.2 InForm established a framework that has enabled the Council to have an effective corporate system for dealing with comments, compliments and complaints and to use the information gained to identify good practice, to drive forward improvements to services and better meet the needs of customers.
- 4.3 InForm was developed in the context of the Customer Service Review undertaken last year as part of the Modernisation and Efficiency Programme.
- 4.4 Corporate Communications and Public Affairs is responsible for the handling and monitoring of complaints at the corporate stage within Inverclyde Council.
- 4.5 Each Service within the Council has identified at least one Customer Liaison Officer (CLO) who has responsibility for the implementation of InForm within their service area. This person is not necessarily the investigating officer for complaints but acts as the administrator of InForm for that area.

The CLO is responsible for acknowledging comments, compliments and complaints within a set timescale and ensuring that timescales in relation to complaints are followed by the service. They also log all material relating to the comment, compliment or complaint and ensure that adequate numbers of InForm leaflets and posters are available at public offices. CLOs supply Corporate Communications and Public Affairs with management information relating to InForm.

- 4.6 The Council has 22 CLOs and briefings have taken place with them to discuss their role and responsibilities. To date 14 out of the 22 CLOs have received this briefing and it is expected all will have been briefed by the end of the calendar year.
- 4.7 Comments and Compliments are easily facilitated within the system and are passed to the service concerned for attention. In terms of complaints, InForm outlines a Four Stage Process as follows:
 1. Complaint handled by relevant council service
 2. Complaint escalated to the Head of Service
 3. Reviewed by Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs.
 4. Complaint referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

In each stage a pro forma letter is produced to make it clear to the complainant which stage of the process they are at and what their options to progress their complaint. This will ensure that the process is followed in full and that premature complaints are not made directly to the Chief Executive, for example.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The implementation of InForm remains at an early stage and management information is only starting to come through. Not enough has been collated at this stage to present a full list but headline figures and summaries since 1 April 2009 are:

Comments:

1 for Economic and Social Regeneration
(Received by Libraries asking if adults should have priority over children for computer use)

Compliments:

1 for Economic and Social Regeneration
(Libraries, praising attitude and knowledge of employees)

Complaints (Stage 1):

1 for Planning
(Issue over granting of completion certificate without owner's knowledge)
1 for Property Resources and Facilities Management
(Cleanliness at Municipal Buildings, Greenock)

Complaints (Stage 3):

2 for Finance
(Both relating to housing benefit matters)

Complaints (Stage 4, Ombudsman):

1 for Lifelong Learning and Educational Support
(ASN School Placement)
2 for Planning
(Incorrect neighbour notification and access path)
1 for Finance
(Benefit fraud investigation)
1 for Environmental Services
(Roads and flooding complaint)
2 for Safer Communities
(Water ingress at neighbouring property and Enforcement Notice disagreement)
1 for Economic and Social Regeneration
(State of local bowling green)

It is worthy of note that none of the eight Stage 4 Complaints were upheld against Inverclyde Council by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Finance: InForm is delivered within the existing Corporate Communications and Public Affairs budget
- 6.2 Personnel: None
- 6.3 Legal: None
- 6.4 Equalities: Equality and diversity processes and procedures are embedded within the Corporate Communications Framework.

InForm will be subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment which will be available on the Council Website or in hard copy by request.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation on InForm took place with the CMT, Heads of Service and other relevant officers of the Council. Examples of good practice were found by consulting with a number of other local authorities and public sector agencies including the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.