

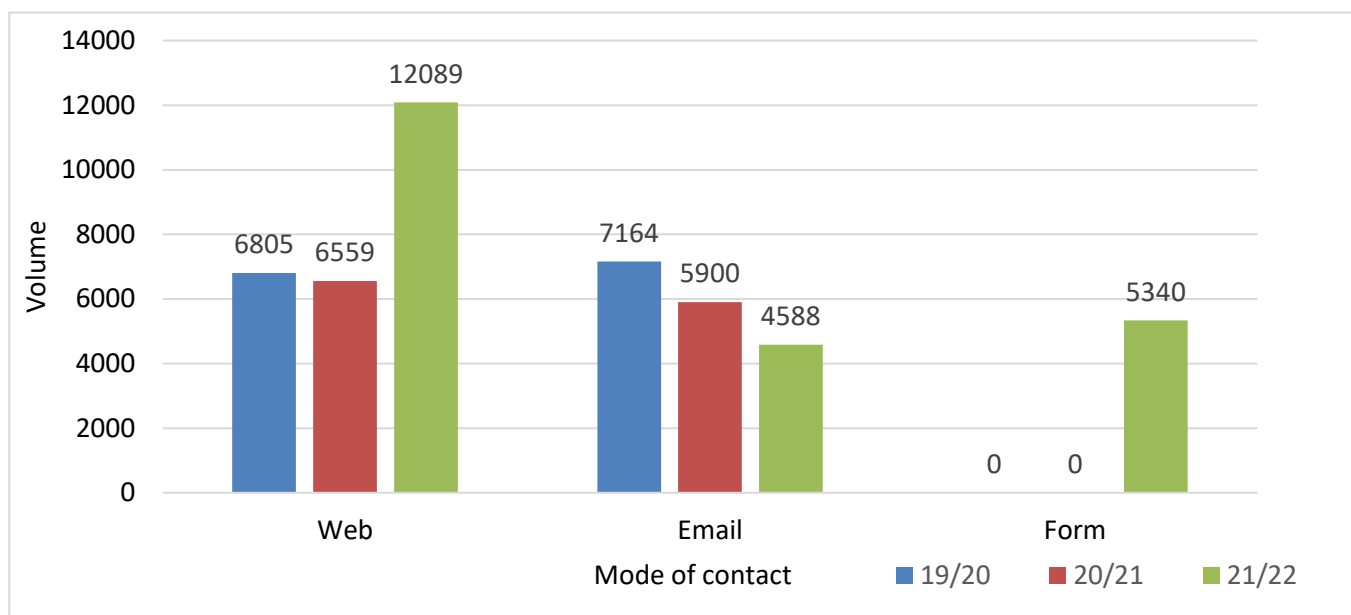
1.0 Customer Feedback in 2021/22

1.1 The collection of feedback from customers using our ESCC website, receiving email correspondence from ESCC teams and completing some commonly used forms has continued to assist in monitoring of customer satisfaction across the Council and to provide valuable insight which informs service improvements. The feedback from our website continues to add value to the Council's ambition for customers to self-serve as much as possible, while striving for a high level of customer service. It continued to assist the Council's operational response to the pandemic as well as its return to pre-pandemic service offers and informed edits made to content during 2021/22.

1.2 Headlines for customer feedback in 2021/22:

- We received just over 22,000 ratings across all feedback surveys.
- We received just over 5,000 verbatim comments from customers.
- We began collecting feedback from commonly used forms across a range of services.
- Customer satisfaction related to the website increased by seven percent, the largest increase year on year since collection of feedback began in 2017.

Graph 1 – Volume of customer feedback and comments, 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22



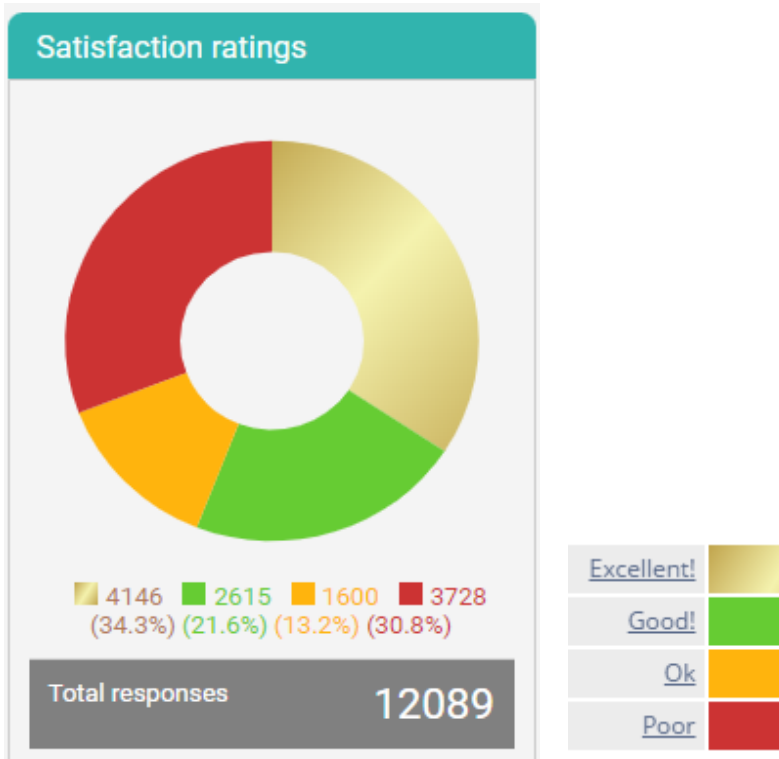
2.0 Website feedback 2021/22

2.1 Key takeaways:

- The website feedback remains well used, despite being a fixture for users for almost five years.
- Our website feedback increased by 84% compared to the previous year with just over 12,000 feedback ratings received this year.
- This increase was due to a combination of webpages being unpublished or changes delayed due to operational changes in services due to the pandemic during 2020/21 and the embedding of the Customer Thermometer feedback survey on to some sections for the first time, most notably [Rubbish and Recycling](#), which received a significant amount of feedback.
- Customer satisfaction rating for 2021/22 was 69%, which is an increase of eight per cent compared to the previous year.
- Feedback surveys are available on almost a third of the ESCC website webpages.

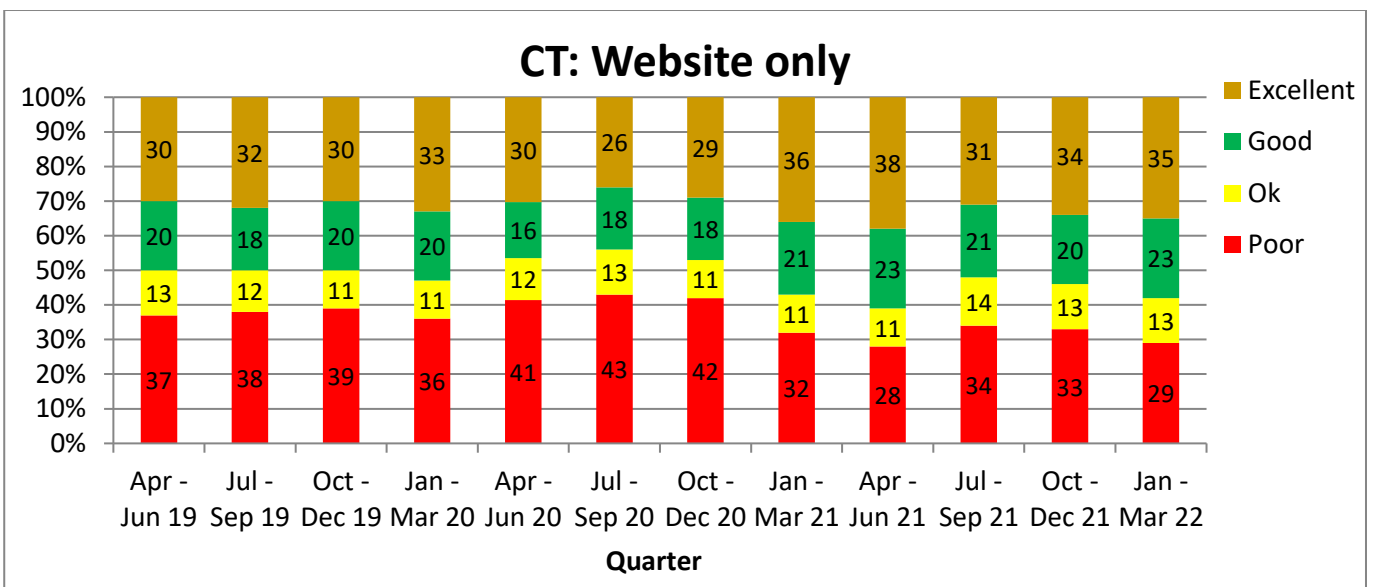
- Some website content is not appropriate for feedback surveys, such as landing pages and pages related to committees and elected members.
- Customer comments continue to be useful in highlighting where to make improvements.
- Our customer satisfaction rating is comparatively high compared to other authorities.

Graph 2 – Customer satisfaction ratings: Website, 2021/22



2.2 Customer feedback has been collected for almost five years and it provides the Council with a vast pool of feedback. It is reassuring that customer satisfaction has remained at a steady rating during the previous years and has improved during 2021/22.

Graph 3 - Website satisfaction ratings: three-year comparison, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22



2.3 During 2021/22, the Customer Services Team continued to assess where content consistently performs below average of the overall customer web satisfaction. The reasons

customers visit our website vary greatly from service to service and it has been accepted that it will include visits related to a certain level of dissatisfaction due to the services we provide based on policy, particularly enforcement decisions we take. However, we continue to analyse which areas of the site could be improved given the feedback provided by our visitors to the site.

2.4 The following points provide information on developments to the ESCC website in 2021/22 that are relevant to improving customer experience.

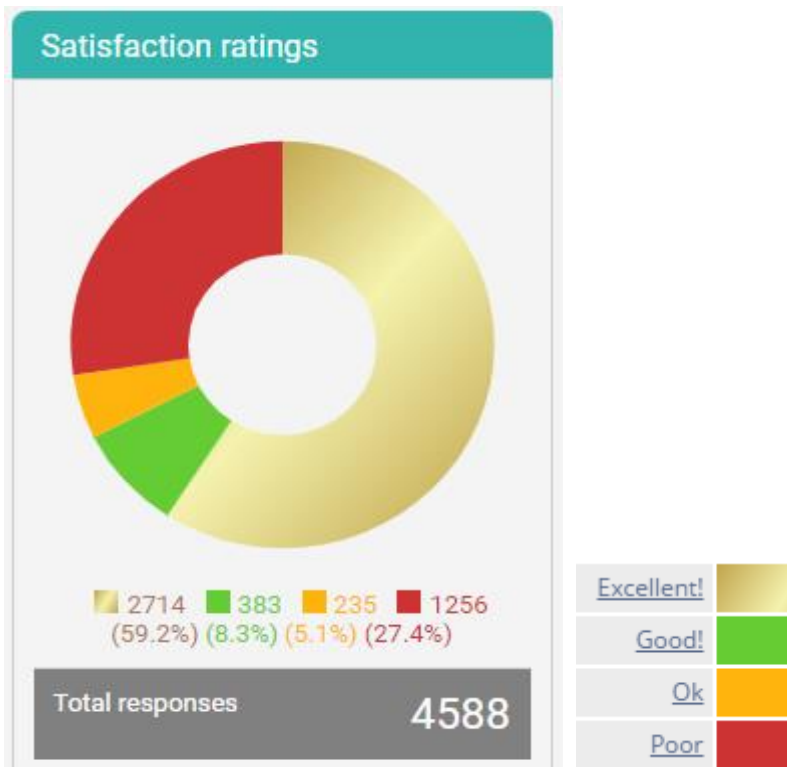
- 2.4.1 Following the work completed during 2020/21 to meet our compliance of the Accessibility Regulations 2018, all teams have been encouraged to continue their oversight and maintenance of content to ensure visitors have the best and easiest customer experience when visiting the website. This includes monitoring content to ensure it's clear and fully accessible including webforms and published documents, and content is written in plain English.
- 2.4.2 Further efforts to meet accessibility standards continued in 2021/22 with the focus for staff on accessibility requirements of documents published on the ESCC website and microsites. This major review, led by Digital Services, saw a significant reduction of published documents on the website and our digital offer has been improved and customer journeys simplified.
- 2.4.3 Digital Services provided document accessibility training and made guidance available. A course designed for managers was also devised to improve oversight of teams' responsibilities in regard to document accessibility and covered the Council's web content management policies and best practices regarding digital content.
- 2.4.4 Digital Services, in collaboration with content owners across the Council, completed the migration of the ESCC website onto the new gov.uk style framework in April 2022. The new site design and management system improves our customers' experience providing a more up-to-date, clearer look and feel and has removed any accessibility issues to date.
- 2.4.5 During 2021/22, we began collecting feedback from customers that had completed two forms: [report a problem](#) on the highway and [apply for a school place](#). This has proven very popular with customers and more information is available below in section four of this report.
- 2.4.6 We continue to liaise with our partnered Councils and similar local authorities to gauge developments they are considering or implementing on their website, as well as their customer satisfaction ratings. Reassuringly, our customer satisfaction rating is comparatively high compared to the authorities we share such information with.

3.0 **Email feedback 2021/22**

3.1 Key takeaways:

- We received over 4,500 pieces of feedback, that is a 22% decrease compared to 2020/21.
- This notable decrease relates to the reconfiguration of one email survey to be categorised as a form survey. Further details regarding this are available in section four of this appendix.
- 14 teams are using the email feedback surveys, the same number as last year.
- Overall customer satisfaction rating for emails was 73%, five percentage points lower than in 2020/21. Similarly, to the impact upon the volume of feedback relating to emails, this is associated with the reconfiguration of an email survey, which received high levels of customer satisfaction, to a form survey.
- The largest volume of negative ratings regarding email correspondence continue to relate to services that engage with a more challenging customer base and subject matter than other services. These services are often defending the decision of the Council to either uphold an initial decision or to not take action regarding a reported issue or concern.
- On analysis of the comments provided by customers in response to emails, we find that dissatisfaction mainly relates to a decision or standpoint of the Council rather than the customer experience of the resident.
- However, comments provided with 'excellent' ratings regularly provide compliments about staff, congratulating them on their good customer service.

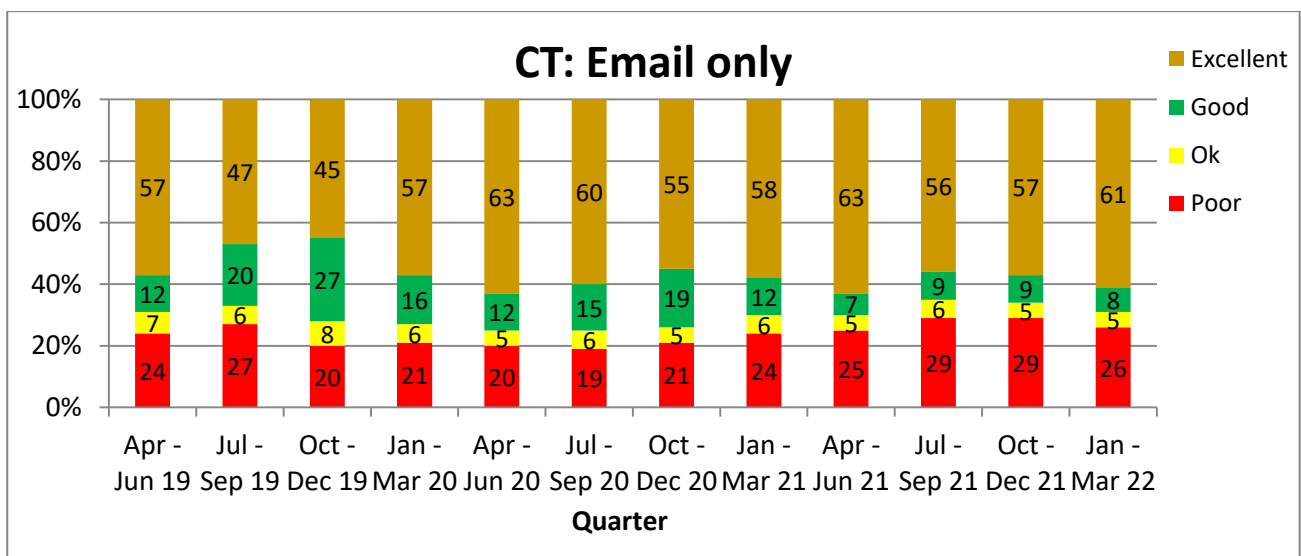
Graph 4 – Customer satisfaction ratings: Email, 2021/22



3.2 Throughout 2021/22, team managers continued to advise that receiving real-time customer insight assists the oversight of the quality of email correspondence. Comments left by customers provide managers with intelligence in relation to possible amendments to their service offer but also, critically, specific praise of a response and/or member of staff. This type of feedback is shared with teams and individuals and has a positive impact upon staff morale.

3.3 While the overall satisfaction rating for email feedback has reduced due to reconfiguration of the surveys, comparison of individual email surveys from 2020/21 and 2021/22 indicates consistent satisfaction ratings from year to year.

Graph 5 - Email satisfaction ratings: three-year comparison, 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22



4.0 Form feedback 2021/22

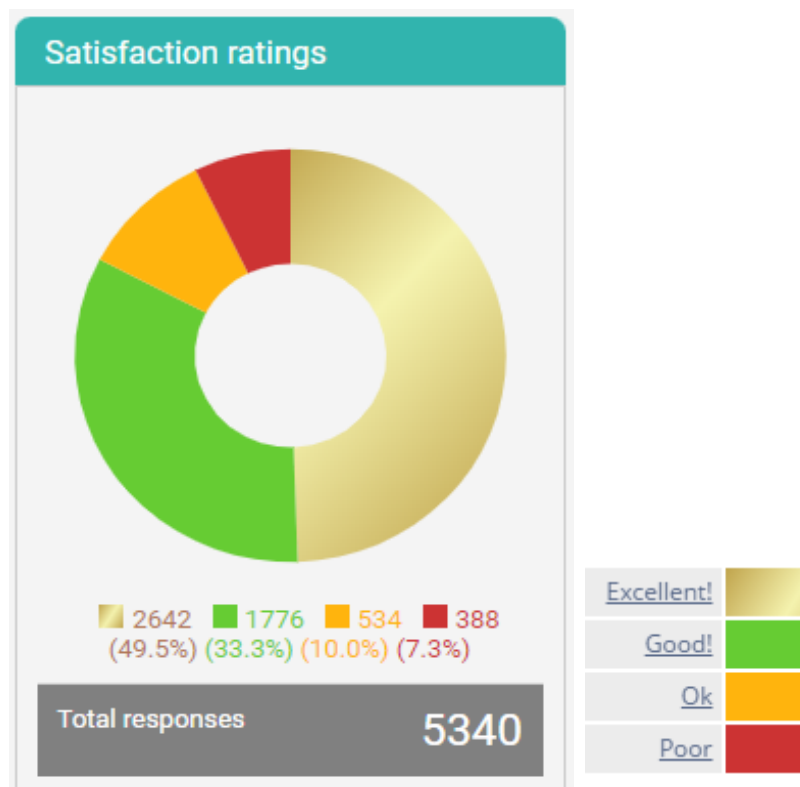
4.1. During the last quarter of 2020/21, collecting feedback from customers [reporting a problem on East Sussex Highways' \(ESH\)](#) website was trialled. Given the success of this trial in terms of volume and quality of feedback, this was made a permanent survey.

4.2. Following this development, it was agreed by the Board to explore whether other commonly used forms across the Council could capture customer feedback. An existing email survey related to the school admissions application process was reconfigured from June 2021 to collect feedback from customers who had completed the school application form.

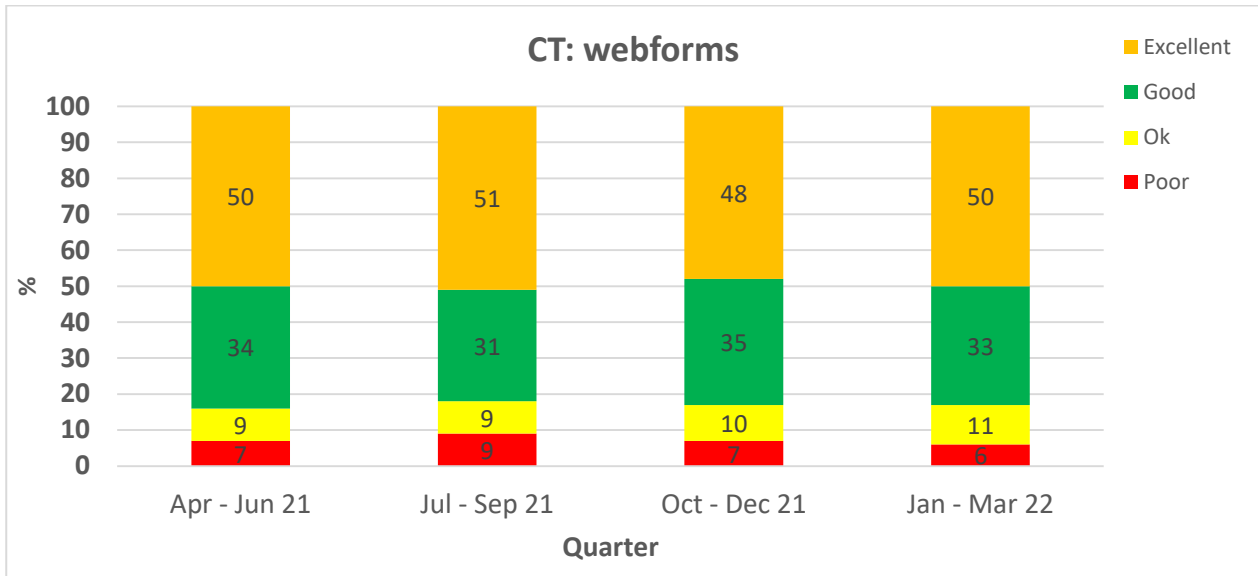
4.3. Ongoing analysis has been completed regarding commonly used forms completed by Adult Social Care and Health (ASC&H) customers. Due to a scheduled system upgrade, it was unlikely that collection of this feedback could begin until late 2022. However, due to the innovation of ASC&H Business Analyst Team, a solution has been found to collect feedback earlier than anticipated. Final testing has been completed and the collection of live customer feedback has begun from July 2022 on six different forms that sit within a customer facing portal.

4.4. Feedback captured during the last year has been overwhelmingly positive at an overall 93% satisfaction rating, as highlighted by graphs six and seven below. It is reassuring to have a consistently high level of customer satisfaction regarding important customer journeys. It is significant as it shows that customers are happy to use self-serve forms when they find them useful, easy and clear. It also indicates that the consideration of customer journey and the ease of use, at point of design of these forms, was appropriate. Comments attached to poor ratings are monitored, as they are with website and email feedback, and contribute to reviews of these forms' design. This will continue throughout 2022/23.

Graph 6 – Customer satisfaction ratings – Forms, 2021/22



Graph 7 – Form satisfaction ratings: 2021/22



5.0 Face to face feedback 2021/22

5.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we removed the feedback devices from locations they were previously installed in March 2020. Since the lift of restrictions in April 2022, feedback devices have been rebuilt and will be reinstalled at a number of Council buildings from August 2022.

6.0 Telephone feedback

6.1 During 2021/22, East Sussex Highways (ESH) remained the only service to continue collecting feedback by telephone. Although the numbers are low, they still find the telephone surveys valuable gauge, as part of a suite of measures that make up the customer satisfaction performance indicator for the Highways contract.

6.2 There were 392 customers who provided feedback during 2021/22, slightly lower than the previous year (480), and 70% of customers were satisfied with the service they had received. This is exactly the same rating as reported in 2020/21. The table below highlights customers satisfaction with different elements of their experience.

Table 1 – Telephone survey statistics: East Sussex Highways, 2021/22

| Services | No. surveys answered | Overall satisfaction | Satisfaction with: | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | | Time taken to respond | Helpfulness and politeness of staff | Fully understood your needs | Quality of information and advice given |
| Highways (CET) | 392 | 70% | 68% | 79% | 78% | 72% |

7.0 Customer Service Network

7.1 The Customer Services Network sessions in 2021/22 remained especially helpful to colleagues during the Council's response to the different stages of the pandemic. The group shared issues that have developed as the pandemic presented different customer needs and behaviours, as well as the methods they developed to remedy such difficulties. The Network also assisted the

sharing of lessons learned during the pandemic as well as the better use of technology to ensure to impact to our customers was minimised as the pandemic progressed.

7.2 The group had informative discussions on hybrid working and that staff are looking forward to the 'soft intelligence' gained when working in an office together. The group discussed the benefits of technology embedded, such as quick MS Teams chats and support from colleagues to quickly resolve or progress customer enquiries and complaints. CSN will continue to discuss hybrid working and staff are enthusiastic to share experiences and learn from other colleagues about tips and best practice approaches they find.

7.3. The meetings have also provided opportunity for council-wide developments to be highlighted to a broad spectrum of services. The most notable include updates from Digital Services highlighting the new ESCC website including improvements to accessibility and the Equalities Manager regarding changes to the Council's Equality Impact Assessment template.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 In response to the pandemic and planning for the Council's hybrid working, gathering customer feedback, across different channels of engagement with our customers, has provided us and colleagues across Council services continued, valuable insight into our customers' opinions. Provision of our customer feedback is approaching five years and teams across the Council are able to review and implement required changes proficiently. Teams' familiarity with this method of feedback maximises the value of the feedback to aid colleagues and customers, where possible.

8.2 The increased quantity of customer feedback gathered during 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 provides a useful benchmark and added assurances that can help us to understand how customers view their interaction(s) with the Council. The service-specific type of feedback captured allows individual services to review their specific feedback while the analysis of all surveys we run provides a Council-wide overview. The latter has been especially helpful since start of 2020/21 due to ever-evolving customer service offer due to the pandemic.

8.3 We will continue to increase the number of places where customers can provide feedback, where possible in order to meet our commitment to provide valuable information for evaluating and improving our services for customers.