



Smart Energy Greater Lincolnshire Project Feedback, Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy

Approval

| Project name | Document Version | Author |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
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| Approved by | Comments | Date |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Programme Board | Approved | |

Document History

| Version | Summary of Changes | Document Status | Date |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| V0.01 | Drafting | Draft –for Board discussion | 26/11/2018 |
| V1.0 | Spelling correction | Approved | 19/12/2018 |
| | | | |

Review due: December 2020

Introduction

1.1 Smart Energy Greater Lincolnshire project is being managed by North East Lincolnshire Council on behalf of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP. We are committed to giving everyone we deal with or who are affected by our services the opportunity to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. We are committed to changing our policies, systems and procedures where appropriate in order to improve our services.

1.2 We welcome your feedback, so we can learn from your experience to help us improve and enhance the services we provide. If we are doing something well please tell us about it, so that we can share best practice. Equally if we are not, we want to put things right. You may disagree with a decision made about the services we offer you as an outcome of an assessment we have made. We will consider your views and confirm the outcome of this, and decisions made.

1.3 Any organisation that provides services on our behalf is required to comply with the requirements of this policy.

2 Types of Feedback

2.1 What is a compliment?

A compliment is when a customer gives us feedback about how well we deliver the Project service or how helpful a project member has been to them.

2.2 What is a suggestion?

A suggestion is when a customer gives us feedback on how we may be able to improve our delivery of the Project service.

2.3 What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, which requires a response. This can include the following situations:

- a) A delay in providing a service
- b) Failing to provide a service
- c) Providing a poor-quality service or making a mistake
- d) Providing an inappropriate service
- e) Removing or withdrawing a service
- f) Where a project members behavior causes a customer upset
- g) Where a policy unreasonably disadvantages a customer

h) Unfair discrimination against a customer

2.4 What if I disagree with the decision following my application and assessment of my needs? Is this a complaint?

Should you disagree with the outcome of the decision you are encouraged to advise us of this and your reasons for disagreeing with the decision. This will be investigated, and the outcome of the investigation will be referred back to the Project board for further decision making. Should you remain unhappy with the further decision you are invited to make a complaint, and this will be further investigated.

3 Learning from feedback

3.1 We will monitor trends and performance in our handling of customer feedback through regular reports to the Smart Energy Greater Lincolnshire project board, NELC senior managers, and elected members when required.

4 Encouraging feedback

4.1 You can provide us with feedback in any of the following ways:

- a) In person
- b) By telephone on (01472) 326968.
- c) By e-mail to Smart Energy at SmartEnergy@nelincs.gov.uk
- d) In writing to Smart Energy Greater Lincolnshire Municipal Offices, Town Hall Square, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN31 1HU
DX13536, Grimsby 1

5 Handling of compliments

5.1 We will ensure your compliments are recorded and passed on to the relevant service and member of staff.

6 Handling of suggestions and comments

6.1 We will ensure your suggestions and comments are recorded and passed on to the project team.

6.2 The project team will consider your suggestion or comment and send a response to you within fifteen working days. We will either explain how your suggestion or comment will be implemented or explain why we are unable to do so.

7 Handling of complaints

7.1 We are committed to providing everyone with a high standard of service. Where problems occur, we aim to provide you with a timely response and resolution to the issues you have raised.

7.2 We aim to resolve problems as quickly as possible, and in many cases, it should be possible to sort them out straight away.

7.3 North East Lincolnshire Council's policy and process will be followed.

Timescales in which to make your complaint

7.4 Normally, you must make your complaint within 12 months of:

- a) the event you want to complain about; or
- b) finding out that you have a reason to complain.

7.5 In certain circumstances, we may accept your complaint after the 12 months' time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Timescales to advise that you disagree with the decision outcome following your needs assessment

7.6 This should be within 3 months of the decision to enable the project to consider your views.

8 Investigation stages

Complaint Stage 1 service investigation:

8.1 Your complaint will be investigated by a senior project officer within the service you have made the complaint about.

8.2 We will acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days and tell you who will be dealing with your complaint and what will happen next.

8.3 Within 10 working days of the date of the acknowledgement letter, you will receive a full response explaining any action to be taken. If this is not possible, we will inform you within 10 working days and give you an indication of when a full reply will be sent.

8.4 A complaint can be escalated to stage 2 of the process

- a) If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint at stage 1, or the Council's handling of your complaint; or
- b) The Council determine your complaint cannot be resolved at stage 1.

Stage 2 an independent review:

8.5 Your complaint will be investigated and reviewed on behalf of the Chief Executive by a service manager who has no previous involvement in the complaint.

8.6 We will acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days.

8.7 The officer dealing with your complaint at stage 2 will contact you to discuss your complaint in order to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for.

8.9 You will normally receive a full response to your complaint within 25 working days of the officer dealing with your complaint contacting you. Where appropriate alternative timescales for the response can be agreed with you.

8.10 If we are unable to provide you with a full response within the agreed timescales, we will tell you as soon as we identify this to provide you with an update on our progress and agree revised time limits with you.

Local Government Ombudsman:

8.11 If after exhausting all the stages of our complaints process, you are still unhappy with the way your complaint has been dealt with, or feel you were treated unfairly, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

8.12 Contact details can be found on the [Local Government website](#).

8.13 The Ombudsman can only investigate your complaint if you believe that you have been caused injustice as a result of something we have or have not done (maladministration). The Ombudsman will expect you to have taken your complaint through our NELC Corporate Complaints process first.

Dealing with complaints about our contractors or partners:

8.14 Any complaint or issue relating to dissatisfaction with the project services provided on behalf of North East Lincolnshire Council should be made using this complaints procedure. The project has a delivery partner IfaS and also works with other delivery suppliers and partners.

8.15 The project will ensure any Stage 1 investigations will be undertaken where appropriate by the organisation that provided the service you have complained about.

8.16 Where you are dissatisfied with the stage 1 response, the stage 2 review of your complaint will be undertaken by an officer of the Council.

Disagreement with outcome of decision Preliminary Stage:

8.17 Your information and why you disagree with the decision will be investigated by a senior project member

8.18 We will acknowledge your difference of view within 2 working days, and may ask you for further information to support the reasoning for your disagreement to enable the investigation.

8.19 Within 10 working days of the date of the acknowledgement, you will receive a full response explaining any action to be taken. If this is not possible, we will inform you within 10 working days and give you an indication of when a full reply will be sent.

8.20 We will investigate your reasons and review the decision in light of this. The information will be referred to the Smart Energy Greater Lincolnshire Project Board Members for review and final decisions.

8.21 You will be informed of the Board findings and outcome of the decision in writing either via email or letter within 25 working days.

8.23 Should you remain unhappy about the decision you are invited to make a complaint and the complaints process will be followed.

8.24 If we are unable to provide you with a full response within the agreed timescales, we will tell you as soon as we identify this to provide you with an update on our progress and agree revised time limits with you.

December 2018