

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND REQUESTS

Presented by Corporate Director (Sport and Leisure)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This purpose of this report is to seek Member approval of a revision to the current procedure for resolving feedback received from customers and, in particular, customer complaints.

The procedure, previously called Customer Communications, has been revised and updated following the ending of the contract with the Lee Valley Leisure Trust Limited and to ensure that the current procedure and contact process will be fit for purpose at the commencement of the new Leisure Service Contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited. It has been renamed for clarity. The revised procedure includes amendments to the hierarchy structure of the Authority prior to the final stage of a Member panel used to consider complaints that have been unable to be resolved by the procedure's earlier stages.

RECOMMENDATION

Members Approve: (1) adoption of the revised Customer Communications and Requests procedure attached as Appendix B to this report.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The current Customer Communications Procedure deals with all complaints, compliments, suggestions, enquiries and requests relating to Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), Data Protection (DP) and Subject Access Requests (SAR).
- 2 The current complaints process and procedure (attached at Appendix A to this report) for dealing with complaints comprises a three stage internal process following which, if the customer is still unsatisfied, the matter is referred to a final stage.
- 3 In the paper presented to the Authority on 21 January 2016 (Paper A/4223/16), the revised procedure included the creation of a final stage of a Member panel for resolution of complaints that could not be resolved by officers.

- 4 Members of the Executive Committee on 25 February 2016 (Paper E/439/16) and as requested by Authority agreed the process for the appointment of the Independent Advisor and also the appointment of Members to the final stage panel which remains unchanged by this revision. The appointment of Members will be made by the Executive Committee at the relevant time and will form a sub-committee of the Executive Committee to undertake the role of the panel. When setting up the sub-committee the Executive Committee meeting will also consider and agree the appointment of the Independent Advisor who will be selected following recommendations from the local authorities making up the Public Law Partnership as set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 below.
- 5 With the changes to the Authority's management structure in April 2020 and the departure of the Director of Finance and Resources, the current three stage internal complaints process had to be reviewed and updated.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – INTERNAL STAGES

- 6 The revised procedure for customer complaints, compliments and requests for information (Customer Communications and Requests) still contains a three stage officer procedure, followed by a final Member stage. Due to changes in structure, the officers listed in the three stage internal process have changed.
- 7 If a complaint is received it will be logged on the Authority's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and sent to the appropriate officer for investigation and resolution.
- 8 Stage 1 will be investigated by a relevant officer of the service area or facility that the complaint is regarding.
- 9 If the complainant is unhappy with the handling and resolution of the case, it will be escalated to Stage 2 where it will be investigated by a relevant Head of Service officer of the Authority who is the direct line manager of the Stage 1 investigating officer.
- 10 If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the investigation and resolution at Stages 1 and 2, the case will be escalated to Stage 3 where it will be considered by senior Authority officers. Currently these are listed as the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Finance and Resources and the Information Officer.
- 11 The new management structure of the Authority has dispensed with the two Directors listed and the panel will now consist of the Authority's Monitoring Officer (Deputy Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (or their Deputy) and/or a Corporate Director, supported by the Legal and Information Officer.
- 12 If the complainant is still unsatisfied after Stage 3, they can then proceed to the final stage of the Authority's Customer Complaints process, which is a request for a Member review and remains the same as the present process.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – FINAL STAGE

- 13 The case or cases will continue to be considered by a Member panel made up of three Members, including either or both the Chairman and Vice Chairman, plus one or two Members from a pool of Members previously appointed by the

Executive Committee. The panel will receive all communications, background information and relevant documentation to investigate and resolve any open cases.

- 14 The panel shall include an independent advisor as appropriate and suitability will depend on the nature of the complaint. The Authority will seek to retain the advisor to assist Members in the resolution of the complaint.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT ADVISOR

- 15 The Authority is a member of Public Law Partnership (PLP), the legal services partnership of authorities in Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk who work together to share resources and ensure legal support is provided to all clients.
- 16 Upon the need for an Independent Advisor to review a complaint, PLP will be contacted to request recommendations on an appropriate external advisor and, dependant on their availability at such time, one will be appointed for a specific complaint. This retains flexibility and enables persons with different experience and expertise to be available depending on the nature of the complaint. Alternatively if a particular specialist Independent Advisor were required it would be open to the Authority to procure separately.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE FINAL STAGE PANEL

- 17 As stated, the Members' panel is to be made up of three Authority Members and will include the Authority's current serving Chairman and/or the Vice Chairman with the remaining panel Members to be selected from a pool of six serving Members previously appointed by the Executive Committee.
- 18 Therefore the Executive Committee (minus the Chairman and Vice Chairman) will form the pool of six Members and the panel will be required to be a sub-committee of the Executive Committee. This is necessary to ensure that the "panel" can be decision making.
- 19 Upon the need for a final stage panel to be set up, Executive Committee will be asked to appoint one (if the Chairman and Vice Chairman are included) or two (if only one from the Chairman and Vice Chairman are included) of its members to form the sub-committee. This is similar to the approach many local authorities have in relation to their licensing committees.
- 20 The sub-committee will then meet to consider the recommendations of the Independent Advisor and decide the outcome of the complaint. The decision of the sub-committee will be final.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 21 There are no environmental implications arising directly out of the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 22 There is a financial commitment to the customer complaints process in the form of retained work from the independent advisory figure who would work with the Member panel to find a complaint resolution.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

23 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

24 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

25 There are no risk management implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

26 There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

None

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS

Authority	A/4223/16	Customer Communications Procedure	21/01/16
Executive	E/439/16	Customer Communications Procedure	25/02/16

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix A	Current Customer Communication Procedure
Appendix B	Updated Customer Communications and Request Procedure

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

the Authority	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
ICO	Information Commissioners Office
CRM	Customer Relationship Management – software data collection and analysis system

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority to ensure there is a proactive system in place to ensure the effective management of customer relationships.

Detail

This procedure covers the following points:

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Introduction

Customer Communication is the capture, management and analysis of customer information, and the two-way communication with customers that improves satisfaction and relationships, for example, (complaints, compliments, suggestions, enquiries), Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Data Protection (DPA).

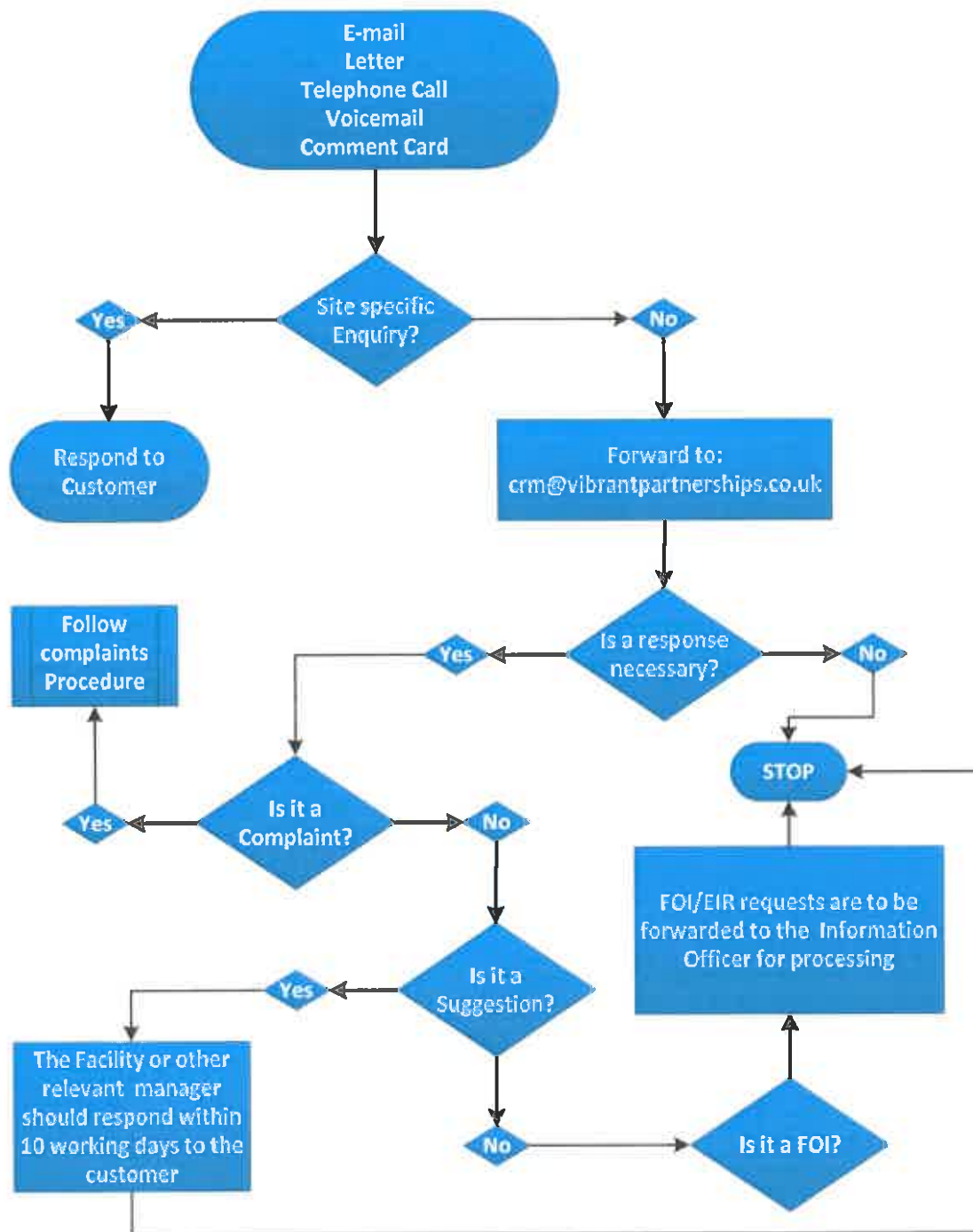
Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the database used to manage customer communication and is managed by the Information Officer of the Trust.

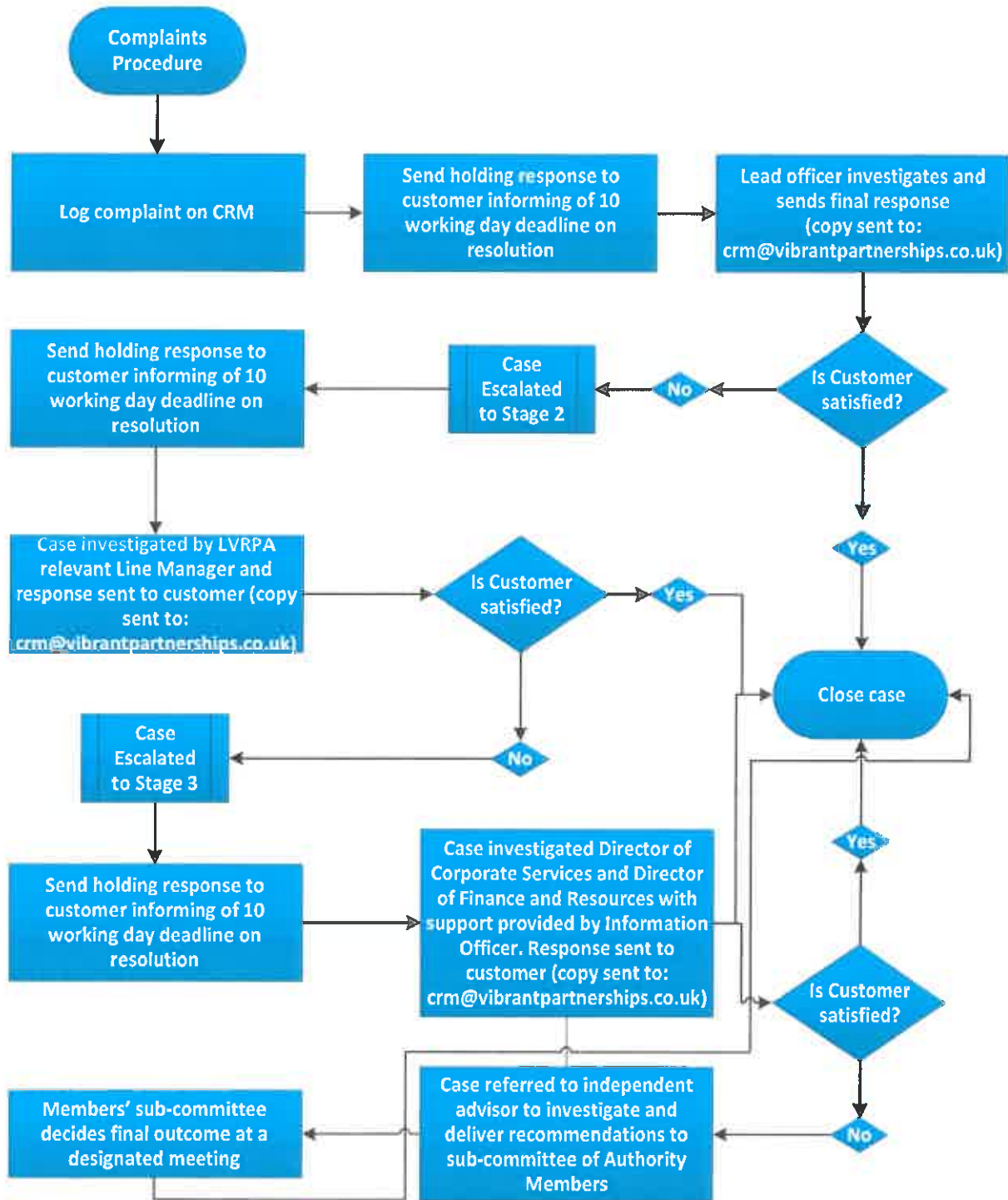
The following process illustrates the steps that staff should follow when receiving customer communication. It covers:

- Complaints
- Compliments
- Suggestions
- Enquires
- FOI/EIR Requests
- Data Protection Subject Access Requests (SAR)

For situations that become confrontational, verbally abusive or potentially violent follow the Dealing with Difficult Customers procedure.

Incoming Customer Communication:





Customer Communications Procedure

Our customer communications procedure deals with complaints, compliments, suggestions, enquiries, and requests relating to Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection (DP) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and can be reached by this link to the website - [Customer Complaints Procedure](#).

If you wish to contact the Authority you may do so via one of the following:

- In writing to Myddelton House, Bulls Cross, Enfield, Middlesex, EN2 9HG
- Emailing crm@vibrantpartnerships.co.uk
- Visiting www.VisitLeeValley.org.uk and filling in the [contact us form](#)

FOI, DP and EIR communications received are formally logged on the internal Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database and a case number is assigned.

Enquiries and suggestions are logged and the relevant area of service is informed of the details and comments are logged as customer feedback.

If someone wishes to complain about a certain area of the Park the details of the complaint will be passed to a relevant area of service.

Stage 1

If someone wishes to make a formal complaint against an action or service of the Authority it will be logged, assigned a case reference number and delegated to an officer from the relevant area of service. In the event that the complaint is about an individual, the complaint will be passed to the line manager of that individual.

The lead officer will fully investigate the complaint and provide a response within ten working days.

If the complaint requires more investigation, the complainant will be contacted and a reason for the delay will be provided along with a revised date for a response.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied after the stage 1 investigation the complaint can be escalated to stage 2.

Please note that for a case to be escalated the complainant must outline exactly why they are dissatisfied after stage 1, whether that is the process of investigation, the way the case has been handled by the lead officer or the recommended course of action.



Customer Communication

Issue 1

A stage 2 complaint will be investigated by the relevant Line Manager of the investigating officer of the Authority.

The officer will review the stage 1 investigation, any outcomes of the investigation and consider whether it has adequately satisfied the details of the stage 1 complaint. A response will be sent within 10 working days.

Stage 3

If the complainant is dissatisfied after the stage 2 investigation the complaint can be escalated to stage 3.

Please note that for a case to be escalated the complainant must outline exactly why they are dissatisfied after stage 2.

The complaint is investigated by the Director of Corporate Services and Director of Finance and Resources. Information and communication regarding the case shall be provided by the Information Officer.

The panel will review how the case was investigated, any outcomes and whether any further course of action or further investigation is needed. A response will be sent within 10 working days.

Authority Member Stage

If the complainant is dissatisfied by the investigation at stage 3 the complaint can be referred to an independent advisor for investigation. The independent advisor will review the process of the complaint and deliver recommendations to a sub-committee who will make a final decision on the outcome at a designated meeting.

The Members' sub-committee shall be made up of three Members and will include the Authority's current serving Chairman and/or the Vice Chairman with the remaining sub-committee Members to be selected from a pool of six serving Members from the Executive Committee.

The independent advisor will be retained by the Authority as an available resource in such an event and information and communication regarding a complaint shall be provided by the Authority's Information Officer.

This process will be completed as soon as practicably possible but in any event the complainant will be notified of the date and should receive a response within 10 working days of the sub-committee meeting.

Review:

January 2021

March 2016



Customer Communication

Issue 1

Internal Forms:

- Customer Comments Form

Sources of Information:

- LVRPA Customer Relationship Management

Appendix A

LVRPA Corporate Website

"Our customer communications procedure deals with complaints, compliments, suggestions, enquiries, and requests relating to Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection (DP) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

If you wish to contact the Authority you may do so via one of the following:

- In writing to Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Myddelton House, Bulls Cross, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 9HG
- By email to crm@vibrantpartnerships.co.uk
- Completing a [contact us form](#)

FOI, DP and EIR communications received are formally logged on the internal Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database and a case number is assigned.

Enquiries and suggestions are logged and the relevant area of service is informed of the details and comments are logged as customer feedback.

If someone wishes to complain about a certain area of the Park the details of the complaint will be passed to a relevant area of service.

Stage 1

If someone wishes to make a formal complaint against an action or service of the Authority it will be logged, assigned a case reference number and delegated to an officer from the relevant area of service. In the event that the complaint is about an individual, the complaint will be passed to the line manager of that individual.

The lead officer will fully investigate the complaint and provide a response within 10 working days.

If the complaint requires more investigation, the complainant will be contacted and a reason for the delay will be provided along with a revised date for a response.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied after the Stage 1 investigation the complaint can be escalated to Stage 2.

Please note that for a case to be escalated the complainant must outline exactly why they are dissatisfied after Stage 1, whether that is the process of investigation, the way the case has been handled by the lead officer or the recommended course of action.

A Stage 2 complaint will be investigated by the line manager of the original investigating officer of the Authority.



Customer Communication Issue 1

The officer will review the Stage 1 investigation, any outcomes of the investigation and consider whether it has adequately satisfied the details of the stage 1 complaint. A response will be sent within 10 working days.

Stage 3

If the complainant is dissatisfied after the stage 2 investigation the complaint can be escalated to stage 3.

Please note that for a case to be escalated the complainant must outline exactly why they are dissatisfied after stage 2.

The complaint is investigated by the Director of Corporate Services and Director of Finance and Resources. Information and communication regarding the case shall be provided by the Information Officer.

The panel will review how the case was investigated, any outcomes and whether any further course of action or further investigation is needed. A response will be sent within 10 working days.

Authority Member Stage

If the complainant is dissatisfied by the investigation at Stage 3 the complaint can be referred to an independent advisor for investigation. The independent advisor will review the process of the complaint and deliver recommendations to a sub-committee who will make a final decision on the outcome at a designated meeting.

The Members' sub-committee shall be made up of three Members and will include the Authority's current serving Chairman and/or the Vice Chairman with the remaining sub-committee Members to be selected from a pool of six serving Members from the Executive Committee.

The independent advisor will be retained by the Authority as an available resource in such an event and information and communication regarding a complaint shall be provided by the Authority's Information Officer.

This process will be completed as soon as practicably possible but in any event the complainant will be notified of the date and should receive a response within 10 working days of the sub-committee meeting."



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority to ensure there is a proactive system in place to ensure the effective management of customer relationships.

Detail

This procedure covers the following points:	
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Introduction

The Customer Communication and Requests procedure is the capture, management and analysis of customer information, the two-way communication with customers that improves satisfaction and relationships, for example complaints, compliments, suggestions, enquiries, along with Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests and Data Protection (DPA) including the current GDPR regulations.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications (such as Microsoft CRM) are used to manage customer data, customer complaints and compliments, and as a tool to communicate to customers (via additional tools such as 'Click Dimensions') and is managed by the Sport and Leisure Department of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

Venues that sit within the Leisure Service Contract are currently managed by the Authority and any communication received regarding areas that sit within LVRPA will be forwarded on by facility managers to the Authority.



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

The following process illustrates the steps that staff should follow when receiving customer communication. It covers:

- Complaints
- Compliments
- Suggestions
- Enquiries
- FOI/EIR Requests
- GDPR Breach
- Data Protection Subject Access Requests (SAR)
- Legal matters/court/ litigation papers

For situations that become confrontational, verbally abusive or potentially violent follow the Dealing with Difficult Customers procedure.

Customer Communications and Request Procedure

Our customer communications procedure deals with complaints, compliments, suggestions, enquiries, and requests relating to Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection (DP) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Customers can view this information on our website - [Customer Communications Procedure](#).

If someone wishes to contact the Authority they may do so via one of the following:

- In writing to Myddelton House, Bulls Cross, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 9HG
- Emailing crm@leevalleypark.org.uk
- Visiting www.visitleevalley.org.uk and filling in the [contact us form](#)
- Phone or voicemail
- Customer comment card where supplied

FOI, DP, GDPR and EIR communications received are formally logged on the internal Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database and a case number is assigned.

Enquiries and suggestions are logged and the relevant area of service is informed of the details and comments are logged as customer feedback.

If someone wishes to complain about a certain area of the Park the details of the complaint will be passed to the relevant head/director of service.



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

Stage 1

If someone wishes to make a formal complaint against an action or service of the Authority it will be logged, assigned a case reference number and delegated to an officer from the relevant area of service. In the event that the complaint is about an individual, the complaint will be passed to the line manager of that individual.

The lead officer will fully investigate the complaint and provide a response within 10 working days, sending a holding letter if required.

If the complaint requires more investigation, the complainant will be contacted by the most suitable method consistent with the original complaint and a reason for the delay will be provided along with a revised date for a response with CRM updated.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied after the stage 1 investigation the complaint can be escalated to stage 2.

Please note that for a case to be escalated the complainant must outline exactly why they are dissatisfied after stage 1, whether that is the process of investigation, the way the case has been handled by the lead officer or the recommended course of action.

A stage 2 complaint will be investigated by a Head of Service officer of the Authority.

The officer will review the stage 1 investigation, any outcomes of the investigation and consider whether it has adequately satisfied the details of the stage 1 complaint. A response will be sent within 10 working days.

Stage 3

If the complainant is dissatisfied after the stage 2 investigation the complaint can be escalated to stage 3.

Please note that for a case to be escalated the complainant must outline exactly why they are dissatisfied after stage 2.

The complaint is investigated by a panel consisting of; the Authority's Monitoring Officer (the Deputy Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (or Deputy) and/or a Corporate Director.

The panel will review how the case was investigated, any outcomes and whether any further course of action or further investigation is needed. A response will be sent within 10 working days.



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

Authority Member Stage

If the complainant is dissatisfied by the investigation at stage 3 the complaint can be referred to a panel of Authority Members who will review the case and make a final decision on the outcome at a designated meeting.

The Members' Panel shall be made up of three Members and will include the Authority's current serving Chairman and/or the Vice Chairman with the remaining sub-committee Members to be selected from a pool of six serving Members from the Executive Committee. The panel shall also include an independent advisor who will be retained by the Authority as an available resource in such an event.

This process will be completed as soon as practicably possible but in any event the complainant will be notified of the date and should receive a response within 10 working days of the Members' Panel meeting.

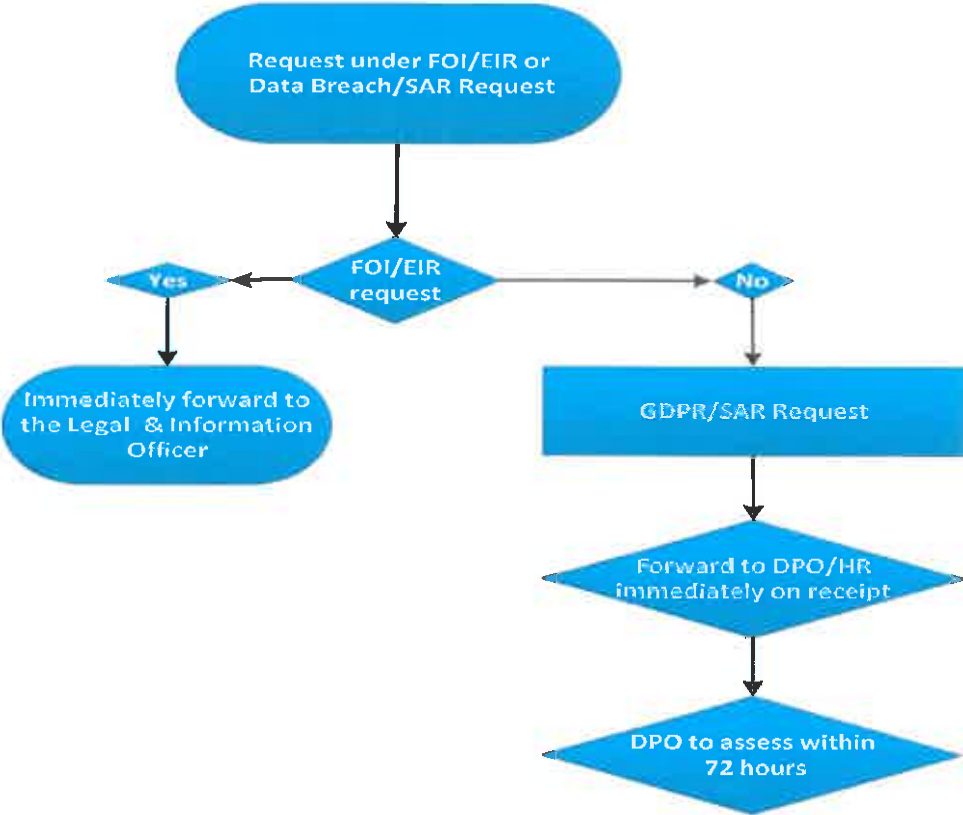
FOI/EIR/Data Breach/SAR Requests

Any FOI/EIR requests received by the Authority will be forwarded to the Legal and Information Officer for investigation and response. Any Data Breach/SAR requests will be forwarded to the Data Protection Officer/HR for investigation and response.



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

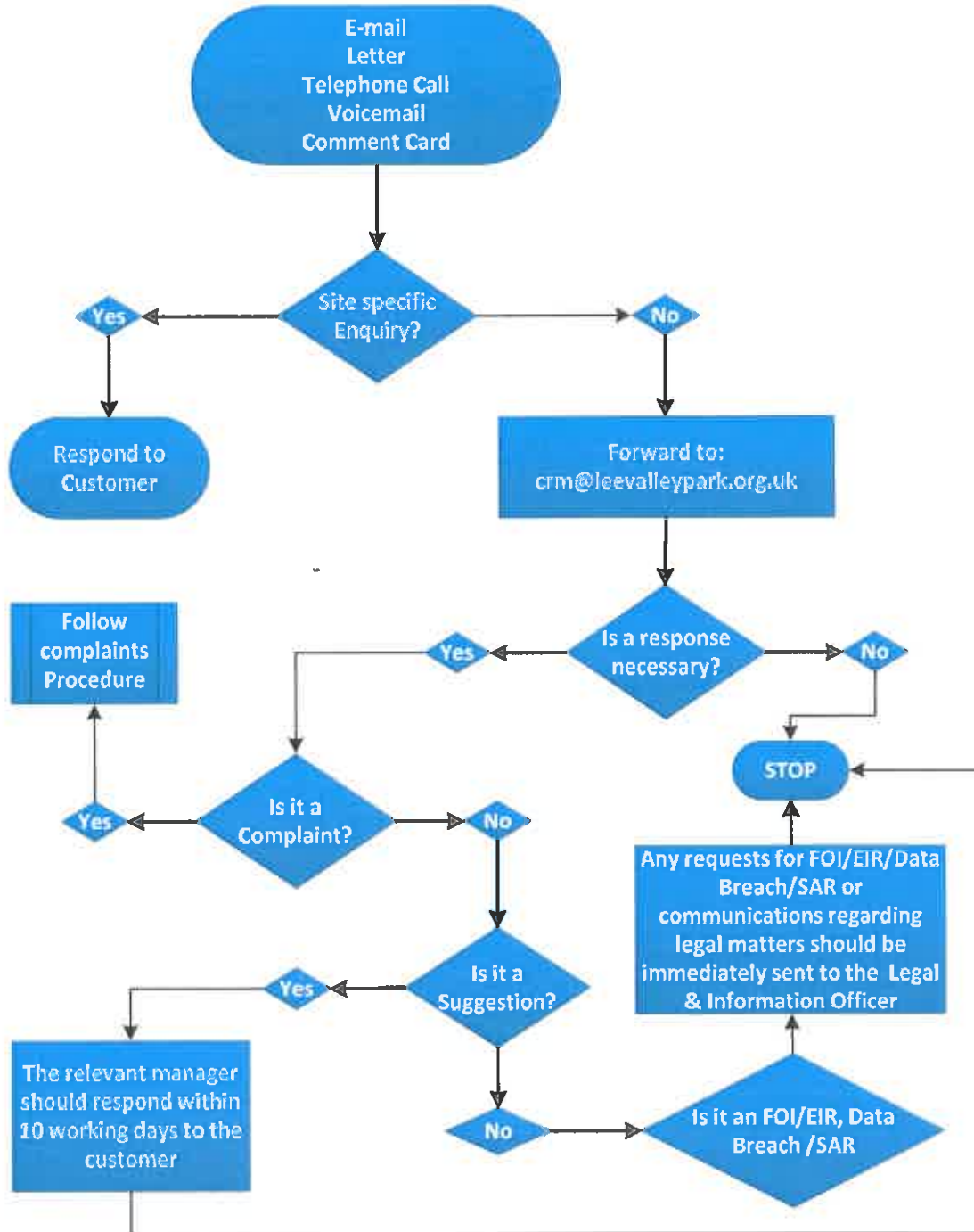




Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

Incoming General Customer Communication - Authority:





Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

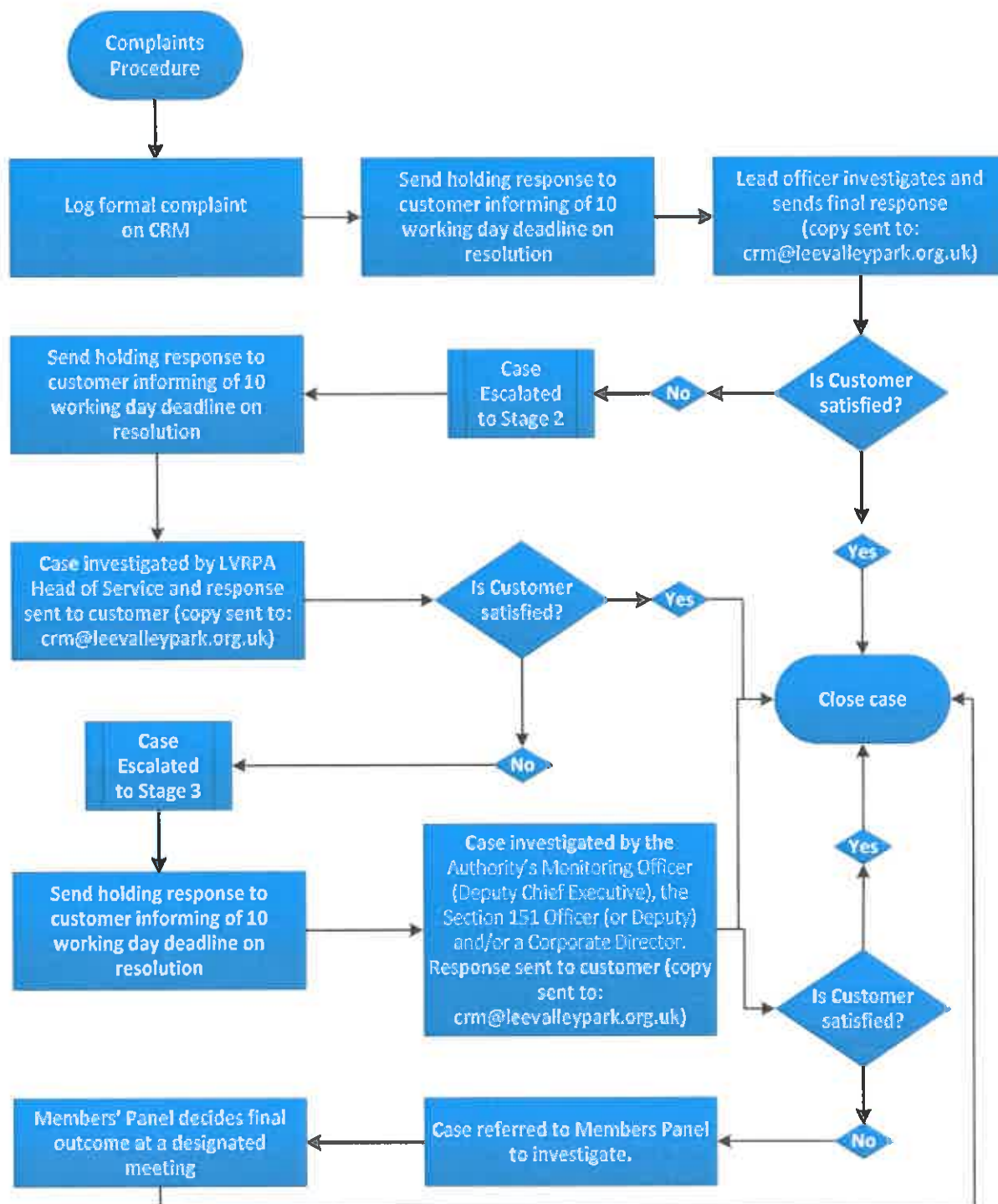
Formal customer complaints

The complaints requiring logging will be formal complaints regarding the service or performance of the park (e.g. being locked in at a car park) and/or its employees. Notification complaints (e.g. dog bins overflowing), will not require logging. Any complaints regarding LSC operated Venues/Staff, must be forwarded to the operator.



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1



Leisure Service Contractor complaints

As noted in the previous section, any complaints regarding LSC Venues/Staff, must be forwarded to the operator (currently the Authority). In the event that a customer is dissatisfied by the response received, the complaint will follow the Formal Complaint procedure process as outlined above.



Customer Communication and Requests

Issue 1

The outcome of this process would normally be reported back to the LSC contractor as it would form part of the Payment and Performance Mechanism under Service Performance Failures and Performance Indicators.

Review:

August 2022

Internal Forms:

- Customer Comments Form

Sources of Information:

- LVRPA Customer Relationship Management
- Dealing with Difficult Customers procedure

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