



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	19 NOVEMBER 2020
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
TITLE OF REPORT:	CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS Q2 2020/21
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the customer complaints and compliments received in 2020/21 to the end of the quarter 2 reporting period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended to:

- (i) Note the report on the complaints and compliments received up to the end of quarter 2 of the reporting cycle.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To monitor the numbers of complaints received, the departments affected and identify any trends in the complaints data.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 Potential reputational damage from upheld decision notices following investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman into customer complaints.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 None

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 The customer complaints and compliments received form an important part of the feedback process for the Council to learn from any issues raised and improve how we deliver our services. When analysing the customer complaints and compliments, they should be read in conjunction with each other to gain a full picture of the feedback received.

COMPLAINTS

- 6.2 The Council operates a two stage internal complaints process to respond to the issues raised by complainants. The first stage is an initial response by the applicable line manager or service unit manager. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response they receive, then they can move to Stage 2, which is investigated and answered by the relevant Head of Service.
- 6.3 Following this Stage 2 response, there is the option to then go to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied. The Ombudsman is a free and impartial service, but will generally only consider complaints that have been through the internal two stage process at the Council first.
- 6.4 The table below compares the number of corporate complaints received by service area in the 2020/21 year to date to the same time period in 2019/20.

Department	2020/21		2019/20	
	Complaints received from 01/04/2020 to 30/09/2020	Average response time	Complaints received from 01/04/2019 to 30/09/2019	Average response time
Community Team	0	N/A	4	4.5 days
Corporate Governance	0	N/A	0	N/A
Customer Services	2	5.50 days	1	5 days
Economic Development	2	11.50 days	0	N/A
Environmental Health	1	5 days	1	16 days
Facilities	0	N/A	0	N/A
Forward Planning	0	N/A	0	N/A
Housing	3	9 days	3	9.67 days
Human Resources	0	N/A	0	N/A
ICT	0	N/A	0	N/A
Legal	0	N/A	1	11 days
Other	1	15 days	0	N/A
Planning and Regulatory Services	2	5.50 days	10	17.10 days
Revenues and Benefits	5	5.80 days	5	3.80 days
Ryecare	0	N/A	0	N/A
Streetscene	8	5.33 days	10	4.30 days
TOTAL	24	6.79 days	35	9.03 days

- 6.5 The number of complaints received so far in 2020/21 is significantly lower than the number received at the same time last year. It is felt that the lockdown period has led to a reduction in citizens contacting the authority generally for non-emergency enquiries.
- 6.6 From the complaints received this year, twenty three (96%) have been dealt with under stage 1 of the complaints process, with just one complaint in this time period remaining dissatisfied at stage 1 and advancing on to stage 2.
- 6.7 The average response time for stage 1 complaints in the year to date is 6.79 working days. This is an improvement in response time of 2.24 days in comparison to the same period last year and is within the 15 day maximum turnaround time for complaint responses that require further investigation to provide a full response to. The one Stage 2 complaint received was responded to in 9 working days. The high response rate for the complaints received in Economic Development was down to one complaint that took 17 days to respond and an other complaint that took 15 days to respond to. These

were both delayed due to the enquiries that had to be undertaken to gather further information into the complaints.

- 6.8 Examples of the lessons learned from the complaints received up to the end of quarter 2 this year are included at Appendix 2 to show the actions taken to remedy complaints received.

COMPLIMENTS

- 6.9 The number of service compliments received in the 2020/21 year up to the end of September 2020 and a comparison with the 2019/20 is as follows:

Department	2020/21 compliments received from 01/04/2020 to 30/09/2020	2019/20 compliments received from 01/04/2019 to 30/09/2019
Business Support Grants (Economic Development / Revenues and Benefits)	12	-
Community Team	3	0
Corporate Governance (was Business & Democracy)	0	3
Customer Services	5	1
Environmental Health	0	0
Facilities	2	7
Forward Planning	0	0
Housing	3	2
Human Resources	0	0
ICT	0	0
Legal	0	0
Other	0	0
Planning and Regulatory Services	0	1
Revenues and Benefits	5	2
Ryecare	1	3
Streetscene	26	0
TOTAL	57	19

- 6.10 The main topics of the compliments received by citizens during the year so far relate to support given in the response to Covid-19, in particular the grant help for local businesses, the work of Streetscene in continuing to provide refuse and recycling collections and providing temporary accommodation for those who had become homeless during the pandemic.

- 6.11 Examples of some of the compliments include:

“I would like to thank you for the grant issued to us recently. It is a much needed life-line and greatly appreciated.”

“We've lived in countless places and I've never known bin men as brilliant as the ones here are. They're always accommodating and helpful. A breath of fresh air and a credit to the Council.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to say a really big thank you to your recycle team.”

“Thank you so much for all your assistance, and patience! This will make a massive difference, to us and our clients, and it would not have happened without your help. I

really appreciate it.”

- 6.12 Strategic Management Board have identified an underreporting of the service compliments received, and officers are investigating ways of better reflecting the positive feedback received in this report for future meetings.
- 6.13 Officers are reviewing the Compliments, Complaints and Feedback procedure in place for dealing with complaints, compliments and feedback received by the council. During the Covid-19 response this year, it has been clear that it is important to have a robust feedback procedure that is easy to follow, makes clear the standards we expect and the way we will consider complaints. As part of the review, officers are following the good practice guidance set out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and have undertaken a comparative benchmarking exercise to show the complaint timescales by other Local Authorities shown at Appendix 3. Following any feedback received from the committee, the revised procedure will be implemented and follow up training given to service managers on good practice in handling complaints and how to respond effectively, delivered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:
- a) Financial
None
 - b) Legal
No direct implications
 - c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)
None

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Background Papers:
[RDC Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure](#)