



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	11 FEBRUARY 2021
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SIMON COPLEY
TITLE OF REPORT:	CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS Q3 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 3 reporting period on 31 December 2020.

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 3 of the reporting cycle

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To monitor the numbers of complaints and compliments received, the departments affected and identify any trends in the 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 Since the quarter 2 update report to the committee meeting in November, the council has handled a further 7 corporate complaints in the period from 1 October to 31 December 2020.

Department	Number of Complaints received	Complaints resolved at Stage 1	Complaints resolved at Stage 2
Environmental Health	1	1	N/A
Housing	1	1	N/A
Planning & Regulatory Services	2	1	1
Revenues & Benefits	2	2	N/A
Streetscene	1	1	N/A
Total	7	6	1

- 6.5 From the seven corporate complaints received during quarter 3, six were dealt with under stage 1 of the complaints process, with one complainant remaining dissatisfied at stage 1 and advancing on to stage 2. The overall average response time during the quarter was 10.13 days, broken down to 9.57 days to respond at stage 1 and 14 days for the stage 2 response. All complaints received in quarter 3 were completed within the timescales set out to the complainants in the initial acknowledgement letter.
- 6.6 For the 2020/21 year-to-date performance, there have been 31 complaints received from 1 April to 31 December 2020. The 31 complaints received from April to December 2020 is significantly lower than the 48 received in the same time period last year and in comparison to previous years. It is felt that the periods in national lockdown has led to a reduction in citizens contacting the authority generally for non-emergency enquiries.
- 6.7 Of the 31 complaints received, 29 have been resolved at stage 1, with 2 complaints escalated to be dealt with under stage 2 of the complaints procedure. This is an improvement on the same time period last year, when 14 out of the 48 complaints received were dissatisfied with the stage 1 response and requested to progress to stage 2 complaints. This is part of a concerted effort to improve complaint responses to thoroughly address all of the points raised in complaints received.
- 6.8 The most complaints this year have been received in the customer facing areas of Revenues & Benefits, Streetscene, Planning & Regulatory Services and Housing Services. The average response times for the year to date are 7.39 days for the resolution of stage 1 complaints and 12.5 days for the resolution of stage 2 complaints. Analysis of the service response times has found that where specialist legal advice is sought or when interviews are required between the investigating officer and other

members of staff to better understand the reasons behind a complaint, this generally leads to a longer time to respond.

- 6.9 Examples of the lessons learned from the complaints received up to the end of quarter 3 this year are included as an appendix to show the actions taken to remedy complaints received.

COMPLIMENTS

- 6.10 The number of service compliments recorded in the 2020/21 year up to 31 December 2020 is 81. The main topics of the compliments received by citizens relate to appreciation of the response of the council to Covid-19, in particular the grant help for local businesses provided by the Economic Development, Finance and Revenues & Benefits teams. Furthermore, the work of Streetscene in continuing to provide refuse and recycling collections is recognised, and the Ryecare service to support vulnerable residents during the pandemic.

- 6.11 Examples of some of the compliments from October to December include:

“Many thanks for the incredible service provided today. Could not believe it when I returned from work to see my new bin. Please can you pass on my thanks to the amazing street scene team. They always were a credit to Ryedale District Council and it is lovely to know that they still deliver a service second to none.”

“A big thankyou to the Ryecare staff who were working on Tuesday morning. You were so quick. Cannot thank you enough.”

“Thank you so much! You have been amazingly quick with dealing with my request. In the first lockdown I was unfortunately not eligible for any grants or funding so I am most grateful and very impressed with your professional and prompt service.”

“I just wanted to thank you for all your help with the planning application. We welcome the effort that you and your team has done on this complex and challenging case and the time taken on sites visits and collation of a report that summaries hundreds of pages of paperwork.”

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: None