



PART A: MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

REPORT TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 16 FEBRUARY 2023

**REPORT OF THE: PROGRAMME DIRECTOR PEOPLE AND RESOURCES
MARGARET WALLACE**

TITLE OF REPORT: CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS Q3 2022/23

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on Customer Complaints and Compliments received up to the end of quarter 3 of the reporting cycle (October - December 2022) for 2022-23.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended to:

- (i) Note and endorse the performance of complaints and compliments received in quarter 3 of the 2022/23 reporting cycle.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 To provide data analysis of the numbers of complaints and compliments received and highlight the areas recommended for making service improvements moving forward.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

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

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

5.1 **Our Organisation - an innovative, enterprising council – accessible to all.**

We will transform our customer services, using new ways of working to improve our responsiveness.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

6.1 Effective analysis of the views and feedback from our community through our complaints process, provides an important tool for identifying ways to improve the customer's journey and the opportunity to highlight areas for service improvement. To gain a full, overall picture of the quarter 3 analysis, details of customer complaints and compliments should be read in conjunction with each other.

6.2 COMPLAINTS

6.3 A complaint is defined within the council as *"an expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf"*.

6.4 The council operates a two stage complaints procedure. Stage 1 acknowledges the submission of a complaint within one working day of receipt, provides details of the named officer dealing with the complaint and outlines the timescales for providing a response. At this stage, the aim is to reach a frontline resolution within ten working days. However, due to the complexity of some complaints, where it becomes evident that this timescale cannot be met, an extension can be agreed.

6.5 Following completion of a stage 1 complaint response, where a customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome, escalation to a stage 2 process may be appropriate. Again, stage 2 acknowledges submission of the complaint within one working day of receipt. Two types of complaint are considered at this stage; those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and those that are deemed so complex that a more detailed investigation from the onset will be required. Stage 2 complaints are dealt with by a senior manager and a full response is provided to the complainant as soon as possible but within 20 working days.

6.6 Following completion of a stage 2 complaint, where the customer remains dissatisfied with the way in which a complaint has been handled or answered, they are advised to open a case with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The LGSCO is a free and impartial service and will usually only investigate complaints that have first been considered through the council's own internal stage 2 process.

6.7 This report provides an overview of the corporate complaints and compliments received in quarter 3, from 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022. During this quarter, the council received and responded to 6 complaints. In comparison to the previous quarter 2 2022/2023 report, this represents a positive reduction of 50%.

6.8 In quarter 3, three out of the six complaints received were dealt with under the stage 1 process, which equates to 50% of all quarter 3 complaints received. Three quarter 3 stage 1 complaints progressed to the stage 2 procedure.

6.9 During quarter 3, three stage 1 complaints received an extension to the 10-day timescale, all of which were agreed to allow further investigation. In total, 100% of stage 1 complaints met their agreed timescale.

6.10 Complaints provide important customer feedback which help the council to identify where improvements can be made to provide a better standard of service delivery and one which is better placed to meet the needs of the community. Quarter 3 statistics

demonstrate that the council is listening to customer feedback, by taking action and working hard to address any negative feedback with the aim of preventing a reoccurrence.

- 6.11 Significant increases in workload due to local government reorganisation have seen a substantial impact on staff and resources, however, this report highlights that teams across all services are continuing to work hard to meet the needs of the communities throughout Ryedale, improving customer satisfaction and demonstrating an excellent level of service delivery. A detailed analysis of the breakdown in complaint topics, timescales and outcomes can be found at **(Appendix A)**.
- 6.12 Customer Service Complaints and Insight Officers continue to work with services across the organisation to ensure defined timescales are met and a high-quality response is provided to all complainants.
- 6.13 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) training took place in quarter 2 for all Customer Service Complaints and Insight Officers and designated service complaints handlers. As a result, a Staff Complaints Handbook is being created to provide clear, consistent guidance for staff across all departments to help improve the quality of handling complaints and the responses provided.

6.14 COMPLIMENTS

- 6.15 Analysing customer complaints alongside compliments received is important to provide a full, comprehensive insight into overall customer feedback. The number of compliments recorded in quarter 3 from 1 October 2022 to 30 December 2022, was 16, and these covered services provided by Customer Services, Housing, Planning, Revenues & Benefits, Ryecare and Streetscene.
- 6.16 The significant number of compliments received during quarter 3 is testament to the high-level performance across the council. Many teams work together, carrying out cross cutting services to contribute to the positive feedback received from customers, which is evidenced by the compliments received.
- 6.17 Many of the compliments received are to thank staff for their quick, professional and knowledgeable performance, while others highlight support and expertise in making applications and being signposted to the correct departments to meet a diverse range of needs. There was also recognition for the Housing department for winning two National Awards. A detailed analysis of the breakdown of compliments can be found at **(Appendix A)**.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:
 - a) Financial
Costs are contained within the agreed budgets for the service.
 - b) Legal
No escalation to Legal Services in relation to complaints was required during quarter 3.
 - c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental and Climate Change, Crime & Disorder).

No direct equality implications have been identified. All complaints are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, considering individual circumstances and details of events.

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Background Papers:

Customer Complaints and Compliments Q3 2022-23 - Appendix A