

Complaints/Comments/Compliments - Information and Improvements

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Recommendation

The Standards Committee is asked to:

Note the attached data and charts for the period 1 July-30 September 2012 (Quarter 2).

Corporate Implications

The establishment and maintenance of complaints procedures is conducive to the discharge of the Council's various functions and as such are authorised by Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

There are no financial implications.

A robust complaints procedure assists in minimising the risks to the Council arising from complaints.

Background

Quarterly information is supplied to all business units which record complaints, comments or compliments on ServiceMail, and after consultation with managers, composite information for Strategic Management Board. Further complaints statistics are also incorporated as Local Performance Indicators by the Policy and Research Unit.

Report

The information and charts for the quarter are attached herewith, together with a summarised report on LG Ombudsman complaints to 30th October 2012. The target for complaints to be responded to in target is 90%.

(a) Answering complaints within target (10 working days):

This quarter there was a total percentage of complaints within target of 97%, an excellent quarter and substantially above target.

(b) Review of Complaints and Improvements as a result of complaints:

For this quarter there are 2 improvements recorded, one for Housing Applications and one for Refuse services.

(c) Complaints to the LG Ombudsman:

There have been no findings of maladministration. There is one current ongoing Ombudsman enquiry [*N.B. now discontinued*].

(d) Compliments Logging

The total for compliments logged is 89 for this quarter, and the service area with the most compliments is off-street parking with 20. Service areas coming second with 15 compliments are Environmental Health and the Customer Service Centre. This is a very good result for the services concerned.

Current Issues

- (1) As from 1st April 2013, under the Localism Act our councillors will form part of the “democratic filter” for the Housing Ombudsman, for housing complaints covering all services apart from temporary housing and housing applications. This means that complainants who have taken their complaints through the relevant HA complaints procedure and wish the complaint to progress to the Housing Ombudsman, will have to ask either a councillor, an MP or a designated Tenants Panel to forward it for them. I have made contact with Red Kite initially as we will need to provide information and possibly a protocol so that our councillors are aware of this and know what to do when contacted by a resident.
- (2) Automated phone system: Regular meetings between CSC, Council Tax, Mark Lansbury and I are taking place and we are working through all of the phone scripts for every option to streamline and simplify them for the customers. These are being done in the order of popularity and importance. In addition, the standard letters regarding Council Tax are being reviewed to tie in with the phone options so that customers can easily understand and use the phone system to their advantage.

Background Papers

“Have We Got It Right” leaflet for the public.