

COMPLAINTS/COMMENTS/COMPLIMENTS - INFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENTS QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2013)

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Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the attached information in relation to complaints, comments and compliments for the period 1 October to 31 December 2013 (quarter 3); and
- (ii) recommend to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee the adoption of revised terms of reference for the Standards Committee to allow for future complaints, comments and compliments information to be provided by means of an Information Sheet to members of the Standards Committee and Cabinet.

Corporate Implications

1. 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.
2. There are no financial implications.
3. A robust complaints procedure assists in minimising the risks to the Council arising from complaints.

Background

4. Quarterly information is supplied to all business units which record complaints, comments or compliments on ServiceMail, and then composite information is provided for SMB.
5. Further complaints statistics are also incorporated as Local Performance Indicators by the Policy and Communications Team.

Quarter 3 Report

6. The information and charts for the quarter are attached herewith, together with a summarised report on LG Ombudsman complaints to date. 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 drop in the total percentage of complaints within target from 96% last quarter to 90%, which may have been due to the Christmas holiday period (of 57 complaints logged, 6 were out of target).

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

Three improvements have been recorded for this quarter.

(c) Complaints to the LG Ombudsman:

There have been no reports issued or negative findings to date. There are 3 ongoing complaints, one of which has been responded to and we are awaiting the LGO decision. Thirteen decisions have been received this year to date.

With regard to the previous quarter's report I can advise that the LGO discontinued the investigation with regard to the homelessness complaint and found no fault with the Council's actions.

(d) Compliments Logging:

The total for compliments logged is 52 for this quarter, and the service area with the most compliments is Parking Services again with 14, followed by Environmental Health with 10 and the Customer Service Centre with 6.

Current Issues

Joint Waste Service Complaints

7. The Joint Waste team are based at Chiltern District Council. There were a considerable number of additional contacts arising from the rollout of the increased recycling service across the Wycombe District which commenced in October, which included many missed collections and delays in the supply of new recycling bins and containers. These persisted at a higher level from October through to December, but are reducing.
8. We collect rubbish and recycling from 71,000 properties in the district, 66,000 of which experienced some changes under the new service. It's not unusual with a rollout on this scale to have higher numbers of calls and enquiries: in the past, service changes have been made on an incremental basis.
9. We are advised by the Joint Waste Team manager that there were approximately 2,500 contacts/requests for service during this period and 8 Stage 1 complaints were logged; in addition 7 Stage 2 complaints were responded to. It is therefore not possible to report an accurate figure for the number of complaints for Quarter 3. Only the Stage 2 complaints are included in this quarter's figures above, as the waste team have separate reporting arrangements. The team has been reminded of WDC's complaint definition in relation to the types of complaints received and they advise that reporting to us will comply with our requirements for future quarters and will be looked at anew

for the forthcoming financial year. It is important to note that the LG Ombudsman will hold Wycombe DC responsible for any complaint in the Wycombe District, and will expect the resident to have completed our own procedure. The Head of Environment (Caroline Hughes) will be meeting with the Waste Team management shortly to agree a way forward for improvements in the area of complaint recording and reporting following recent discussions on the matter.

10. There is now one Ombudsman complaint arising from this period which will be responded to shortly.

Complaints Received – Car Parks Automatic Number Plate Recognition system Trial

11. In the information sheet for the last quarter, there were a large number of complaints with regard to the new ANPR system in some of our car parks. The Parking Services Manager advises that the number of complaints has now reduced considerably as customers have got used to the new system, and particular issues causing problems in the last quarter have now been resolved with the contractor. The number of complaints logged has reduced from 120 to 7 for this quarter.

Conclusions

12. As this information does not relate to Standards, it is recommended that the Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to allow for future complaints, comments and compliments information to be provided by means of an Information Sheet to members of the Committee and Cabinet. The Committee is therefore asked to refer the revised terms of reference to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee, as a revision of the Constitution, for recommendation to Council.