

Bolsover District Council

Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee

23rd July 2018

**Compliments Comments and Complaints Report 2017/18 –
1st October 2017 to 31st March 2018 and Annual Summary**

Report of the Head of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To provide information on the number of compliments, comments and complaints for the period 1st October 2017 to 31st March 2018
- To provide an Annual Summary on the above.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 This report forms part of a larger report which incorporates Customer Service Standards monitoring to the Council's Executive.
- 1.2 This is a new report to scrutiny, following best practice guidelines. Future reports will be presented on a six-monthly basis.

1.3 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Compliments

Appendix (A) shows the number of written compliments received for the period by department. In total 136 written compliments were received. A good cross section of compliments was received from customers appreciating excellent service, including 41 for Streetscene Services, 23 for the Housing Department and 21 for Customer Services. As there are some compliments which cross cut departments, the total does not correspond with the total above when viewed in this way.

Comments

Appendix (B) shows the number of written comments received for the period. 100% (all 36) were acknowledged and passed to the respective department within the target time of 3 working days, for consideration when reviewing their service. As there are some comments which cross cut departments, the total does not correspond with the total above when viewed in this way.

Complaints

Frontline resolution (stage one)

Appendix (C) shows the number of Frontline Resolution complaints received by the Contact Centre service and recorded on the Customer Information System (Firmstep) by department. The customer service standard for responding to these complaints is 3 working days.

Formal Investigation (stage two)

Appendix (D) shows the number of Formal Investigation complaints by department. 89 complaints were received during this period, 98% of which were responded to within our customer service standard of 15 working days.

As some complaints cross cut departments, the total does not correspond with the total above when viewed in this way.

Internal Review (stage three)

Appendix (E) shows the number of stage three complaints received for the period by department. These are complainants who have already made a stage two complaint and still feel dissatisfied. During this period 23 stage three complaints were received, 96% (22) of which were responded to within the standard of 20 working days. As there are some complaints which cross cut departments, the total does not correspond with the total above when viewed in this way.

Ombudsman

Appendix (F) shows the status of Ombudsman complaints for 2017/18 as at the end of March 2018. During this period two decisions of 'No maladministration' were made (one by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and one by the Housing Ombudsman), two further cases were closed after initial enquiries (by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman) and the Council is awaiting further correspondence in respect of a complaint via the Housing Ombudsman.

Performance

Cumulatively, 98% of Formal Investigation complaints were responded to within 15 working days to date for the financial year 2017/18. It is pleasing to report that this exceeds the target of 97%.

1.4 Summary for 2017/18

The following tables provide a summary of performance for compliments, comments and complaints for 2017/18, with comparative data from previous years.

Volume and Performance by Complaints Handling Service

Volume by type	2017/18 Total	2016/17 Total	2015/16 Total	2014/15 Total
Compliments	266	264	324	167
Comments	58	70	50	48
Formal Investigation Complaints (S2)	179	176	127	121
Internal Review Complaints (S3)	46	35	39	20
Total	549	545	540	356
% Comments acknowledged within standard (target 3 working days)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Stage 2 responded to within standard (target 97%)	98%	99%	99%	96%
Average response in days (target 15 working days)	10	10	10	12
% Stage 3 responded to within standard (target 100%)	98%	100%	100%	100%
Average response in days	14	14	14	16

Volume recorded by Contact Centre

Volume by type	2017/18 Total	2016/17 Total	2015/16 Total	2014/15 Total
Stage 1 Complaints	213	224	273	310

When comparing 2017/18 to the previous year of 2016/17, the following is noted:

- There were slightly more written compliments
- We have received fewer comments
- We have received slightly fewer frontline resolution complaints
- Received slightly more formal investigation complaints
- Received more internal review complaints

The above would appear to indicate that the Council has an easy to access complaints system, as recommended by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman. When looking at ombudsman complaints decisions for this financial year, it is satisfying to note the Council has not been found at fault or received criticism regarding its complaint handling.

Complaints Feedback

There was no specific feedback leading to service improvements during this financial year.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The report is to keep Elected Members informed of volumes and trends regarding compliments, comments, complaints and to remain compliant with the Customer Service Excellence standard.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 The report is to keep Elected Members regularly informed of volumes and trends regarding compliments, comments and complaints. No consultation or equality impact assessment is required.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Not applicable as the report is to keep Elected Members informed rather than to aid decision making.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications with regard to the report, the Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well.
- 5.1.2 In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman.
- 5.1.3 In the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information requests, the Information Commissioner's Office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 The Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman and, in the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information requests, the Information Commissioner's Office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines. There are no Data Protection implications.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 Not applicable as the report is to keep Elected Members informed.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Scrutiny note the overall performance on compliments, comments and complaints for 2017/18.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: <i>BDC: Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed	Yes
District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Providing Our Customers with Excellent Service – retain Customer Service Excellence accreditation year on year Transforming Our Organisation – good governance.

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1:	
A:	Compliments by department 1/10/17 – 31/3/18
B:	Comments by department 1/10/17 – 31/3/18
C:	Frontline resolution complaints by department 1/10/17 – 31/3/18
D:	Formal Investigation complaints by department 1/10/17 – 31/3/18
E:	Internal Review complaints by department 1/10/17 – 31/3/18
F:	Ombudsman complaints summary for 2017/18
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
Customer Standards and Complaints Officer	Ext: 2353