

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Standards Committee on 13th November 2023

Customer Service Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report and Annual Summary 2022/23

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Pam Brown, Service Director for Executive, Corporate Services & Partnerships Lesley Botham, Customer Service, Complaints and Standards Manager

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To provide information on the Council's performance in relation to its customer service standards, Compliments, Comments and Complaints.
- To provide information on the effective management of complaints and customer requests which is central to excellent customer service and the Council can use to improve its services.
- To provide information on the number of compliments, comments and complaints for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023
- To provide an Annual Summary on the above.
- To make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to its Customer Service Standards and the effective management of complaints.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to the effective management of complaints.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Compliments

In total **160** written compliments were received during 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. Compliments were received from customers who appreciated excellent service.

Comments

The number of written comments received for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, **24** Comments were received and 100% were acknowledged and passed to the respective department within the target time of 3 working days, for consideration when reviewing their service.

Complaints

Frontline resolution (stage one)

The number of Frontline Resolution complaints received by the Contact Centre service, in total **311** complaints were recorded from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

84% of which were responded to within our customer standard of 3 working days.

Formal Investigation (stage two)

The number of Formal Investigation complaints and M.P. enquiries received by department, **116** formal complaints 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. **235** M.P. enquiries were also received during this same period.

88% Formal complaints and 91% M.P. enquiries were responded to within our customer service standard of 15 working days target 97%.

(Target has been updated for 2023/24 to 95% for both Formal Complaints & MP Enquiries).

Internal Review (stage three)

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 2022/23 **27** stage three complaints were received of which, 92% were responded to within the standard of 20 working days.

Ombudsman

The Local Govt & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) received 3 enquiries and complaints during 2022/23, 2 were closed after initial enquiries and 1 case was not upheld with no fault found.

Housing Ombudsman (HO) 1 complaint was decided during this period (2022/2023) and it was determined there was service failure in the Landlords (Councils) handling of the related complaint. Recommendation - to ensure compliance with its own complaints procedures to ensure that complaint are answered within its published time limits and complaint responses contain the correct escalation.

Summary for 2022/23

The following tables provide a summary of performance for compliments, comments and complaints for 2022/23, with comparative data from previous years.

Appendix (1) provides a summary of performance by % of compliments, comments and complaints received for each service area and responses within timescale.

Volume and Performance

Volume by type	2022/23 Total	2021/22 Total	2020/21 Total	2019/20 Total
Compliments	160	187	228	273
Comments	24	23	97	55
M.P. enquiries	235	126	28	Data not recorded
Stage 1 Complaints (S1)	311	447	217	205
Stage 2 Formal Investigation Complaints (S2)	116	117	175	208
Stage 3 Internal Review Complaints (S3)	27	39	35	41
Total	873	938	563	782
% Comments acknowledged within standard (target 3 working days)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Stage 1 responded to within standard (target 100%)	88%	Data not recorded	Data not recorded	Data not recorded
Average response in days (target 3 working days)	2	Data not recorded	Data not recorded	Data not recorded
% Stage 2 responded to within standard (target 97%)	88%	91%	94%	96%
Average response in days (target 15 working days)	10	11	10	13
% Stage 3 responded to within standard (target 100%)	92%	82%	94%	88%
Average response in days (target 20 working days)	18	16	16	19

When comparing 2022/23 to the previous year of 2021/22, the following is noted:

- There were slightly fewer written compliments
- We have received slightly more comments
- We have received slightly less frontline resolution (S1) complaints
- Received a similar amount of formal investigation (S2) complaints and an increase in M.P. enquiries
- Received slightly less internal review (S3) 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 the Housing Ombudsman Service.

A separate report is submitted for Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service complaints.

Complaints Feedback

Whilst there were no real trends leading to service improvements during this financial year, we have agreed to deal with general enquiries from the MPs office where appropriate as opposed to escalating through the complaints process.

Due to the decline of formal investigations (S2) % response time, service areas to be reminded of the CCC Policy and response timeframes.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 None

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints.

Approved by Councillor Mary Dooley Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Health & Wellbeing

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

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. In cases of

maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

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.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment: Yes No

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details:

Any complaints linked to environmental issues are dealt with in line with our policies.

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

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

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>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:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	<p>No</p>

<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details:</p>

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.

Increasing customer satisfaction with our services
Improving customer contact and removing barriers to accessing information
Actively engaging with partners to benefit our customers
Promoting equality and diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	Compliments, Comments and Complaints:- A. Compliments by department 1/04/22 – 31/03/23 B. Comments by department 1/04/22 – 31/03/23 C. Frontline resolution complaints (S1) by department 1/04/22 – 31/03/23 D. Formal Investigation complaints (S2) by department 1/04/22 – 31/03/23 E. Internal Review complaints (S3) by department 1/04/22 – 31/03/23 F. Ombudsman complaints summary for 2022/23

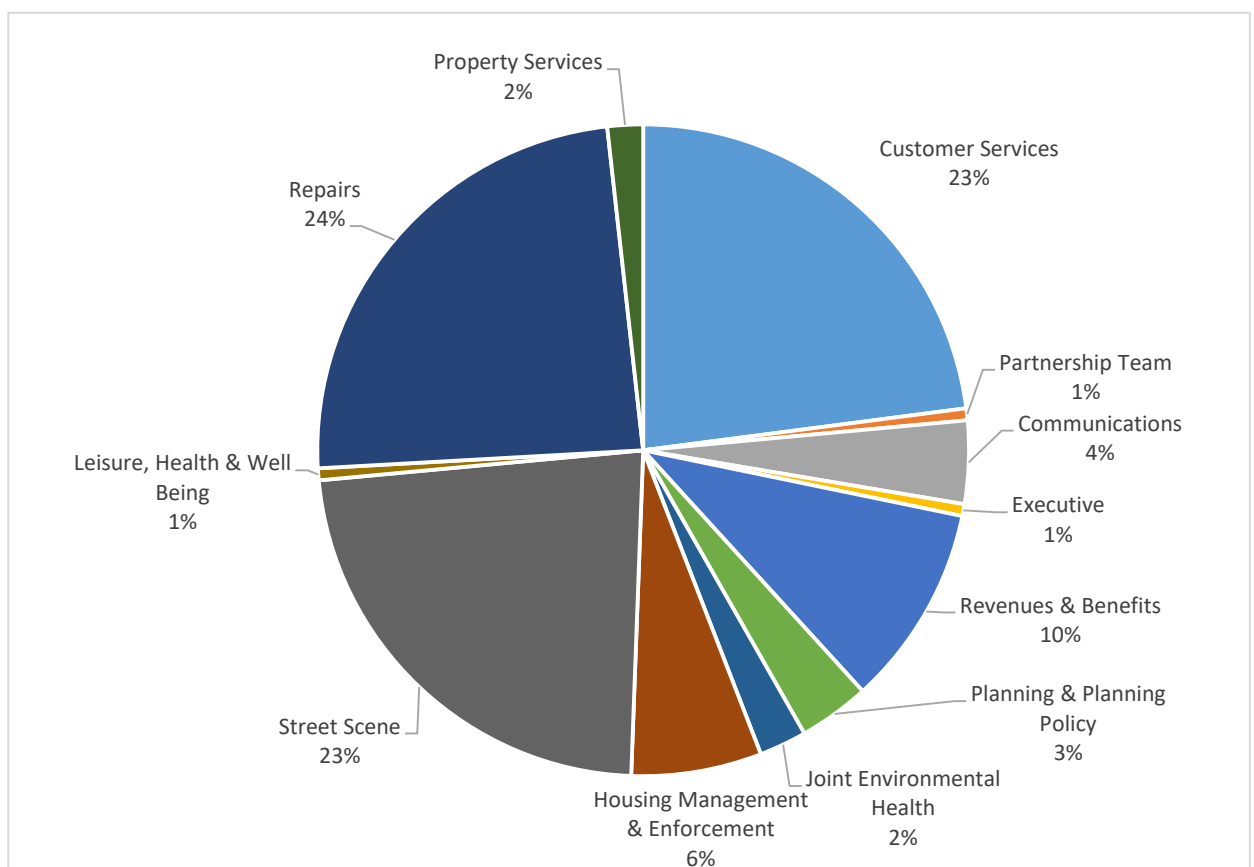
Background Papers

None

Appendix (1)

A- Compliments 1/4/22 - 31/3/23		Number
Services	Customer Services	39
	Partnership Team	1
	Communications	7
	Executive	1
	Revenues & Benefits	17
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	6
	Joint Environmental Health	4
	Housing Management & Enforcement	11
	Street Scene	39
	Leisure, Health & Well Being	1
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	41
	Property Services	3

Percentage of Compliments by department



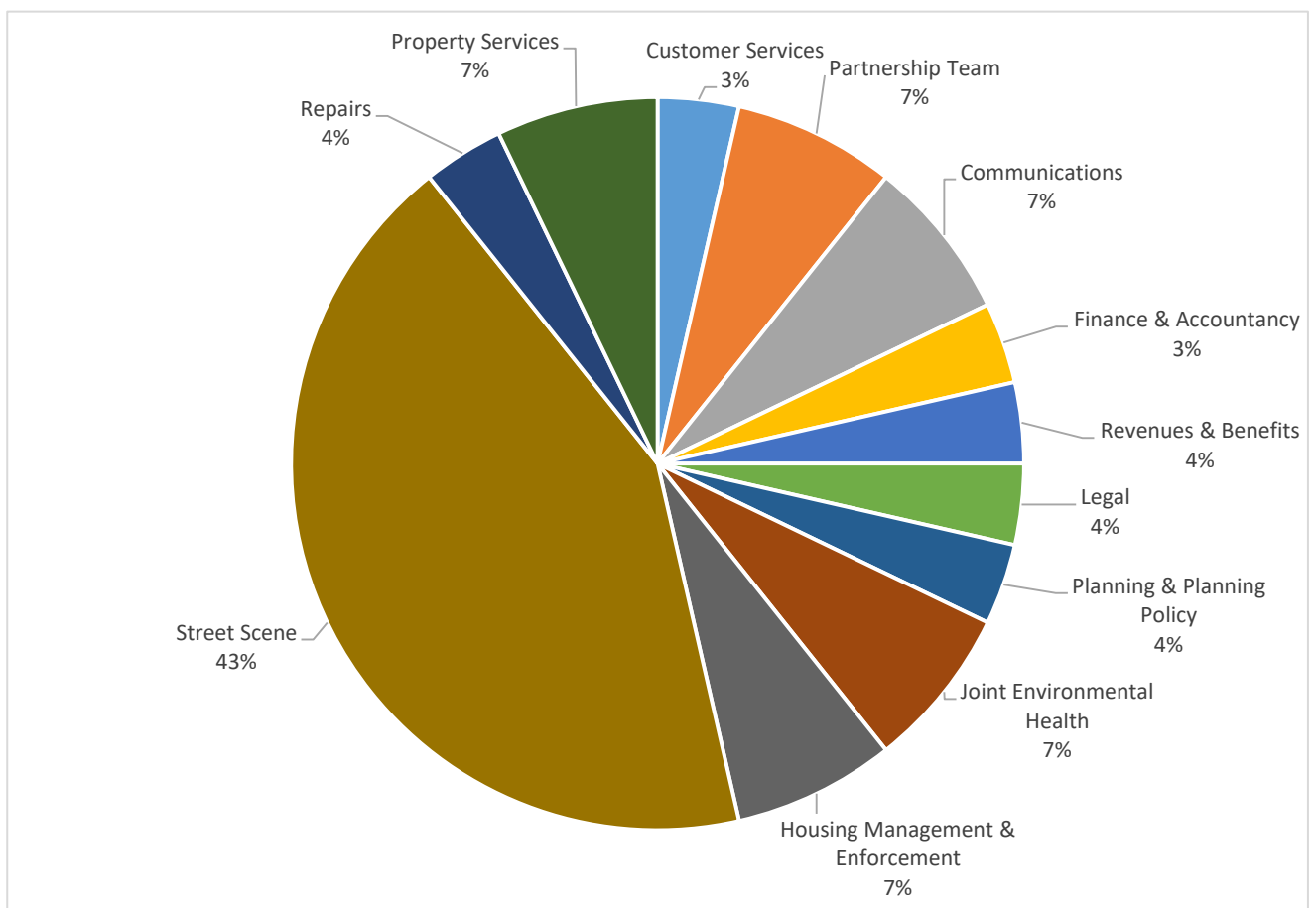
Compliments Included:

Would you please pass on my thanks and gratitude to the team who cut the grass at Vale Close on Friday 29th April. They are a very courteous and pleasant team.	Street Scene
Customer was so grateful and expressed how fabulous the service was that he experienced from Shirebrook Contact Centre Reception staff.	Customer Services
On behalf of the Helping Hands Club, XXX would like to send her Thanks and gratitude to Scott Chambers and Councillor Leader Steve Fritchley, for their help and wonderful support.	Communications Executive
Customer would like to thank the drains team for all their hard work. They were very polite , and no mess was left.	Repairs Property & Estates
Customer would like to express her appreciation to the Environmental Health department especially XXX who listened to her complaint and was proactive in the advice she offered.	Environmental Health
Customer would like to thank the Revenues team how efficient their service is in answering the phone and advising information requested.	Revenues
On behalf of XXX and myself, I just wanted to drop you a line to say , "thank you". Thank you for your help, advice, patience and understanding with our application, it has been greatly appreciated by us both.	Planning
Customer praised the staff at the Council who he has come into contact with in regard to the process of applying for a Council Property; the customer expressed how everyone he has contacted has been very helpful in both Customer Services and the Housing Department.	Housing Customer Services

Customer advised services at the gym are excellent, the receptionists, instructors and facilities are all value for money.	Leisure
Customer thanked XXX Partnership Team for his great professional selfless help	Partnership Team
Customer would like to thank Bolsover District Council employees from the Housing Repairs and Street Scene Department for undertaking repairs to their property and removing bulky items	Repairs Street Scene

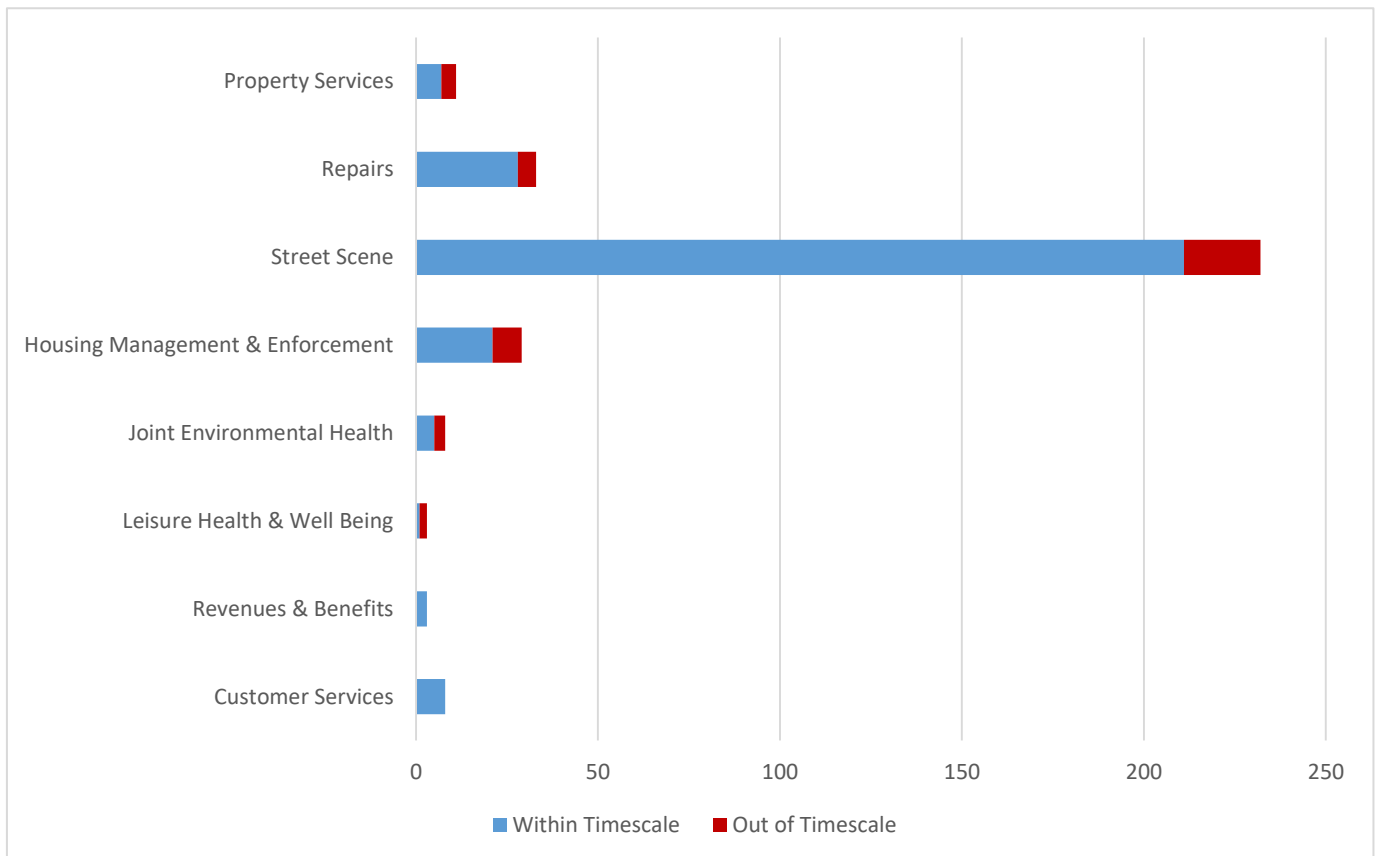
B - Comments 1/4/22 – 31/3/23		Number
Services	Customer Services	1
	Partnership Team	2
	Communications	2
	Finance & Accountancy	1
	Revenues & Benefits	1
	Legal	1
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	1
	Joint Environmental Health	2
	Housing Management & Enforcement	2
	Street Scene	12
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	1
	Property Services	2

Percentage of Comments by department



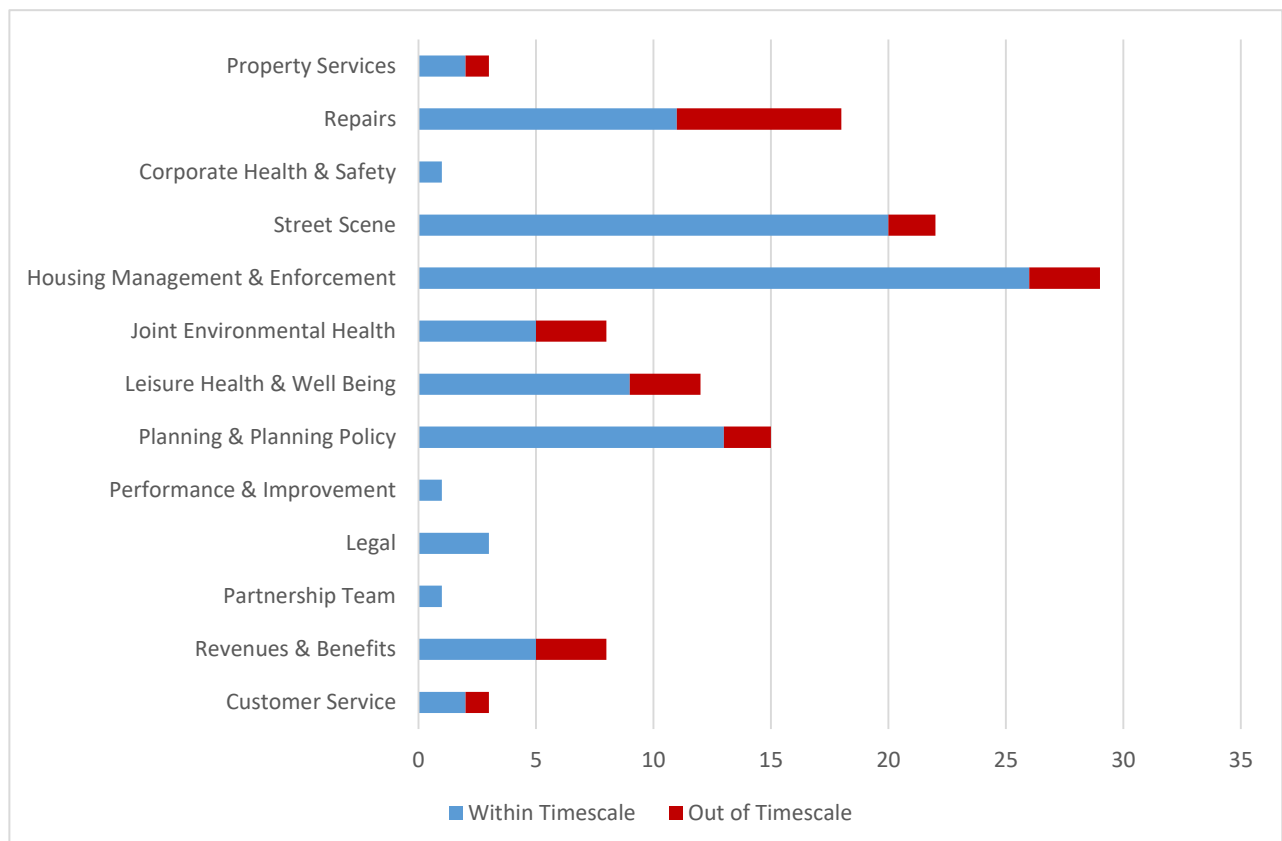
C - Number of Frontline Resolutions (Stage 1) complaints via Contact Centre 1/4/22 – 31/3/23		Number	Within Timescale (3 working days)	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	8	8	0
	Revenues & Benefits	3	3	0
Strategy	Leisure Health & Well Being	3	1	2
	Joint Environmental Health	8	5	3
	Housing Management & Enforcement	29	21	8
	Street Scene	232	211	21
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	33	28	5
	Property Services	11	7	4

Informal complaints (Stage 1) within target (working days) by department



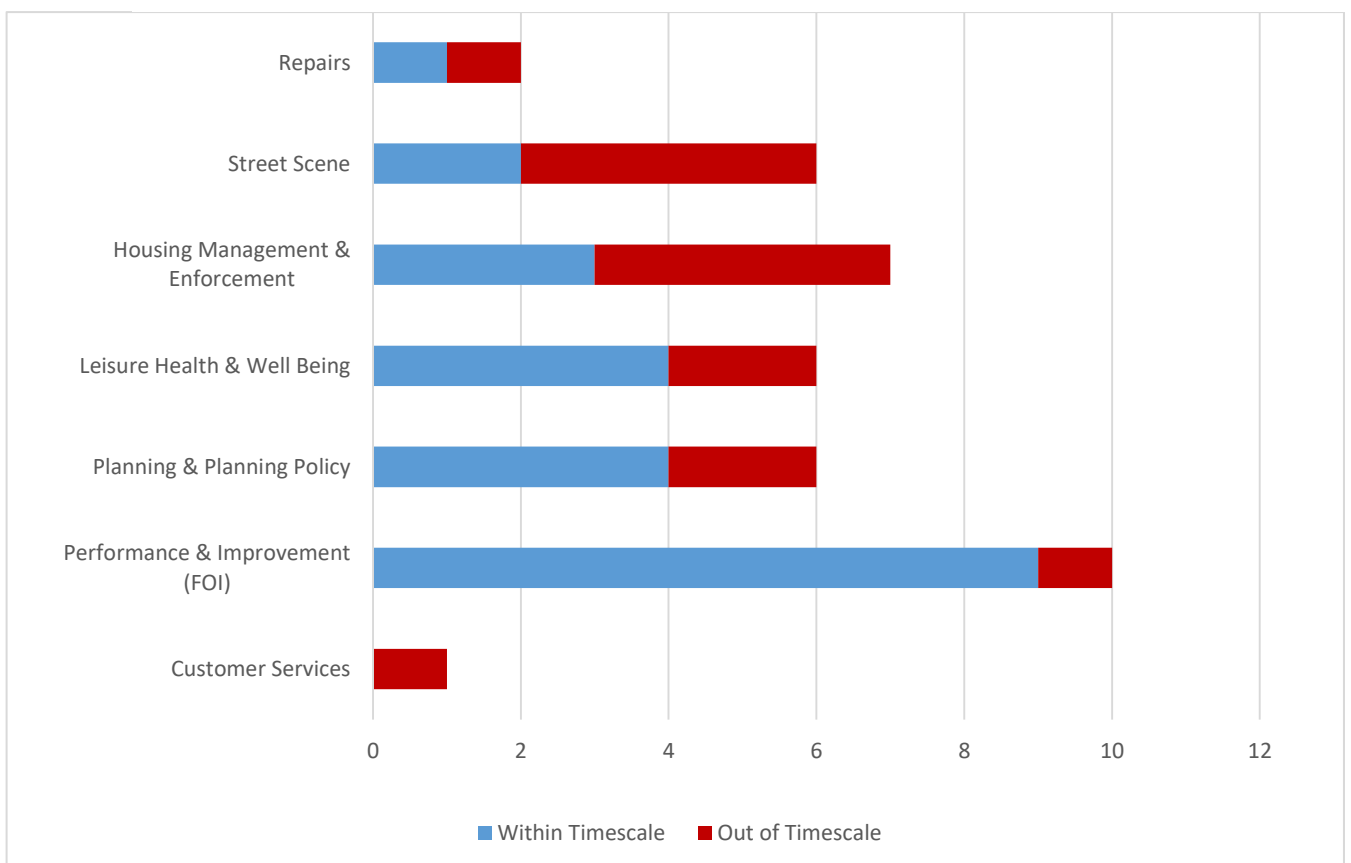
D - Number of Formal Investigations (Stage 2) complaints 1/4/22 – 31/3/23		Number	Within timescale of 15 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	3	2	1
	Revenues & Benefits	8	5	3
	Partnership Team	1	1	0
	Legal	3	3	0
	Performance & Improvement	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	15	13	2
	Leisure Health & Well Being	12	9	3
	Joint Environmental Health	8	5	3
	Housing Management & Enforcement	29	26	3
	Street Scene	22	20	2
	Corporate Health & Safety	1	1	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	18	11	7
	Property Services	3	2	1

Formal Investigations (Stage 2) within target (15 working days) by department



E - Number of Internal Reviews (Stage 3) complaints 1/4/22 – 31/3/23		Number	Within timescale of 20 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	1	0	1
	Performance & Improvement (FOI)	10	9	1
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	6	4	2
	Leisure Health & Well Being	6	4	2
	Housing Management & Enforcement	7	3	4
	Street Scene	6	2	4
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	2	1	1

Internal Reviews (Stage 3) within target (20 working days) by department



F – Ombudsman’s Summary		Departments Involved	Date Decision Letter Received	Ombudsman Decision
12/4/22	LGSCO Complained about the Council’s investigation into concerns she raised about the actions of two other councillors and a parish council clerk. There was no fault by the Council.	Legal	12/10/22	Mrs X complained about the Council’s investigation into concerns she raised about the actions of two other councillors and a parish council clerk. There was no fault by the Council
1/11/21	HO Complaint regarding the landlords handling of the resident’s report of antisocial behaviour and the landlord’s response to the resident’s decision to install CCTV cameras and having three dogs in the property.	Housing	14/4/22	There was service failure in the landlord’s handling of the related complaint.

LGSCO* Local Government Ombudsman

HO* Housing Ombudsman