

Report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of Meeting	24 March 2020
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Community & Culture
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Public/Private Document	Public

1st & 2nd Quarter Corporate Complaints

Executive Summary

1. The report provides Members with a summary of corporate complaints and compliments received during the first and second quarters of 2019/20.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members of the Committee consider and scrutinise the information contained in the report and assess whether further information or explanation is required regarding any of the issues raised in the report.

Reason for Recommendation

3. Part of the Council's performance management process is to ensure the Authority's ambition to continuously improve services is realised, and actions or decisions may need to be taken to maintain improvement.

Key Points for Consideration

4. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's definition of a complaint is *"an expression of dissatisfaction about a Council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response"*

In total, 298 new complaints were received during the first half of 2019/20 across all services. The majority of the complaints were resolved at stage one, with only 8 escalating to stage two and 1 complaint being dealt with at stage three. A total of 148 compliments were received in this reporting period.

There was a slight reduction in the number of complaints received during this reporting period compared to the same period last year, and 31.9% of the overall number of complaints received were found to be not upheld.

Lessons learned

Complaints provide the Council with valuable feedback to develop and improve our services to meet the needs of our customers. The following are examples of changes made by services in response to feedback from residents during this reporting period:

Amendments were made to the software on computers at Middleton Library. The change resolved password problems experienced by users and all staff were advised that new customers joining the library must now choose their own pin number and not use the last 4 digits of a membership account.

Information on the Council website concerning the provision of bins for new build properties was reviewed and reworded to provide more accurate information for residents.

The Highways Service increased the resources available to manage vehicle dropped crossing installations and improved an ICT issue with email capacity. The service also reviewed the website content to better inform customers of the dropped crossing procedure to manage expectations.

Working practices for free school meals applications were reviewed based on feedback received from customers and information gathered from the end of year review. Up to date guidance was issued to all staff who deal with free school meals.

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

Details of complaints dealt with by the Ombudsman are presented in a separate report which is produced on receipt of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review.

4.1

Alternatives Considered

None. Information has been compiled from the complaints recording system used by all services to record complaints and compliments.

Costs and Budget Summary

5. None of the complaints dealt with in this reporting period had financial implications.

Risk and Policy Implications

6. There are no specific risk issues for Members to consider arising from this report.

Complainants have the opportunity to refer their complaint to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman for up to twelve months from completion of the Council's complaints process; therefore there is a risk that the outcome of a future Ombudsman investigation into a complaint may result in a recommended financial remedy. Complaints considered by the Ombudsman are reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee annually on receipt of the Ombudsman's annual report.

Consultation

7. Not applicable.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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| 8. None | |
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