

CORPORATE COMPLAINTS Annual Report 2022/2023

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*”

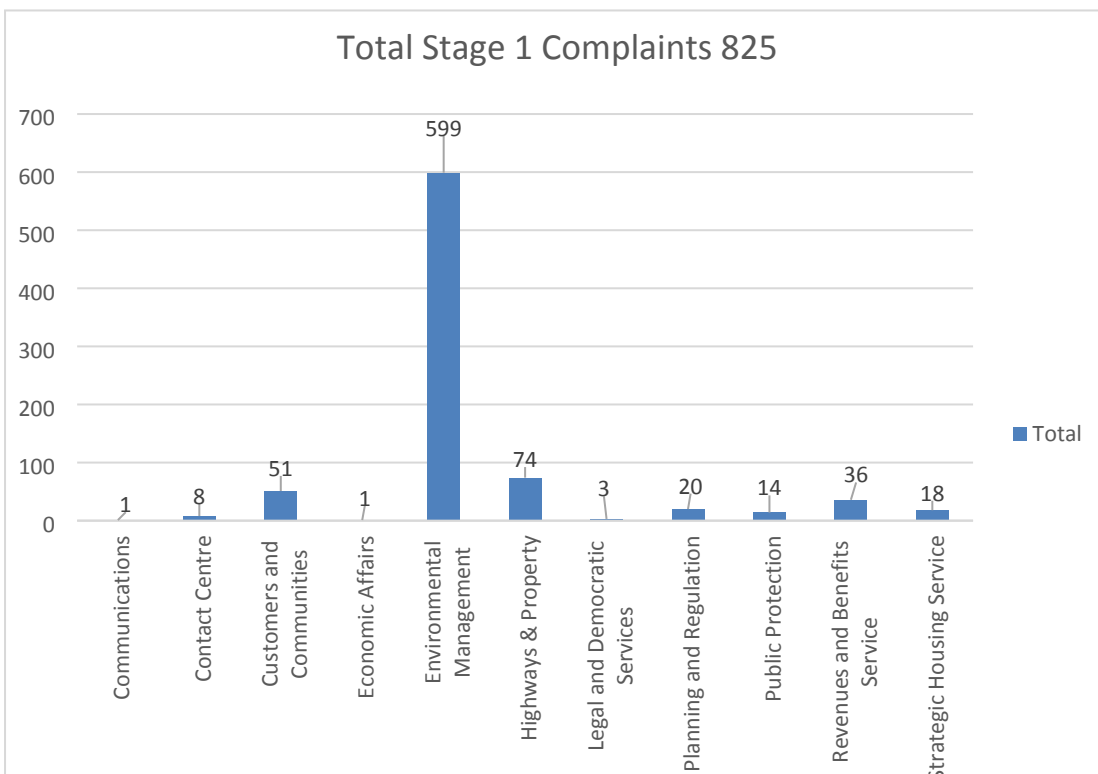
The Council’s Corporate Complaints Policy consists of a three stage process, providing a point of appeal at stage three arranged by the Customer Feedback Team for complainants who remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint to a service.

Corporate complaints and compliments

- The Complaints and Customer Feedback enquires increased significantly during 2022/23 by a total of 98% for complaints versus the previous reporting year.
- This was highlighted and reported on throughout the year from late Q1 onwards and monitored closely by the complaints manager. The increases were due to several factors, including strengthened reporting processes, the post-covid tolerance of communities, improved recognition of what constitutes a complaint and tighter controls within the Customer Feedback Team and follow up with services.
- Customer Feedback Team delivered awareness and coaching sessions to a number of services to support and educate on what constitutes a complaint and how best to investigate and respond. This work continues in the current financial year

Stage 1 – (Allows up to 10 working days for resolution from the date the complaint is received).

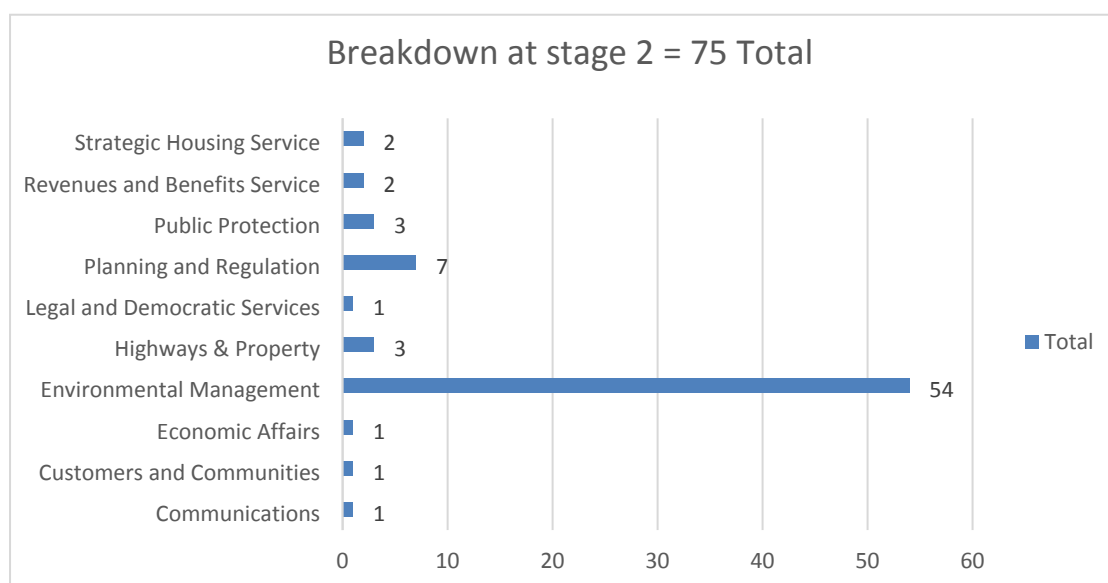
- A total of 825 stage 1 corporate complaints were received in this reporting period
- A total of 241 corporate compliments were received in this annual reporting period of 1st April 2022-31st March 2023..



- 91% of the complaints were resolved at stage one of the corporate complaints policy which allows up to 10 working days for resolution.
- 45 of the complaints in customer and communities were related to the cancellation of Drag Queen Story Time in August. *The team received over 200 emails on this matter, of which could identify 45 of which could be deemed a complaint rather than just feedback.*

Stage 2 (Stage 2 is an escalation when not resolved at stage 1 and allows for up to 20 working days for a resolution).

- Service breakdown of the stage 2 complaints is below
- 9% of the stage 1 complaints were escalated or managed at stage 2 (75)
- Further breakdown on the volume in Environmental Management will be addressed below



Stage 3 (This stage is when a customer can request an independent review from the Customer Feedback Team when they remain dissatisfied with the response/outcome from the 1 or 2 of the complaint)

- 28% of stage 2 complaints were escalated to stage 3 (21 requests)
- Of these 21 requests, 48% (10) were investigated fully by the Customer Feedback Team at stage 3.

Service	Requests for stage 3 = 21	Stage 3 investigation = 10
*Adult Social Care	2	1
Planning	4	2
EM	6	4
*CSC	1	0
Community Safety	1	1
Revs & Bens	2	1
Monitoring Officer	1	0
IT	2	0
*Early Help & Schools	1	1
Public Protection	1	0

* From time to time these services have complaints which fall under the corporate complaints policy

Points to note regarding the volume of complaints in **Environmental Management**

- 73% of stage 1 complaints were for EM (599)
- Environmental Management saw an increase in complaints regarding missed bins, and assisted collections, it should be noted assisted collections were not captured in full during previous reporting year 2021-2022 and were mostly captured under missed bins or dealt with under service requests.
- The annual collected bins volume is in excess of 9 million bins per year, which broken down equates to 0.0042% of all collections result in a complaint.
- The introduction of ALLOY in April 2022 saw a system transfer from Bartec to Alloy which resulted in some teething problems in the transfer of data.
- The Customer Feedback Team work close with EM and provide support sessions throughout the year.
- Replacement rolls of caddy liners continue to be a high demand service request, the service informs us the demand is outgrowing the supply, the trucks are not designed to carry/store the amount of caddy liners required on a daily basis. The service are reviewing ways to support customer expectations in dealing with these requests.
- The service is currently undergoing a review on the efficiency and delivery of assisted collections and process. Findings not yet known.
- The service have identified multiple lessons learnt on upheld complaints. This includes, but not exhaustive to:
 - Changes in processes
 - Supervisors now taking more responsibility for the volume complaints to in still feeling of ownership
 - Further review of additional processes
 - Changes in team engagement
 - Structure changes in back office team

Of the 599 complaints the breakdown is detailed below:

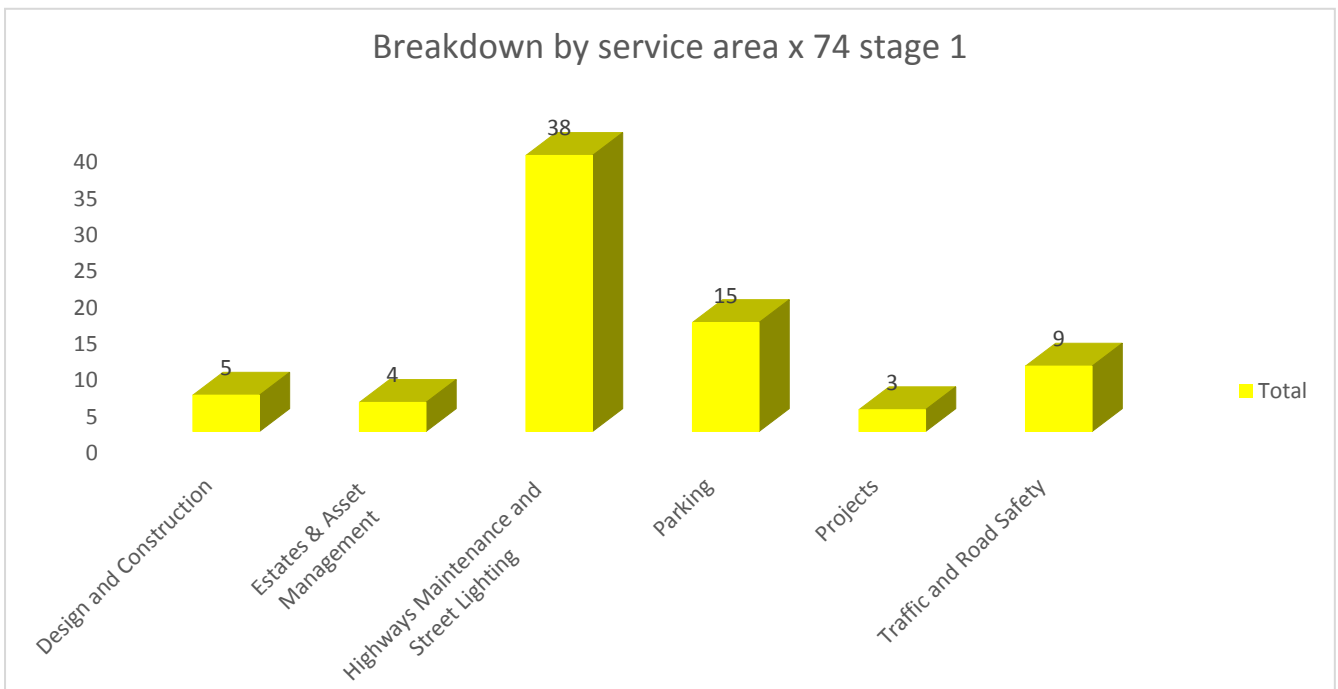
Missed Bin	200
Assisted Collection	177
Staff Behaviour (Street Scene Services)	66
Waste Services (bin wagons, damaged tarmac, discarded bin, driving)	40
Shrubs hedges & grass maintenance	17
Grounds Maintenance, Parks, Cemeteries, Sports Pitches, Bowlee Nursery	13
Fleet Management, Lettings, Arboriculture	10
Street Cleansing	9
Fly Tipping Removal	8
Bulky Waste Collection	8
Bin Request	4
Enforcement	4
Untidy Garden & Vegetation	3
Dog Fouling	2
Greenspace Development, Countryside & Allotments	2
Events on Council Land	2
Invasive Weeds	1
Remove Drug Paraphernalia	1

Bereavement Services	1
Special Projects	1
Business Support, Mailroom, SEN Transport	1
Fly Posting	1

- The Customer Feedback Team continue to work to support EM in delivery of best practice on complaints for residents.

Highways

- 74 complaints received at stage 1
- 51% of these were for Highways Maintenance and street lighting, which is in line with expectations due to the work moving in house in March 2022 as it gives full view and clarity of the issues/complaints raised by residents. These complaints are reported fully into the Customer Feedback team and this is a reflection that Highways are aligned to the corporate complaints process.
- Of the 74 complaints 4% (3) were considered at stage 2
- 0% of these complaints escalated to stage 3
- 69% of stage 1 complaints were not upheld



Highways lessons learnt

Highways inherited some issues when the service was brought back in house as a directly managed service of the Council and have continued throughout the year to make positive changes to support the delivery of services. These includes:

Revenue mitigation

- Operational team now fully staffed
- Currently re-structuring following delivery of first year to build resilience
- Procuring framework contract to provide resilience for delivery of revenue works
- ALLOY implementation ongoing

Capital mitigation:

- Procuring framework contract to streamline procurement, appointment of contractors and delivery of capital works
- Have appointed temporary staff to assist core staff resource

Overall, given the challenges the service faced in taking the work in-house, these volumes can be expected and have some fantastic follow up work implemented.

Other corporate services

Year on year comparison on complaint volumes

The tables below compare the total number of complaints received in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

- Complaint volumes increased by 98% across corporate services.
- This created an extremely high demand in the customer feedback team
- The services that saw the highest increase were – Customer and Communities, EM & Highways – as addressed above
- It should be noted that Housing complaints have increased due to services returning to RBC from 1st April 2022

2021-2022	
Service	Number
Contact Centre	8
Customers and Communities	4
Environmental Management	296
Facilities Management *	1
Finance *	1
Highways & Property	47
Legal and Democratic Services	3
Planning and Regulation	17
Public Protection	17
Revenues and Benefits Service	22
Strategic Housing Service	1
Grand Total	417

2022-2023	
Service	Number
Communications*	1
Contact Centre	8
Customers and Communities	51
Economic Affairs*	1
Environmental Management	599
Highways & Property	74
Legal and Democratic Services	3
Planning and Regulation	20
Public Protection	14
Revenues and Benefits Service	36
Strategic Housing Service	18
Grand Total	825

* 0 Complaints to compare with

Complaint outcomes

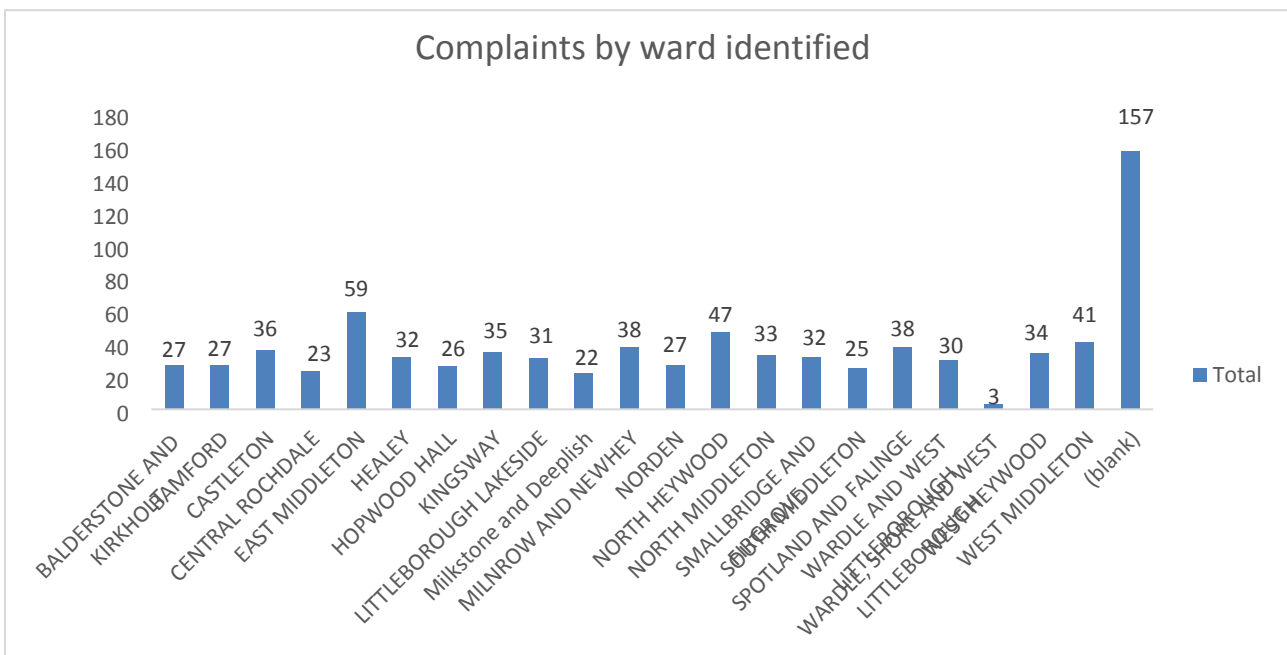
- Of the 825 stage 1 complaints, 66% were upheld or partially upheld by services. This means the council have acknowledged a level of fault/ownership in the complaint being founded.
- 32% of the stage 1 complaints were not upheld. This means the council have found no fault.
- The remaining 1% includes withdrawn complaints or those deemed to be out of the scope of the Corporate Complaints Policy e.g. this could be a Rochdale Borough Housing complaint.

Service	Not upheld	Out of scope			Withdrawn	Ongoing	Grand Total
		of scope	Partially upheld	Upheld			
Communications	1						1
Contact Centre	1		1	6			8
Customers and Communities	9	1	39	2			51
Economic Affairs		1					1

Environmental Management	136		9	452	2		599
Highways & Property	51	2	10	11			74
Legal and Democratic Services	1		1	1			3
Planning and Regulation	16		2	2			20
Public Protection	10	1	2		1		14
Revenues and Benefits Service	26	1	5	4			36
Strategic Housing Service	16	1			1	0	18
Grand Total	263	5	69	478	3	8	825

Complaints received by Ward (This is included in the 825 total complaints, separated out to display ward)

- Ward reports are distributed monthly with a 6-8 week lag on the data
- Numbers of complaints reported by Ward are dependent upon customers providing their address details.
- The graph below shows the numbers of complaints received by Ward during 2022/23. It also indicates where address details have not been provided or the complainant resides outside of the Borough.



- There are no particular areas of concern that stand out on the monthly ward reports other than the volume of blanks. Customer feedback team are working on improving monthly ward reports.
- Note that Customer Feedback are working with customers to establish address details on new complaints and that almost all the drag queen complaints had no address attached, therefore increasing the volume in blanks

SERVICE REQUESTS

- The Customer Feedback Team implemented recording of service requests that come in via the feedback/complaints channel
- Customer Feedback Team received 784 service requests in 2022-2023 for corporate services, this excludes any general feedback and compliments

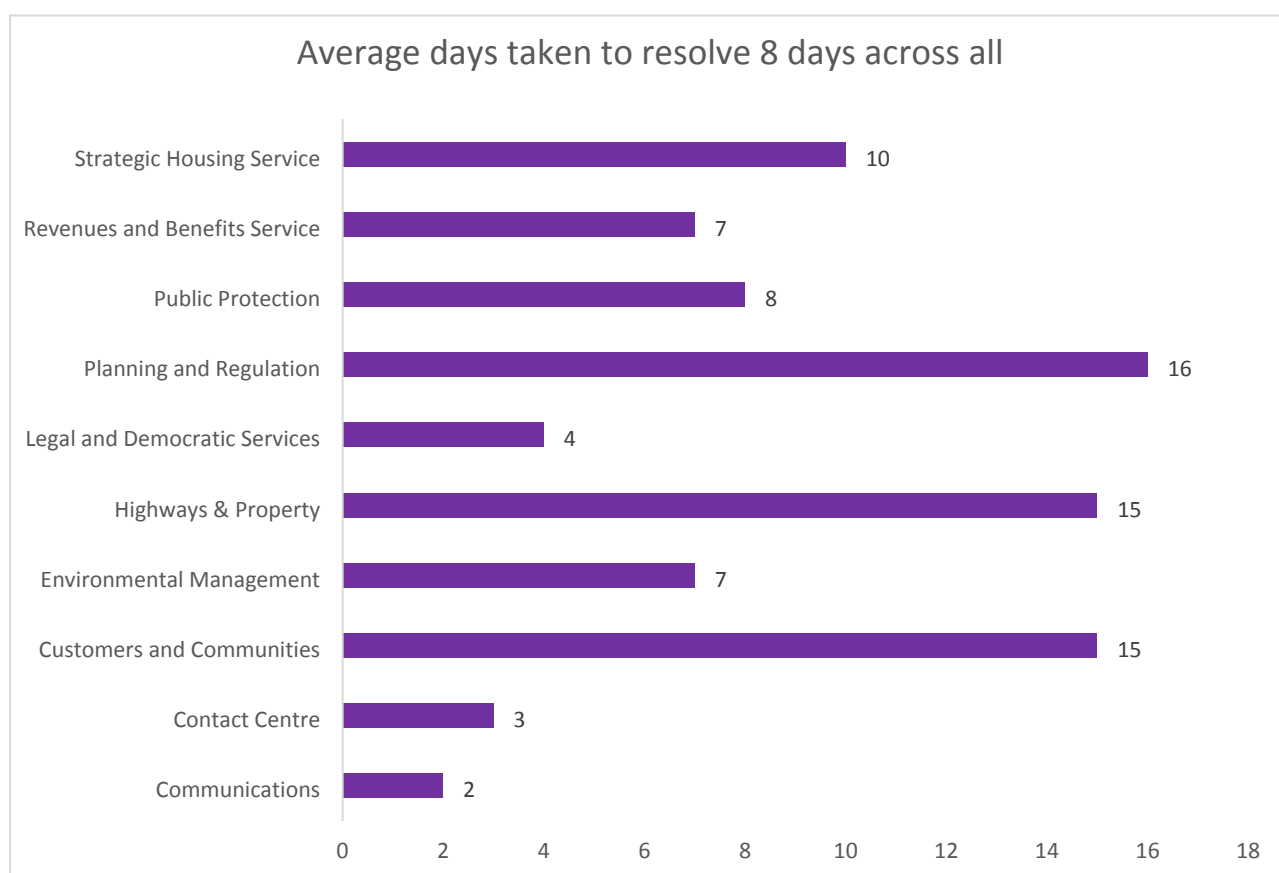
- The table below demonstrates the key service areas that our customers bring to the complaints team that are not formally recorded as complaints.
- Other services include planning, Community safety and Environmental Health.

The below table demonstrates the total number of service requests into the key complainant areas and complaint ratio by %

Service Requests	Direct to Service	Direct to Customer Feedback Team	Total Complaints	Total SR	Complaints ratio %
EM	60,800	502	599	61,302	0.10%
Highways	866	106	74	972	7.60%
R&B	369	43	36	412	8.7

Lessons Learnt

Days to resolve a Corporate Complaint



The Overall average days to resolve across all services is 8 days.

- 3 services perform on average above the 10 days corporate policy status, in planning and regulation, this can be at times longer to determine if it falls into statutory law procedures or remains in corporate policy.

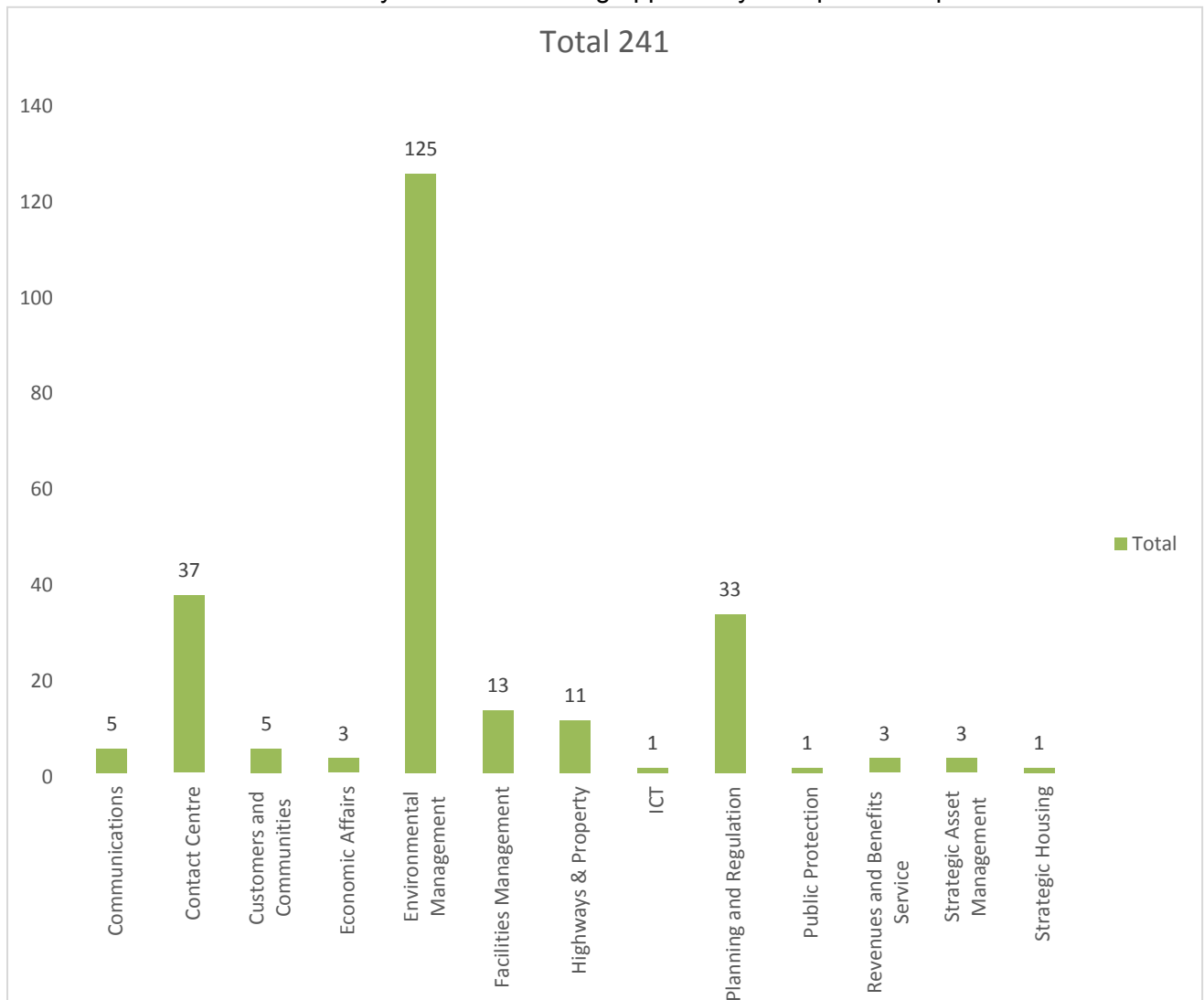
- Customer and Communities delays were related to the corporate point on response to complaints from a cancelled event.
- Highways delays have been related to returning back in house and work is ongoing to reduce this.
- Customers are kept up to date by the Customer Feedback Team or the service directly.

COMPLIMENTS

Compliments are a fantastic way to show gratitude in services for the support our residents give. The overall volume of compliments received has significant room to improve and it should be noted that there is no active “fishing” taking place in any service. This means that the compliments received are direct from residents who have taken time from their day to give thanks.

Customer Feedback Team will be working closer with services during the current reporting year to look at ways to gain further insight from residents in taking their comments and compliments in.

- A total of 241 compliments were received in 22/23
- Environmental Management received 125 of these
- Work to follow later this year on maximising opportunity to capture compliments



A selection of compliments can be read below.

"Thank you for your response. We're really appreciate it.

- *Customer wanted to praise the patience, kindness and dedication of XX, expressing how brilliant she had been with her. Couldn't put phone down without ensuring that XX received some recognition*
- *Thank you so much XX!*
- *After months of phone calls and long holds I cannot thank you enough for calling me back!
Thank you xxxx*
- *You are the best customer service provider.*
- *Thank you very much for your amazing help and patience.*
- *She was a great help and solved my query quickly and was extremely polite.*
- *Customer wished to show her appreciation to the team for assistance with bulky collection.*
- *Regarding the cemetery I would like to thank you for your support and the completion in time of all work for the 11th November, please thank your team for a job well done*
- *Firstly – you have a gentleman who does litter picking on Oldham Road, close to Kingsway/Queensway and I see him every morning, he is amazing! I have never seen anyone as dedicated as him, he is very quick and efficient. So whoever he is please tell him that his good work is recognised by people who live locally (I live on Broad Lane) and he should be very proud of the job he is doing and the difference it makes.*
- *I would like to compliment all you staff at Rochdale offices on duty on 10th June 2022, they were all so friendly and knew exactly how to solve my problem,It was the first time I had been in the building,I was very impressed with it all, please pass on my thanks and how much it's appreciated when all staff are so welcoming and very helpful*
- *Hi, I would like you to let you know how wonderful your colleague is named xxx. This lady provided me with exceptional service, I couldn't be more thankful to her for helping me in solving my problem. I don't have enough words to put into place with how much she helped me, it's so heartwarming to know there are still such lovely people in the world.*
- *I have noticed certain trees on Woodlands Avenue, Bamford have been felled as a result of Ash Dieback. The avenue given its name had a lovely outlook with these trees along the pavements*