

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
18 MARCH 2013	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Strategic Resources

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COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT 2011 - 12

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1
- To provide a summary of formal complaints monitored between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2012 which fall under the Corporate Complaints' Policy.
 - To propose a change to the current Corporate Complaints Policy
 - To comment on the annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about the council's performance on complaints.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1
- Members to note the information presented in this report regarding complaints received between 1st April 2011 and the 31st March 2012.
 - Members to approve the change to the corporate complaints process

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The effective management of complaints is important to ensure action is taken when customers express dissatisfaction about the delivery of any of our services. Failure to do so could impact upon any of the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy:-
- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities;
 - Creating strong and supportive communities;
 - Creating the UK's environmental capital; and
 - Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee requested this item at its first meeting on 16 June 2003 and it is agreed that they will continue to receive regular monitoring reports.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 A change to the complaints process from three stages to two is recommended.

Complaint volumes are broadly similar to last year taking into account the lack of complaints from City Services – which are now replaced with complaints figures provided by Enterprise – which are shown at the end of Appendix A.

Speed of response to Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) enquiries improved from 22 days to 14.8 days over the last year which is a major achievement for the complaints service. In this years LGO annual letter to the Chief Executive it stated “*I am pleased to say that I have no concerns about your authority’s response times and there are no issues arising from the complaints that I want to bring to your attention*”.

Compliments about council services continue to exceed complaints and have shown an increase on the previous year.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Customer Service

Customer service and perception of the council will improve if complaints are processed quickly and effectively. If complaints are resolved at the earliest opportunity this ultimately saves time, particularly of senior officers when complaints are escalated. If service improvements are identified and acted upon this will lead to fewer complaints in the future and improve the Council’s reputation and efficiency.

Financial

The report contains no financial implications

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The report has been shared with Directors and Heads of Service and comments have been incorporated.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 Any comments and suggestions from Committee will be considered and incorporated in subsequent complaints reports.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 • Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review 2011-12

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1 - Complaints Monitoring Report 2011-12

Appendix 2 – Proposed change to the complaints process

Appendix 3 – Complaints process for Vivacity

Appendix 4 – Complaints process for Enterprise

Appendix 1

1. COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT 2011-12

1.1 This report will analyse the performance of the council's formal Corporate Complaints Procedure between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2012. It is important to note that this report does not include complaints that fall outside the Corporate Complaints Policy, for example, complaints relating to schools, Statutory Children Social Care and Adult Social Care.

1.2 The Corporate Complaints Policy has three-stages:

Stage	Action	Timescale
1	The council aims to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily through the 'front line' employees who provide the service or the relevant manager. The complaint may be resolved informally by way of an apology, by providing the service required, or providing an explanation to the customer.	10 Working Days *
2	If the customer is not happy with the decision at Stage 1, he/she can appeal to the Central Complaints Office, who asks the relevant Head of Service or Assistant Director to investigate the complaint fully and provide a written response to the customer.	15 Working Days
3	If the customer is not happy with the decision at Stage 2, he/she can appeal to the Chief Executive who will appoint an independent person to investigate the complaint fully and provide a written report to the customer.	30 Working Days

- Stage One (First Contact Complaint)
- Stage Two (Service Review)
- Stage Three (Independent Person Review)

Note: *Stage 1 complaints can be responded to in various ways depending on how the customer contacts the council and the complexity of the complaint. For example, it is hoped that the majority of complaints will be resolved without delay on the telephone or in person, but those that are sent in by letter should be responded to within the corporate standard of 10 working days.

1.3 Where a complaint is received by the central complaints office, a decision is made on where the complaint should be forwarded to. If it is known that a complaint falls outside of the complaints process, as for example, there is a different appeal route, then the customer will be advised of that. However, if a complaint is referred to a service and they decide that a matter cannot be resolved via the complaints process as there is a different route available, then the service area is expected to liaise with the central complaints team to decide how to proceed with the matter.

2. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS (FIRST CONTACT COMPLAINTS)

2.1 The table below shows the number of Stage 1 complaints received for each department during 2010/11 including those that were received and logged by the Central Complaints Office (CCO). The data for the previous year is included to allow comparisons to be made.

Table 2: The number of Stage One complaints				
Department	2010/2011		2011/2012	
	Total complaints received	Logged by CCO	Total complaints received	Logged by CCO
Chief Executive's Dep't	12	6	15	10
Children's Services	4	4	16	16
City Services	63	46	n/a	n/a
Operations	166	83	86*	65
Strategic Resources	171	49	170	102
TOTAL	416	188	287	193

* complaints in transport and engineering and planning services have dropped considerably due to quicker resolution of service requests and improved customer service delivery

2.2 We have continued to collect more detailed data from departments. This allows us to analyse all Stage 1 complaints received by the council. The next two tables show the category and outcomes for all stage 1 complaints.

2.2 All complaints are classified into a category, the table below shows the breakdown by category for all stage 1 complaints logged for 2011/12.

Table 3: Department	Not To Standard	Poor Facility/Building	Broken Promise/Appointment	Staff Attitude Conduct	Breach Of Confidentiality	Denial/Withdrawal Of Service	Delayed/Failed Service	Lack Of/Incorrect Info About A Service	About Legislation	About Policy	Other	Overall
Chief Executives												
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	6
Democratic Services (Governance)	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	2	1	8
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Human Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strategic Resources												
Customer Services	3	0	0	22	0	1	23	2	1	3	3	58
Revenues and Benefits – Included under STS												
Corporate Services – Included under STS												
Shared Transactional Services	6	0	2	4	0	2	63	11	2	15	3	108
Business Transformation	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	4
Childrens Services												
Learning & Skills	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
Family & Communities	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	6
Commissioning & Performance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operations												
Planning Delivery Services	0	0	0	2	0	0	9	0	0	3	0	14
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	4	0	3	0	12
Environment, Transport & Engineering	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	3	0	1	6	18
Neighbourhood Services	3	0	0	6	1	2	21	6	2	1	0	42
Overall	15	1	2	39	4	8	140	27	8	30	13	287

2.4 'Delayed/failed service' remains the most common category with 49% of the total number of stage 1 complaints. The second most common has changed from 'About Policy' to 'Staff Attitude/ Conduct' at 16%. Staff attitude complaints are most common in the areas where customer contact levels are high. There has been a decrease in complaints classified as Other to 5% (from 26% in 2010-11) which shows that complaints are being classified more accurately.

2.5 To put the number of complaints received into perspective an exercise has been undertaken for a number of services to calculate the number of complaints as a percentage of total contacts others. For example, within customer services there were

535,292 customer contacts during 2011/12 either via telephone or face to face. As customer services received 58 complaints during the year this equates to 0.0001% or 1 complaint for every 9229 contacts.

In respect of Planning Delivery Services, there were 4330 customer contacts and as 14 complaints were received this equates to 0.0032%, or 1 complaint for every 309 contacts. Furthermore, 1870 customer contacts were received by Transport and Engineering, and as 18 complaints were made this equates to 0.0096% or 1 complaint for every 104 contacts.

2.6 Table 4 shows the outcomes for all stage 1 complaints registered for 2011/12.

Table 4: Department	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Overall
Chief Executives Department				
Communications	0	0	0	0
Legal Services	0	4	2	6
Democratic Services	5	2	1	8
Growth & Regeneration	1	0	0	1
Human Resources	0	0	0	0
Strategic Resources				
Customer Services	24	21	13	58
Revenues and Benefits – Included under STS				
Corporate Services – Included under STS				
Shared Transactional Services	40	46	22	108
Business Transformation	1	1	2	4
Childrens Services				
Learning & Skills	1	4	0	5
Family & Communities	2	3	0	5
Resources	1	4	1	6
Commissioning & Performance	0	0	0	0
Operations				
Planning Delivery Services	2	8	4	14
City Centre Operations	2	5	5	12
Environment, Transport and Engineering	4	11	3	18
Neighbourhood Services	8	27	7	42
Total	91	136	60	287

2.7 32% of stage 1 complaints were recorded as upheld, 47% not upheld and 21% as being partially upheld. These figures are similar to last year where we upheld 35%, did not uphold 47% and partially upheld 17%. This indicates that complaint handling is fair and where errors have occurred they are identified and the complaint outcome reflects this accurately

3. STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS (SERVICE REVIEW)

3.1 Table 5 breaks down Stage 2 complaints by department, we have seen an increase in Stage 2. This is not a general increase as it is specific to just two departments which

are Learning and Skills within the Children's Services department and Revenues and Benefits within the Strategic Resources Dept

Table 5: Stage Two Complaints By Dept	2010-11	2011-12
Chief Executive's Department	3	2
Children's Services	1	8
City Services	5	n/a
Operations	23	24
Strategic Resources	12	16
Overall	44	50

3.2 Table 6 gives greater detail of the business units who have had Stage 2 complaints during 2011/12 as well as which category the complaint fell into.

Table 6: Department	Not To Standard	Poor Facility/Building	Broken Promise/Appointment	Staff Attitude Conduct	Breach Of Confidentiality	Denial/Withdrawal Of Service	Delayed/Failed Service	Lack Of/Incorrect Info About A Service	About Legislation	About Policy	Other	Overall
Chief Executives	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Legal Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Strategic Resources	3	0	0	0	1	0	8	0	2	2	0	16
Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Revenues and Benefits	2	0	0	0	1	0	7	0	2	2	0	14
Corporate Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Transformation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Childrens Services	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	8
Learning & Skills	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	6
Family & Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Commissioning & Performance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operations	0	0	0	4	0	1	6	1	1	10	1	24
Planning Delivery Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	8
City Centre Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Environment, Transport & Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Neighbourhood Services	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	1	2	1	11
Overall	3	0	0	5	1	1	21	1	3	14	1	50

3.3 Delayed/failed service is still the most common category with 42% of the stage 2 complaints falling into this category. There has been a change to the second highest category which has changed from lack of or incorrect information last year to about policy this year at 28% of Stage 2 complaints. This indicates that customers are becoming more confident at challenging council decisions which they do not agree with. However of the 14 complaints in this category 11 were not upheld and only 3 were partially upheld.

3.4 Table 7 shows the outcomes for all stage 2 complaints registered for 2011/12. 58% of complaints were not upheld, 22% partially upheld and only 18% were upheld. This was an improvement over the previous year where the upheld rate was 22%.

	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Overall
Table 7: Department				
Chief Executives Department	0	2	0	2
Communications	0	1	0	1
Legal Services	0	0	0	0
Democratic Services	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	0	0	0	0
Growth & Regeneration	0	1	0	1
Strategic Resources	6	6	4	16
Customer Services	0	1	0	1
Revenues and Benefits	6	4	4	14
Corporate Services	0	0	0	0
Business Transformation	0	1	0	1
Childrens Services	1	3	3	8
Learning & Skills	1	2	2	6*
Family & Communities	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	1	1	2
Commissioning & Performance	0	0	0	0
Operations	2	18	4	24
Planning Delivery Services	0	8	0	8
City Centre Operations	0	2	1	3
Environment, Transport and Engineering	0	2	0	2
Neighbourhood Services	2	6	3	11
Total	9	29	11	50*

* 1 complaint was withdrawn

3.5 All Stage 2 complaints were acknowledged within the 2 working days target

- 3.6 During 2011-12, there was a slight decrease in the number of stage two complaints which were responded to within 15 working days. This reflects the complexities in some cases and adds weight to the review of the stages which follows in Appendix 2.

Table 8: Stage 2 Complaints Responded To Within 15 Working Days		
	2010-2011	2011-2012
Chief Executive's Dep't	66.7%	100%
Children's Services	0%	50%
City Services	100%	n/a
Operations	90.9%	87%
Strategic Resources	71.4%	73%
Overall	81.80%	77.6%

4. STAGE THREE COMPLAINTS (INDEPENDENT PERSON REVIEW)

- 4.1 Complaints at stage 3 are generally investigated by the Governance Team, although occasionally it has been necessary to appoint other senior managers due to capacity within the Governance team. The complaints policy states that the investigator will be independent of the service about which the complaint has been made. This will usually be an officer of the council not connected to the service area being investigated. The investigators are asked to investigate and prepare a report within 20 working days. This is then provided to the Chief Executive or her nominated representative so that it can be considered and a final response is sent to the complainant within a further 10 working days. Although the time available for the investigation is fixed to 30 days, in the majority of cases these timescales have not proved to be sufficient for the investigation to be completed. This has also contributed to the need to review the number of stages within the Council's complaints policy and this is detailed in Appendix 2.

- 4.2 During 2011-12, the council received 22 stage three complaints, compared to 21 during 2010-11. 100% of these were acknowledged within 2 working days by the Central Complaint Office.

Of the 22 complaints registered at stage 3, 20 were escalated from stage 2. Of these 20 complaints, 4 were withdrawn/closed before the investigation begun.

The outcome on the remaining 16 following the stage 3 investigation was that in 12 cases the decision remained the same. In 3 cases the decision changed – from Not Upheld to Partially Upheld. The 3 cases concerned were for, Planning Enforcement, Pollution control and Council Tax. One case remains outstanding due to a delay caused by the ill health of the complainant.

There were 2 complaints that went straight to stage 3. 1 case was not upheld, and the other was upheld.

Overall of 22 cases only 1 complaint changed substantially at Stage 3 which is a further reason for the review of the optimum number of stages for the Council's complaints process.

4.3 Table 9 breaks down the stage 3 complaints by directorate.

Table 9: Stage 3 Complaints by Directorate		
	2010/11	2011/12
Chief Executive's Dep't	2	1
Children's Services	0	2
City Services	1	n/a
Operations	16	14
Strategic Resources	2	5
Overall	21	22

4.4 The incidence of stage 3 complaints has stayed consistent with last year with Operations department attracting the majority. There were 6 neighbourhood complaints, 6 were planning matters and 2 were about highways issues.

4.5 Tables 10 & 11 break down the stage 3 complaints received during 2011/12 by category and final outcome.

Table 10 : Stage 3 Category Breakdown	No.
Not to standard	2
Poor Facility/Building	0
Broken Promise/Appointment	0
Staff Attitude Conduct	1
Breach Of Confidentiality	0
Denial/Withdrawal Of Service	1
Delayed/Failed Service	6
Lack Of/Incorrect Info About A Service	1
About Legislation	2
About Policy	9
Other	0
Total	22

Table 11: Stage 3 Outcome Breakdown	No.
Upheld	1
Not Upheld	10
Partially Upheld	6
Withdrawn/or closed due to no contact	4
Still under investigation	1
Total	22

4.6 Only 4 of the cases reviewed at Stage 3 were escalated by the complainant to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Council's decision was not challenged by the LGO in any of these cases.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO)

5.1 In July each year the LGO provide an annual review to the Council.

For 2011/12 the LGO received 60 complaints and enquiries relating to Peterborough City Council, compared to the 37 that were raised the previous year.

Some enquiries will result in general advice being given to the customer or with the LGO asking the customer to use the Council's own complaints policy before they will become involved.

The LGO proceeded to investigate only 23 cases. Lower than the number investigated last year.

5.2 The table below outlines the number and types of decisions the Ombudsman made during the last two years.

Table 12: Category	2010/11	2011/12
Maladministration Reports	0	2
Local Settlements	3	4
M REPS	0	0
NM REPS	0	0
NO MAL	12	13
OMB DIS	6	2
OUTSIDE JUR	4	2
TOTAL	25	23

5.3 The annual review highlights that the Ombudsman made two maladministration decisions against the Council last year. However these were both in the area of Children's Social Care. Complaints about this department have a separate statutory complaints process and full details of these are not included in this report.

Table 13: Ombudsman Enquires	2007- 08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Number of enquires received	10	18	16	24	18
Average response times	33 days	32 days	29 days	22 days	14.8 days

The LGO made written enquiries about 18 complaints in the year, less than the previous year. Our average response time to these enquiries was 14.8 days which is the best recorded performance against the LGO target of 28 days for our Council.

The LGO sends an annual letter to the Chief Executive each year which stated this year "I am pleased to say that I have no concerns about your authority's response times and there are no issues arising from the complaints that I want to bring to your attention".

6 COMPLIMENTS

- 6.1 Compliments data has now been collated for two consecutive years and this year shows an increase over last year, with both Strategic resources and Operations showing increases in recorded compliments.

As can be seen from table 14 we have recorded both internal and external compliments. External compliments are compliments received by members of the public or external organisations and internal compliments are from Councillors or from one department to another.

Table 14: Compliments	External	Internal	Overall
Chief Executives Department			62
Communications	0	0	0
Legal & Democratic Services	8	29	37
Human Resources	3	22	25
Strategic Resources			175
Customer Services	135	27	162
Revenues and Benefits	6	4	10
Corporate Services	0	0	0
Shared Transactional Services	2	1	3
Childrens Services*			0
Learning & Skills	0	0	0
Family & Communities	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0
Commissioning & Performance	0	0	0
Operations			585
Planning Delivery Services	231	60	291
Commercial Operations (City Centre Services)	7	1	8
Environment, Transport and Engineering	24	8	32
Neighbourhood Services	231	23	254
Overall	647	175	822

* Information not available.

7 OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

- 7.1 Table 15 shows how complaints are received, at the moment this data is only available on complaints received by the CCO. There are no major changes to how customers are contacting us with complaints.

Table 15 : How Received	2010-11		2011-12	
	%	Number	%	Number
Chief Exec's Office	3.6%	8	4.6%	9
Email/Online Form	42.2%	95	44.6%	87
Fax	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
In Person	4.9%	11	1.0%	2
In Writing	23.1%	52	23.6%	46
Ombudsman	7.1%	16	4.6%	9
Telephone	18.7%	42	21.5%	42
Through a representative	0.4%	1	0.0%	0

8. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

8.1 The table below lists some service improvements following complaints that have been made.

Table 16: Service Improvements Arising From Complaints	
Department	Service Improvement
Blue Badge Scheme	A new computer system is needed to include a document management system to better monitor o/s applications – already implemented.
Customer Services	A recording system will be put in place to ensure that hand-delivered mail boxes in the town hall are emptied twice daily and signed for in the central post room to ensure the efficient onward delivery of customers' mail.
City Centre Services	Italian Festival – consideration is given to employing a parking enforcement officer to manage parking on the Sunday around the church in future years
Operations	Agreed that additional customer service training would be provided to staff at the travel choice centre

PARTNER COMPLAINTS

9 VIVACITY

9.1 In May 2010, management of Peterborough City Council's Key Theatre, Museum and Art Gallery, public libraries and sports centre's transferred into a specially created culture and leisure trust called Vivacity.

The table below details the complaints for Vivacity during 2011/12.

Table 17: Department	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Sports Services	1	3	5	5	14
Libraries	3	2	3	1	9
Arts	1	2	4	1	8
Heritage	0	0	0	1	1
Total	5	7	12	8	32

This is in line with the previous year where 36 complaints were recorded.

9.2 A copy of Vivacity's complaint policy is included at Appendix 3.

10. **ENTERPRISE**

10.1 In March 2011, management of Peterborough City Council's Refuse, Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleansing functions transferred to Enterprise Peterborough.

Enterprise has implemented a more robust complaints system since November 2011 which details all complaints, customer enquires and service requests whether 'justified' or not. All complaints are recorded on the Enterprise Works Order management system which holds records of any improvements made or action taken. Enterprise has implemented several staff briefings based around the complaints they have received to improve the quality of service they are offering. This clearly demonstrates they seek to improve and utilise all the feedback from the public to do this.

Enterprise interacts with around 1,423,332 households per quarter and the services they offer have a direct impact on all of the residents of Peterborough. The table below sets out the total numbers of complaints and expresses these against a percentage of the interactions.

Below are the figures for complaints since the more robust recording systems have been implemented with a percentage against interactions with the public:

Month *	Total	Justified	Unjustified	Customer Interactions	Percentage justified complaints/compared to customer interactions
November	21	13	8	474,444	0.0027%
December	16	14	2	474,444	0.0029%
January	35	22	13	474,444	0.0046%
February	27	23	4	474,444	0.0048%
March	33	22	11	474,444	0.0046%

* Figures were not available from Enterprise for April to October 2011.

10.2 A copy of Enterprise's complaints policy and process is included at Appendix 4.

10.3 The call centre answers calls on behalf of Enterprise and will log complaints in line with their complaints policy. Therefore, if, for example a bin has been missed for a number of weeks in a row, it will be logged as a complaint, in order for this to be investigated. In addition, it is also logged as a service request so that the missed collection can be rectified.

11. **PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS**

11.1 The complaints policy contains provision to restrict customer's access in exceptional circumstances.

Complainants can sometimes pursue their complaints in a manner which can impede an investigation or can cause a significant resource issue for the council. In these circumstances, the behaviour of the complainant may be defined as unreasonably persistent. The council defines an unreasonably persistent complainant as:-

'those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the council, hinder the council's consideration of their, or other people's, complaints.'

During 2011-12 this was applied to three customers who had their access formally restricted in various ways.

Appendix 2

Review of Corporate Complaints Process

A review of the complaints policy is overdue – the previous being undertaken in 2009. The current policy states that there will be a triennial review of the policy.

In March 2009 guidelines were published by the Local Government Ombudsman which indicated that local Authorities should seek to operate a complaints process which met the following principles:-

- Accessibility – Well publicised, easily accessed and understood by staff and the public
- Communication – Effective communication within the organisation and between partners
- Timeliness – Council should take no longer than 12 weeks from receipt to resolution
- Fairness – Complaints should be dealt with impartially. Responses should be proportionate.
- Robust – A complaints process should include a robust review by someone who has the independence and authority to ask questions and get at the facts.
- Accountability – Information should be clear, regular monitoring should take place to ensure timescales and satisfaction levels are met.

Comparing these principles against our current policy there are two areas which need to be improved.

Communication – As the Council have joined in partnership with several organisations to deliver their services the responsibility for complaint processing in these areas needs further clarification. Also there is some evidence that as services have been split the responsibility for complaint reporting has been diluted and the information coming to the Central complaints team needs to improve. The complaints team are working with council departments and partners to ensure complaint data is maintained.

Timeliness – Currently the Council's corporate complaints process has three stages. The LGO guidance states that two stages should normally be sufficient to deal with the majority of complaints but in any case the council should fully review a complaint through the relevant number of stages within 12 weeks. The Stage 3 complaints from 2011/12 have been reviewed and it was found that nearly 60% of complaints considered at Stage 3, and so had progressed through all 3 stages, had exceeded the 12 week target for total time spent on dealing with a complaint.

There is a clear indication that the three stage process could be replaced with a two stage process.

The benefits of a two stage process would be:-

- Earlier resolution for the complainant where resolution is possible
- Greater compliance with the Ombudsman's stated timescales of 12 weeks in total for a complaint to be handled through the Council's process
- Reduction in resources as less resource expended on complaint handling
- In addition, it is apparent from some cases that the same manager is providing the stage 1 and stage 2 responses and so this change will remove this duplication.

The Next Steps

The Chief Executive has given approval for a two stage complaint process to be developed to replace the current three stage process.

The new process is currently at the planning stage and it is hoped that it will be implemented later in the current year.

Appendix 3

Vivacity Complaints Process

Vivacity Complaints Procedure and Policy



**Peterborough
Culture and Leisure**

Introduction

Vivacity is committed to listening to the views of its customers in order to improve the services we provide. Complaints are a simple means for our customers to voice their concerns about Vivacity's services and are an important indicator of where services may not be delivering best performance. The effective resolution of complaints should improve the confidence of customers and identify service improvements.

The objectives of the Complaints Policy are to:

- ensure everyone knows how to complain and how a complaint will be handled by Vivacity
- ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently across Vivacity
- provide customers with a fair and effective way to complain about our services
- ensure that complaints are monitored and used to improve our services; and
- improve public satisfaction and confidence in the way the organisation handles complaints and provides its services.

Vivacity will ensure that:

Our customers have a right to...

- be treated fairly and sensitively;
- be kept informed about what is happening with their complaint; and
- be advised of the service standards they should expect; the timescale for acknowledging and responding to a complaint; and any right of appeal.

Our employees will...

- be sensitive to the particular needs of customers;
- treat complaints as confidential where possible; and
- be accessible and clearly identified.

Our policy ...

- is open, easily accessible and widely promoted to all people that live, work and visit Peterborough;
- is easy to understand and use by all customers and employees; and
- sets out how to complain and how a complaint should be handled.

Our procedure

The Complaints Policy is based on a three-stage procedure:

- Stage One (First Contact Complaint)
- Stage Two (Service Review)
- Stage Three (Independent Person Review)

Stage One (First Contact Complaint)

Vivacity aims to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily through the 'front line' employees who provide the service or their relevant manager. The complaint may be resolved informally by way of an apology, by providing the service required or by providing an explanation to the complainant. The complainant should be informed of the course of action he/she may take if he/she remains dissatisfied.

Stage Two (Service Review)

The relevant Head of Service will investigate the complaint fully and provide a written response to the complainant. If the relevant Head of Service conducted the Stage One investigation, another Head of Service should conduct the Stage Two investigation. The complainant should be informed of the course of action he/she may take if he/she remains dissatisfied. Vivacity will also offer the complainant the opportunity to contact the Head of Service to clarify the decision or any points raised in their response.

Stage Three (Independent Person Review)

An independent person, acting on behalf of the Chief Executive, will investigate the complaint fully and provide a written report for consideration by Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will then write to the complainant enclosing the independent person's report setting out the Vivacity's response. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

Stage One provides an opportunity for an informal and quick resolution of complaint. In the majority of cases, it is the officer responsible for the original action or decision who should resolve the complaint. However at the more formal stages of the procedure (Stages Two and Three), it is important that someone who did not have any involvement in the action or decision (or the Stage One investigation), should consider the complaint.

Vivacity may exercise discretion about the stage at which a complaint is first considered.

When Vivacity has finished considering a complaint, it should inform the complainant how they can pursue a complaint in any other way or complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. Vivacity should also offer the complainant the opportunity to contact the investigating officer to clarify the decision or any points raised in their response. If the complainant raises new issues, these should be dealt with as a Stage One complaint.

Vivacity will strive to respond to complaints within 10 days or within a stated timescales if the complaint is complex. If more than 10 days is required to investigate the complaint, the customer must be sent a holding letter which should include:

- an apology for the delay;
- an explanation for the delay; and
- the date by which a full response can be expected.

Anonymous complaints

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

Data Protection

To process a complaint, Vivacity will hold personal data about the complainant. This includes data the complainant provides us and information that other people give us, about the complainant, in response to our enquiries. Vivacity will hold this data securely and only use it to help process the complaint. The identity of the person making the

Appendix 4

Enterprise Complaint Process

Customer Enquiries and Complaints Plan 2011

The Complaints Procedure

Our recording of complaints and enquiries is linked to the engagement of the Authority at key touch points to ensure that Peterborough City Council Officers are aware of the complaint, its prioritisation and the activity undertaken by Enterprise to ensure resolution in line with the service specification and service level agreement.

We will ensure that the Authority has continuous visibility of the complaint or enquiry status and action taken by Enterprise to resolve. This will be via the client access web portal into WorkManager for live data 24 hours a day.

The complaints procedure details responsibilities within our organisation for the resolution of complaints. It also includes details of the escalation process to ensure complaints in jeopardy of failing target resolution time frames are highlighted appropriately to senior managers.

Enquires and Complaints can be logged via the Members Hotline, Peterborough Direct and Enterprise Peterborough's Operations Help Desk

Enquires and complaints received in the Call Centre will need to follow the Request for Service/Complaints process (RFSC). This will verify if the person logging a call is asking for Request for Service or wants to make a Complaint.

The examples listed are a guide for decision making process to distinguish between a Request and a Complaint and are in no means exhaustive.

Examples of **Request** for Service:

- My bin was not collected today/yesterday
- My bin was not put back to its original place
- The grass on the verge outside my house hasn't been cut for ages - why?
- The tree in the shelter belt at the back of my house is too tall/overhanging/pushing against my fence etc
- Dog poo outside on the pavement I need you to clear it
- Travellers have set up near by house and are making a lot of mess with their rubbish

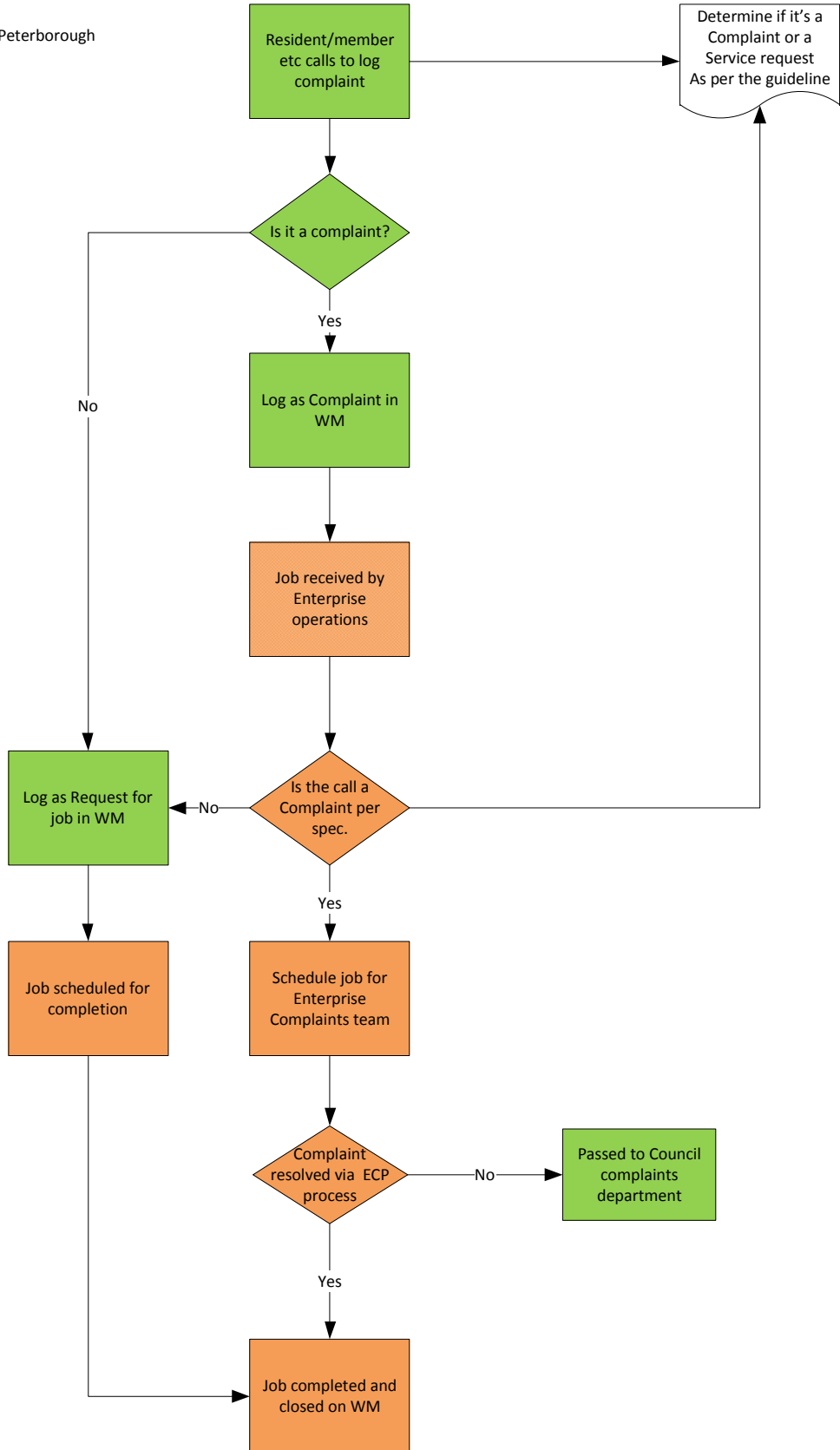
Example of a **Complaint**

- It's the third time you have not emptied my bin, I want an explanation
- I have raised this issue several times, but the crew are still not returning my bin back properly
- Your vehicles is always speeding down my road, more than the speed limit
- One of you operative has sworn at me for no reason
- I reported a fly-tip on two occasions and nothing has happened and I was promised a call back and this has not happened
- Travellers are back behind my house again despite the defences you put in, what are you going to do about it?
- Travellers keep dumping rubbish behind my house, poo in the bushes behind my garden fence etc

Request to log call for Service/Complaint (RFSC)

PCC Peterborough Direct

EP Enterprise Peterborough

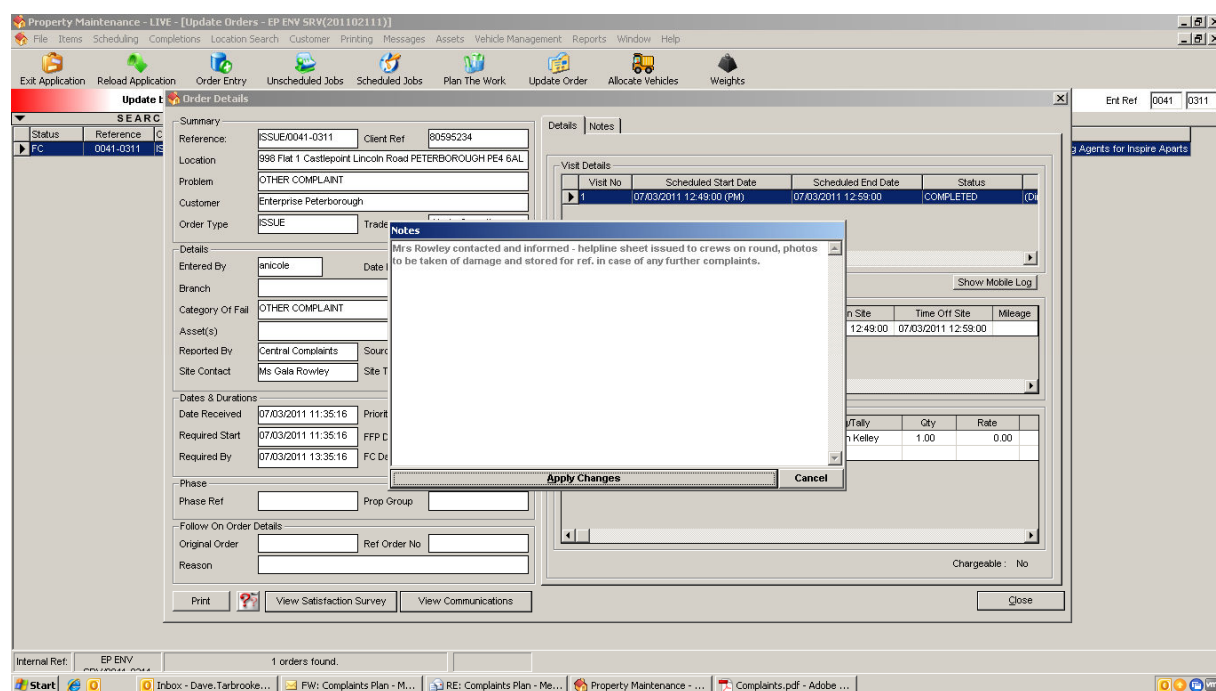


Once the call has been verified the request for service is logged as such, any complaints will be logged under Formal Complaints menu within WorkManager Customer Response System using the relevant activity, complaint code, division and service.

The call will be dealt with in line with Enterprise Complaint Procedure

The Enterprise Peterborough Complaints Team will work alongside Peterborough Direct to ensure all complaints are recognised and recorded in accordance with this process. All complaints are logged on WorkManager to ensure that they are tracked and that an audit trail is provided. The screen shot below show the logging of a complaint.

All complaints are recorded on the weekly exception report. Unresolved complaints will be included in the monthly report.



Enterprise Complaints Procedure:

On receipt of a complaint or enquiry, it is our intention to implement the following procedure for recording and resolution:

- **Stage 1** – Point of contact resolution, update of CRM system and update given to complainant. If not able to resolve complaint at point of contact then letter sent to complainant with notification of the next stage and the period of time we will respond to with a decision in line with ECP timeframe
- **Stage 2** – Investigation of issues by Supervisor or Service Manager. Report produced and recommended action plan. Update of CRM system
- **Stage 3** – Escalation to Contract Partnership Director for review and investigation. Update of CRM system and update given to complainant. At Stage 3 the Authority Waste Client Manager is formerly advised and involved in a joint investigation if required.

Enterprise Activity to Resolve	Authority Touch Point
<p>Complaint is received (in person, email, letter, fax, telephone or via website) either direct or via Peterborough Direct into Enterprise Peterborough’s Operations Help Desk. The Help Desk to log complaint onto WorkManager and assign to complaints team</p>	
<p>Enterprise Stage 1 (within 2 working Days)- Complaint Resolution at ‘first point of contact’</p> <p>If practical to do so, the complaint will be resolved to the satisfaction of the customer at the ‘first point of contact’ and logged on WorkManager as to the nature of the complaint and action taken. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage then the customer is informed immediately, if on the phone or in person, otherwise an ‘ES1 letter’ is sent to the complainant informing them of the next steps in the process of their complaint and time to resolve.</p>	<p>Touch Point</p> <p>Real Time information on complaint with automated status reporting. All information will be reviewed at the monthly Partnership Contract Review Meeting.</p>
<p>Enterprise Stage 2 (within 8 working days) - Complaint Not resolved at ‘first point of contact’</p> <p>If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the customer at the ‘first point of contact’ it is passed by the Complaints Advisor to the Supervisor or Service Manager who is required to resolve the issue within the time frame of Stage 2. The Service Manager will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the supervisor or manager related to the issue to gain an operational understanding • Trigger the associated workflow for escalation of the complaint to the relevant supervisor or manager • Check that it is dealt with in accordance with the relevant Specification or Service Level Agreement • Ensure that it is closed when a satisfactory outcome is reached 	<p>Touch Point</p> <p>Real Time information on complaint progress with automated status and exception reporting Complaints Advisor updating Authority on progress Review of information at monthly Partnership Contract Review meeting.</p>
<p>Enterprise Stage 3 (within 5 working days) – Senior Manager/Director to Investigate</p>	<p>Touch Point</p>

Customer Enquiries and
Complaints Plan

Enterprise Activity to Resolve	Authority Touch Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further escalation to the Partnership Director for review and investigation. • Formal investigation into issue and learning points • The Partnership Director will investigate and resolve (this may be with the agreement/involvement of the council staff, client officer) • Check that it is dealt with in accordance with the relevant Specification or Service Level Agreement • Ensure that it is closed when a satisfactory outcome is reached <p>The customer is sent a 'ES2 letter' notifying of the completion of the complaint or escalation to the council with a name of the department within the council that will be dealing with the complaint and reason why it's been escalated</p>	<p>Real Time information on complaint or enquiry progress with automated status reporting</p> <p>Partnership Director updating Authority on progress via monthly Partnership review meetings.</p> <p>Authority Waste Client Manager joined in the investigation of the complaint.</p> <p>Formal reporting of outcome reported to the Authority</p> <p>Complaint escalated to the Enterprise Regional MD.</p>

NOTE: All complaints are logged and monitored. KPIs are set on both response and action times – both are logged and monitored.

82 Report provided to the Authority in line with the reporting procedures setting out details of complaints and enquiries, status, stage (1 to 3) and outcomes, learning points.