

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
17 MARCH 2015	Public Report

Report of the Corporate Director Resources

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COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT 2013 – 14

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1
- To provide a summary of complaints monitored between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014 which fall under the Corporate Complaints' Policy.
 - To provide an update on proposed changes 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
1. Members to note the information presented in this report regarding complaints received between 1st April 2013 and the 31st March 2014.
 2. Members to note the inclusion of the full detail of cases investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman as requested by Committee members.
 3. Members views are sought on the proposed change to a two stage 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. Failing to take customers concerns seriously would impact particularly upon the following priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy:-

- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities;
- Creating strong and supportive communities;

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

- There have been increases in complaint volumes this year within, Amey Peterborough, Serco partnership and the services delivered by Vivacity.
- A change to the complaints process from 3 stages to 2 is proposed.

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 more efficient and effective service delivery and will improve the Council's reputation and efficiency.

Financial

6.2

The report contains no financial implications

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The report has been shared with relevant senior managers 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 2013-14

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1 - Complaints Monitoring Report 2013-14

Appendix 2 – New Complaints Process

Appendix 3 - Local Government Ombudsman Investigations

APPENDIX 1

1. COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT 2013-14

- 1.1 This report will analyse the performance of the council's formal Corporate Complaints Procedure between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014. 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 One (Investigated by Team Manager)
 - Stage Two (Investigated by Head of Service)
 - Stage Three (Investigated by investigator from Governance team)
- 1.3 Table 1 below shows the number of Stage 1 complaints received for each department during 2013/14 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 1: STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED				
Department	2012/2013		2013/2014	
	Total complaints received	Logged by CCO	Total complaints received	Logged by CCO
Chief Executive's Dep't	13	3	14	9
Children's Services	29	14	25	15
Operations	92	65	59 (excludes 34 Neighbourhood complaints)	48
Strategic Resources	143	63	268	109
Adult Social Care & Public Health (since December 2013) – Corporate complaints only			1	1
TOTAL	277	145	367	182

- 1.4 Whilst the majority of services saw minimal increases or maintained the same volumes there was an increase in complaints within Strategic Resources – within the Serco Partnership area – almost all attributable to the local council tax support (LCTS) introduced in that year. In 2014-15 complaint volumes in this area have reduced to a lower level. There is more background in Section 10 – Partner Complaints including complaint volumes for Amey Peterborough and Vivacity.

2. CHANGE TO COMPLAINTS PROCESS

- 2.1 Complaints processing has been under review since 2010 in regard to reducing the number of stages of our corporate complaints process. This was due to new guidance issued by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 2.2 The rationale for reducing the stages and the history of review and development of a new two stage process is fully documented in Appendix 2.
- 2.3 The new two stage process has been developed by the Complaint Manager in conjunction with the Governance team, and has been piloted for one year by Neighbourhood services.
- 2.4 In reducing our complaint stages from three down to two the aims are:-
- To ensure the customer has their complaint resolved as soon as possible
 - To ensure a final review by an independent service is still available
 - To reduce the amount of time a department has to investigate a complaint overall
 - To comply with the maximum of 12 weeks recommended by the Local Government Ombudsman for a Council to fully review a complaint.
- 2.5 This process has been robustly tested for over a year and the feedback from the department is very positive. I am confident in recommending this process for full implementation throughout the council.
- Overall more complaints will be resolved at the first opportunity
 - The customer will spend less time overall waiting for a response
 - Customers will be more likely to have personal contact from the department about their complaint leading to better understanding of their issues.
 - There will still be an independent review stage but this stage has been designed to be more efficient than the current stage 3 investigations
- 2.6 Members' feedback on the proposals is invited by the Chief Executive before a final decision is made.

3. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS (FIRST CONTACT COMPLAINTS)

- 3.1 There have been some significant changes to complaints processing during the year, which include
- changes to directorates
 - the piloting of a new complaint process
- 3.2 The changes to Directorates include:
- the closure of the Operations Directorate
 - the creation of 3 new Directorates - Growth and Regeneration, Governance & Communities
 - The transfer of Adult Social Care from Health to the council in March 2012 followed by the amalgamation with Public Health to create the directorate now known as Adult Social Care & Health & Wellbeing.

- 3.3 The piloting of the new complaints process (which involved the Neighbourhoods department) also means some complaints have not been included in the figures above. The detail of Neighbourhoods complaints is shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 All complaints are classified into a category, the table below (table 2 on the next page) shows the breakdown by category for all stage 1 complaints logged for 2013/14.
- 3.5 'Delayed/failed service' remains the most common category with 64% of the total number of stage 1 complaints. It should also be noted that the increased volume of complaints can almost exclusively be contributed to this category. The second most common remains 'Staff Attitude/ Conduct' at 11.9% - which has shown a further drop from last year.

Table 2	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
Department												
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chief Executive	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	1	4	14
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal & Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	1	4	12
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Strategic Resources	6	2	0	34	0	7	195	6	13	4	2	268
Customer Services	4	2	0	27	0	2	33	4	0	0	2	74
Shared Transactional Services	1	0	0	7	0	5	159	2	13	3	0	190
<i>Incomes (inc Council Tax & Business Rates)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>121*</i>
<i>Payments (inc Benefits)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>69*</i>
Business Transformation/ Strategic Property	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	4
Children's Services	0	0	1	2	0	2	7	1	8	3	1	25
Admissions/ School place planning & Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	8	2	0	14
Attendance/ Ed Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Education & Resources (inc Early Years)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
SEN/ Inclusion/ Ed Psychology/ PRU	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Childrens Social Care (corporate complaints)	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
Commissioning & Prevention (inc 8-19 service)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Operations	3	4	0	7	0	2	29	6	0	6	2	59
Planning Delivery Services	0	0	0	3	0	0	8	0	0	2	0	13
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Environment, Transport & Engineering	3	4	0	1	0	1	10	3	0	1	1	24
Neighbourhood Services (to Sept 2013)	0	0	0	3	0	1	11	3	0	2	1	21
Overall	11	6	1	44	0	11	237	14	21	14	9	367

* subtotals for STS broken down into Payments & Incomes complaints

3.6 Table 3 shows the outcomes for all stage 1 complaints registered for 2013/14.

Table 3	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Complaint withdrawn	Overall
Department					
Adult Social Care	1	0	0	0	1
Chief Executive	3	8	3	0	14
Communications	0	0	0	0	0
Legal & Governance	3	7	2	0	12
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	0	1	1	0	2
Strategic Resources	100	89	79	0	268
Customer Services	45	10	19	0	74
Shared Transactional Services	55	75	60	0	190
<i>Incomes (inc Council Tax & Business Rates)</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>121*</i>
<i>Payments (inc Benefits)</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>69*</i>
Business Transformation/ Strategic Property	0	4	0	0	4
Children's Services	4	17	2	2	25
Admissions/ School place planning & Assets	0	12	2	0	14
Attendance/ Ed Welfare	0	1	0	0	1
Education & Resources (inc Early Years)	0	1	0	0	1
SEN/ Inclusion/ Ed Psychology/ PRU	1	2	0	1	4
Childrens Social Care (corporate complaints)	3	0	0	1	4
Commissioning & Prevention (inc 8-19 service)	0	1	0	0	1
Operations	13	35	11	0	59
Planning Delivery Services	2	9	2	0	13
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	0	0	1	0	1
Environment, Transport & Engineering	7	11	6	0	24
Neighbourhood Services (to Sept 2013)	4	15	2	0	21
Overall	121	149	95	2	367

* subtotals for STS broken down into Payments & Incomes complaints

3.7 The number of cases which are Not Upheld has remained broadly the same at 41%. There has been a decrease in the number of cases being Fully Upheld, which has reduced from 37% last year to 33% this year and a corresponding increase in numbers classified as Partially Upheld which has risen from 21% to 26%.

4. STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS (SERVICE REVIEW)

4.1 Table 4 provides a breakdown of Stage 2 complaints by department, which has increased in volume since the previous year as the number of complaints received has increased. However it should be noted that the number of complaints escalating to Stage 2 has decreased slightly as a percentage of the Stage 1 complaints received (from 16% escalation in 2012/13 to 14% escalation this year). If the customer is able to accept the resolution which is offered at the first stage this leads to fewer escalated complaints.

Table 4: Stage Two Complaints By Dept	2012-13	2013-14
Chief Executive's Department	3	2
Children's Services	4	8
Operations	27	22
Strategic Resources	9	20
Overall	43	52

4.2 Table 5 gives greater detail of the business units who have had Stage 2 complaints during 2012/13 as well as which category the complaint was registered against. The table shows that Delayed/failed service is still the most common category with 52% of the stage 2 complaints falling into this category. For the third year the second highest category has been about policy at 21% this year. Staff attitude/ conduct was the third highest category (11%) which is an increase from last year.

Table 5: 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	1	0	0	2
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal & Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Growth & Regeneration	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
Strategic Resources	2	0	0	2	0	0	10	0	0	6	0	20
Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	4
Shared Transactional Services	2	0	0	2	0	0	8	0	0	4	0	16
<i>Incomes (inc Council Tax & Business Rates)</i>	2	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	12*
<i>Payments (inc Benefits)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	4*
Business Transformation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	8
Admissions/ School place planning & assets	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Attendance/Ed Welfare	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Education & Resources (inc Early years)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEN/Inclusion/Ed Psychology/PRU	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Childrens Social Care (corporate complaints)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Commissioning & Prevention (inc 8-19 service)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operations	0	1	1	0	0	0	14	3	0	3	0	22
Planning Delivery Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	0	1	0	11
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Environment, Transport & Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Services (to Sept 2013)	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	2	0	8
Overall	2	1	1	6	0	0	27	3	1	11	0	52

* subtotals for STS broken down into Payments & Incomes complaints

4.3 Table 6 shows the outcomes for all stage 2 complaints registered for 2013/14.

A relatively small number of complaints have been upheld at Stage 2 – just 7.6%, with 65% not upheld and 25% Partially Upheld. If complaints are thoroughly investigated at the earliest stage it should be expected that the number upheld at the next stage will be low.

	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Withdrawn	Overall
Table 6 : Department					
Chief Executives Department	0	2	0	0	2
Communications	0	0	0	0	0
Legal & Governance	0	2	0	0	2
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	0	0	0	0	0
Strategic Resources	3	14	3	0	20
Customer Services	1	1	2	0	4
Shared Transactional Services	2	13	1	0	16
<i>Incomes (inc Ctax & Business Rates)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>12*</i>
<i>Payments (inc Benefits)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4*</i>
Business Transformation/ Strategic Property	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	0	5	3	0	8
Admissions, School place planning & Assets	0	1	2	0	3
Attendance/Ed Welfare	0	1	0	0	1
Education & Resources (inc Early years)	0	0	0	0	0
SEN/Inclusion/Ed Psychology/ PRU	0	2	1	0	3
Childrens Social Care (Corporate complaints)	0	1	0	0	1
Commissioning & Prevention (inc 8-19 service)	0	0	0	0	0
Operations	1	13	7	1	22
Planning Delivery Services	0	7	3	1	11
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	1	1	1	0	3
Environment, Transport and Engineering	0	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Services (to Sept 2013)	0	5	3	0	8
Total	4	34	13	1	52

* subtotals for STS broken down into Payments & Incomes complaints

- 4.4 Table 7 shows that there was a slight decrease in the number of Stage two complaints which were responded to within the target of 15 working days. Part of the reason for a review of the three stage complaints process is to reduce the overall time which a customer must spend proceeding through the complaints process and to ensure resolution at the earliest possibility.

Table 7 : Stage 2 Complaints Responded To Within 15 Working Days		
	2012-13	2013-14
Chief Executive's Dep't	100%	50%
Children's Services	75%	75%
Operations	81.48%	90%
Strategic Resources	88.88%	75%
Overall	84.8%	81.3%

5. STAGE THREE COMPLAINTS (INDEPENDENT PERSON REVIEW)

- 5.1 In 2011/12 the outcome of complaints at Stage 3 indicated that there was a declining need for Stage 3 investigation with the outcome on only one case changing significantly from the Stage 2 findings. In 2012/13 and 2013/14 the number of complaints escalating to stage 3 has declined further which provides further evidence of the need to review the number of complaint stages that are necessary. Complaints at stage 3 are investigated independently by the Governance Team. In 2013/14 there were 12 cases where the complainant requested further escalation after stage 2.

- 5.2 Table 8 breaks down the stage 3 complaints by directorate.

Table 8: Stage 3 Complaints by Directorate		
	2012/13	2013/14
Chief Executive's Dep't	0	0
Children's Services	3	2
Operations	8	7
Strategic Resources	1	3
Overall	12	12

- 5.3 Of the 12 cases only 7 cases were passed for investigation by the Governance team Investigators. The Complaint Manager in consultation with the Chief Executive can decline to offer a Stage 3 investigation where it is considered there is no merit in continuing with further investigation, or where the complainant may have recourse to an alternative process such as an appeals process. In such cases the complainant will always be given the option of early referral of the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman. 5 cases were considered and given early referral rights to the LGO.

5.4 The 7 cases which were passed for investigation were

Childrens Services x 1
Operations x 4 (1 x case was withdrawn during the stage 3 investigation)
Strategic Resources x 2

- 5.5 Of these cases there were 3 where the outcome of the Stage 3 complaint investigation was different to the stage 2 outcome. This indicates some type of independent scrutiny is still required to ensure that issues are recognised and resolved from within the Authority before the case escalates to the LGO.

Of the 6 cases which were investigated only 2 escalated their concerns to the LGO.

- 5.6 One of these was a Planning complaint which had been Partially Upheld at both stage 2 & 3, the LGO agreed with this stance but recommended a higher compensation figure.

- 5.7 The other case was a School Admissions complaint, where the department did not uphold the complaint, but the independent investigation led to a decision to partially uphold the complaint. The complainant remained dissatisfied and approached the LGO who investigated and fully upheld the complaint. This case illustrates that there is still a need for a final independent review of a decision made by a service before escalation to the LGO. However it also illustrates that even independent review may not recognise a complex point of law, which is where the LGO's decision differed from the councils in this case. 5.8 The five complaints which were declined an investigation at Stage 3 related to the following departments:

Childrens Services x 1
Operations x 3
Strategic Resources x 1

One of these complainants did not take the matter to the LGO, this was an Operations complaint (Building Control)

Four of these complainants took their cases to the LGO who made the following decisions:

Strategic Resources x1	Out of Time,
Operations x 1	Not to initiate an investigation
Operations x 1	Maladministration but no injustice
Childrens Services x 1	No maladministration

- 5.9 Therefore only one case resulted in a finding against the council– this was a planning enforcement complaint, where the LGO investigator found that there had been a non-materiel breach in a planning condition which was not acknowledged fully to the complainant. There was no injustice to the complainant and no enforcement action was recommended by the LGO.

6. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO)

- 6.1 Each year the LGO provide an annual review to the Council. For both 2012/13 & 2013/14 the LGO's review letters only presented the total number of complaints received and not the more detailed analysis they had offered in previous years.
- 6.2 The reason for this is that the LGO changed their business processes during the course of 2012/13 and have recently been asking councils what detail they would like going forward. Due to the reduction in funding to the LGO they have now confirmed that it is unlikely that they will return to providing personalised letters to Authorities in the future.
- 6.3 There have also been changes in how the LGO categorise their findings which makes it impractical to compare this years information with previous years.
- 6.4 Since April 2013 the LGO provide a 3 tier system when assessing complaints received from the public.
- Intake – all general enquires from the public
 - Assessment – complaints passed to this team for initial assessment
 - Investigation – complaints the LGO decide they will investigate.
- 6.5 The LGO reported to the Council in July 2014 that they had handled the following complaint enquiries about Peterborough City Council in 2013/14.

Enquires to the LGO 2013/14	51
Closed After Initial Enquiries	16
Incomplete/Invalid	1
Referred back to LA for local Resolution	20
Investigated Upheld	10
Investigated Not Upheld	4

- 6.6 This shows that although the LGO had contact from the public about 51 separate complaints in 2013/14 they only actively investigated 14 of these cases. In 2012/13 the LGO investigated 19 cases, with 18 fully investigated in 2011/12. This shows a reducing level of complaints where the LGO feel an investigation is necessary.
- 6.7 The 14 cases investigated by the LGO are detailed in Appendix 3.
- 6.8 As the LGO do not become involved in a complaint until it has been through the Council's complaint process the cases that they investigate this year may sometimes be cases that the Council investigated in the previous year. So some of the cases reported in the Stage 3 category above will not be reported on fully until next year when the LGO have completed their investigations.

7. PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS

- 7.1 The complaints policy contains provision to restrict customer's access in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.2 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.'***
- 7.3 During 2013-14 this was applied to three customers who had their access formally restricted in various ways.
- 7.4 A policy on when and why to restrict access is in place. The decision to place a customer on this register and restrict their access to the complaints process is taken as a last resort and following recommendation by the Complaint Manager this must be authorised by the Head of Customer Services.
- 7.5 The process involves a review every six months to ensure where the customer complies with the restrictions they can be removed from the register at the earliest possible point.
- 7.6 The policy includes a right of referral to the Local Government Ombudsman if the customer believes the policy has been applied to them unfairly.

8. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- 8.1 It is important that where faults and system weaknesses are identified that improvements are recommended and implemented at a departmental level to ensure a service improves and future complaints may be reduced.
- 8.2 Service Improvements are identified during the course of investigating complaints and these are recorded by the Central complaints team who then contact the relevant department later in the year to ensure the service improvement has been delivered.
- 8.3 Below in Table 9 is the full detail of service complaints which have been delivered following complaints investigated in 2013/14.

Table 9

Reference	Description	Service Improvement	Feedback
C13/031	Failure to reply to correspondence and pay an invoice for a child placed with the home school (Childrens services)	Review how calls are handled/ redirected to officers who are not office based	All of the phones in SEN Team are now on a hunt group. This ensures if an officer is away from their desk their phone can more easily be answered by another team member
C13/033	Incorrect bidding number provided by Housing Needs (Housing Needs)	Ensure that correct bidding numbers are provided	Staff have received refresher training in Housing Needs to reduce the probability of this occurring again
C13/052	Unhappy with way in which case is being handled by Housing Needs (Housing Needs)	Ensure that copies of policies are made available to customers at the earliest opportunity	The Housing Allocations policy is now available on the PCC website and staff have been advised to ensure that printed copies are provided on request at the earliest opportunity
C13/136	Complaint regarding the lack of knowledge from the call centre regarding the Dog Warden out of hours service (Call Centre)	Call centre will be reminded of Dog Warden out of hours procedure	Internal Phone directory updated following complaint
C13/154	Failure to contact a customer within agreed timescales (Planning Department)	Officer will be advised of the need to keep customer informed of the progress of their enquiries	Best practice has been promoted that should an officer be unable to reach a customer they should, ensure a voice mail is left, if this is not possible to send an email, failing that a holding letter be dispatched to arrange a suitable time and date to make contact.
C13/162	Not happy that the Admissions team delayed in forwarding an out of area school application form to Lincolnshire resulting in the child now not having a school place (Childrens services)	In light of this complaint procedures for working with other Local Authorities will be reviewed to see if anything needs to be changed	The system of file exchanges between local authorities is a national system which generally works well. An enhancement was put in place to process such file exchanges at the time of processing the original forms rather than wait for nearer the time of the house move.

C13/175	Keeps receiving FPN (littering fines) addressed to other people to his address	Reinforce the issue of accurate data entry with the team. Where an offender gives an incorrect address it is likely that the postcode will not match the address. As in this case. Address and post code need to be checked for matching	Since the above incidents staff now have to double check that they are inputting the correct address and post code and that they match, if there is any discrepancy a check is carried out on the Royal Mail website and the officer who issued the ticket is informed and explanatory notes are placed on the record.
C13/194	Delays regarding hardship relief application (Business Rates)	Complaint highlighted an important training issue which will be followed up internally as a matter of urgency with the relevant officers	Relevant "training need" picked up with the team. Procedures also reviewed and automation introduced to ensure all post is allocated out in date order, taking into account priorities in place at the time
C13/208	Unhappy with delay in processing correspondence which resulted in a summons being issued. (Council Tax)	Implementing procedures to prevent accounts being picked up on the automated recovery runs where customer's correspondence is outstanding. If successful this should prevent this situation occurring again on any account	Matching report is now run prior to each summons run. This report identifies any cases which have an item(s) of work o/s and where this is the case, the a/c is put "on hold" resulting in no recovery action being initiated.

9. HOW COMPLAINTS ARE RECEIVED

- 9.1 Table 10 shows how complaints are received (Stage 1 complaint figures only)
The most popular contact method continues to be email, with telephone calls next and then letters.
- 9.2 This trend is repeated across all departments with the exception of Childrens Services who receive the majority of their complaints by letter.

Table 10: Department	Email/Online Form	Letter	Person	Telephone	Overall
Adult Social Care	0	1	0	0	1
Chief Executive	12	2	0	0	14
Communications	0	0	0	0	0
Legal & Governance	10	2	0	0	12
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	2	0	0	0	2
Strategic Resources	138	53	7	70	268
Customer Services	31	8	4	31	74
Shared Transactional Services	104	45	3	38	190
<i>Incomes (inc Council Tax & Business Rates)</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>121*</i>
<i>Payments (inc Benefits)</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>69*</i>
Business Transformation	3	0	0	1	4
Children's Services	10	13	0	2	25
Admissions, School place planning & Assets	2	12	0	0	14
Attendance/Ed Welfare	0	0	0	1	1
Education & Resources (inc Early Years)	1	0	0	0	1
SEN/Inclusion/Ed Psychology/ PRU	3	0	0	1	4
Childrens Social Care (corporate complaints)	3	1	0	0	4
Commissioning & Prevention (inc 8-19 service)	1	0	0	0	1
Operations	43	8	1	7	59
Planning Delivery Services	7	4	1	1	13
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	0	0	0	1	1
Environment, Transport & Engineering	23	1	0	0	24
Neighbourhood Services (to Sept 2013)	13	3	0	5	21
Overall	203	76	8	79	367

* subtotals for STS broken down into Payments & Incomes complaints

10. COMPLIMENTS

10.1 This data is captured by all Council departments and sent to the Complaints team to provide annual figures. The figures are very similar to last year (853 2012/13 and 852 2013/14). It is positive to note that Compliment figures are 43% higher than complaint figures.

10.2 As can be seen from table 11 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 11: Compliments	External	Internal	Overall
Chief Executives Department			
Communications	0	0	0
Legal & Governance	24	60	84
Growth & Regeneration	0	0	0
Human Resources	1	1	2
Strategic Resources			
Customer Services	156	25	181
Shared Transactional Services	24	0	24
<i>Incomes (inc Council Tax & Business Rates)</i>	9		
<i>Payments (inc Benefits)</i>	15		
Business Transformation/ Strategic Property	0	0	0
Children's Services			
Admissions/ School place planning & Assets	2	0	2
Attendance/ Education Welfare	0	0	0
Education & Resources (inc Early Years)	0	0	0
SEN/ Inclusion/ Ed Psychology/ PRU	0	0	0
Commissioning & Prevention (inc 8-19 service)	1	0	1
Operations			
Planning Delivery Services	188	28	216
Commercial Operations (City Centre)	6	0	6
Environment, Transport and Engineering	44	19	63
Neighbourhood Services (to Sept 2013)	273	0	273
Overall	719	133	852

11. PARTNER COMPLAINTS

Amey Peterborough

- 11.1 The following information in relation to complaint increases was provided by Amey.
- 11.2 'We have seen over the period 2013/14 a rise of 34% in complaints received by the Amey Peterborough, with a 52% increase in unjustified complaints.
- 11.3 Amey has a three stage complaints procedure and complaints are fully investigated to ensure in most instances an acceptable resolution for the resident. Before a complaint can be classed as unjustified it has to be fully investigated and all evidence to demonstrate this recorded.
- 11.4 Breaking down the data into the key service areas we have seen the following: -
- 11.5 Household waste collections** – whilst there has been an increase in complaints for this service, a greater percentage of the complaints have been found to be 'unjustified' (in 2012/13 82% of complaints for this service were recorded as justified, compared to 33% this year). Complaints typically relate to unhappiness about refuse crews adhering to policy – for example, if a recycling bin has the wrong material in it, it will be **stickered and not emptied** until the resident has removed the wrong materials. Amey will register a call about this as a complaint (for a missed bin) but this will be deemed 'unjustified' as crews are doing the right thing. We also saw a spike in complaints in the winter months when PCC had suspended the garden waste service. Late leaf-fall caused issues for residents – which were reflected in increased complaints and led to an additional collection being provided in December. The new (chargeable) service that is now in place provides for a year-round fortnightly service, with monthly collections in December and January.
- 11.6 Amey are working hard to reduce complaints in all areas across the service and notably for missed bins and missed assisted collection. This is being carried out through additional / further training of staff and regular management audits which involve spot checks of crews following collections. At this point they check bins have been replaced to the point of presentation, all bins have been emptied and that there has not been any spillages, this includes pictorial evidence of how the street is left following collection.
- 11.7 Parks Trees and Open Spaces and Street Cleansing** - There has been a decrease in complaints for this area by 28% against the previous year. There were 264 complaints received for this service. Also there has been a decrease in complaints being recorded as justified. In 2012/13 94 % of complaints for this service were recorded as upheld/justified. For 2013/14 this has reduced to 58% of complaints being recorded as upheld/justified. This has been due to Amey improving the way they are investigating complaints. The majority of all complaints are actually calls for service e.g. shrubs to be cut back further, litter in streets etc. as such this has increased the amount of unjustified complaints considerably. Overall we have seen a decrease in complaints in this service, this is also evidenced through the Key Performance Indicators and quality audits carried out by Amey and PCC.

11.8 The remaining services including building cleaning, transport and property have all seen a decrease in customer complaints. Passenger transport has seen complaints half over the period however this will mainly be attributed to the removal of the Local Link Service previously operated by Amey.

11.9 The data in Table 12 shows the complaints received by Amey in 2013/14

Table 12					Justified complaints/compared to customer interactions
Month	Total	Justified	Unjustified	Customer Interactions	
April	145	68	77	474,444	0.014
May	169	74	95	474,444	0.016
June	118	45	73	474,444	0.009
July	143	65	78	474,444	0.014
August	180	76	104	474,444	0.016
September	141	53	88	474,444	0.011
October	122	41	81	474,444	0.009
November	140	53	87	474,444	0.011
December	166	24	142	474,444	0.005
January	149	48	101	474,444	0.010
February	102	35	67	474,444	0.007
March	98	36	62	474,444	0.008
TOTAL	1673	618	1055		0.011

11.10 For comparison the total Amey complaint figures from 2012/13 are shown below in Table 13

Table 13					Percentage justified complaints/compared to customer interactions
2012-13	Total	Justified	Unjustified	Customer Interactions	
	1252	556	696	474,444	Not calculated

11.11 The report also includes the compliments received by Amey. It should be noted that these have continued to rise and have increased by 35% since 2012 /13.'

AMEY compliments 2013-14												
April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
13	12	12	20	13	14	16	16	22	22	18	17	195

Serco - Shared Transactional Services & Customer Services

- 11.12 As Serco are in Partnership with the Council their complaints are recorded under the Council's own corporate Complaints process. Therefore the full breakdown of data for these complaints are incorporated under the 3 stages of the process which begins at Section 4.
- 11.13 Serco provided the following information.
- 11.14 In Shared Transactional Services there were 190 complaints in 2013/14 against 90 in the previous year and over the same period recorded complaints in Customer Services increased from 49 to 74. In analysing the reasons for these increases it is clear that both services were subject to considerable change and increased demand over this period created by the introduction of the local council tax support (LCTS) scheme. A further analysis of the Shared Transactional Services complaints directly attributed 98 of the 190 complaints to the LCTS scheme.
- To put this into further context the Peterborough LCTS scheme when introduced meant that all those liable for council tax (except pensioners who were excluded) were now required to pay an amount of council tax themselves. In Peterborough the scheme was set at 30%. In other words a local resident who was previously in receipt of 100% council tax benefit and so did not have to pay any council tax was from 1 April 2013 now only entitled to claim a maximum of 70% of their council tax through the new LCTS scheme and would have to find the remaining 30% themselves from their other benefits, savings or income. This change impacted approximately 11,000 households in the City either paying council tax for the first time or paying more. In addition to the increased demand caused by LCTS other welfare reform changes were introduced including the benefits cap and 'the bedroom tax' which placed further demand on these services.
- 11.15 Central Government did provide financial support to local authorities to introduce these legislative requirements but it was insufficient to meet demand which had the consequential effect of increasing dissatisfaction with the service and hence the numbers of complaints. This is highlighted by the fact that 73% of complaints received across Customer and Transactional Services during this period were due to concerns about delayed or failed service.
- 11.16 Looking forward it is encouraging to note that the number of complaints received during 2014/15 (with only one month left in the year) have reduced significantly (currently 124 in Shared Transactional Services and 28 in customer Services) which has coincided with a slight reduction in demand as customers are more aware of the new scheme.
- 11.17 To put the number of complaints received into perspective it is useful to have an understanding of the number of contacts these services typically receive. For example, within customer services there were 579699 customer contacts during 2013/14 either via telephone or face to face. As customer services received 74 complaints during the year this equates to 1 complaint for every 7833 contacts. In Shared Transactional Services the volume of transactions was 149468 generated by incoming information leading to changes. There were 190 complaints for this department which equates to 1 complaint for every 786 transactions

Vivacity

11.18 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.11.19Table 14 below details the complaints for Vivacity during 2013/14:

Table 14: Department	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Sports Services	5	13	2	21	41
Libraries	5	7	4	4	20
Arts	1	0	4	1	6
Heritage	0	0	1	1	2
Total	11	20	11	27	69

11.19 This is an increase of 56% over the previous year where **39** complaints were received. Complaints about Sports Services and Libraries have increased, whilst complaints relating to Heritage services have decreased. The number of complaints about Arts has remained the same.

11.20 The following information was provided by Vivacity

11.21 Members will note that the complaints received by Vivacity have increased. However, this has to be put into the context of a service that is dramatically growing. Last year Vivacity grew by 20 per cent and has a very high footfall with an annual attendance currently around 2.2 million. The percentage of complaints received by Vivacity are: 2012/13 = 0.0012% of customers and 2013/14 = 0.0031% customers, in other words a tiny proportion in both years.

11.23 To help measure customer satisfaction levels where movement in complaints is so small, Vivacity, this year, has adopted a quality measuring system used widely in business called the Net Promoter Score. Not all of its centres are as yet using this measure but those that are report performances superior to well known 'customer focused' organisations such as Apple and Google. The results of this Net Promoter Score are reported to the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee and are available on request.

11.22 Vivacity Compliment figures for 2013 – 2014 are detailed in Table 15.

Table 15: Department	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Sports Services	1	3	3	3	10
Libraries	1	0	0	0	1
Arts	3	5	1	0	3
Heritage	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	8	4	3	20

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