

South Lakeland District Council

Standards Committee

17 April 2018

Report on Compliments, Customer Feedback and Complaints received during 2017/2018

PORTFOLIO:	Cllr Jonathan Brook – Innovation and Improvement Portfolio Holder
REPORT FROM:	Simon McVey – Assistant Director Performance and Innovation
REPORT AUTHOR:	Caroline Metcalfe – Contact Centre Manager
WARDS:	All
FORWARD PLAN:	not applicable

1.0 EXPECTED OUTCOME

- 1.1 Feedback is very important to help us better understand our customers' needs and concerns and can help identify possible avenues of service improvement. This report presents an update to Members on the number of complaints and compliments received during 2017/2018

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the report be received and the recent decisions of the Local Government Ombudsman noted.**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

- 3.1 In our drive to improve our customer service, complaints data has been monitored for a number of years. All complaints and compliments are recorded and managed by the customer services team.
- 3.2 Previous reports on this subject have generally shown that the number of complaints received tends to be consistent and averages approximately two each week. This trend has continued during 2017/2018 with the number of complaints reducing slightly. This is shown in the data attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 During 2017/18 there were **97** stage 1 complaints received compared to **103** and **118** in the previous two financial years. The reasons for complaints are wide and varied and there is no underlying trend with complaints about council policies and service standards making up 75% of the total.
- 3.4 This report is showing that the average time taken to respond to complaints is currently **6.2** working days (previous years have ranged between 7.3 and 15 working days) and **79** of the 97 complaints (**81.4%**) were answered within the 10 working day target which is better than 78.6% achieved in 2016/2017.

- 3.5 The **18** complaints falling outside the target are more complex cases involving more detailed investigation and on some occasions a site visit. All complaints were acknowledged in 1 working day.
- 3.6 The simplified complaints process is helping to reduce the number of complaints progressing to the Chief Executive with **10** reaching this stage.
- 3.7 Appendix 2 shows a more detailed breakdown of the stage 1 complaints by department and also by complaint category. This data is useful to identify trends and assist with service improvements. Neighbourhood Services received the highest number of complaints which is indicative of the large number of public interactions but the department also receives the highest number of compliments. There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of missed bin complaints but this has been offset by an increase in planning issues.
- 3.8 There has been a large increase in the number of compliments which are listed at Appendix 2. During the year there were **72** compliments compared to 54 received during the previous year.
- 3.9 To put these figures in context it is estimated that over the same period there have been in excess of **3.5million** customer interactions.
- 3.10 The Annual Review Letter from the Ombudsman is expected in July 2018. As highlighted in last year's annual report, the Ombudsman has changed the way that it reports on complaints.
- 3.11 There have been no public interest reports received. Since September 2017 one complaint has been upheld and recorded as maladministration and injustice at pre report stage. The case related to an environment services and public protection matter with agreed actions for the Council to review an application and its procedures for future applications. This application has been reviewed, and procedures are being reviewed within an agreed timeframe.
- 3.12 Members are asked to receive the report.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 None.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 There are no alternative options – the report is to note.

6.0 LINKS TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Links to the Council's priorities in relation to customer satisfaction.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial and Resources

- 7.1.1 Not applicable.

7.2 Human Resources

- 7.2.1 Not applicable.

7.3 Legal

7.3.1 Not applicable.

7.4 Social, Economic and Environmental

Have you completed and Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please confirm that it is attached to the report in the appendices.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons.	Impact Assessment not required. Data gathered will help inform service improvements.	

7.5 Equality and Diversity

Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please confirm that it is attached to the report in the appendices.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons.	Not required for this report but an Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the complaints policy and customer access strategy.	

7.6 Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Reputational as a result of complaints	Reputation of the council is diminished	Regular review of complaints policy and proactive monitoring of complaints.

CONTACT OFFICERS

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APPENDICES ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT

Appendix No.	
1	Complaints Data 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
2	Complaints Data 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
3	Compliments Data 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Previous Reports to Standards Committee

TRACKING INFORMATION

Assistant Director	Portfolio Holder	Solicitor to the Council	SMT	Scrutiny Committee
29/03/2018	29/03/2018	29/03/2018	29/03/2018	n/a
Executive (Cabinet)	Standards Committee	Council	Section 151 Officer	Monitoring Officer
n/a	17/04/2018	n/a	29/03/2018	29/03/2018
Human Resource Services Manager	Leader	Ward Councillor(s)		
n/a	n/a	n/a		