

Report to Finance & Performance Working Group

16th June 2016

By David Plank Customer Services Manager

INFORMATION REPORT

Not exempt



Horsham
District
Council

Complaints & Compliments Monitoring Report for Horsham District Council 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016 incorporating annual figures

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform the Finance & Performance Working Group of the details of the complaints and compliments notified to the Council's Complaints & Feedback Officer for the period 1st January to 31st March 2016. Annual figures are also included. The intention is to learn from the feedback that the Council receives to prevent reoccurrence of complaints, improve Council services and promote areas of good practice.

For the period 1 January to 31 March 2016 the Complaints & Feedback Officer was notified of 47 complaints. The number of complaints received at the Council's leisure centres for the period was 104.

Over the course of quarter three and four, we have seen an improvement to each department's management of the complaints. We are seeing good progress in response times as staff receive triggers as the due date for a response approaches. Whilst staff have 20 working days to respond in full to a complaint, we do endeavour to reply well before this date as this is a key driver of customer satisfaction

There has again been a reduction in complaints received in Quarter four, with a decrease from 57 complaints in Quarter three. Whilst there is still progress to be made, the use of root cause analysis and the Covalent software to rigorously monitor complaints, in terms of their content and how they are addressed, has made a promising start and yielded positive results. As with the previous quarter, quarter four has in fact recorded more compliments than it did complaints.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

- i) To Note the contents of this report and comment as appropriate.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) To increase awareness of the Council's corporate complaints procedure and improve our learning and understanding from the complaints received.

Background Papers: Local Government Ombudsman's (LGOs) Guidance on Running a Complaints System, LGO Guidance on Good Administrative Practice, LGO Guidance on Remedies

Consultation: Director of Community Services & Monitoring Officer

Wards affected: All

Contact: David Plank, Customer Services Manager ext 5371

Background Information

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to show the number and type of complaints, compliments and suggestions received by Council department to identify trends and help monitor the situation. This excludes any representations, appeals or disagreements with Council policy – these are not classed as complaints under the Council's current definition of a complaint.

This report is intended for managers, staff and Councillors to help everyone at the Council learn and act upon customer feedback.

2 Statutory and Policy Background

2.1 Local Government Act 2000

Relevant Government policy

- 2.2 Current LGO Guidance recommends that information gathered from front line staff about complaints, questions and comments be collated and reviewed on a regular basis as it can be a valuable source of information about how users view service provision. This provides a mechanism for identifying emerging issues that might be addressed before they escalate into complaints.

Relevant Council Policy

- 2.3 The Council's complaints procedure is available on the website.

3 Details

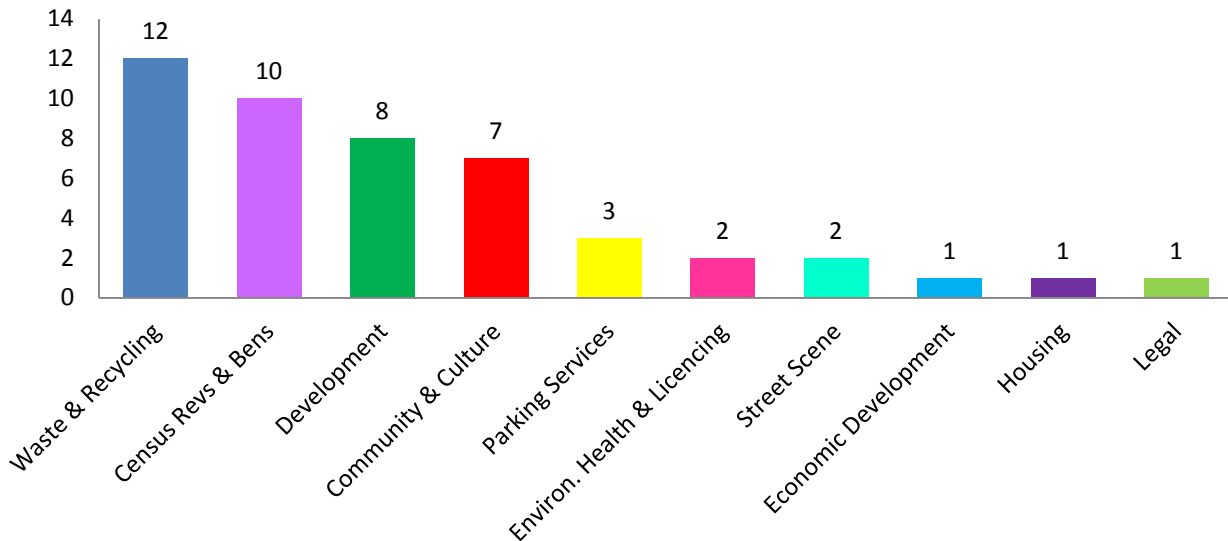
Complaints notified to the Complaints & Information Officer 1 January to 31 March 2016

- 3.1 The number of complaints notified to the Complaints & Information Officer for the period 1 January to 31 March 2016 is 47 complaints. A further 104 were received by the Leisure centres.
- 3.2 It should be noted that front line Council services such as refuse collections, planning services and leisure facilities will, by their nature attract more complaints than the services which provide 'in house' functions. Horsham District Council's current definition of a complaint is:-

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response, about the standards of service, action or lack of action by the Council, its staff or a

contractor working on the Council's behalf affecting an individual customer or resident or group of customers'

3.3 Complaints received by department 1 January to 31 March 2016.



As anticipated, the number of complaints received for Community & Culture has decreased from quarter three, being arguably the busiest time of year in December, which saw a spike due the increased footfall.

Despite the typical end of year challenges, Census Revenues & Benefits managed to keep complaints low and have recorded two less complaints than in quarter three.

Waste & Recycling have recorded a slightly higher amount than in the previous quarter (being 9). This has been caused predominately by frequently missed bins (as opposed to one off occasions). This is an area that is being addressed with the department through drilling down to the root causes of the missed bins and what lessons can be learnt for the future.

Development continue to record a low number of complaints, with less than the previous quarter (being 10) and significantly less than quarter four of 2014/15 (being 30).

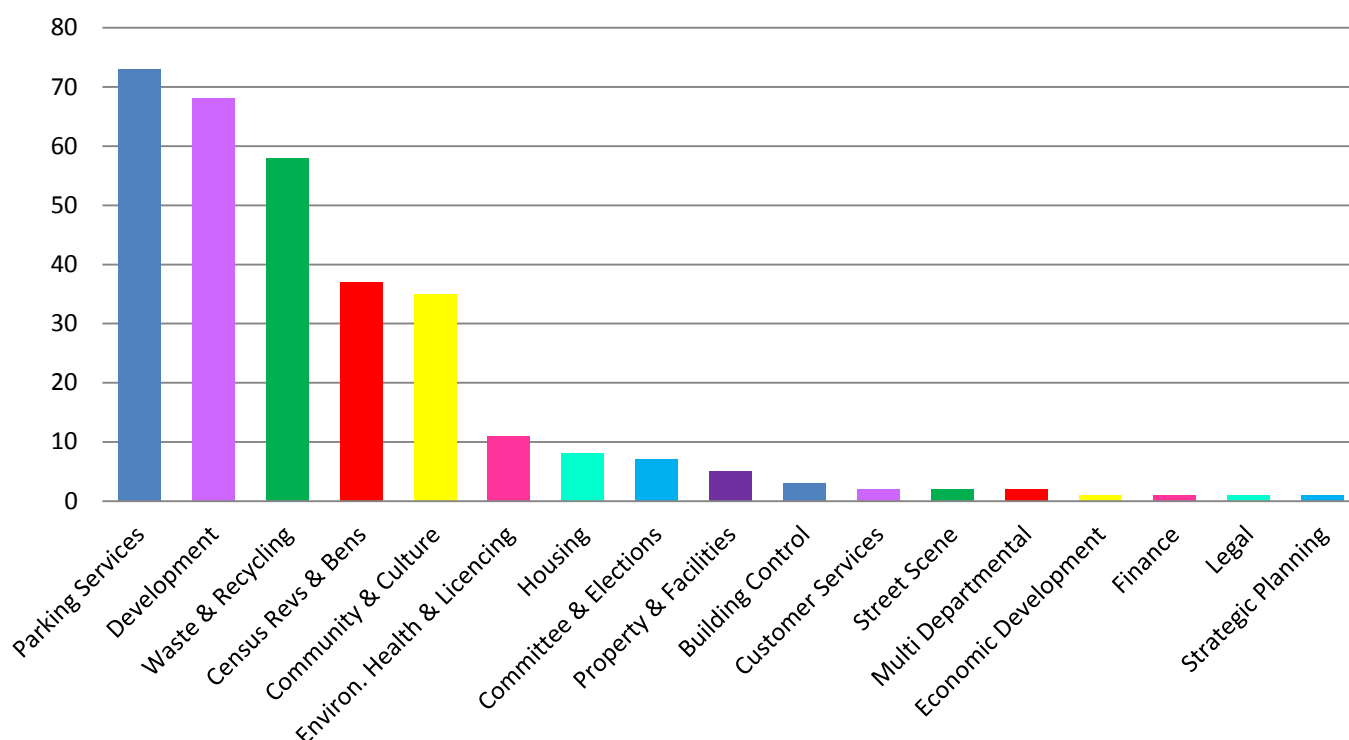
3.4 Compliments received for the period 1 January to 31 March 2015

Department	Compliments Received 1 January to 31 March 2016
Commission & Performance	1
Committee & Elections	2
Community & Culture	20
Customer services	7
Development	3
Economic Development	2
Environmental Health & Licensing	4
Parking Services	1
Property & Facilities	1
Spatial Planning	4
Street Scene	2
Multi Departmental	2
Waste & Recycling	2
TOTAL	51
Leisure Centres	104

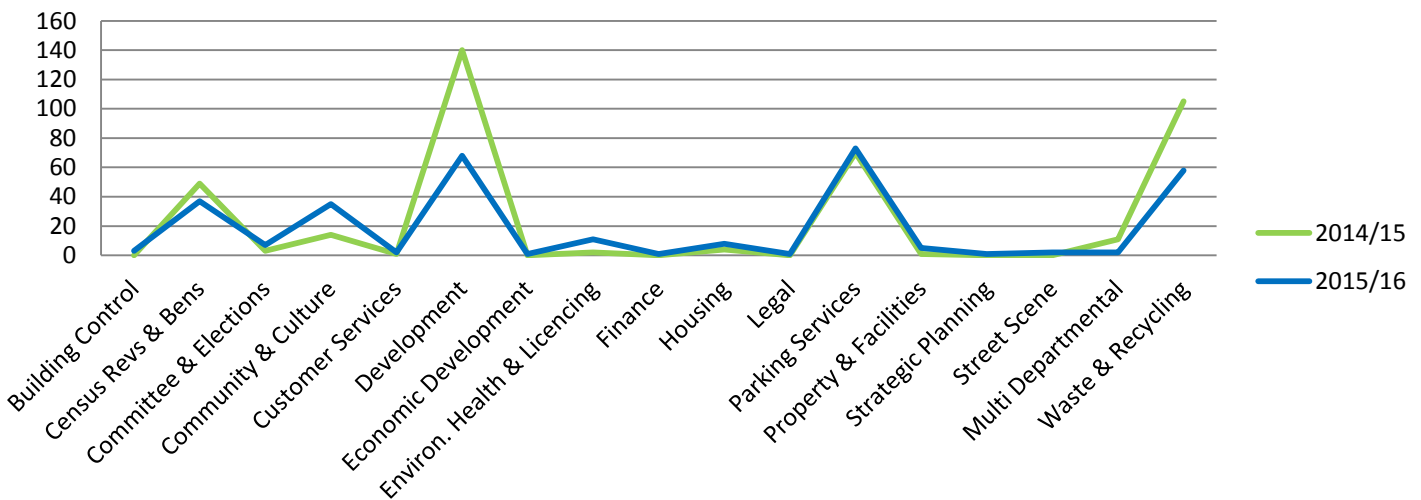
3.5 Annual Figures for 2015/16

For the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 the Complaints & Feedback Officer was notified of 315 complaints. The number received at the Council's leisure centres for the period was 382.

3.6 Complaints received by department 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.



Complaints by department 1st April to 31st March



In comparison to 2014/15 where 400 complaints were recorded, there was a reduction in of 21% in the total number of complaints in 2015/16.

Note The spike in complaints in parking services for the 2015/16 year has predominately been caused by the introduction of the Smart Parking system. It was expected that the number of complaints for this would reduce over time and this has been the case.

There were 35 complaints and 72 compliments received in Community and Culture in 2015/16. The number of complaints per service user is extremely small and whilst it is not possible to quantify the number of complaints per user of our parks and open spaces but we can say that the 21 complaints at the Capitol represents just 1 complaint for every 8,000 attendees. Of these 21 complaints only 4 appeared more than once with 2 complaints about seating, 2 complaints regarding pricing, 3 regarding the quality of the performance and 4 regarding noise leakage from live performances into the cinema. All complaints are dealt with appropriate gravitas but the ability to address the issue of noise leakage is not possible without immense expenditure or by leaving significant parts of the building underutilised.

In summary, although the 35 complaints represents a rise on 2014/15 there are no patterns that would indicate that serious action is required in a particular area.

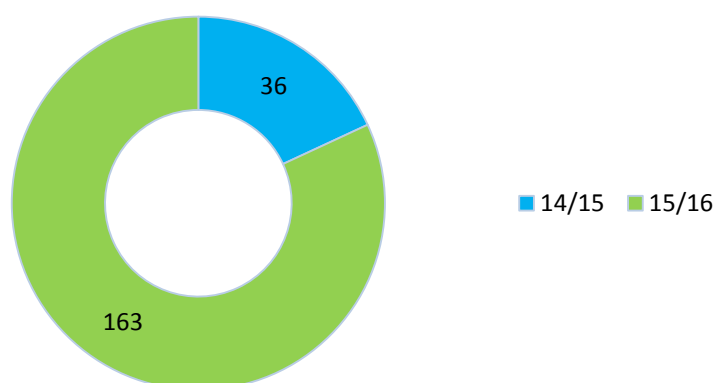
3.7 Compliments received for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

Department	Compliments Received 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016
Commissioning & Performance	1
Committee & Elections	4
Community & Culture	72
Customer Services	11

Development	18
Economic Development	3
Environmental Health & Licensing	15
Parking Services	3
Property & Facilities	1
Spatial Planning	5
Street Scene	12
Multi Departmental	3
Waste & Recycling	15
TOTAL	163
Leisure Centres	337

Note The total number of compliments *excluding* leisure centres has increased in 2015/16 by 353% compared to 2014/15.

Compliments received



3.8 Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

The Annual letter and Annual Review of Complaints report for the year 2015/16 will be published on 21st July 2016. A report of the contents of this letter will be made to Finance & Performance Working Group at the next meeting in August.

4 Outcome of Consultations

4.1 Not applicable

5 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

5.1 Not applicable

6 Staffing Consequences

6.1 There are no staffing consequences as a result of this report.

7 Financial Consequences

7.1 Whilst each complaint does have its own costs, there are no financial consequences as a result of this report.