

Report to Finance and Performance Sub Committee



9th February 2017

By the Customer Services Manager

INFORMATION REPORT

Not exempt

Complaints & Compliments Monitoring Report for Horsham District Council 1st October - 31st December 2016

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform the Finance & Performance Sub Committee of the details of the complaints and compliments notified to the Council's Complaints and Feedback Officer for the period 1st October to 31st December 2016. 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 1st October to 31st December 2016 the Complaints and Feedback Officer was notified of 52 complaints and the number of complaints received at the Council's leisure centres for the period was 66.

The trend of a decrease in complaints from the year 2015/16 has continued into the third quarter of 2016/17. I am pleased to report that the number of complaints received for this period has decreased by 8% from the same time as last year. However, the number of complaints has increased by 13% from quarter two, with 46 complaints logged in the previous quarter. The increase can, for the most part, be attributed to a more focused approach in logging complaints for certain services. Previously some front line services had seeing a disproportionate lack of complaints at odds with the service being offered.

Whilst there is always 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 continued to yield positive results. For the fifth consecutive quarter we have again recorded more compliments than 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 and Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to show the number and type of complaints and compliments received by Council departments 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.

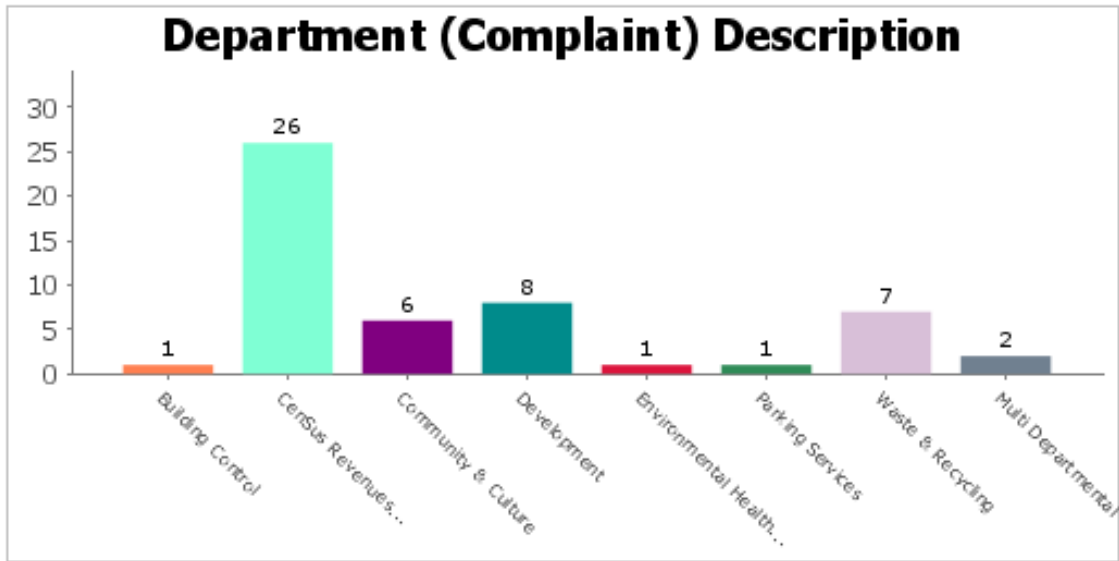
3 Details

Complaints notified to the Complaints and Feedback Officer 1st October to 31st December 2016

- 3.1 The number of complaints notified to the Complaints and Feedback Officer for the period 1st October to 31st December 2016 is 52 complaints. A further 66 were received by the leisure centres.
- 3.2 When the results of quarter three 16/17 are compared with the same period in 15/16 we have kept complaints to a very similar level, and compared to 14/15 have continued the trend of reducing complaints, which shows the management of complaints is being rigorously applied.
- 3.3 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.

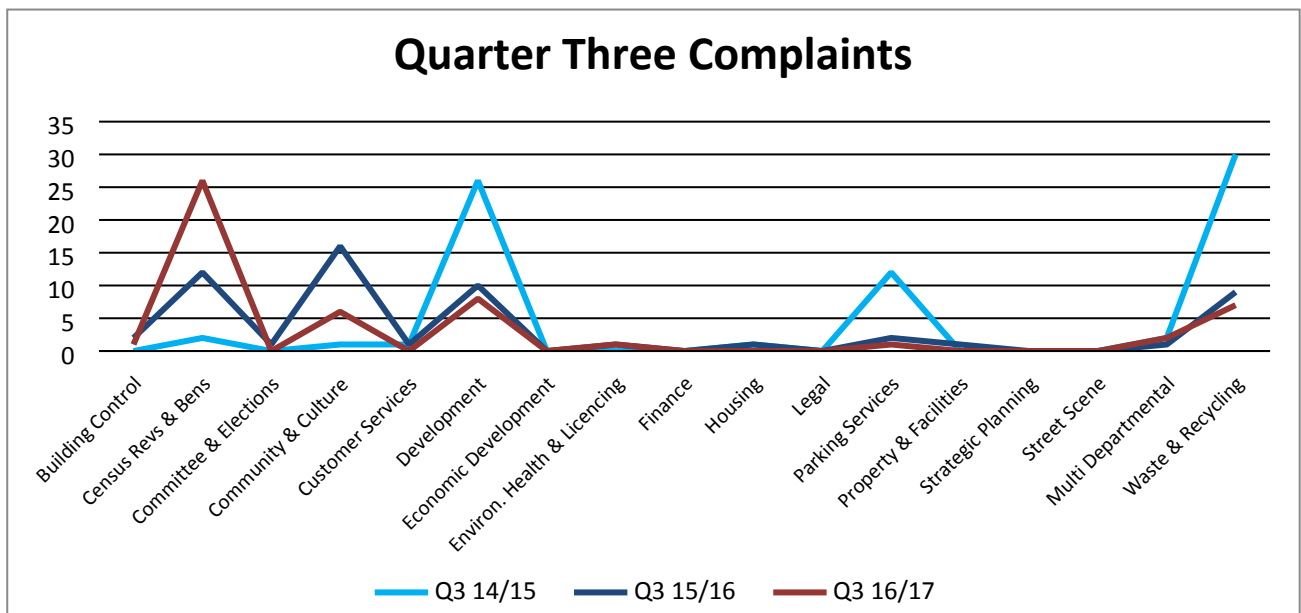
3.4 Complaints received by department 1st October to 31st December 2016.



Housing has seen a very positive continuation of low numbers of complaints for this quarter recording just the one.

Looking at Census & Revenues, the department had more complaints in November however over the past three years this has been on a par. Recovery had tended to get more complaints in October and December which are generally due to the recovery process and attachment of earnings being sought. November's complaints were mostly reviews concerning responses to emails and the Single Person Discount review.

Waste & Recycling has recorded an increase which matches that of 2015/16, however this is due to a more rigorous response to waste complaints to ensure realistic monitoring. It should be noted that a new system (Bartec) which is due to be in place by April should see a reduction in the main areas Waste & Recycling receives the most complaints in, i.e. missed collections.



3.5 To be fully aware of complaints across the Council we need to have an idea of what is taking place on a day to day basis and have real time monitoring of potential issues to ensure a proactive response. To do this, we are working closely with the communications team to actively share information and be mindful of any potential complaints coming through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. We are beginning to capture relevant statistics which can start to give us a picture of the level of interaction between the council and customers.

During this quarter the communications team had 911 interactions on Facebook and Twitter (interactions relates to comments on Facebook and Tweets to us) 420 interactions were on Facebook, and 482 on Twitter.

Comments are tagged with themes to get a picture of what is being discussed, and the top five themes of comments from this quarter were:

- 1) Parking
- 2) Bins
- 3) Hurstwood recycling site
- 4) Changes to fortnightly collections
- 5) Horsham Football Club

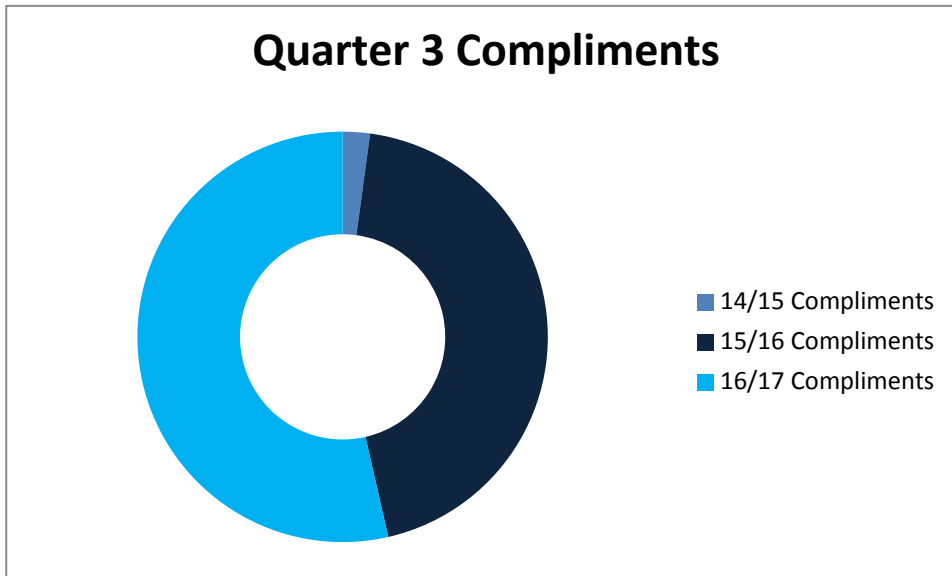
As can be seen, some of the themes are not services which are the responsibility of Horsham District Council; however this helps to give a picture of what residents are commenting on and means we can be more proactive in the messages we give out to residents, which in turn can help to reduce complaints.

3.6 Compliments received for the period 1st October to 31st December 2016.

Department	Compliments Received 1st October - 31st December 2016
Building Control	8
Community & Culture	41
Development	11
Environ. Health & Licensing	11
Housing	3
Waste & Recycling	1
Leisure Centres	66
TOTAL	141

The total number of compliments *excluding* leisure centres has seen a continued rise compared to the same quarter as last year. The number of compliments has decreased by one on the previous quarter, but we are continuing to encourage staff to log compliments. We are also looking at ways of capturing compliments which have been received through different channels, such as positive reviews on Trip Advisor, to ensure a true picture is logged.

We have received a total of 75 compliments *excluding* leisure centres in quarter three.



3.7 We will continue our work with the communications team to ensure positive feedback from across social media is also captured and shared.

4 Next Steps

4.1 The next step is to further develop communication between teams to ensure real time monitoring of complaints and feedback to ensure there is an up to date knowledge .

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

5.1 Not applicable.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

6.1 Not applicable.

7 Resource Consequences

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

8 Legal Consequences

8.1 There are no legal consequences as a result of this report.

9 Risk Assessment

9.1 Not applicable.