



Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey
Chief Operating Officer

52 Derby Street
Ormskirk
West Lancashire
L39 2DF

Friday, 24 November 2023

CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEMBERS UPDATE

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24

NOVEMBER 2023 - ISSUE NUMBER 3

The content of this **CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEMBERS UPDATE** covers all the services.

If a Member wishes to receive further information on anything in the Update, please contact the officer named at the beginning of the article.

Articles:

If a Member wants to place an item on the Committee agenda in connection with any article in the Update, please provide it to member.services@westlancs.gov.uk or telephone 01695 5833127 by **12 NOON FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2023**.

Members Item/Councillor Call for Action:

If a Member wants to place an item on the Corporate and Environmental O&S Committee Agenda, please complete the attached Member Item/Councillor Call for Action Proforma (Appendix B) and return it to member.services@westlancs.gov.uk by **12 NOON FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2023**.

The Press are asked to contact the Digital Communications Manager for further information on this Update.



MEMBER ITEM / COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION
CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING: 14 December 2023

This form must be received by Member Services, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk before 12 noon on Friday 1 December 2023.

If more information is required in relation to this item, please contact the officer indicated on the first page of the related report.

Please advise Member Services on 01695 583312 if at any time you wish to withdraw this item following receipt of further information or e-mail member-services@westlancs.gov.uk

Member Update Issue: 3

Councillor: (Name of Member requesting the item)	
Subject:	
1. What are your reasons for requesting the item:	
2. What outcome would you wish to see following discussion of the item?	

3. What have you already done to resolve this issue?

Potential means of pursuing an issue before resorting to a Member Item/CCfA:

- Raise Ward Issue as a ‘Patch Problem’
- Discuss issue with an appropriate officer from the Council Service or Agency
- Discuss issue with an appropriate Cabinet member
- Raise the issue with partner agency, eg. Police, PCT, etc.
- Write formal letters on behalf of constituents
- Use official complaints procedure or other official route
- Put forward the issue as a topic for inclusion on an O&S work programme

The following are potential reasons why your Member Item/CCfA may not be considered further:

- The issue is an individual case
- You have not explored the issue fully and exhausted all avenues above
- A review into the general issue is included in an O&S work programme
- A petition is being submitted to the Council
- A complaint is being or has been submitted and the outcome is awaited
- A FOI request is being or has been made and the outcome is awaited
- Scrutiny of the issue is unlikely to result in improvements for local people
- The issue has been the subject of Executive Call In
- The issue has been the subject of a Council Motion / Question
- The issue is urgent and could be more speedily resolved by other means
- The issue is an ‘excluded matter’ (Constitution 18.3)

FOR MEMBER SERVICES USE ONLY

Received by:		Date of Committee:	
Date:	Time:	Chief Officer informed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head of Service informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chairman informed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact Officer informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Portfolio Holder informed	<input type="checkbox"/>

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We can provide this document, upon request, on audiotape, in large print, in Braille and in other languages.

For further information, please contact:-
Democratic Services on
Or email Member.Services@westlancs.gov.uk



**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE:**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2023/24
ISSUE: 3**

Article of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Contact for further information: Miss K Breakell (Extn 3022)
(E-mail: Kirsty.Breakell@westlancs.gov.uk)

**SUBJECT: MINUTES OF LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCILS HEALTH AND ADULT
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To keep Members apprised of developments in relation to Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee in Lancashire.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

2.1 The Health and Social Care Act (2001), subsequently superseded by the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012, extended the powers of Overview and Scrutiny Committees of local authorities responsible for social services functions to include the power to review and scrutinise matters relating to the health service in their areas.

2.2 The Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee at Lancashire County Council exercises the statutory functions of a health overview and scrutiny committee. The Membership of the Committee includes twelve non-voting Co-opted District Council Members.

2.3 To ensure that Members receive regular updates on the work being undertaken by the Service and to provide an opportunity to feed back any comments via the Council's representative, a copy of the County Council's Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee minutes are attached.

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this Article and in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications associated with this item, except the Officer time in compiling this Article.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 This Article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to the risk registers as a result of this article.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The article does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Minutes of the Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee can be accessed via the link below:-

[Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/scrutiny/minutes/health-and-adult-services-scrutiny-committee)

13 Sep 2023

25 Oct 2023



**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE:**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2023/2024
ISSUE: 3**

Article of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Dowling (Portfolio Holder for Communities & Community Safety/Deputy Leader)

**Contact for further information: Miss Kirsty Breakell (Extn 3312)
(E-mail: Kirsty.Breakell@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: MINUTES OF THE LANCASHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To keep Members apprised of developments in relation to the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

2.1 The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) can exercise specific powers under the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), and all other enabling powers, discharging its functions in accordance with the Policing Order 2011. The Panel has the power to scrutinise Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) activities, including the ability to review the Police and Crime Plan and annual report, request PCC papers and call PCCs and Chief Constable to public hearings. The PCP can also veto decisions on the local precept and the appointment of a new Chief Constable.

2.2 The panel is a Joint Committee made up of representatives from the 15 local authorities in the Lancashire Police Force area, together with two independent co-opted members.

2.3 To ensure that Members receive regular updates on the work being undertaken by the Panel and to provide an opportunity to feed back any comments via the Council's representative, a copy of the PCP's minutes are attached.

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this Article and in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications associated with this item, except the Officer time in compiling this Article.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 This Article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to the risk registers as a result of this article.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Minutes of the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel can be accessed via the link below:

[Minutes of the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel](#)

3 Oct 2023

Document is Restricted



ARTICLE NO:

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MEMBERS UPDATE

Issue: 3

Article of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy

**Contact for further information: Helen Morrison (Extn. 5091)
(E-mail: helen.morrison@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER FEEDBACK (2022-2023)

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

- 1.1 To present data in relation to the volumes of Complaints received by the Council under the former complaints process from April 2022 to the end of September 2022.
- 1.2 To present data in relation to Comments, Compliments and Complaints received by the Council, under the Customer Feedback Policy from October 2022 to March 2023.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following an extensive review of the former three stage complaints procedure, a new Customer Feedback Policy and process was launched in October 2022 (see appendix 1). The policy sets out the Council's approach to dealing with comments, compliments and complaints, whilst adhering to the principles of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- 2.2 Both the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman recommend two stages for complaints policies. This best practice was adopted within the new policy, reducing the complaints process from three stages (one informal and two formal) to two formal stages, with each stage being investigated independently. This streamlined the process and makes it easier for customers to make a complaint.

- 2.3 Prior to the introduction of the new policy, complaints were managed within individual service areas. As stage one was an informal stage, only stage two and three were recorded. Complaints were monitored and recorded independently by service area, which limited the ability to understand organisational themes to drive service improvement.
- 2.4 As part of the introduction of the new feedback policy, a new process was developed to enable all feedback to be recorded in one central digital platform and triaged by a centralised team within the Customer Experience Service. The centralised team assess and assign feedback to the relevant service areas for investigation. This approach ensures that all feedback is captured, recorded and monitored effectively against each service area.
- 2.5 The Ombudsmen encourage the use of complaints to identify issues and introduce positive changes to service delivery. The new approach actively encourages feedback, which supports the creation of a positive complaints culture. This enables the Council to effectively resolve issues for customers, use feedback to develop and improve services and demonstrate that it listens and learns from feedback.
- 2.6 If a complainant wishes to pursue an issue further after the Council has fully investigated their complaint and issued their final response, they can raise this with either the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman, depending on the nature of the complaint. Council tenants are also able to seek independent advice from the Housing Ombudsman before they submit a complaint and whilst the Council conducts their investigation.
- 2.7 The Council defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.
- 2.8 A comment is a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion. The Council recognises that customers may want to express views on the standard of service provided, without making a complaint. Comments are investigated to ensure that appropriate action is taken to resolve.
- 2.9 A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service provided.

3.0 ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK

- 3.1 As the new policy launched in October 2022, the performance data contained within this article, will be reported on in two parts. For the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022, the data will focus solely on complaints recorded under the former three stage process. For the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, the data will cover Comments, Compliments and Complaints as they form part of the Customer Feedback policy.

1 APRIL 2022 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

- 3.2 The tables below detail the volumes and response times in relation to formal complaints (recorded at the formal stage two and three) under the former three-stage process, from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. The timescales set for investigating and responding to both stages two and three complaints was ten working days.

Complaints – 01.04.22 – 30.09.22	
Stage 2	
Number of complaints recorded	11
Number of complaints responded to within 10 working days	3 (27%)
Number not responded to within 10 working days	8 (73%)

Stage 3	
Number of complaints escalated from stage 2 to stage 3 % Escalated from stage 2 to stage 3	9 (82%)
Number responded to within 10 working days	7 (78%)
Number not responded to within 10 working days	2 (22%)

- 3.3 The table below details the number of complaints **recorded/escalated** for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 by service area.

Complaints per service – 01.04.22 – 30.09.22	Stage 2	Escalated to stage 3
Corporate & Customer Services	0	0
Environmental Services	0	0
Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services	0	0
Housing Services	3	3 (100%)
Legal and Democratic Services	0	0
Planning and Regulatory Services	8	6 (75%)
Wellbeing & Place	0	0
Total	11	9 (82%)

- 3.4 The table below details the performance in relation to response times at stages two and three for the service areas that received complaints.

01.04.22 – 30.09.22 Service	Stage 2			Stage 3		
	No. due	In time	Out of time	No. due	In time	Out of time
		No. (%)	No. (%)		No. (%)	No. (%)
Housing Services	3	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3	2 (67%)	1 (33%)
Planning & Regulatory	8	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	6	5 (83%)	1 (17%)
Total responses	11	3 (27%)	8 (73%)	9	7 (78%)	2 (22%)

1 OCTOBER 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023

- 3.5 The table below details the total number of feedback cases submitted under the new Feedback Policy during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 by category.

Category	1.10.22 - 31.3.23
Comments	42
Compliments	53
Complaints - stage 1 (escalated to stage 2)	235 (23)
Complaint received at stage 2	1*
Service Requests	18
Total	349

- 3.6 Comments and stage 1 complaints should be responded to within ten working days and stage 2 complaints should be responded to within 20 working days. We recognise that given the nature of some complaints, they may take longer to investigate and respond to. To ensure that complaints can be investigated in full, officers are permitted to request to extend response times if the reason meets one of the three areas defined within the policy. The request is considered by the Head of Service. Response timescales for complaints with extensions should not normally exceed a further ten working days.
- 3.7 When extension requests are approved, customers are provided with a holding letter, which notifies them of the reason for the extension in line with the Policy and the revised response date.
- 3.8 The tables below provide an overall annual summary of performance in relation to the handling of comments and complaints.

Comments received between 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023	
Number received	42
Number responded to within timescales	40
Percentage responded to within timescales	95.2%
Percentage not responded to within timescales	4.8%

Complaints received between 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023	
Stage 1	
Number of complaints received	235
Number of complaints to be responded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 10 working days within 20 working days (extension granted) 	229 6
Number responded to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 10 working days within 20 working days (extension granted) 	189 5
Percentage responded to within timescales: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 10 working days within 20 working days (extension granted) 	82.5% 83.3%
Number not responded to within 10 working days	40 (17.5%)
Number not responded to within 20 working days	1 (16.7%)

Stage 2	
Number of complaints received at stage 2*	1*
Number of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2	23
% Escalated from stage 1 to stage 2	(9.8%)
Number of complaints requiring response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 20 working days within 30 working days (extension granted) 	24 0
Number responded to within 20 working days	18 (75%)
Number not responded to within 20 working days	6 (25%)

**This was a new complaint, triaged at Stage 2 rather than Stage 1, given previous interactions/complaints with this customer. Under normal circumstances all stage 2 complaints are escalated from stage 1.*

4.0 SERVICE AREA PERFORMANCE

4.1 The table below details the number of **comments** submitted during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 by service area.

Service Area - comments	1.10.2022 to 31.3.2023
Corporate & Customer Services	5
Environmental Services	18
Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services	0
Housing Services	9
Legal and Democratic Services	0
Planning and Regulatory Services	4
Wellbeing & Place	6
Total	42

- 4.2 The table below details the performance for each service area in relation to response times for **comments**, during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Comments - 1.10.2022 to 31.3.2023				
Service Area	Number responded to within timescales	Number responded to outside of timescales	% Responded to within timescales	% Responded to outside of timescales
Corporate & Customer Services	5	0	100%	n/a
Environmental Services	18	0	100%	n/a
Housing Services	9	0	100%	n/a
Planning and Regulatory Services	3	1	75%	25%
Wellbeing & Place	5	1	83%	17%
Total	40	2	95%	5%

- 4.3 The table below details the number of compliments submitted during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, by service area.

Service Area - compliments	1.10.2022 to 31.3.2023
Corporate & Customer Services	14
Environmental Services	23
Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services	0
Housing Services	10
Legal and Democratic Services	0
Planning and Regulatory Services	6
Wellbeing & Place	0
Total	53

- 4.4 The table below details the number of stage 1 complaints submitted during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 and those that were subsequently escalated.

Service Area - complaints	1.10.2022 to 31.3.2023	
	stage 1	stage 2
Corporate & Customer Services	34	2
Environmental Services	33	4
Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services	1	0
Housing Services	131	12
Legal and Democratic Services	1	0
Planning and Regulatory Services	25	5
Wellbeing & Place	10	1
Total	235	24

- 4.5 The table below details the performance in relation to response times for stage 1 complaints submitted during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, including those that were subsequently escalated to stage 2.

Complaints - 1.10.2022 to 31.3.2023						
Service	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	No. due	In time	Out of time	No. due	In time	Out of time
		No. (%)	No. (%)		No. (%)	No. (%)
Corporate & Customer Services	34	34 (100%)	0	2	2 (100%)	0
Environmental Services	33	31 (94%)	2 (6%)	4	4 (100%)	0
Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services	1	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Housing Services	131	101 (77%)	30 (23%)	12	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
Legal and Democratic Services	1	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Planning & Regulatory	25	18 (72%)	7 (28%)	5	5 (100%)	0
Wellbeing & Place	10	10 (100%)	0	1	1 (100%)	0
Total responses	235	196 (83%)	39 (17%)	24	18 (75%)	6 (25%)

- 4.6 Whilst performance in relation to response times has improved significantly since October 2022, there is a recognition that this needs to improve further. There is a clear commitment by officers to improve further in this area, with systems in place to monitor performance and ensure improvements are made.

5.0 COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

- 5.1 The tables below detail the number of complaints upheld, partially upheld or not upheld as a result of the Council's investigations, for each period.

Stage 2 complaints – 1 April 2022 – 30 September 2022			
Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Housing Services	1	0	2
Planning & Regulatory	0	0	8
TOTAL	1	0	10

Stage 3 complaints – 1 April 2022 – 30 September 2022			
Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Housing Services	0	3	0
Planning & Regulatory	0	0	6
TOTAL	0	3	6

Stage 1 complaints – 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023			
Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Corporate & Customer Services (34)	2	10	22
Environmental Services (33)	16	6	11
Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services (1)	0	0	1
Housing Services (131)	79	30	22
Legal and Democratic Services (1)	0	0	1
Planning & Regulatory (25)	6	5	14
Wellbeing & Place (10)	2	2	6
Total (235)	105 (45%)	53 (22%)	77 (33%)

Complaints subsequently escalated to stage 2			
Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Corporate & Customer Services (2)	0	1	1
Environmental Services (4)	2	2	0
Housing Services (12)	5	2	5
Planning & Regulatory (5)	0	2	3
Wellbeing & Place (1)	0	0	1
Total (24)	7 (29%)	7 (29%)	10 (42%)

6.0 HIGH LEVEL THEMES

6.1 High level themes have been introduced for complaints received from 1 October 2022, to enable service areas to categorise the complaints received, undertake further analysis of the root cause of the issues and develop action plans to resolve issues.

6.2 The table below provides the definitions of the high-level themes.

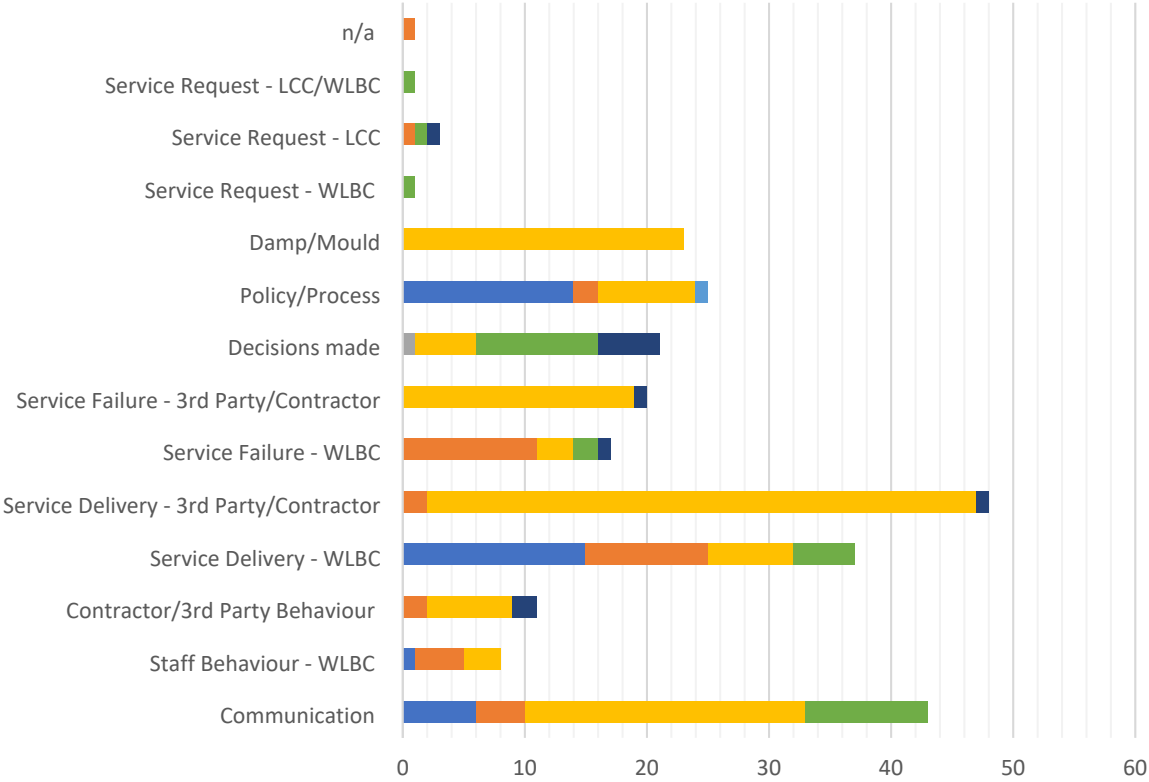
Theme	Definition
Staff Behaviour	The actions or behaviours of an officer of the Council or a third party/contactor acting on behalf of the Council.
Communication	Failing to keep customers informed or where communication is not clear.

Decisions	Customer is unhappy with a decision made by an officer of the Council. This does not include decisions made where there is a formal right to an appeal, as these are not investigated under the Customer Feedback policy (see appendix 1 for further details).
Service Delivery	The standard or quality of service provided by the Council or a third party/contractor acting on behalf of the Council.
Service Failure (WLBC or third party/contractor)	Failing to provide a service. Either the Council or a third party/contractor acting on behalf of the Council.
Policy or Process	Dissatisfaction with a policy/process.
Damp/Mould	Complaints from Council tenants regarding damp and mould issues in their home.

- 6.3 The graph below demonstrates the total number of complaints received since 1 October 2022, categorised by theme and service area. Where "n/a" and "Service Requests" are identified, analysis has shown that these were originally triaged as complaints, but upon investigation they were identified as not falling within the Council's remit or being service requests for either the Council or Lancashire County Council (LCC). All of these complaints were responded to and the service requests were actioned accordingly.

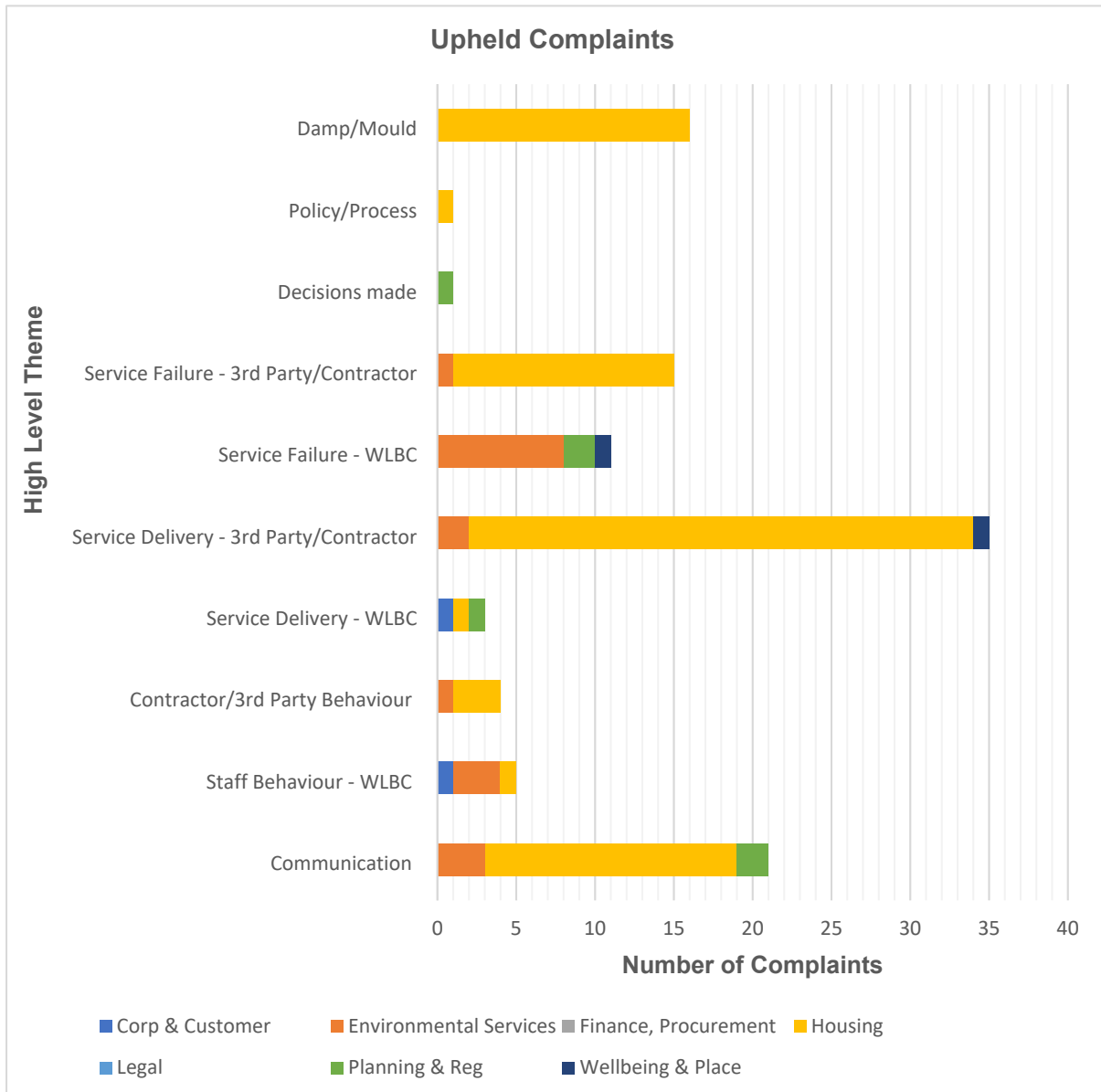
All Complaints

High Level Theme

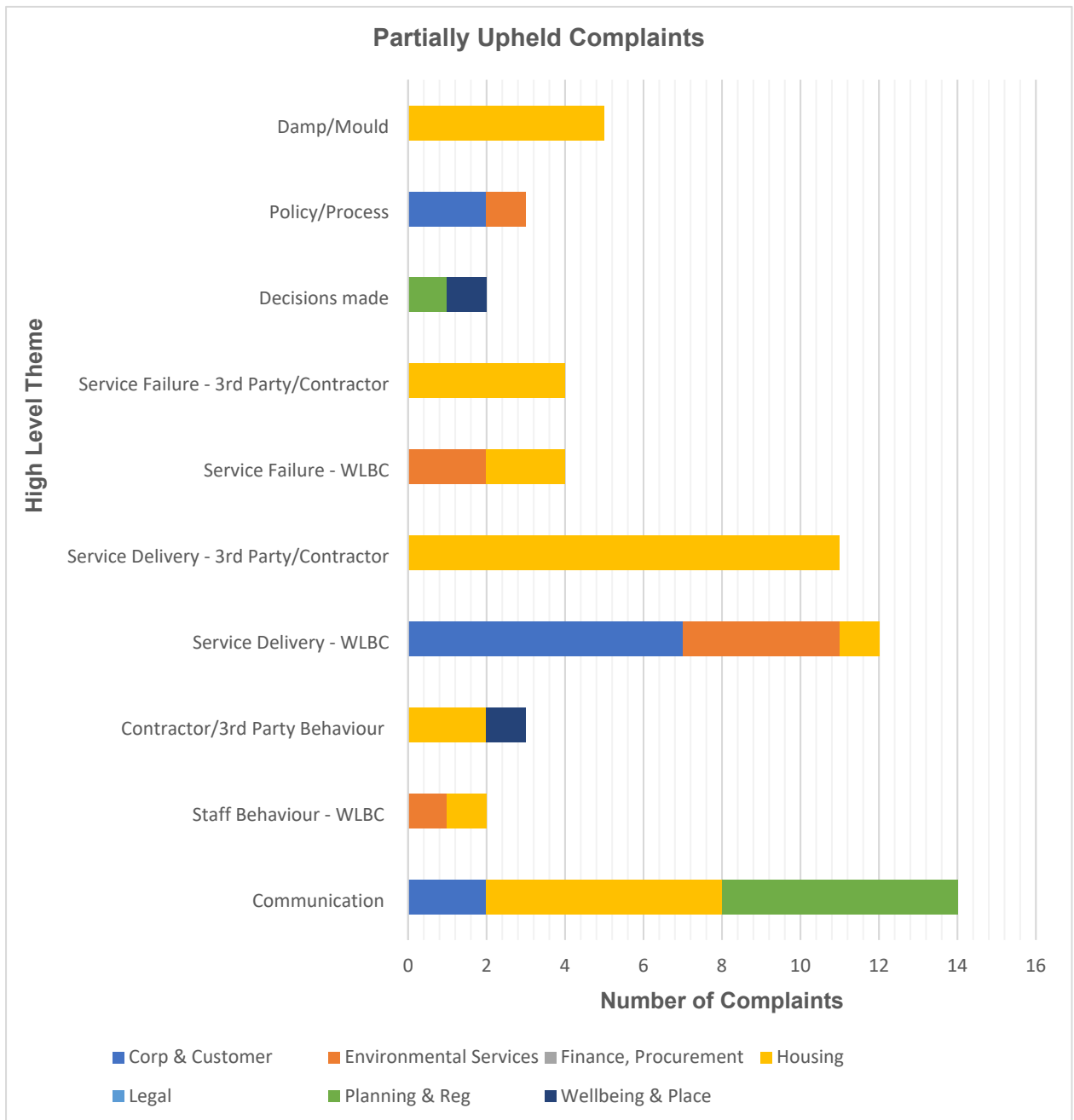


- Corp & Customer ■ Environmental Services ■ Finance, Procurement ■ Housing
- Legal ■ Planning & Reg ■ Wellbeing & Place

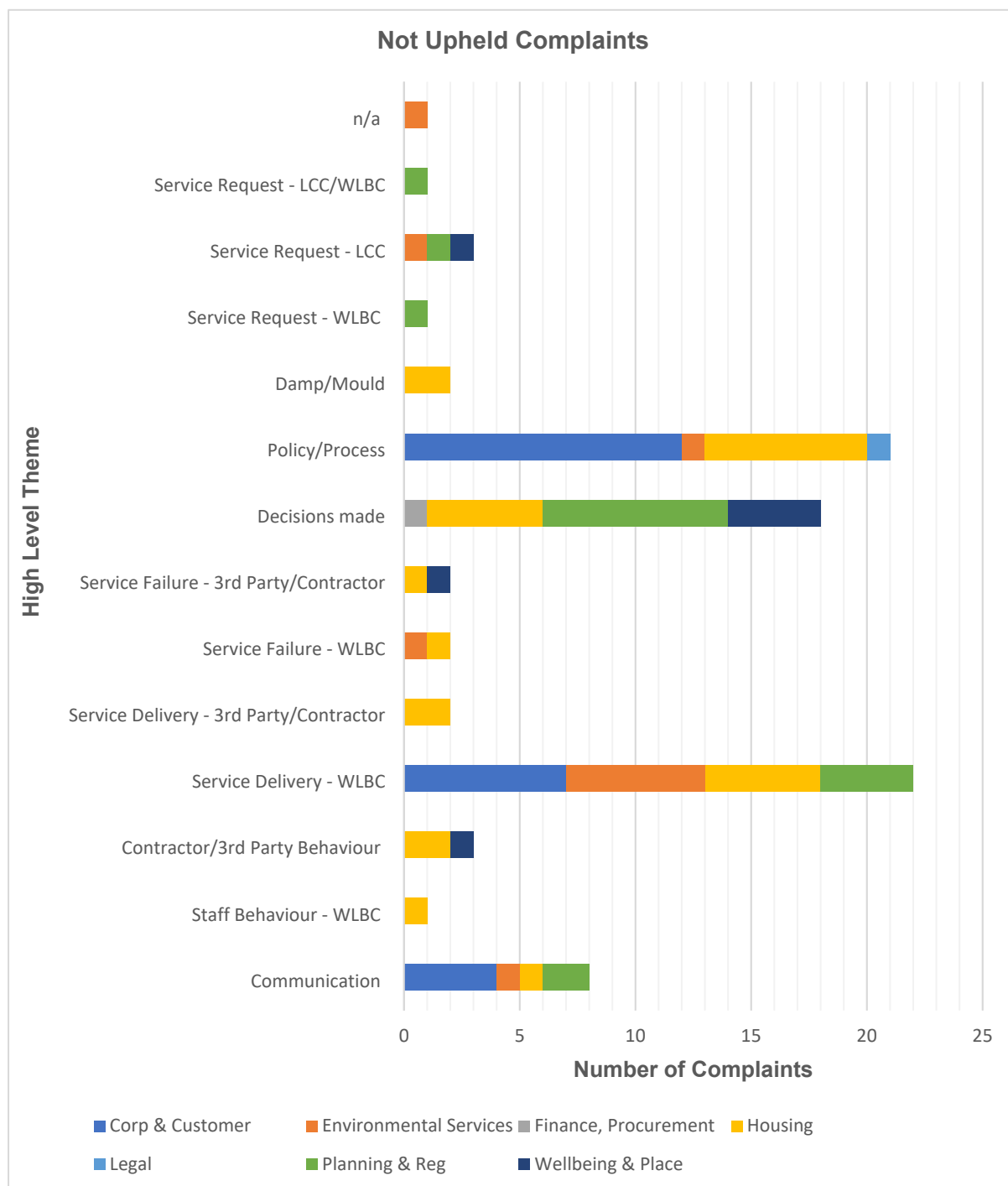
6.4 The graph below demonstrates the number of complaints that were determined as upheld, by theme and service area.



6.5 The graph below demonstrates the number of complaints that were determined as partially upheld, by theme and service area.



6.6 The graph below demonstrates the number of complaints that were determined as not upheld, by theme and service area.



7.0 OMBUDSMAN REFERRALS

7.1 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman provides an annual report to each Council on the number of complaints referred to them, along with the outcome of their investigations and the decisions made. This information was previously presented to Members via a Members Update in August 2023 (appendix 2).

7.2 There have been no complaints investigated by the Housing Ombudsman.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Complaints provide valuable customer feedback and the principal purpose of investigating, monitoring and responding to complaints is always to improve service delivery. On the occasions where the Council acknowledged that the service was not up to the required standard, the focus is on putting the matter right and preventing any re-occurrence. By taking complaints seriously, the Council is ensuring that all genuine grievances are recognised and action taken to address the issue.
- 8.2 Complaints are written expressions of dissatisfaction and not always substantiated. This is demonstrated at section 6 which details the number of complaints that were not upheld.
- 8.3 Following the introduction of the new Customer Feedback policy and process, there has been an increase in the number of feedback cases recorded. This should be viewed as a positive change as feedback enables the Council to understand customer views, improve services and prevent any re-occurrence.
- 8.4 9.8% of stage 1 complaints within the new process (01/10/22 – 31/03/23) were escalated to Stage 2, in comparison to 82% being escalated to the next stage under the previous process. This is a positive change and demonstrates that in most cases, officers are understanding, acknowledging and listening to customers concerns and responding appropriately at stage 1.
- 8.5 Analysis of complaint handling times during the two periods shows a significant improvement during 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. This is as a result of the introduction of the Customer Feedback Policy, the revised process and the centralised team as detailed at section 2.4. Whilst performance in this area has increased, there is a continued drive to further improve in this area.
- 8.6 Whilst complaints have increased, it should also be recognised that the level of compliments from customers expressing satisfaction with services has increased. Through effective analysis of feedback, it has been identified that two customers who made a complaint, subsequently submitted compliments, in relation to how their complaint was handled and investigated, which is a positive change.
- 8.7 The level of complaints in relation to each service area during the year must also be put into perspective, in comparison to the number of services delivered:
- For Housing Services, 109 complaints relating to the repairs service were received. This equates to 0.4% of the 29,315 repairs completed.
 - For Planning and Regulatory, 23 complaints relating to the planning service were received. This equates to 1.8% of the 1254 planning applications received.
 - For Environmental Services, 15 complaints relating to refuse and recycling collections were received. This equates to 0.0005% of the 3,279,187 refuse and recycling collections, that the Council undertakes on an annual basis.
- 8.8 Feedback is not fully resolved until the actions identified as part of the investigation are completed. Appendix 3 provides a summary of the high-level themes and

actions taken/planned as a result. These actions and progress are consistently monitored by individual service areas.

9.0 PROMOTION OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK DATA

9.1 The Housing Ombudsman requires landlords to publish complaint handling data in relation to Housing Services and any actions/lessons learnt as a result. For openness and transparency, data for all services, along with comments and compliments, will be published on the Council's website.

10.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and in particular no significant impact on crime and disorder.

11.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this article.

12.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

12.1 This Article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment, risk registers remain unchanged.

13.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this article.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/ or stakeholders. There is no Equality Impact Assessment required.

Appendices

1. Customer Feedback Policy
2. Members Update – Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman statistics 2022/23
3. High level themes and actions

Customer Feedback Policy

October 2022



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Introduction

West Lancashire Borough Council is committed to consistently providing an excellent service to all our customers. We value all feedback about our services and see this as an opportunity to learn, adapt and improve, so that our customers can have confidence in us to deliver a quality standard of service.

We recognise that occasionally things can go wrong. In these circumstances, we want to make it as quick and simple as possible for our customers to raise their concerns, so that we can resolve the issue in a timely way.

We also like to hear from our customers when they have had a positive experience or if we have exceeded their expectations. We will use this information to promote good practice throughout the organisation and give credit to our staff.

Purpose of the Customer Feedback policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to dealing with customer comments, compliments, and complaints, whilst adhering to the principles of both the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

We are committed to putting our customers at the heart of everything we do and make it easy for our customers to provide feedback.

Through the Customer Feedback policy, we will:

- Handle all feedback within the agreed timescales, effectively and fairly.
- Offer a range of channels for customers to make a comment, compliment, or complaint.
- Treat all customer feedback equally, regardless of channel.
- Keep customers informed throughout the process; our written correspondence will use plain language and avoid the use of jargon.
- Treat all our customers fairly and recognise all customers have a right to have a voice, be understood and respected.
- Record and analyse all feedback and use this information to identify opportunities for improvements.

The definition of a Comment, Compliment and Complaint

What is a Comment? – A comment is a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion.

We recognise that you may want to express your views on the standard of service we have provided, without making a complaint. Comments on how we could improve services to better meet the needs of customers are always welcome.

We will ensure that we monitor any repetition of comments about the services we provide and take appropriate action to resolve these.

What is a Compliment? - A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service provided.

Everyone likes to receive compliments and Council officers are no exception. More importantly, compliments can help us to identify what our customer's value and highlights when we have done a good job.

What is a Complaint? – A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

What we cannot deal with under this policy

- **Requests for a service**

Common requests for service include, reporting a repair to a Council property, reporting a missed bin, fly tipping removal or litter picking. You can access and request a wide range of services through your [Self-Service account](#). If after requesting a service, you are dissatisfied with the action taken or standard of service, you can raise a complaint, we may also choose to escalate this to a complaint on your behalf. We will always discuss this with you first.

- **Appeals**

Matters for which there is a right of appeal or a more appropriate or prescribed legal remedy e.g., Licences, Permits, Approvals, Consents, Permissions, Registrations, or any related [planning and enforcement](#) action. This includes decisions in relation to the outcome of claims made against the Council.

When a decision is made and there is a right of appeal, you will be informed of the appeals process in the decision letter.

Please note, if your complaint relates to an active investigation (e.g., noise nuisance, planning enforcement) that we are undertaking and the outcome of this investigation has not yet been determined by our Officers, we reserve the right to close your complaint until the matter is concluded. If your complaint relates to a decision that has been lawfully made by the Council (e.g., Planning Permission) and you have a clear right of appeal in law against that decision, we reserve the right to close your complaint as the appeals process will take account of your relevant concerns. In either case, we will write to you to notify you of this.

- **Services provided by Lancashire County Council:**

Lancashire County Council deliver various services in the Borough and complaints regarding their services must be directed to them. An example of some of the services that they provide include:

- Highway maintenance including potholes, gritting, roadworks, street lighting and temporary traffic lights
- Education
- Adult and Children's Social Care
- Libraries

For more information visit [Lancashire County Council](#)

- **Complaints about Freedom of Information requests (FOI)**

For further guidance, please visit our [website](#)

- **Requests for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice**

For example: decisions regarding the assessment of a Housing Application as an appeals process is in place as part of the Housing Allocations Policy.

- **Petitions**

For further guidance, please visit our [website](#)

- **Complaints regarding issues that occurred over 12 months ago**

In line with the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, we will only consider complaints that are received within 12 months of the issue occurring. After this time, we will not consider your complaint.

- **Matters that have previously been considered**

What you can expect from us if you give us a comment

If you have a comment that you want to share with us, we will:

- Acknowledge your comment
- Review your comment for improvement opportunities
- Provide you with the outcome of the review

What you can expect from us if you give us a compliment

If you have a compliment that you want to share with us, we will:

- Acknowledge your compliment
- Share your compliment with the relevant services area/officer
- Identify opportunities to share best practices across the Council

What you can expect from us if you complain

If you have concerns that cannot be resolved at the first point of contact, we will:

- Acknowledge your complaint

- Keep you informed at all stages of the investigation, especially if the investigation is likely to take longer than the agreed timescales.
- Treat your complaint in confidence
- Always treat you with courtesy and fairness
- Provide you with the outcome of the complaint and reasons for any decisions made

What we expect from you if you complain

We hope that you will be fair and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour/language towards our staff.

How to make a comment, give a compliment or make a complaint

The quickest and simplest way to make a comment, give a compliment or make a complaint is to submit a form, via our [website](#), however if you prefer, you can also contact our Customer Services team or write to us:



westlancs.gov.uk



Customer Services – 01695 577177 or visit a Customer Service Point



Customer Feedback, Business Support, West Lancashire Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF.

Reasonable adjustments

We are committed to ensuring that people are not disadvantaged in accessing our services. We will make reasonable adjustments for those people that need further assistance when making a complaint, depending on the individual's needs, this could include:

- Providing information in an appropriate alternative format (e.g., large print, Braille)
- Extending of time limits (where it is lawful to do so)
- Using an agreed relevant communication channel
- Using plain English in our correspondence or provide an Easy Read service
- Communicate with you through your representative or intermediary

Asking for reasonable adjustments

You can ask us to make a reasonable adjustment when you first contact us or at any time during our consideration of your comment, compliment, or complaint.

Our response to requests for reasonable adjustments

We are committed to treating all customers fairly and we take equality and diversity into account in a positive way. We will make sure that individual needs are considered when applying this policy and that any reasonable adjustments are made as required.

Stages of the complaint's procedure

Our complaints procedure has two-stages

Stage One

This is the first opportunity for a Service Manager to investigate and respond to the complaint.

When submitting your complaint, please provide as much information as possible about your concerns and the outcome that you would like to achieve.

As part of our investigation, we will:

- Log and acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days.
- Provide you with the name of the person investigating the complaint.
- We will discuss with you the nature of the complaint and the desired outcome to assist with the investigation.
- Aim to respond to your complaint in full, within 10 working days from the date we receive your complaint. However, if this is not possible, we will let you know why and confirm when you will receive a response. This should not exceed a further 10 working days.
- If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to respond to the complaint fully, we will discuss and agree this with you.
- For more information, please see section "Extending response times".
- Provide you with a final response, detailing the outcome of the investigation, reasons for any decisions made and any actions taken to resolve the complaint
- Close your complaint at this point and provide details of how to request a review if you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved

Stage Two

If you remain dissatisfied following our investigation and response at Stage one, you can request that a review of your complaint and the decision made is undertaken.

For us to consider your request for a review, you will need to contact us to set out why you believe your complaint remains unresolved and the outcome that you wish to achieve.

You will need to request a review by:



Submitting your request via our [website](#)



Customer Services – 01695 577177 or visit a Customer Service Point



Writing to Customer Feedback, Business Support, West Lancashire Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF.

We will need to receive your request within 28 days from the date of our response to your Stage one complaint.

As part of your request, you will need to be clear on the points that you disagree with and why our response has not resolved your complaint. Please be aware that the review will only focus on the initial complaint, we will not consider new issues.

As part of our review:

- We will acknowledge your request within five working days.
- The Head of Service reviewing your complaint may need to ask you for further information to assist with their investigation.
- We will strive to respond to your complaint in full within 20 working days. However, if this is not possible, we will let you know why and confirm when you will receive a response. This should not exceed a further 10 working days without a good reason.
- If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to respond to the complaint fully, we will discuss and agree this with you.
- We will provide you with a final written response (which will usually be via email), detailing the outcome of the investigation, reasons for any decisions made and any actions taken to resolve the complaint.
- Close your complaint at this point.
- We will also provide details of how to escalate the matter to the relevant Ombudsman if you remain dissatisfied.

Extending response times

On the rare occasions that we need to use our discretion to extend our response times to enable us to respond to you fully, we will always tell you why. We will need to have a good reason to extend our response times by up to 10 working days and this could include:

- Waiting for information from a third party, e.g., a contractor acting on our behalf, to enable us to fully investigate and respond to you
- Needing more time to undertake interviews, e.g., staff interviews
- Needing longer to gather all the information we need from multiple sources to enable us to properly investigate, particularly if it is a long standing, complex case

If a further extension beyond 10 working days is needed, we will discuss and agree this with you.

Remedies

When the Council is at fault, we will put things right by acknowledging our mistakes and apologising for them, explaining why things went wrong and what we will do to prevent the same mistake happening again.

We will ensure that there is a mechanism in place to monitor incidents of the same type and take appropriate action to remedy this.

Where possible, we aim to put you back in the position you would have been had the fault not occurred. In such cases, the remedy could include:

- Taking specific action – such as reviewing a process or policy.
- Consider any financial impact upon you because of the upheld service failure.

We follow the guidelines issued by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman in deciding the appropriate remedy.

Escalation to the Ombudsman

Following our decision at Stage two, if you remain dissatisfied, you can ask the relevant Ombudsman to review how we have handled your complaint. Our final response will contain the contact details for the appropriate Ombudsman's office.

Note: if you are a Council Tenant and your complaint is in relation to Housing Management services, you can access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout your complaint for impartial advice and support.

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman investigates individual complaints about Councils, all adult and social care providers and some other organisations providing public services. They investigate in a fair and independent way.

The Ombudsman will expect you to have gone through all stages of our complaints policy before contacting them, to give us an opportunity to deal with your complaint and put matters right.

If we do not respond to you within a reasonable time (usually up to 12 weeks), they may decide to investigate the complaint anyway.

Contact Information

PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service investigates complaints about housing organisations, the service is free, independent, and impartial.

You can access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout your complaint for impartial advice and support.

At the end of our complaints process, if you remain dissatisfied with our final response to your complaint, you can contact the Ombudsman directly for an assessment. Please note they will only investigate the complaint once we have completed our complaints process.

Contact information:

PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Who can complain?

Anyone who has been affected by decisions made by the Council, or the way services have been provided to them can make a complaint.

A representative can make a complaint on behalf of a person where they have been asked to represent them, or if the person is not able to make the complaint themselves.

If a complaint is made on behalf of another person, we require consent to be provided, to evidence that the person being represented is aware that the complaint is being made on their behalf and happy for information to be shared with the representative. Once consent is received, we will investigate the complaint and liaise directly with the representative.

Types of complaint

Complaints received via a local Councillor

When we receive a complaint via a local Councillor, we will handle the complaint in line with this feedback policy and we will respond directly to the Councillor.

Complaints against members of staff

If you have an issue about a member of staff (this includes people who volunteer on our behalf), we will investigate in line with this feedback policy and where necessary take appropriate action.

Complaints about the conduct of Councillors

If you want to complain about the conduct of a Councillor please visit our [website](#) where you can download and complete a Councillor complaint form.

Once completed please send it to the Monitoring Officer:
Legal and Democratic Services Manager,
West Lancashire Borough Council,
52 Derby Street,
Ormskirk,
West Lancashire,
L39 2DF

You can also put your complaint in writing and send it to us using the address above.

Complaints received by the Chief Operating Officer

If a complaint is directed to the Chief Operating Officer, it will be handled in line with this feedback policy. We would encourage all customers to submit complaints in the ways detailed in the "How to make a comment, give a compliment or make a complaint" section, to enable the complaint to be handled in a timely way.

Complaints relating to more than one Council service

Where a complaint covers more than one service within the Council, one officer will lead the investigation. We will aim to provide you with a single response wherever possible.

Anonymous complaints

Where the complainant provides sufficient information to identify the issue of concern, we will record and investigate the complaint as far as possible, however we will be unable to issue a formal response, without any contact details.

Dealing with unreasonably persistent complaints and unreasonable complainant behaviour or demands

West Lancashire Borough Council are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly.

We treat all complaints seriously and our officers will respond professionally and work positively with you to find a mutually acceptable resolution. However, there are occasions when a customer's actions and behaviour, or nature and frequency of their contacts with us adversely affects our ability to do our job and we consider such behaviour unreasonable.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman defines unreasonable behaviour as 'Complainants who, because of the nature or frequency of their contact with an organisation, hinder the organisation's consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

Examples of unreasonable behaviour include:

- Refusing to co-operate with the complaint's policy
- Refusing to specify the grounds of the complaint
- Refusing to accept certain issues are not in scope of the complaints policy
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in a way which is incompatible with our complaints policy
- Making groundless complaints about staff dealing with the complaint and seeking to have them replaced
- Submitting falsified documentation/evidence
- Aggressive, abusive, offensive, or threatening language in any format, this is not just limited to actual physical or verbal abuse, but can include derogatory remarks, rudeness, inflammatory allegations, and threats of violence
- Pursuing a complaint or similar complaint at the same time with the authority and other members e.g., Councillor/Ombudsman
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations and insisting that this is a 'new' complaint
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Attempting to pursue parallel complaints on the same issue with various departments
- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of officers with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous officers or detailed letters every few days and expecting immediate responses
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information and requesting these to be considered and commented on or raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are fully answered
- Sending large volumes of correspondence or an excessive number of contacts
- Refusing to accept the answer that has been provided, continuing to raise the same subject matter without providing any new evidence, continuously adding to, or changing the subject matter of the complaint
- Covertly recording meetings and conversations without prior consent of the other party
- Social media 'trolling'. Posting inflammatory, offensive, abusive, or confidential comments or information online

How we will inform you

If we believe your behaviour in pursuit of your complaint is unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, we will write to you and inform you why we find your behaviour to be unreasonable and the problems it is causing. We will also set out what we propose for future communication with you.

We may take the following actions:

- Requesting contact in a specific form (e.g., by letter only).
- Requesting contact be made with a named member of staff only.
- Setting the number and frequency of contact that will be accepted (e.g., once a week).
- Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of a witness and in a suitable location.
- Refusing to deal with future correspondence on the same matter if a decision has already been reached.

If you do not agree with our arrangements for contact, we will listen to your objections, but we may still impose the conditions. However, we will set a review period for the arrangements, and this will be no longer than six months. We will let you know in writing, the date the arrangements will be reviewed when we set out our arrangements for contact.

Once we have set out our new arrangements for contact, if you do not comply with them and we feel that your behaviour continues to be unreasonable, we may decide not to respond to your contacts. If we decide this, we will let you know.

If you still disagree with our arrangements, you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman & Social Care Ombudsman to consider whether our decision is reasonable.

Document Control

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ARTICLE NO:

**CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE - 2023/24
ISSUE: 2**

Article of: Head of Legal & Democratic Services

**Contact for further information: Mr Tom Lynan – Electoral Services Manager
(E-mail: tom.lynan@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMEN – STATISTICS 2022/23

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To inform Members of the Council's performance in respect of the Local Government Ombudsmen statistics 2022/23.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is overseen by two ombudsmen following changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011.

2.2 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) deals with complaints by Council housing tenants about matters such as estate management, repairs to Council house properties, rent and service charges, possession proceedings and mutual exchanges.

2.3 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) deals with all other complaints against the Council across all the services it provides, including complaints by Council housing tenants about matters such as housing improvement grants, homelessness and statutory noise nuisance. The Council's response to enquiries and complaints received from the LGSCO are co-ordinated by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, and the Electoral Services Manager.

2.4 In July 2023 the LGSCO published its annual review letter which provides a summary of statistics on enquiries and complaints made in respect of the Council for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The annual review letter can be found at Appendix 1.

2.5 At the time of publication there have been no complaints investigated by the HO.

3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE-2021/22

3.1 During 2022/23 the LGSCO made decisions on 18 enquiries and complaints about the Council. This is 2 more than the previous year.

APPENDIX 2

3.2 Of those 18 matters, 7 were referred to the Council for local resolution (because the Council had not had an opportunity to properly consider the enquiry or complaint). 7 were closed after initial enquires, and 3 were outside of the remit of the LGSCO. 1 formal investigation was completed during this period, which was upheld.

Service Area	Number Referred	Upheld	Not Investigated	Premature Complaint	Out of Jurisdiction
Planning & Regulatory	10	1	4	3	2
Environmental Services	3	0	2	1	0
Housing Services	3	0	1	1	1
Technical Services	1	0	0	1	0
Council Tax & Benefits	1	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	18	1	7	7	3

3.3 The upheld case related to planning enforcement and unauthorised development. The Council were asked to apologise and pay £300 to the complainant, update them on enforcement in the area, and complete a service review (which the Council was in the processes of doing). Please contact the Electoral Services Manager for further information.

3.4 Using information available from the LGSCO website, the table below allows a comparison of the Council's performance with the 11 other non-unitary district councils within Lancashire. Across Lancashire there were 22 detailed investigations (average 1.8 per authority) of which 15 (average 1.3 per authority) were upheld, a reduction of 9 and 4 respectively from 21/22.

Council	Investigations	Complaints Upheld	% of Investigations Upheld
Burnley	5	4	80%
Chorley	1	1	100%
Flyde	2	2	100%
Hyndburn	2	0	0%
Lancaster	2	1	50%
Pendle	1	1	100%
Preston	4	2	50%
Ribble Valley	1	1	0%
Rossendale	1	0	0%
South Ribble	0	0	0%
West Lancashire	1	1	100%
Wyre	2	2	100%
Total	22	15	68%
Lancashire Average	1.8	1.3	68%

3.5 Across Lancashire, and nationally, there has been an increase in the percentage of investigations which result in the complaint being upheld, whilst at the same time the total number of investigations has fallen. In their Annual Letter (Appendix 1) the LGSCO have noted that, following a process review, they are now more selective about the cases they investigate, prioritising the public interest and taking on fewer 'borderline' cases. As a result, a higher proportion of investigations are finding fault than previous years – 68% of investigated complaints upheld compared to 61% in 21/22.

3.6 Whilst West Lancashire had an Uphold rate of 100%, this was against only 1 case that was formally investigated. Compared to the other District Authorities in Lancashire, West Lancashire had a lower number of investigations and upheld complaints than the average.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and no significant impact on crime and disorder.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Investigating and co-ordinating responses to enquiries and complaints made to the Ombudsmen takes officer time for the Electoral Services Manager and for the service area or multiple areas to which the complaint or enquiry is directed. Given the importance to the Council in satisfactorily resolving enquires and complaints made by service users this work stream will continue to receive a high priority.

6.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 This article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this article.

7.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter – West Lancashire Borough Council – 2022/23

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK THEMES AND ACTIONS 01/10/2022 to 31/03/2023

Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Outcome	Current status	Due date/completion date
Communication	Improve communication between tenants and the Council's day-to-day repairs contractor regarding cancelled/rearranged repairs appointments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process to be introduced to ensure our contractors make direct contact with tenants when repair appointments need to be cancelled/rearranged. 	Tenants are kept informed of any appointment changes avoiding customer inconvenience	Ongoing.	End of October 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process to be introduced to ensure rearranged appointments are scheduled within 5 working days. 			
	Review and improve the content of "No Access" letters which are issued to tenants by our day-to-day repairs contractor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with the Council's day-to-day repairs contractor to review and improve the content of the letters 	Clearer communication to tenants.	Completed.	October 2023
	Improve communication with residents in relation to the management of a leased Council site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold quarterly meetings with residents and Lancashire Police 	Improved communication with the leaseholder and residents to provide an understanding of any issues.	Initial meetings held – quarterly meetings to continue.	Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign designated Community Connector Manager to enable any concerns to be raised and resolved. 	Effective relationship management with the leaseholder.	Complete	Summer 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the frequency of communication with the leaseholder of the site. 	Improved relationships and understanding with leaseholder to hold accountable for security of site.	Ongoing	Continuous		

APPENDIX 3

	Assess how we communicate our intended activity in relation to tree maintenance to residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has been restructured enabling capacity to ensure that we engage with our customers ahead of the intended work programme for tree maintenance to set their expectations. 	Preventing avoidable contact as a result of the proactive approach in communicating with customers ensuring visibility of schedules	Restructure complete.	December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a tree programme and policy 	Visible programme of works	policy in draft	April 2024
	Improve communication with applicants and agents when making planning applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Councils webpages in relation to Planning enquiries and letter templates. Regular monitoring of responses issued and timescales. 	Clearer communication with applicants/agents.	Complete	March 2023
Page 44	<p>Ensure customer communication in relation to Environmental Health issues clearly explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actions that the Council can undertake. The formal processes that the Council must follow as part of any investigation. Timeframes for resolution. The customer's role and responsibilities as part of an investigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policy, standard letters Officers to undertake training in relation to managing expectations with customers. Review signposting information to ensure officers can signpost to other relevant agencies. 	Customers have a better understanding of the process, timescales and the services the Council provides.	Complete	September 2023

Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Outcome	Current status	Due date/completion date
Service Delivery/Service Failure – 3 rd Party/Contractors	Increased monitoring of the Council's day-to-day repairs contractor performance and progress of works. Improve communication between the Council and the day-to-day repairs contractor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce weekly reporting to monitor outstanding repairs. Review partnership meetings Workshop to be held between all involved services within the Council and the Councils day-to-day repairs contractor, to identify improvements to service delivery. 	Robust monitoring of contractor performance and service delivery	Complete	June 2023
	Increase the number of day-to-day repairs that can be completed at the first appointment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure full details of the repair and trade are effectively communicated to the Council's day-to-day repairs contractor at the time of raising a repair order. The Council's day-to-day repair contractor to ensure their operatives are equipped to resolve repairs when attending appointments. 	To improve the customer experience by completing repairs at the first appointment.	Ongoing	November 2023
	Tenants to be fully informed when repairs cannot be fully completed at the first appointment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's day-to-day repairs contractor must fully explain to tenants the reasons why jobs cannot be completed on the first visit and manage tenant expectations by confirming when they will return to complete the work. 	<p>Tenants are proactively kept informed on the progress of their repair.</p> <p>Remove the need for tenants to make contact to chase their repair</p>	Ongoing	November 2023
	Improve the quality of work completed by contractors acting on behalf of the Council for day-to-day repairs to council houses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current process for monitoring reports of poor-quality workmanship. Identify improvements. Work with the Councils day-to-day repairs contractor to introduce the 	<p>Increased quality of repairs/workmanship carried out.</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction</p>	Ongoing	December 2023

Page 46		new process for effective monitoring.	Reduction in repeat visits		
	Improve the reporting mechanism for defects highlighted following the completion of major works on Council owned sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the reporting mechanism for defects highlighted following the completion of major works on Council owned sites. 	<p>New reporting process in place.</p> <p>Clarity of contractual responsibilities for contractors.</p>	Complete	January 2023
	Review the Council's existing contract for gritting to ensure that all Council car parks are gritted correctly and the contractor fulfils the requirements of the contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion with the contractor to ensure that Council car parks are gritted when both red and amber warnings are issued by the Met Office. Monitor the gritting of Council car parks throughout the winter period to ensure issues can be resolved timely with the contractor. Implementation of key performance indicators within the new contract. 	<p>All Council car parks to be gritted where red and amber weather warnings have been issued.</p> <p>Effective contract management</p>	New contract being procured for winter 2023 that will include both amber and red warnings for gritting within Council car parks.	October 2023

Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Outcome	Current status	Due date/completion date
Third Party/Contractor Behaviour	Increase supervision and communication with contractors and sub-contractors when undertaking works/projects within the Borough to ensure residents/visitors are fully informed of works taking place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective site supervision/communication as part of any agreements when work/projects are undertaken. 	<p>Improved working relations.</p> <p>Customers informed of projects/works ongoing in the Borough.</p>	Ongoing in line with any new projects.	Continuous.
Page 47	Training required for Civil Enforcement Parking Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to Civil Enforcement Officers in relation to machine functionality. 	Civil Enforcement Officers are able to effectively communicate to service users.	Complete	January 2023

Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Outcome	Current status	Due date/completion date
Council Officer Behaviour -	Continuous development of Customer Service officers through ongoing training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Customer Services staff to undertake customer service training via the new e-learning platform, with annual refresher training in place. • Increase call monitoring to identify further training needs/monitor success of the training delivered. 	<p>Improved customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Customer Services staff able to effectively deliver a high standard of service and customer care.</p> <p>Continuous development, enhanced knowledge and skills.</p>	Initial round of training complete. Annual refresher training	September 2023 Annually
	Provide customer service training for all refuse and recycling operatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Customer Service and Equality and Diversity Training 	<p>Staff working in line with the Councils behaviour framework.</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction</p>	In progress	Initial phase to be complete by February 2024. This will be an ongoing process

Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Outcome	Current status	Due date/completion date
Service Delivery- West Lancashire Borough Council	Refuse and Recycling collection crews to be aware of all collections on their rounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular briefing sessions to be undertaken with all waste crews to set out the importance of understanding their collection rounds and the impact of missed bins on our customers. • Implement performance management to monitor crew performance. 	Reduction in the number of missed bin collections being reported which resulted in 99.85% of bins being collected in the financial year 2022/23	Ongoing process	Ongoing
	Effective promotion of any scheduled changes to refuse & recycling collection dates and times to ensure customers understand when to present their bins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication campaign in advance of the festive period to notify customers of any changes. • Revise the design of stickers to be placed on all bins to notify customers of the revised collection dates over the festive period. • Continue to review the effectiveness of yearly campaigns to identify any further improvements for the following year. 	Reduction in avoidable contact Customers kept informed of any changes to collections.	Complete for 2022/23	December 2022 – this work will continue every year
	Review the quality/standard of the garden waste bins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the products available from the existing provider. • Identify whether an alternative provider can be sourced that offers a higher standard of quality. • Refresher bin handling training for crews • Provide advice and guidance to residents on how to care and store bins to avoid overfilling. 	Consideration of alternative provider Officers and residents aware of how to handle/store bins effectively.	Ongoing	May 2024

<p>Improve the process for delivering clinical waste containers to residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an audit of the Clinical Waste Service • Review of all procedures and processes. 	<p>Improved service delivery for clinical waste customers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
<p>Street cleaning schedules to improve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to be undertaken to increase the number of Clean and Green Operatives to achieve HGV licence to improve resilience within the service. • Review of cleansing schedules to meet the needs of the community within resources available. • Introduce effective monitoring of the Land Audit Management inspections for cleansing activities. 	<p>Increased resilience within the service and cleansing in busy locations/high footfall areas.</p> <p>Action plans in place for areas requiring improvements.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Initial training phase is complete.</p> <p>Ongoing cycle with random inspections taking place every 3 months.</p>
<p>Improve the handling time for Right to Buy applications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Right to Buy process to identify improvements to service delivery. • Implement improvement recommendations. • Implement Service Delivery meetings with all key service stakeholders. 	<p>Reduction in current handling timescales</p> <p>Improve the customer experience.</p> <p>Improve communications between the key service areas involved to ensure applications are handled timely.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Ongoing – regular meetings now in place.</p>	<p>February 2023</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2022</p>

Page 51	<p>Improve incoming mail handling time within the Revenues and Benefits Service to ensure timely decisions are made and communicated to customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current capacity, volumes of mail and outputs within the service. Review Council Tax recovery timetable and processes for first and second reminders. 	<p>Full understanding of resource requirements needed to ensure service delivery meets the Councils service standards.</p> <p>Effectively manage customer expectations in line with the Councils Service Standards.</p> <p>Reduce avoidable contact from customers.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete – new process in place.</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
	<p>Improve tenant involvement/engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current tenant involvement/engagement activities. 	<p>An improved tenant involvement structure/framework to ensure the tenants voice is captured and included when reviewing, shaping and developing services to tenants.</p> <p>An improved scrutiny framework for tenants.</p> <p>Meeting the requirements of the Housing Regulator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Quarter 4 2023/2024</p>
	<p>Review the process for officers when publishing planning objections via the Councils website ensure a consistent approach..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training and support to officers involved in the process. Ensure training is provided to new officers as part of their induction. 	<p>Consistent visibility of objections in relation to Planning Applications via the Councils website.</p>	<p>Initial training provided.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	Implement a revised Planning Enforcement Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate alleged Planning Breaches in accordance with the new Planning Enforcement policy	Improved and consistent approach for handling enforcement issues. Improved customer satisfaction	Complete	March 2023
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High Level Theme	Improvements Identified	Actions	Outcome	Current status	Due date/completion date
Damp/Mould	Provide information to tenants in relation to damp and mould causes, remedies and how to report issues to the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information leaflet to be developed and issued to all new tenants and existing tenants when reporting damp and mould issues. • Specific webpage to be created on the Council's website to provide information and signposting services in relation to damp and mould. 	<p>To increase awareness of the potential causes of damp and mould.</p> <p>To support tenants who experience damp and mould to report damp and mould issues.</p>	Complete	September 2023
	Improve response rates to reports of damp/mould in Council properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing processes. • Identify improvement opportunities. • Communicate new process to all officers involved in handling damp/mould enquiries. 	Effective handling of damp/mould reports in line with the Council's Damp Policy.	Complete	March 2023

