



Report Reference Number: E/19/46

To: Executive Briefing
Date: 2 January 2020
Status: Non Key Decision
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Title: Corporate Complaints & Compliments Annual Report 2018 – 2019

Summary:

Selby District Council is committed to customer service. We believe that the needs of our customers are our top priority and we are committed to putting our customers first by improving the quality of our services and our customers' experience of them. As part of our drive for better services, we value the part corporate complaints play in helping us to make improvements to our services. The Council adopted a new Complaints Policy in 2017. In this we have made a commitment to publish our performance on dealing with complaints every quarter as part of the Corporate Performance Report and to publish an annual complaints report.

This annual report includes how we have done in responding to complaints and how we have used complaints to inform service improvement.

Recommendations:

That the Executive note and provide comments on the Corporate Complaints Annual Report

Reasons for recommendation

In our Complaints Policy we have made a commitment to publish an annual complaints report. This report includes how we have done in responding to complaints and how we have used complaints to inform service improvement.

1.0 Introduction and background -

1.1 Complaints arrive into the Council in varying ways; telephone, email, and letter. The central point for receipt, recording and administration is Customer services (Customer Contact Centre and Leadership Support), who triage to assess the type of complaint received. The assessment is to establish if the

complaint is a service area complaint, which can be initially dealt with by the Customer Service team, or if there is a requirement for the Leadership team to log as a corporate complaint and trigger the designated timelines.

- 1.2 Compliments are usually received direct from a service area, a line manager or a colleague, when positive feedback has been received from a customer. The Customer Service team can log details of the named member of staff or team and the service area, with brief details of the customer's comments.
- 1.3 Customer Services (Customer Contact Centre and Leadership Support) monitor complaints for responses to both Stage 1 and Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints and they issue reminders to colleagues for completion dates, As Customer Services are such a reactive service area, the ability to monitor complaints to ensure key dates are kept to can be challenging. This now sits with Leadership support to issue relevant administration to ensure complaint deadlines are adhered to.
- 1.4 At the moment there is no automated system at the moment for complaint reminders similar to the RAG (red, amber, green) system that's used for Freedom of information requests.
- 1.5 Information is gathered monthly and quarterly for Stage 1, Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints, including details of the numbers received and if they have been responded to in the required timeframe. This information is then recorded in KPI reports and published on the web.

2.0 Complaints Performance Report:

Stage 1 Corporate Complaint's

- 2.1 The tables below illustrate a comparison of Stage 1 complaints for the last two financial years, and the data that forms part of the current KPI and the yearly return of the council's performance:-

2018-2019:-

Service Area	Total	On time	Late	Not Justified	Partially Justified	Justified	No data provided
Operational	49	47	2	35	10	4	4
Planning	24	20	4	8	2	4	10
Legal	5	5	0	5	0	0	0
Contracts	5	4	1	4	1	0	0
Business Dev	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Comm. & Partnership	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	85	78	7	54	13	8	14

2017-2018:-

Service Area	Total	On time	Late	Not Justified	Partially Justified	Justified	No data provided
Operational	55	51	4	22	10	5	18
Planning	20	6	14	4	3	1	12
Legal	4	4	0	2	0	0	2
Contracts	7	7	0	2	1	2	2
Business Dev	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comm. & Partnership	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	87	69	18	30	14	8	35

2.2 These figures illustrate a slight decrease in Stage 1 Complaints against the previous year. Whilst late responses have decreased, non-receipt of monitoring sheets, which provide information about complaint justification, continues to be an issue. Whilst it is encouraging from a performance perspective that the overall figure has decreased, the number of complaints where no outcome data has been received from service areas represents 25% of all complaints received by the Council and does not give a true reflection of how the Council deals with its complaints at Stage 1.

Stage 2 Corporate Complaints

2.3 The figures below again illustrate a slight decrease overall. Late responses have decreased, as have partial and full justifications. Only one monitoring sheet wasn't returned for Stage 2 complaints across both years.

2018-2019:-

Service Area	Total	On time	Late	Not Justified	Partially Justified	Justified	No data provided
Ops	10	8	2	8	1	1	0
Planning	9	9	0	5	2	1	1
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contracts	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Business Dev	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comm. & Partnership	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	21	19	2	15	3	2	1

2017-2018:-

Service Area	Total	On time	Late	Not Justified	Partially Justified	Justified	No data provided
Ops	12	8	4	6	5	0	1
Planning	9	8	1	5	2	2	0
Legal	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Contracts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Dev	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comm. & Partnership	2	1	1	2	0	0	0
Total	25	19	6	15	7	2	1

- 2.4 Whilst the corporate complaints for stage 1 and stage 2 have decreased slightly, the focus for quarterly and yearly reports is number based, rather than theme based. There is limited information about lessons learnt or actions taken to rectify an issue to prevent repeat complaints.
- 2.5 Reviewing the monitoring sheets that have been returned where there has been partial or full justification, some of the sheets have been noted with actions that are to be taken to clarify procedure or change a working process. However this data is not collected anywhere or reviewed to ensure practices and procedures have been amended to minimize future complaints.
- 2.6 The common theme for partial or full justifications is communication. Customers have highlighted lack of contact when highlighting an issue to us, which has then escalated to a corporate complaint.
- 2.7 We have then on occasion mirrored this when dealing with complaints, with either not dealing with each point raised or not fully communicated what ownership we have taken or proposed action to rectify issues.

LGA Ombudsman Complaints

- 2.8 The figures below illustrate an increase in the amount of complaints escalated to the LGA Ombudsman, and an increase of one for the number upheld over the two year period.
- 2.9 Planning and Operational Services have been escalated in the main to the LGO, the figures illustrate few complaints are upheld, with the few that are, we have had to compensate for lack of contact or not fully addressing the complaint in the first instance.

2018-2019:-

Received	Investigated	Not investigated	Complaint upheld	Complaint not upheld
14	2	12	2	12

2017-2018:-

Received	Investigated	Not investigated	Complaint upheld	Complaint not upheld
8	2	6	1	7

Compliments

2.10 The figures below illustrate the number of compliments received over the two year period and the service areas concerned.

2018- 2019:-

Received	Contact Centre	Assets	Lifeline	Housing	CT& Bens	Data & Systems	Contracts	Planning
117	37	29	2	17	6	8	16	2

2017-2018:-

Received	Contact Centre	Assets	Lifeline	Housing	EH	Contracts	Legal	Planning
65	23	17	1	14	1	7	1	1

2.11 It is encouraging from a performance perspective that the number of compliments has almost doubled. However, data regarding compliments received isn't currently recorded as a KPI for the council.

Other Complaints

2.12 Separate from the complaints procedure, MP enquires come direct to Leadership Support to instigate a response. This can cause confusion as the customer could have raised an enquiry with customer services which may be already being processed, or a corporate complaint, which again may be being processed. Alongside the customer may raise this with their MP, with administrating these type of enquires separately this can lead to a fractured response.

Vexatious Complaints

- 2.13 As a Council we have only progressed a couple of customers to the vexatious procedure in the past, limiting the customer to contact with one nominated person and outlining what communication we will accept. In the last financial year we have received repeat complaints from two customers that could have been considered for referral to vexatious sooner to avoid vast amounts of repeat communication with the customers raising the same issues.
- 2.14 The process can sometimes become disjointed with several parties receiving repeat complaints about the same issue but through different routes into the council, corporate complaints, MP enquiries and direct emails to the officer dealing or to numerous different people in a single email.
- 2.15 Moving forward with stronger complaint administration, Leadership support can review all communication received and highlight any issues to the Customer Service Manager, to discuss with the relevant area if referral to the vexatious procedure would be appropriate.

3.0 Implications

- 3.1 The current KPI will be revised and a new KPI indicator be agreed, providing quarterly information for compliments received. This will provide a greater opportunity for a more balanced overview of the council's performance in this area. This would add value to complaint procedures and assist with officer buy into the process as a whole.
- 3.2 A new RAG (red amber green) email to be formulated, from the complaint spreadsheet, to assist with complaint administration, similar to one presently used for Freedom of information administration. This will move ownership from the Leadership support team who presently issue reminders and chase for key dates to be adhered to, to assist Officers managing their own dairies to ensure complaints are handled in a timely manner.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 Improve on procedures and processes to support the monitoring officer with the yearly return. Support Legal with robust complaint information for the vexatious procedure.

Financial Implications

- 3.4 With stronger complaint administration and key data on lessons learnt, this may assist with claims against the Council for compensation for delays with complaint handling.

4. Conclusion

The administration of complaints and MP enquiries was fractured and this has led to confusion. A more holistic approach has been adopted which has minimise confusion for customers and colleagues.

Corporate complaints are a tool to provide vital feedback for the Council to improve our performance. The current performance on Stage 1 monitoring sheets requires improvement to strive for 100 percent returns similar to Stage 2's.

Whilst corporate complaints have decreased slightly for both stages, further work can be done to improve the customer journey. With emphasis on a KPI for lessons learnt and how we could improve our policies and procedures this would strengthen the council's relationship and with our customer base, illustrating the value we place on complaints received.

5. Background Documents

Corporate Compliant and Compliment Report 2018-2019

6. Appendices – Monitoring form

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