

# **CABINET**

## **4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2016**

### **Annual report on complaints, comments and compliments**

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Mrs Squires

**Responsible Officer:** Liz Reeves, Head of Customer Services

**Reason for Report:** Annual report on complaints, comments and compliments received as part of our 1.5 million contacts with customers in 2015/16

#### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1. To note the record of complaints, comments and compliments**
- 2. To note the recommendations on continued improvement on recording and responding to complaints.**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** To ensure that people have access to the services they need, particularly those on low incomes and those who are sick or disabled. People also need easy access to information about services at the right time and in the right place whether that is by telephone, digital or face-to-face.

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** Accurate recording and monitoring of complaints is good practice and ensures that we are open and accountable to all of our customers.

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** The Council receives contact from customers in a variety of ways for all services. In 2015-16 we had 99,739 visitors to our offices for enquiries or to make payments, received 487,248 phone calls (in the call centre and direct to officers, this does not include calls received on mobile phones) and received over 843,725 emails. Digital contacts are increasing we received 29,053 on line forms, plus 800 planning applications via the portal and \*\* on line HB applications. Add to this contact by post and Facebook and Twitter, we received 1.5 million contacts from our customers during the year.
- 1.2** This report provides a summary of the number of complaints, compliments and comments received for each service from 1/4/2015 to 31/3/2016 that were recorded on the corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. An official complaint is recorded when a customer has been unable to resolve their issues with the service concerned or where the issue is more serious than a normal service request that can be resolved by officers as part of their day to day activities.
- 1.3** The Customer First team record many service requests and services also record customer contacts on their own ICT systems. These include routine

enquiries, requests for service and service failures that can be resolved quickly to the customer's satisfaction. Members are provided with performance statistics quarterly via Spar.net. A summary of calls logged on the CRM by Customers First for customers via the call centre is included at appendix 2.

- 1.4 All complaints, comments and compliments are recorded on the CRM in accordance with our corporate complaints policy. The name, address and contact details of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and the outcome of the complaint investigation are recorded. Statistics on the complaints, comments and compliments recorded in 2015-16 can be found at appendix 1. There was an increase in the number of complaints last year for waste due to changes to recycling collections and the introduction of the new chargeable garden waste service in October.

## **2.0 Performance statistics**

- 2.1 Complaints are recorded on the CRM and, based on the information recorded, we are able to abstract the number of complaints raised as a level 1 complaint. These are investigated by the service manager. We are also able to abstract the number raised as level 2 complaints which are investigated by a member of Management Team.
- 2.2 The percentage of complaints that, as a result of investigation are up-held, is also recorded.
- 2.3 As a measure of how promptly we deal with the complaint we also record the percentage acknowledged within 3 working days and the percentage resolved within our agreed timescales. These two performance statistics are reported on Spar.net quarterly.
- 2.4 There has been an issue with reporting the number of acknowledged complaints for 2015/16. The CRM was upgraded in May 2015, not all services use the CRM regularly and as a result the new workflow has not been used correctly in some cases, this has affected the accuracy of the statistics during the year. Housing keep additional benchmarking data and can evidence that 100% of the complaints logged by them have been acknowledged within 3 days. This has increased the average from that reported on spar to 61%. A full manual check has not been possible for all cases.
- 2.5 The second target is to resolve 90% of all complaints within timescale and a detailed manual check was made of our records and this proved that 98% were resolved within the timescales agreed in our complaints policy, which is above target.
- 2.6 A review of the complaints monitoring system has been carried out and the problems identified in 2015-16 have been identified and an action plan put

together to improve recording and monitoring complaints. Details are in appendix 3.

### **3.0 What does feedback tell us?**

- 3.1 As a result of investigations into complaints received, service managers have made changes to working practices; a record of these changes is also recorded. This is an excellent way to improve our services and respond to customer comments.
- 3.2 Compliments are fed back to staff and acknowledged by line managers.

### **4.0 Referrals to the Ombudsman complaints service**

- 4.1 There were 11 complaints to the Ombudsman during 2015-16 .
- 4.2 A summary of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman 2015-16 are provided at appendix 4.
- 4.3 The Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review letter 2016 is provided at Appendix 5.

**Contact for more Information:** Liz Reeves (01884 234371 – lreeves@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:** Margaret Squires, Simon Johnson, all management team.

## Appendix 1

<b>Feedback 1.4.2014 to 31.3.2015</b>	<b>Volumes - 14/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Complaints received	424	289
Invalid or withdrawn complaints	32	
Comments received	37	116
Compliments received	229	238
<b>Total</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>527</b>
Number of complaints at level 2	30	35
Number of complaints at level 2 upheld	8	4
Number of complaints at level 1 upheld	88	40
Number where a change was made to the service procedures as a result of the complaint	7	27

<b>Service 2015-16 (27.5 to 31.3.16)</b>	<b>complaint</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>compliment</b>
Building control			1
Cemeteries	3		
Car parks	2		1
Community alarms			1
Community development	2		
Council tax	6	1	1
Council tax Recovery	3		
Customer Services	12	6	17
Democracy and Members	1		
Dogs strays or fouling	3		
Elections	1		1
Environmental Services	4	1	
Fly tipping	1		1
Garden waste	12	20	
Grass cutting	2		
High hedges	1		1
Homelessness	2		1
Housing benefits	10	1	2
Housing repairs	71	24	156
Housing Tenancy (& other housing services)	31	2	13
Leisure	2		
Parks & Flower beds	1		
Planning	16		2
Pollution and noise	1		
Private sector housing	2		
Property services	3		1
Recycling	68	40	20
Refuse collection	27	21	9
Street cleansing	1		2
Trade waste	1		
Total from old system- all services			8
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>238</b>

NB: Leisure has its own complaints monitoring system, details are not recorded here.

## Customer First service request logged on the CRM via the phone 2015-16

Service	Volume
Abandoned Vehicles	95
Benefits	1,098
Building control	160
Building Maintenance	5,664
Bulky waste service requests (WEE and fridges)	727
Cadavers	41
Care services ( service requests and reporting faults)	121
Car park faults	21
Clinical waste service requests	1,131
Communications logs from Media	
• Council tax Discounts	533
General enquiries	2,267
Moving home	2,586
Payment queries (instalments, payment methods)	1,543
Refunds	610
Recovery	193
Business rates	98
• Dogs Dangerous dogs	55
Dog Fouling	126
Dog micro chipping	7
Lost found dogs	94
Street scene -Graffiti, flooding, pests, fixed penalty notice.	956
Electoral services	705
Environmental services	369
Fly Tipping	314
ICT	190
HR	104
Housing , tenancy, housing needs, other	1,329
Licensing	100
Parking permits	91
Payments (telephone & Web)	30,730
Planning & forward planning	569
Property services	196
Street cleaning requests	136
Trade waste	304
Waste & recycling - missed collections	
• Recycling & Refuse total recorded	3,467
Includes total valid missed waste collections	472
Includes total valid missed recycling collections	1,294
• Waste & recycling general enquiries including garden waste	14,380
• Collection day look up	1,041
• Collect bin	2,937
• Waste container sales	259
• Garden waste permit sales (not including on line transactions)	3,795
• Assisted collections	179
Welfare assistance	340
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,661</b>

Switch board transactions and calls made direct to officer's extensions are not included in the table. Missed waste collections are those reported to Customer First over the phone.

## Complaints review action plan 2016-17

### Recommendations

1. Ensure services are logging complaints (in all cases).
2. Ensure services are acknowledging complaints within 3 working days.
3. Ensure the customer is notified if the complaint cannot be resolved in 10 working days and extend the deadline.
4. Ensure reporting data is accurate.
5. Ensure documentation relating to the complaint is stored securely and there is a clear audit trail.
6. Ensure letters include standard template paragraphs in relation to time scales, appeals etc. letters

To deliver the actions above:

- Training will be provided as required by Customer First team leaders.
- Customer Services will take a more active role in monitoring complaints to ensure customers are kept informed of progress and an accurate record of performance is maintained. Monitoring will be carried out weekly and reported on spar quarterly.

Ombudsman complaints

Appendix 4

	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Decision date</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	Mid Devon District Council	Planning & Development	7/7/15	Not upheld
2	Mid Devon District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & regulation	5/8/15	Not upheld
3	Mid Devon District Council	Housing	7/9/15	Advice given
4	Mid Devon District Council	Planning & Development	27/10/15	Closed after initial enquiries
5	Mid Devon District Council	NULL	28/10/15	Advice given
6	Mid Devon District Council	Planning & Development	19/1/16	Referred back for local resolution
7	Mid Devon District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & regulation	20/1/16	Not upheld
8	Mid Devon District Council	Housing	21/1/16	Closed after initial enquiries
9	Mid Devon District Council	Housing	8/2/16	Referred back for local resolution
10	Mid Devon District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & regulation	10/2/16	Closed after initial enquiries
11	Mid Devon District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & regulation	26/2/16	Closed after initial enquiries