

Item

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK REPORT 2019-20

To:

The Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources: Councillor Mike Davey
Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee – 5 October 2020

Report by:

Tony Stead, Business & Development Manager, Customer Services

Wards affected:

All

1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an analysis of the complaints and compliments received by the Council during 2019/20 under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments procedure.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to identify topics and trends in relation to complaints; identify areas of organisational learning that have taken place over the past year as a result of the complaints received and make further recommendations based on trend data to improve services.
- 1.3 The report also highlights those areas of good practice within the Council and seeks to identify themes and trends in relation to comments made by members of the public so that the Council can also take action where appropriate to improve services

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to:

- Consider the draft Annual Complaints Report for 2019/20, and approve for publication on the Council's website.

3. Background

- 3.1 The City Council has been recording information about complaints for the last 15 years and trend data is included in the report from 2017 onwards. In 2019/20 the Council received 1145 complaints compared with 1161 in the previous year.
- 3.2 For context, the Council's Customer Service Centre received 210,000 phone and electronic contacts, and 56,000 face to face contacts, during 2019/20.
- 3.3 While a number of services saw a fall in the number of complaints received (including a 24% fall in complaints to the Shared Waste Service), others (notably the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and Estates and Facilities) saw an increase. The reasons and responses are set out in the Head of Service commentaries in the report.
- 3.4 During the year, the Council also brought the cultural service, Cambridge Live, back in house, and this accounted for 81 complaints which would not have been counted against the City Council total in previous years.
- 3.5 Two complaints were upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman from a total of 13 enquiries. The number upheld, and the number of enquiries to the Ombudsman, is comparable to previous years. The [LGSCO's annual letter](#) to the City Council is available online, and will be published on our website alongside this Annual Complaints Report.
- 3.6 The report includes:
- A summary of complaints received, their trends and action taken
 - Details of compliments and comments

- Complaints investigated by the Independent Complaints Investigator
- Complaints escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman
- Complaints relating to conduct of councillors

- 3.7 As well as complaints the Council also received 164 compliments and 7,993 positive comments about the Council's services and staff through the GovMetric system (around 59% of the total 13,593 instances of feedback received by the Council through that system). A section on compliments is included in the report because knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important as knowing where things are not working well.
- 3.8 Subject to approval by the Executive Councillor, officers will finalise and publish the report on the Council's website with hard copies being made available on request.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

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The time and resources spent on responding to complaints is a not insignificant cost to the Council. Our aim is to get things right first time as often as we can.

(b) Staffing Implications

None

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Analysis and action taken as a result of complaints has an important role to play in ensuring that our services are accessible to all those who wish or need to use them and, that as far as possible, we are able to respond flexibly to the differing needs of our citizens and visitors.

(d) Environmental Implications

None

(e) Procurement Implications

None

(f) Community Safety Implications

None

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The Annual Complaints Report will be published on the Council's website.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Departmental Quarterly Monitoring Reports 2019/20
- (b) LGSCO's Annual Letter to Cambridge City Council

7. Appendices

- (a) Draft Annual Complaints Report 2019/20

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Tony Stead, Business and Development Manager, tel: 01223 - 457501, email: Tony.Stead@cambridge.gov.uk.