



# Annual Corporate Complaint and Compliment Report 2017/2018

# Annual Corporate Complaint and Compliments Report

**2017/2018**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council operates a corporate complaints policy and procedure which is overseen by the Customer Services Division. Complaints, compliments and comments are managed through the corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Any member of staff can record complaints and compliments through the corporate intranet using the online form. Customers can log complaints, compliments and comments online or can request them to be recorded through their preferred access channel.
- 1.2 Oracle CRM holds records of all complaints and compliments and is used to manage the status and timescales of complaint handling within the organisation. The complaint and compliment related data is also analysed to identify trends and lessons learned to help us to improve our customers' experiences.
- 1.3 Complaints about Adult Social Care and Support and Children's Services including Children's Special Educational Needs (SEN) are dealt with by the Adults and Children's Complaints Team.
- 1.4 Corporate complaints received for Children's Services (66) and Adult Social Care (5) are also dealt with by the Adults and Children's Complaints Team and these complaints are included in the Children's Services and Adults Social Care Annual Complaints report.

## **2. The Corporate Complaint Process**

- 2.1 The Corporate Complaints policy and procedure was implemented in July 2013 and is reviewed annually.
- 2.2 The procedure is as follows:
  - Stage one, complaints are investigated and responded to by the appropriate service area. Complaints should be responded to within a maximum of 20 working days. Where complaints are considered more complex, with the agreement of the customer and of the appropriate Head of Service or Complaints team a complaint may be responded to in 30 working days.
  - Stage Two, if a customer remains dissatisfied with the response that has been given a complaint is escalated to the final stage of the complaints procedure. The appropriate Head of Service will review the complaint and response received at stage one and will then respond to the customer within 10 working days or for more complex complaints within 20 working days, in agreement with the customer.

### 3. Summary of complaints and compliments

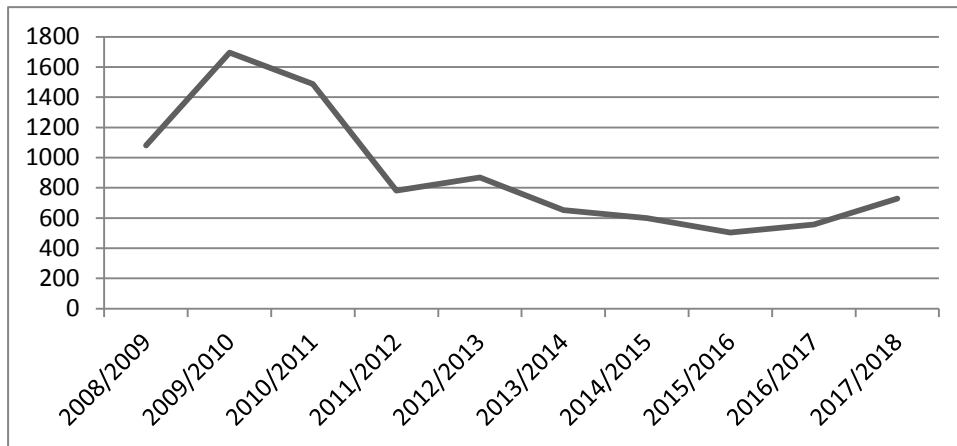
- 3.1 719 complaints were received for 2017/2018, an increase of 163 (29%) compared to the previous year when 556 were received.
- 3.2 It should be noted that of the 163 increase, 102 complaints were logged regarding a single planning application.
- 3.3 Of the 719 complaints received 79 (11%) progressed to the second and final stage of the complaints procedure where a review by a Head of Service was required. Although this is an increase of 36 when compared to the 43 that progressed to stage two in 2016/2017 it should be noted that 14 related to the single planning application that was the subject of 102 stage one complaints.
- 3.4 1046 compliments were received in 2017/2018 this compares to 1021 for the previous year, an increase of (2.5%).
- 3.5 Although overall there has been an increase in complaints, it is important to note that 63% of the increase relates to the 102 planning complaints referred to in paragraph 3.2 above.
- 3.6 Q3 and Q4 of 2017/2018 saw significant service disruption due to severe bad weather which resulted in an increase in complaints. It is consistent with previous years for the number of complaints to increase at times of service disruption as shown in Figure 1.
- 3.7 The preferred access channel for customers to make a complaint continues to be by telephone followed by email, web form and post in that order.
- 3.8 Key trends for the year were:
- There has been an increase in the number of complaints logged.
  - Service areas that provide services to all residents received the most complaints as reflected in previous years.
  - A total of 102 complaints were registered regarding the process of a single planning application.
- 3.9 Table one shows complaints and compliments for the last 3 years and shows an increasing trend for both complaints and compliments.

**Table One: Complaints and compliments by year 2015/2016 to 2017/2018**

	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
Complaints	719	556	503
Compliments	1046	1021	995

3.10 Figure one shows the trends for the number of complaints from 2008 to 2018. This shows the impact of service disruption caused by inclement weather as well as changes to services that affect all households.

**Figure One: Number of complaints by year 2008-2018**



- 2009-2010 – Introduction of additional waste and recycling services resulted in 1001 complaints contributing to the significant increase that year. There was also some disruption to services due to inclement weather.
- 2010-2011 – Continued impact from the waste and recycling changes to services.
- 2011-2012 – 60% decrease in waste and recycling complaints.
- 2013-2016 – Minimal inclement weather and no significant service changes.
- 2016-2017 – Increase in waste and recycling related complaints due to missed collections because of contaminated recycling containers.

#### **4. Corporate Complaints Service Area Analysis**

4.1 Table two shows complaints received by quarter. The increase of complaints in Q2 for 2017/2018 predominantly relates to:

- Planning and Building Control – A total of 110 complaints were registered for Planning Services, 102 of these related to a single planning application, this compares to 12 registered for this service in 2016/2017.

**Table Two: Complaints by Quarter 2015/2018**

Quarter	2017/2018		2016/2017		2015/2016	
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total
<b>Q1 (Apr-Jun)</b>	165	22.9%	166	29.9%	128	25.4%
<b>Q2 (Jul-Sep)</b>	256	35.6%	148	26.6%	153	30.4%
<b>Q3 (Oct-Dec)</b>	142	19.8%	134	24.1%	94	18.7%
<b>Q4 (Jan-Mar)</b>	156	21.7%	108	19.4%	128	25.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>100%</b>

4.2 The increase of complaints in Q4 for 2017/2018 predominantly relates to:

- Highways – Parking penalties with regards to attitude of enforcement officers and the reason for the penalty.
- Waste and Recycling – Crew behaviour and missed bin collections as a result of poor weather conditions.

4.3 To help put the level of complaints into context table three shows some of the activities undertaken by key service areas which tend to be the subject of complaints.

**Table Three: Key Council Activities and Number of Complaints for 2017/2018**

Service Areas	Activity level
<b>Waste and Recycling</b> Household waste and recycling collections 2017/18 (refuse, garden waste, mixed recycling, glass) Bulky Waste Collections Visitors to Bickenhill HWRC	9,360,000 4,500 200,000
<b>Income and Awards</b> • Council tax bills issued during the year. • New Benefit applications processed	163,697 3957
<b>Highways Maintenance</b> Significant Highway schemes implemented	Streetlighting LED project Traffic signals upgrade CCTV – Enforcement bus lane and school parking Lode Lane School streets pilot Average speed enforcement camera pilot
<b>Streetcare</b> • Maintained grass (m <sup>2</sup> )	6,766,891

Service Areas	Activity level
• Maintained hard ground (m <sup>2</sup> )	4,013,919
<b>Planning and Building Control</b>	
• Planning Applications	3,460
• Building Control Applications	1,447
• Initial Notices*	1,014
<b>Customer Services</b>	
<b>Solihull Connect</b>	
Number of contacts by channel	
• Contact Centre	308,442
• Walk in Centres	63,848
• Email	12,042
• Online form	6,042
<b>Cemeteries and Crematoria</b>	
Cremations and burials	3,004
Memorial headstone permits	679
Scatters	334
Grave reserves	159
Reassignments	66
Memorial sales	408
<b>Registration Service</b>	
Births , Deaths and marriages	3,222
<b>Traffic and Parking</b>	
Number of Council owned spaces	4720
<b>Libraries and Arts Services</b>	
Visitor numbers	560,452
<b>Parks</b>	
Area of maintained shrubs (m <sup>2</sup> )	540,750

\*Initial Notices are issued by private companies to advise that they have been engaged to manage Building Regulations compliance.

4.4 Table four shows a breakdown of the 10 specific Service Area Teams which received the highest numbers of complaints.

**Table Four: Top Ten Service Areas 2015/2018**

Specific Service Area Team	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
Waste and Recycling	191	209	167
Planning and Building Control	134	32	28
Highways Services	129	99	74
Streetcare	54	41	33
Income and Awards	56	48	49
Neighbourhood Services	33	21	9

Specific Service Area Team	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
Parks Grass and Shrubs	23	6	10
Customer Services	24	34	27
Cemeteries and Crematoria	19	10	11
Resources.	9	6	5

- 4.5 The greatest percentage increase in the number of complaints compared to the previous year was seen in Planning and Building Control service area for which 102 of the 134 complaints related to a single planning application.
- 4.6 The next largest increase was in Parks, Grass and Shrubs service area however the actual number of complaints remains low at 23 compared with 6 in the previous year. Of the 23, there were 11 complaints which related to unauthorised encampments across the Borough.
- 4.7 A total of 191 complaints have been registered for Waste and Recycling in 2017/2018, 9% decrease from 2016/2017. This relates to a reduction in complaints about Amey Crew attitude and behaviour. As part of the review of complaints and learning with Amey in 2016/2017 there has been an on-going programme of refresher customer care training and tool box talks on specific issues for crews.
- 4.8 The reducing trend in complaints for kerbside recycling collections has continued in 2017/2018. This has been the result of training for Amey crews and raised resident awareness of what can and cannot be placed in recycling bins which resulted in a reduction in missed and contaminated recycling bins. Although we are currently experiencing a fault with our brown bins this did not significantly contribute to complaints in 2017/2018.
- 4.9 Complaints relating to cemeteries and crematoria have increased with no significant trend identified. Although during the year there was a significant refurbishment project at Robin Hood which resulted in the disruption to the cemetery and a 20 week closure of the crematorium, no complaints were received about the refurbishment work.
- 4.10 Neighbourhood Services complaints remain low but did see an increase from 21 to 33. The increase relates to complaints about potholes, manhole covers and maintenance of footpaths.
- 4.11 Streetcare have seen an increase of 13 complaints compared to 2016/2017. These complaints relate to:
- Streetcare – grass cutting, streetcare and litter.
  - Streetcare Amey Crew – parking of Amey vehicles, attitude and behaviour of crew.
- 4.12 As shown in Table three above, Highways undertook a number of major projects in the Borough affecting large numbers of commuters and residents as well as planned on going maintenance. The service saw an increase of 30% in the number of complaints rising from 99 the previous year to 129 in

2017/2018.

4.13 The Highway complaints relate to the following areas:

- Traffic and Parking – Traffic, penalty charge notices and the conduct of PCN officers.
- Highways Maintenance – maintenance and upkeep of the roads.
- Road Safety – Gritting and road safety issues.

4.14 The increase for Income and Awards relates to various issues regarding Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax accounts where customers are disputing the outstanding balance or have incurred charges for non payment. Although the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was implemented during 2017/2018 this did not contribute to the increase in complaints to Income and Awards.

## 5. Categories of Complaint

5.1 Complaints are categorised so that we can understand why customers complain. The categories for complaints are provided in Table five. The top three reasons are the same as for previous years:

- Service delivery
- Decision making (policy)
- Impoliteness, rudeness, unfairness, bias or prejudice

**Table Five: Categories of complaints**

Complaint reason	2017/ 2018	% of total	2016/ 2017	% of total	2015/ 2016	% of total
Dissatisfaction in service delivery	446	62.0%	394	70.9%	314	62.4%
Dissatisfaction with the way we apply policy, a decision or a procedure	218	30.3%	106	19.1%	110	21.9%
Impoliteness, rudeness, unfairness, bias or prejudice	47	6.6%	49	8.8%	64	12.7%
Refusal to answer reasonable questions, misleading or unsuitable advice	5	0.7%	6	1.1%	8	1.6%
Inappropriate use of personal information	3	0.4%	1	0.1%	7	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>100%</b>



- 5.2 Consistent with previous years, complaints regarding service delivery represented the greatest proportion of complaints at 62%.
- 5.3 30.3% of complaints related to dissatisfaction with the way policy or a decision was applied, an increase of 11.2% on the previous year:
- 48% of this category (104) relate to Planning Services of which 102 were for a single planning application
  - 20% of this category (44) relate to Highways Services - in particular traffic, parking and maintenance of the roads.
- 5.4 6.6% of complaints were made because of impoliteness and rudeness a reduction of 2.2% compared to 2016/2017. This category relates mainly to the Parking Enforcement Officers and Amey Crew for Waste and Recycling and Streetcare.

## 6. Complaint Timescales

- 6.1 Table six shows the complaints resolved by complaint stage and timescale. Of the 719 complaints registered at stage one, 610 were responded to within the 20 days, 87 were identified as complex and responded to within 20 to 30 days in line with the Complaints and Compliments policy and the agreement of the complainant. 22 complaints exceeded the 30 day target.

**Table Six: Complaint Resolution Timescales 2017/2018**

	<b>Complaints at Stage 1</b>	<b>Complaints at Stage 2</b>
Resolved in 20 days	610	
Over 20 days and less than 30 days	87	
Over 30 days	22	
Stage 2 in 20 days		49
Stage 2 over 20 days		30
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>79</b>

- 6.2 Of the 79 complaints escalated to stage two, 49 were responded to within the 20 day timescale. 30 were complex and went over the 20 days. The affected customers were kept up to date with the investigation and the complaints team continued to work with the co-ordinators during this period. A breakdown by service area is provided in Table seven.
- 6.3 If at stage one or two a complaint is more complex or an in depth response is required, the deadline can be extended which should be negotiated with the

customer and agreed by the Corporate Complaints Lead.

**Table Seven: Complaints exceeding 20 days at stage two by Service Area**

<b>Service Area Team</b>	<b>Stage 2 out of SLA</b>
Planning and Building Control	22
Highways Services	2
Parks grass and shrubs	2
School Complaint	1
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	1
Streetcare	1
Income and Awards	1

- 6.4 The complaints team monitor all complaint timescales to identify those approaching target completion, liaise with the relevant co-ordinators and where necessary speaking to the relevant investigating officer or Head of Service.
- 6.5 There are a number of reasons for a complaint to exceed timescale including:
- Complexity of the complaint.
  - More information needed from the customer which caused a delay in being able to start the investigation.
  - Delay in completing the complaint on the system even though a response has been sent to the customer.
  - Poor response time management of the complaint by investigating officers.
- 6.6 Planning and Building Control had 22 complaints that exceeded deadline at stage two, of these 14 related to a single application for which we had 102 complaints regarding the same issue. All complainants were sent a holding letter with an update on timescales.
- 6.7 Out of the eight remaining stage two planning complaints which exceeded target, six complainants were contacted with an update on timescales. The remaining two complainants were reviewed by the Complaints team and escalated as the customer had not been updated.
- 6.8 For all other complaints that exceeded timescale at stage two, customers were kept informed of progress throughout and monitored closely by the Complaints team and the Complaints Co-ordinators for the service area. The complaints team escalate any complaints not updated or resolved on the

system.

- 6.9 The complaints team continue to work with co-ordinators to ensure responses where possible are sent within timescale, and customers kept informed with deadline extensions where necessary.
- 6.10 To mitigate the impact of poor response time to the customer and to support investigating officers there is an automated reminder system as part of the complaints process as well as reminders from the complaint co-ordinator.

## 7. Learning from Complaints

- 7.1 One of the most important outcomes of investigating complaints is to learn from them. Categories of learning are used so that we can understand how feedback can be used to improve or shape services in the future. Table eight shows the categories recorded after a complaint has been investigated.
- 7.2 In line with the Council's legal obligations under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016, the Council's complaint procedure has incorporated a measure in which a customer can make a formal complaint to the Council, should any member of the public feel that a customer-facing council officer has insufficient fluency in spoken English in the performance of their role. Since the implementation of the Act, we have received no complaints on this basis which is a positive indicator on the quality of staff employed in customer facing public roles in the Council.

**Table Eight: Categories of learning recorded**

Learning Category	2017/2018		2016/2017		2015/2016	
	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of total
Improve revised service delivery process	204	28.4%	125	22.5%	69	13.7%
Improve in communication	155	21.5%	154	27.7%	124	24.6%
Review behaviours and/or training needs for individuals or a team	127	17.7%	145	26.1%	113	22.5%
Customer comments included in review of how we apply policies, decisions and procedures	179	24.9%	105	18.9%	23	4.6%
Review of confidentiality procedures. These should be carried out in accordance with the Data Protections Act.	54	7.5%	27	4.8%	3	0.6%

None (Removed in 2016)					171	34.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>100%</b>

7.3 The following Service Areas received the highest number of complaints for each learning category recorded:

- Improve service delivery process – the increase in this learning category relates to the 102 complaints for a single planning application.
- Review behaviour developments for individuals or a team – This category was selected for Waste and Recycling complaints with regarding to missed collections, crews not fully emptying bins, bins not being returned to properties and behaviour of crew. Highways Services regarding the behaviour of Parking Enforcement Officers.
- Improve communication – Waste and Recycling regarding communication with residents relating to missed collection of bins specifically regarding contamination of recycling.
- Customer comments included in review of how we apply policies, decisions and procedures – The increase related mainly to Highways Services the majority relating to Parking Charge Notices being correctly issued.
- Review of confidentiality procedures. These should be carried out in accordance with the Data Protections Act – The increase related mainly to Income and Awards complaints for Council Tax.

7.4 The complaints team run quarterly reports on recorded learning and contact service areas to discuss the learning actions that have been implemented as a result of the learning to ensure service improvements.

7.5 Samples of learning from complaints investigated during 2017/2018 have been included as Appendix 3.1. Once the complaint has been resolved it is the responsibility of the service area to implement any learning improvements identified.

7.6 Two case studies have been prepared by Highways and Income and Awards this year to show how a complaint is investigated from start to end, including how we learn from complaints. These case studies are included as Appendix 3.2.

## 8. Complaints by Ward

8.1 To gather a further insight into complaints Table nine shows complaints by Ward in which the complainant lived. This enables us to see if there are any new trends or exceptions to trends that could be analysed further.

**Table Nine: Complaints by Ward**

Ward	2017/ 2018	% of total	2016/ 2017	% of total	2015/ 2016	% of total
*Out of Borough Customers	72	10.0%	55	9.89%	64	12.7%
Bickenhill	132	18.0%	38	6.83%	26	5.2%
St Alphege	57	8.0%	34	6.12%	27	5.3%
Shirley East	47	6.5%	28	5.04%	14	2.8%
Elmdon	39	5.4%	44	7.9%	33	6.5%
Dorridge and Hockley Heath	38	5.3%	27	4.9%	17	3.4%
Knowle	36	5.0%	29	5.2%	17	3.4%
Olton	36	5.0%	30	5.4%	28	5.6%
Shirley South	33	4.6%	37	6.7%	34	6.7%
Smiths Wood	31	4.3%	23	4.1%	24	4.8%
Blythe	29	4.0%	36	6.5%	31	6.2%
Meriden	30	4.2%	22	4.0%	24	4.8%
Sillhill	30	4.2%	41	7.4%	20	4.0%
Lyndon	25	3.5%	16	2.9%	29	5.8%
Kingshurst and Fordbridge	23	3.2%	26	4.7%	34	6.7%
Chelmsley Wood	22	3.1%	22	4.0%	24	4.8%
Shirley West	20	2.8%	37	6.6%	35	7.0%
Castle Bromwich	19	2.7%	20	3.6%	22	4.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>719</b>		<b>556</b>		<b>503</b>	

\* Any complaints made by customers who live out of the Borough, were anonymous or where no address is supplied but we received communication via email.

8.2 The Ward complaints predominately relate to the following service areas:

**Bickenhill:**

- Planning Services 102 complaints about one particular planning application.

**St Alphege:**

- Highways Services parking restrictions, parking penalty charge notices and gritting.

**Shirley East:**

- Waste and Recycling missed waste collections and bins not being returned to properties.
- Cemeteries, Robin Hood Cemetery and the book of remembrance not being kept up to date.
- Highways Services various issues regarding maintenance of roads and pavements, road works and parking.

**Dorridge and Hockley Heath:**

- Highways Services various issues including gritting and traffic.
- Parks, grass and shrubs relating to unauthorised encampments.

**Knowle, Olton and Lyndon**

- Waste and recycling various issues relating to missed collections of domestic waste, recycling and garden waste, as well as Amey crew behaviour.

**Smiths Wood**

- There were various reasons for the increase, mainly related to streetcare regarding services for grass cutting, street cleansing and litter.

**Meriden**

- The rise in complaints for Meriden relate to Neighbourhood Services. The complaints are regarding various issues such as maintenance of footpaths/pavements, high hedges, unauthorised encampment and potholes.

8.3 Waste and Recycling receive the most complaints as a Service Area; however we have seen a decrease of waste and recycling complaints for all Wards except Shirley East, Lyndon, Dorridge and Hockley Heath where there has been a slight increase.

8.4 Where there is a complaint regarding parking, Enforcement Officers are interviewed and asked to give their version of events. All Enforcement Officer complaints are monitored to identify learning and additional training is provided where appropriate. Where there are repeated complaints or any evidence of a trend in behaviours we have the ability to ask for the Officer to be removed from the Solihull contract.

**9. Compliments**

9.1 1046 compliments were received in 2017/2018, an increase of 2.5% compared to 1021 compliments received in 2016/2017. Table ten shows the top ten Service Areas to receive compliments.

**Table Ten: Compliments Service Area Top 10**

Service Area	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
Customer Services	411	477	391
Highways Services	339	195	226
Waste and Recycling	100	87	96
Cemeteries and Crematoria	56	17	53
Streetcare	45	48	77
Libraries and Arts Services	41	23	7
Parks grass and shrubs	13	13	15
Neighbourhood Co-Ordinators	10	16	48
Planning and Building Control	9	12	8
Income and Awards	8	10	12

9.2 Compliments are shared with service areas quarterly and at year end. Customer Services share compliments received as part of a monthly local brief.

9.3 Table eleven shows the reasons for receiving compliments. The majority of compliments were made for named employee helpfulness at 66.7% compared to 63.2% during 2016/2017. High standard of service reduced slightly to 16% in 2017/2018.

**Table Eleven: Categories of Compliments**

Category	2017/2018	% of total	2016/2017	% of total	2015/2016	% of total
Named employee helpfulness	697	66.7%	645	63.2%	559	56.2%
High standard of service	167	16.0%	192	18.8%	212	21.3%
Helpfulness of service	166	15.8%	159	15.6%	196	19.7%
Other	16	1.5%	25	2.4%	28	2.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1046</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 10. Customer Comments

10.1 Customer comments are captured where a customer has a suggestion for

service improvement or is not happy with the way we are currently delivering a service or policy and indicate they do not want to log a formal corporate complaint. These comments are predominantly logged by Solihull Connect across all access channels.

- 10.2 Customer comments are shared with all relevant service areas for learning and improvement suggestions. In cases where a customer has requested a response this will be provided by the service area responsible.
- 10.3 Table twelve shows the top ten service areas that received customer comments. The majority of comments relate to Waste and Recycling which is consistent with previous years.

**Table Twelve: Top ten Service Areas receiving the most comments**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Total</b>
Waste and Recycling	208
Parks grass and shrubs	62
Income and Awards	58
Highways Services	52
Customer Services	44
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	42
Streetcare	32
Planning and Building Control	10
Trees	5

- 10.4 Key trends of customer comments registered in 2017-2018 relate to:
- Waste and Recycling - hangers not being left on bins to explain when a bin isn't collected due to contamination.
  - Parks, grass and shrubs - unauthorised encampments
  - Customer Services call waiting times - advisors are asked to record customer feedback about their experience especially during high demand.
  - Highways Services – Penalty Charge Notices, gritting and parking restrictions
  - Council Tax – Council tax reduction scheme and changes implemented.



10.5 Table thirteen shows the number of comments recorded over the last 3 years

**Table Thirteen: Number of comments for last three years**

	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2015/2016</b>
Number of comments	528	1060	1311

10.6 The decrease in customer comments registered was analysed and predominantly regarded:

- Libraries and Arts Services saw a decrease in customer comments from 152 in 2016-2017 to 4 in 2017-2018. The refurbishment of The Core is now complete, which was the cause of the high volume of customer comments registered in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.
- Waste and Recycling saw a decrease from 474 in 2016-2017 to 208 in 2017-2018. The decrease relates to an improvement in crews leaving hangers to explain why a bin hasn't been emptied
- Income and Awards saw a decrease from 140 in 2016-2017 to 58 in 2017-2018. Introduction of the new council tax reduction scheme in 2016-2017 was the cause of a large number of comments being registered as residents were unhappy with the new scheme.

## **11. Local Government Ombudsman**

11.1 Each year the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) provides feedback to each Local Authority about the complaints it has received about them in the past year. The letter relating to 2017/2018 is included as Appendix 3.3a and a breakdown of complaints decided and received as Appendices 3.3b and 3.3c. No specific areas of concern have been highlighted.

## **12. Customer Satisfaction Survey**

12.1 Customer satisfaction surveys are offered however the response rate is consistently low. Customer feedback through the survey has identified that the preferred method of contact for most customers is by email. During 2017/2018 42 customers were surveyed by email with 21 responding. Customers also report valuing complaint acknowledgements which need to be sent to all customers. Customers have commented that we could improve our website to make it easier for them to complain and the website is being reviewed to ensure that this is the case. Customers also reported that they would like their responses to be sent within the timescales and changes have

been made to enable improved timely responses.

- 12.2 The Complaints and Compliments procedure seeks equality information from service users when conducting customer satisfaction surveys to help the Council check that we are treating people fairly and to identify any issues we might need to address. For the period of 2017/2018 there were no equality issues identified.

### **13. Corporate Complaints and Feedback Policy**

- 13.1 During 2017/2018 a review of the Corporate Complaints and Compliments policy and guidance has taken place and a key focus has been to include the updated LGO remedies guidance. This guidance aims to remedy personal injustice wherever a fault has been revealed. Remedies are not just financial, the LGO will look into the root causes of problems and recommend improvements to systems if necessary, so that others do not suffer in future. A financial payment will be recommended to reimburse a person who has suffered a quantifiable financial loss or it may be a symbolic payment to acknowledge the distress or difficulties a customer has been put through.
- 13.2 Part of the review also looked at the timescales for complaints that exceed the agreed timescales at stage one and two. The Complaints Team have changed the reminder notifications to complaint investigators so that they are issued ahead of the deadline rather than after the target completion date which enables a response to be made on time.
- 13.3 As a result of customer feedback, the timescale for a customer to escalate a complaint to the second stage has been extended from 10 days to 20 days.

### **14. Looking Forward**

- 14.1 A number of activities could result in increased numbers of complaints for 2018/2019. These include:
- Council House decant and refurbishment works if this arises
  - Highways works to Fillongley Bridge
  - Split brown bins and deliveries of replacement bins
  - School street pilot - The Council is introducing an experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which will be in force for a maximum period of 18 months
  - Station to Town Centre accessibility improvements
  - Street lighting LED project and traffic signals upgrade

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix 3.1	Learning examples
Appendix 3.2	Case studies
Appendix 3.3a	Letter from LGO
Appendix 3.3b	LGO Decided
Appendix 3.3c	LGO Received