



Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report

1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014

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Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2013/14 under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the corporate procedure). 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. The report also highlights those areas of good practice within the Council and seeks to identify topics 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.

In addition to the statistical information presented in this report it is important to recognise the work of the Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team that underpins this in terms of promoting an organisational culture in which complaints are recognised, accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. This also enables the Council to collect accurate information on complaints in order to identify topics and trends and improve services accordingly.

Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

The corporate procedure sets out how the Council will deal with all complaints, compliments and comments received with the exception of those received in relation to adult and children's social care services, social housing, public health and Members which will be dealt with under separate procedures.

The corporate procedure has two stages. Stage 1 is a local resolution stage where we try to resolve those complaints that cannot be resolved immediately as part of our day to day business. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with locally, that is within the service being complained about. We aim to resolve the majority of complaints at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure.

Stage 2 is a formal investigation stage where complaints will usually be investigated by the Complaints and Information Governance Manager or another officer independent of the service being complained about.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following a Stage 2 investigation they may refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Public Information and Accessibility

We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most

commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.

Information is available on the Council's website which contains an electronic form people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.

The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

Overview of Complaints, Compliments and Comments

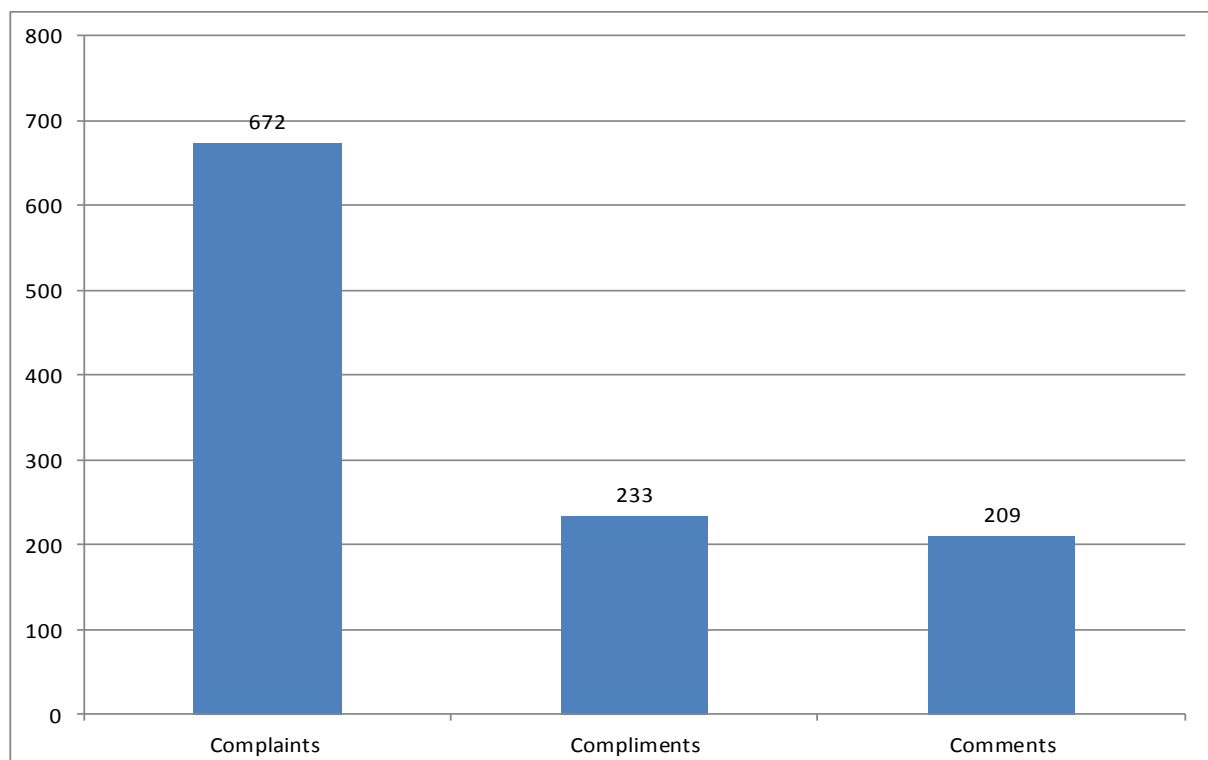
Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 the Council received a total of 1, 114 representations under the corporate procedure, an increase from 836 in 2012/13 and 895 in 2011/12. The Council received 672 complaints, an increase from 383 in 2012/13 and 429 complaints in 2011/12. *(Previously all Housing and Building Services complaints were handled under the corporate procedure. On 1 April 2013 the Council introduced a Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. A further 101 Stage 1 complaints were received under this Procedure during 2013/14).*

667 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure, while four were initially dealt with at Stage 2. 68 stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 72 complaints were investigated at Stage 2, an increase from 58 in 2012/13 and 60 in 2011/12 *(A further 12 Stage 2 complaints were investigated under the Council's Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2013/14).*

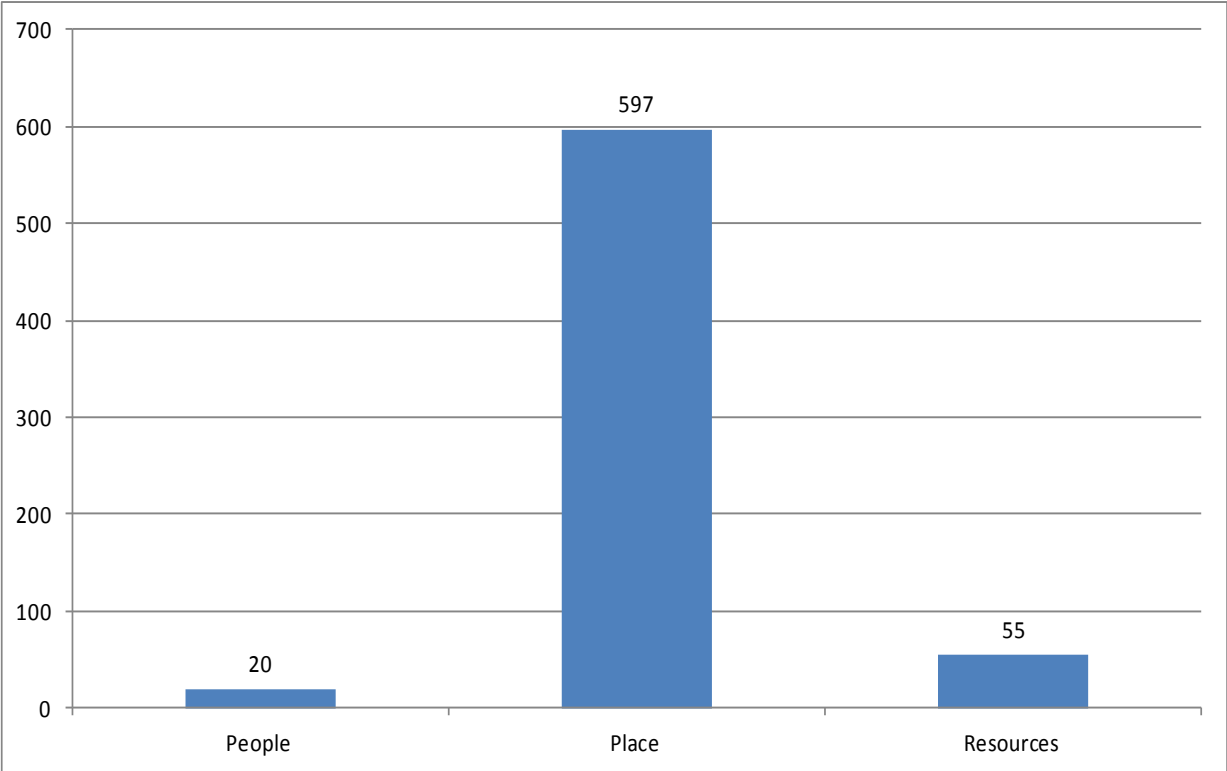
This increase in complaints can be attributed primarily to problems people experienced with their refuse collection, following the introduction in wheeled bins. The Council received 322 complaints relating to refuse and recycling collections compared, to 55 in 2012/13.

The Council received 233 compliments, an increase from 199 in 2012/13, but still fewer than the 267 received in 2011/12. The Council also received 209 comments, a decrease from 254 in 2012/13 to a similar level to the 199 received in 2011/12.

Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments

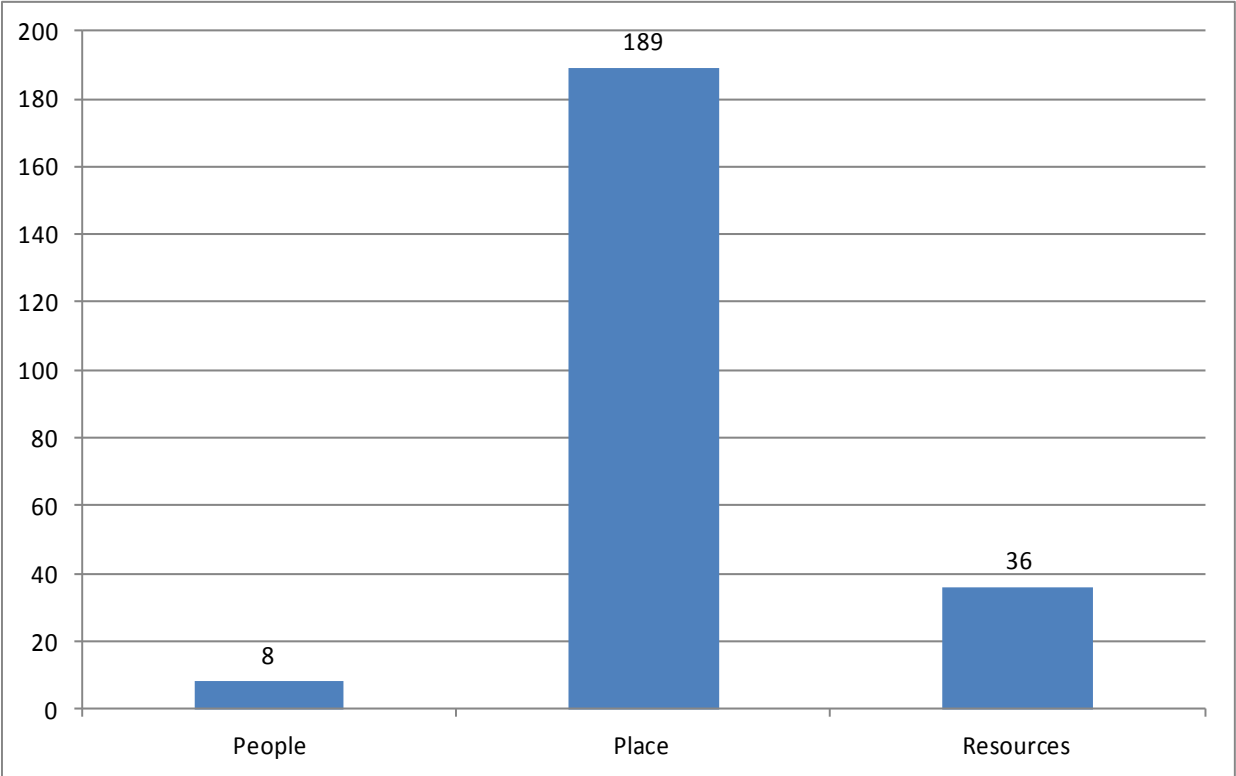


Complaints by Department

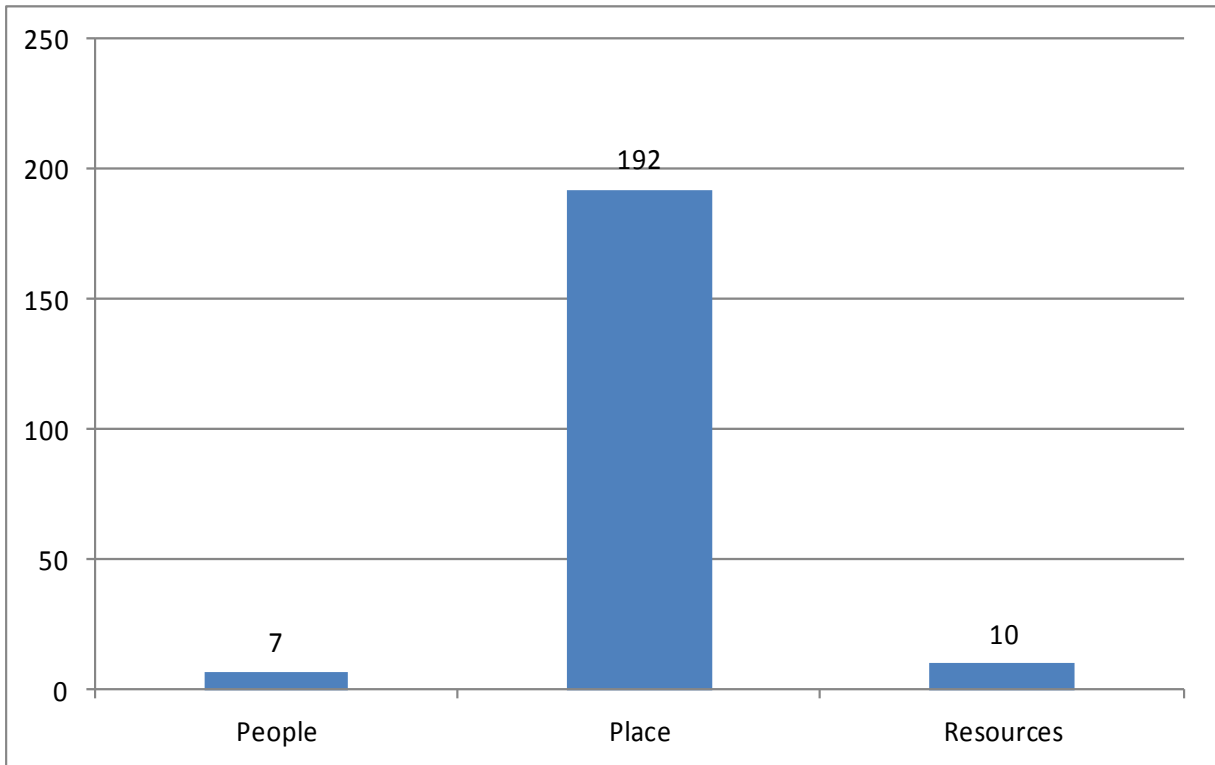


- *People = Services for People*
- *Place = Services for Place*
- *Resources = Resources Group*

Compliments by Department



Comments by Department

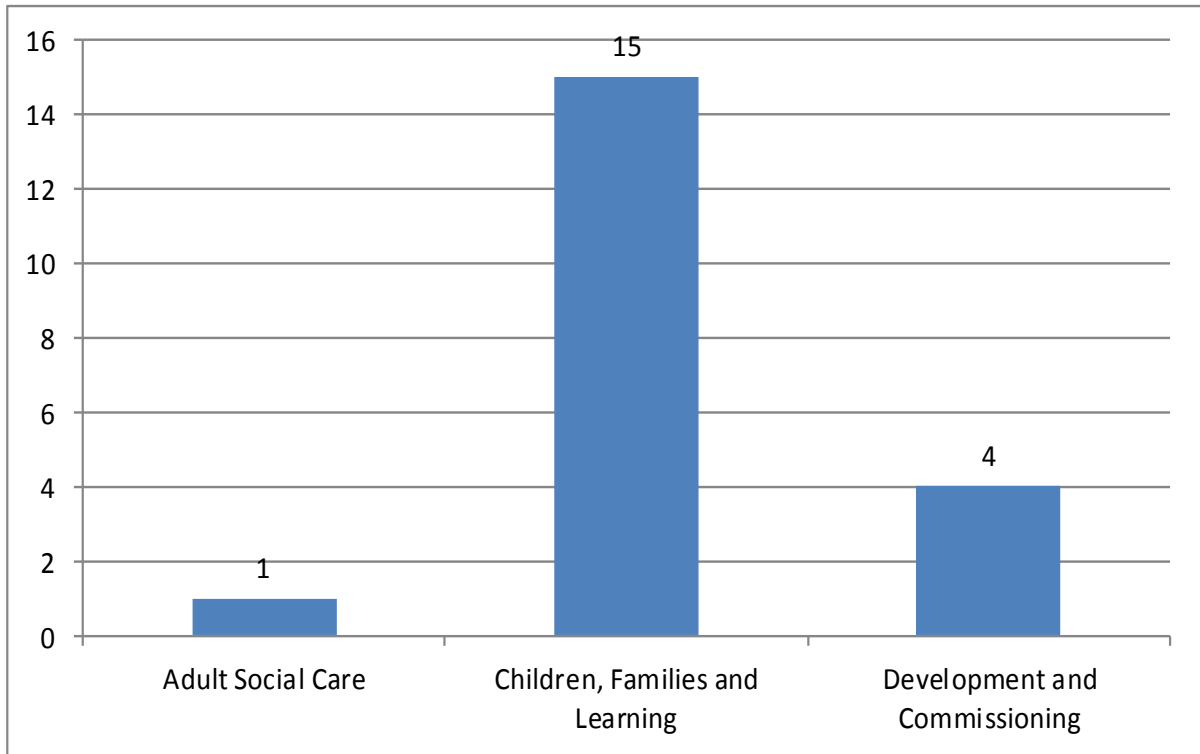


Below is a breakdown of complaints, compliments and comments by department.

NB. Some services may appear more than once as a result of changes to the Council's organisational structure during 2013/14.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department
Services for People
Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview

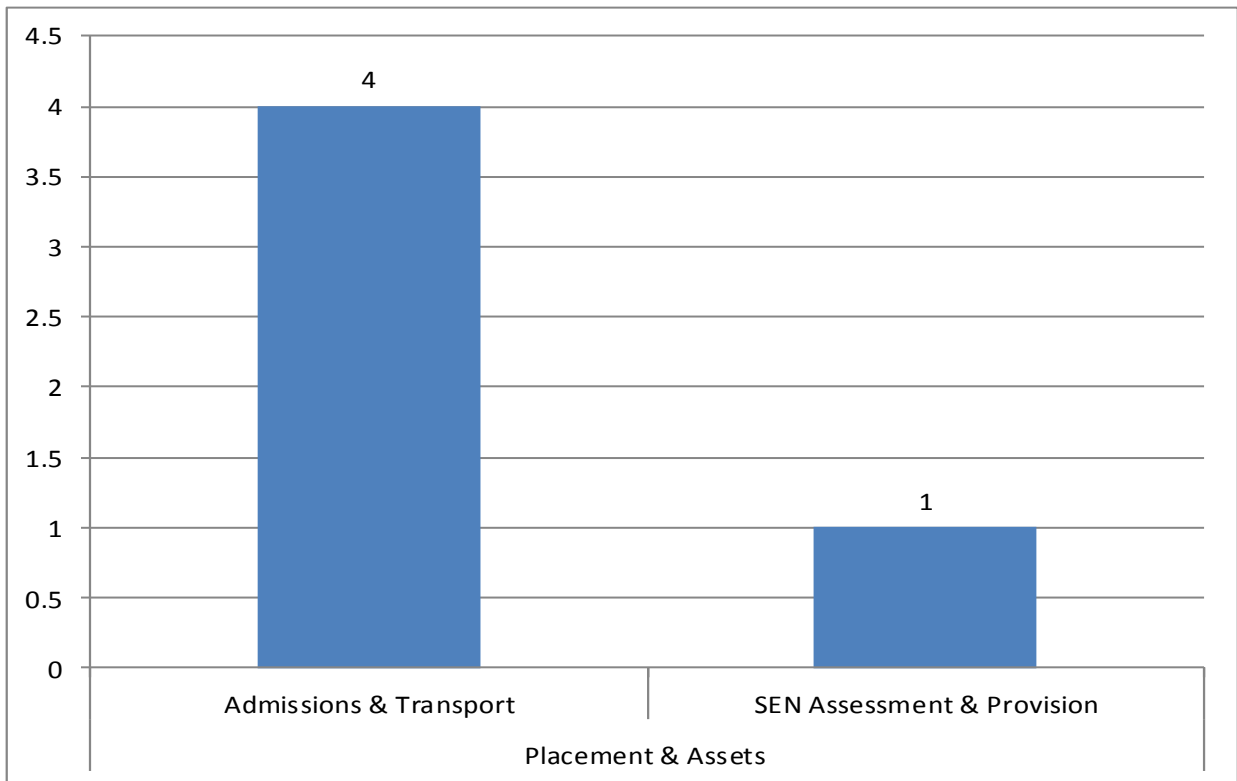


NB. While some Adult and Children's Social Care complaints were handled in accordance with the corporate procedure the majority were handled in accordance with either the Adults or Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure. Details of those complaints are contained within the Adults and Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports.

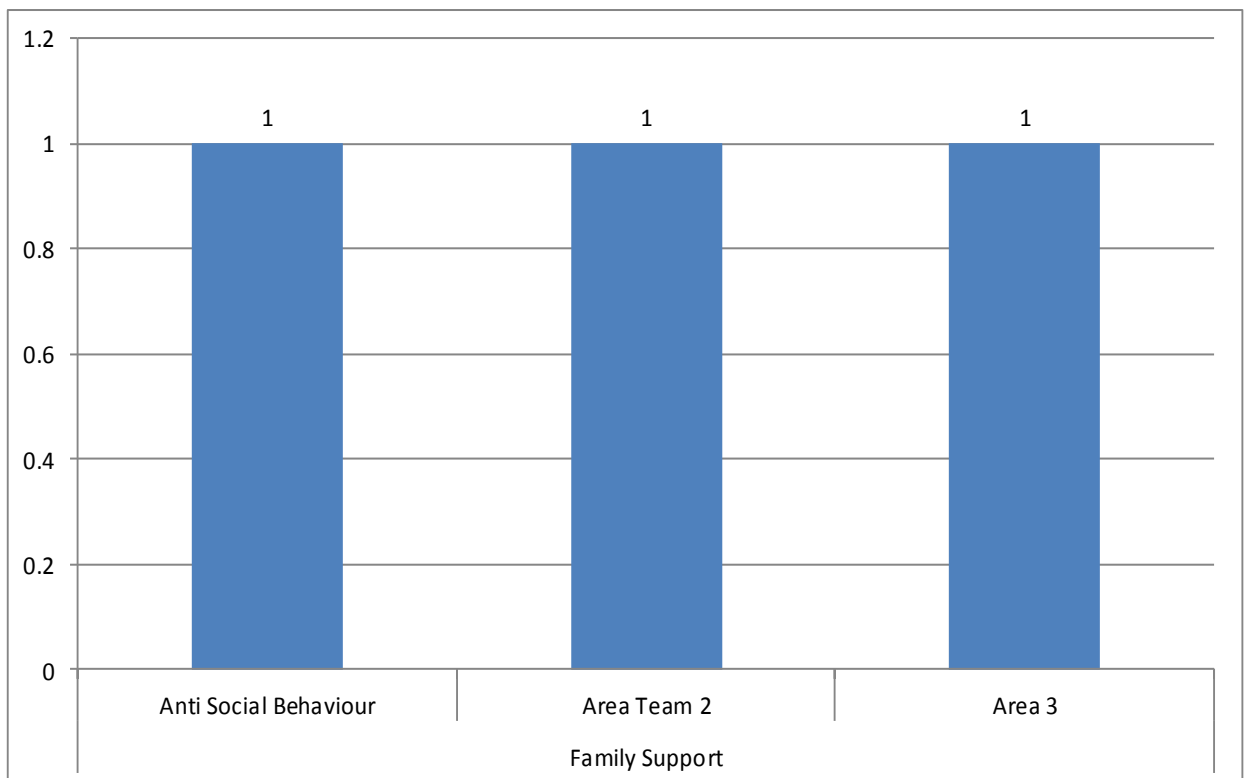
Adult Social Care

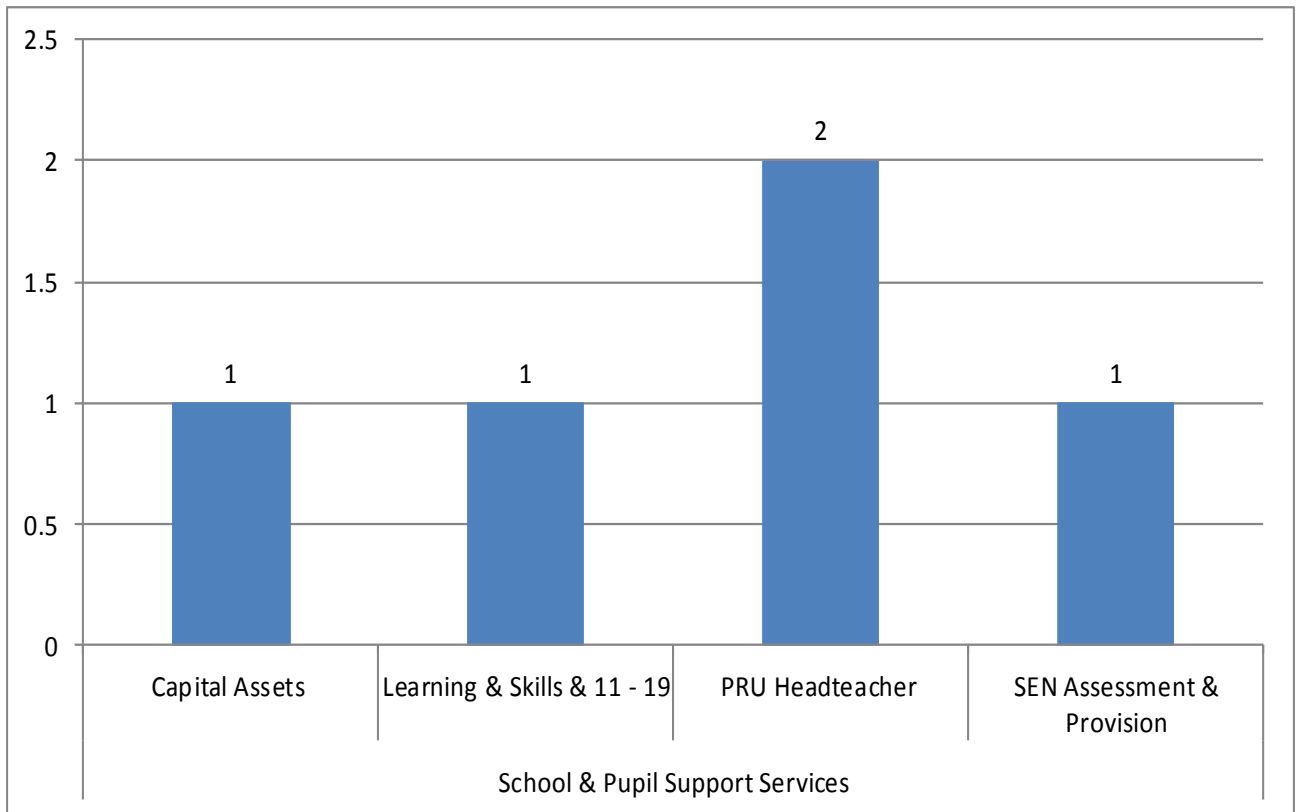
The complaint received in relation to Adult Social Care was for Life Stages 0 – 25.

Children, Families and Learning



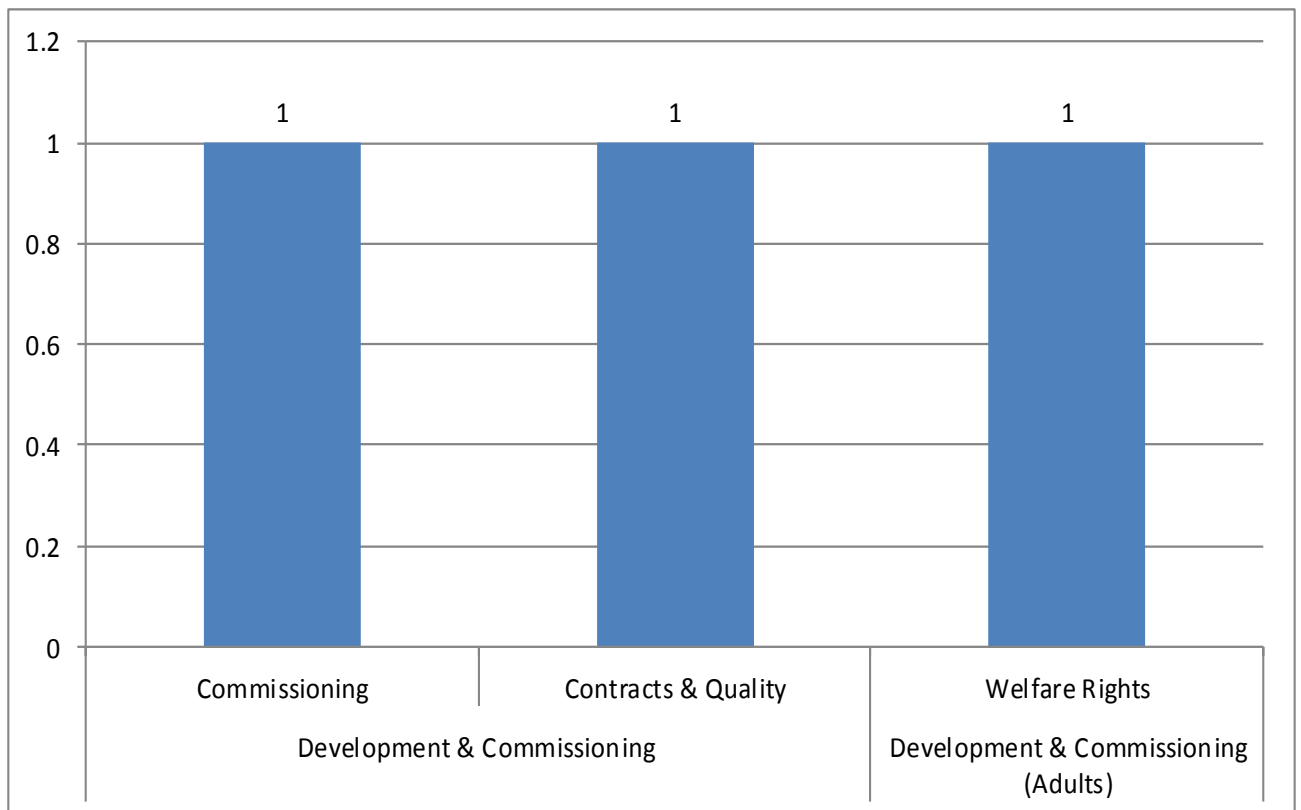
Admissions & Transport, Transport received one complaint.





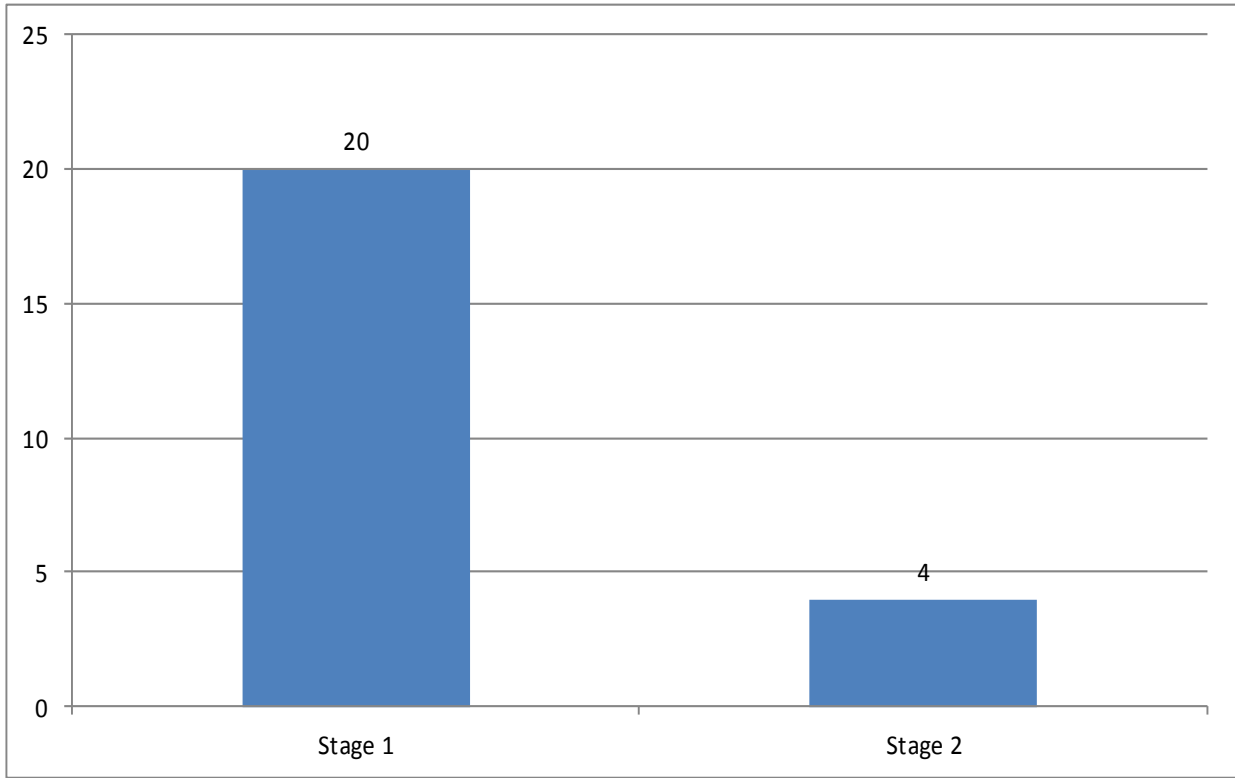
Social Care & Youth Offending, Child Care Duty received one complaint.

Development and Commissioning



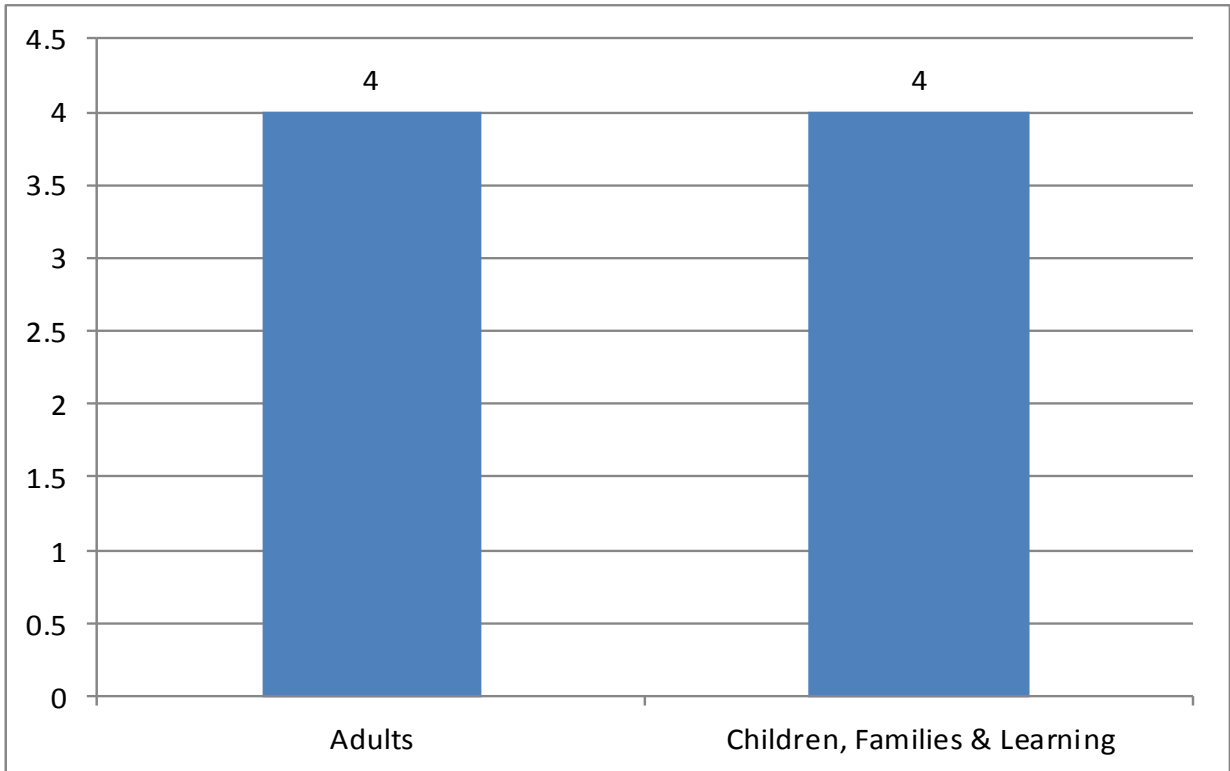
Development & Commissioning, Communities, Community Safety received one complaint

Complaints by Stage



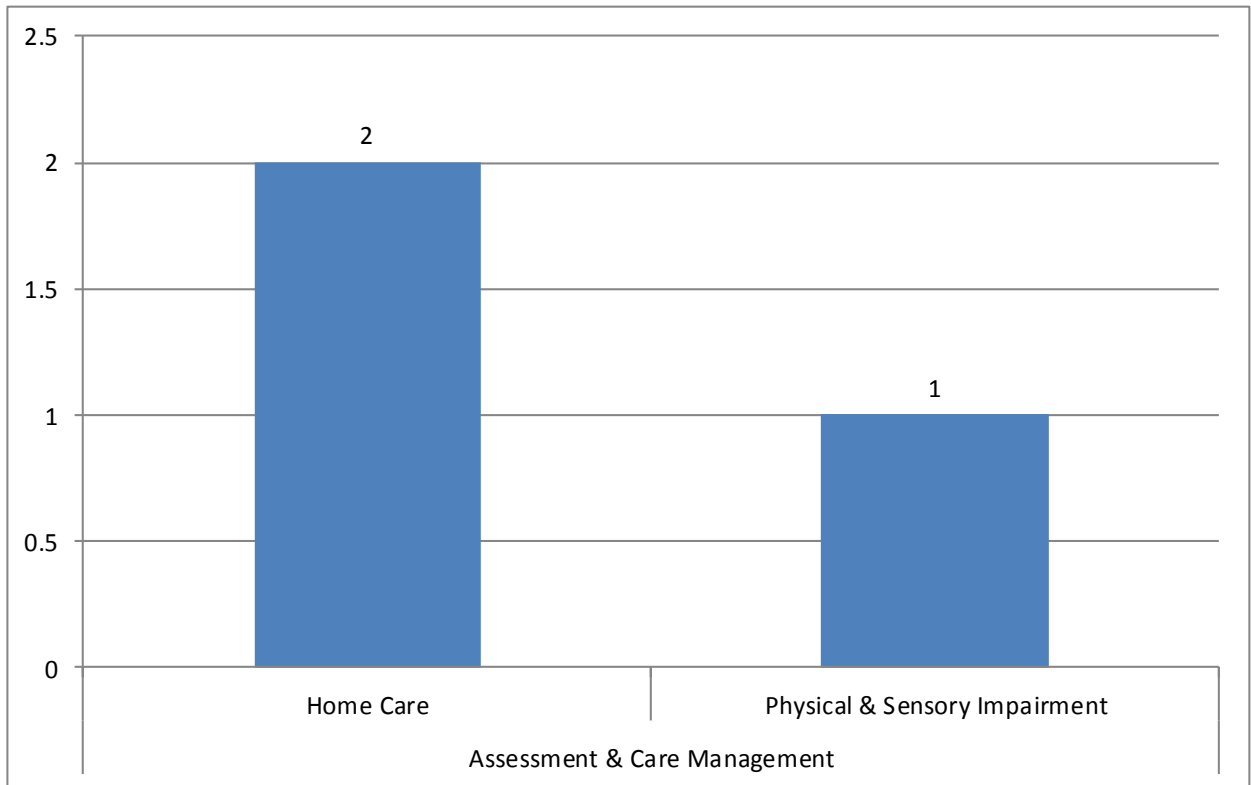
Compliments by Service Area/Team

Overview



NB. While some Adult and Children's Social Care compliments were handled in accordance with the corporate procedure the majority were handled in accordance with either the Adults or Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure. Details of those compliments are contained within the Adults and Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports.

Adult Social Care



The RIACT Service received one compliment.

Children, Families and Learning

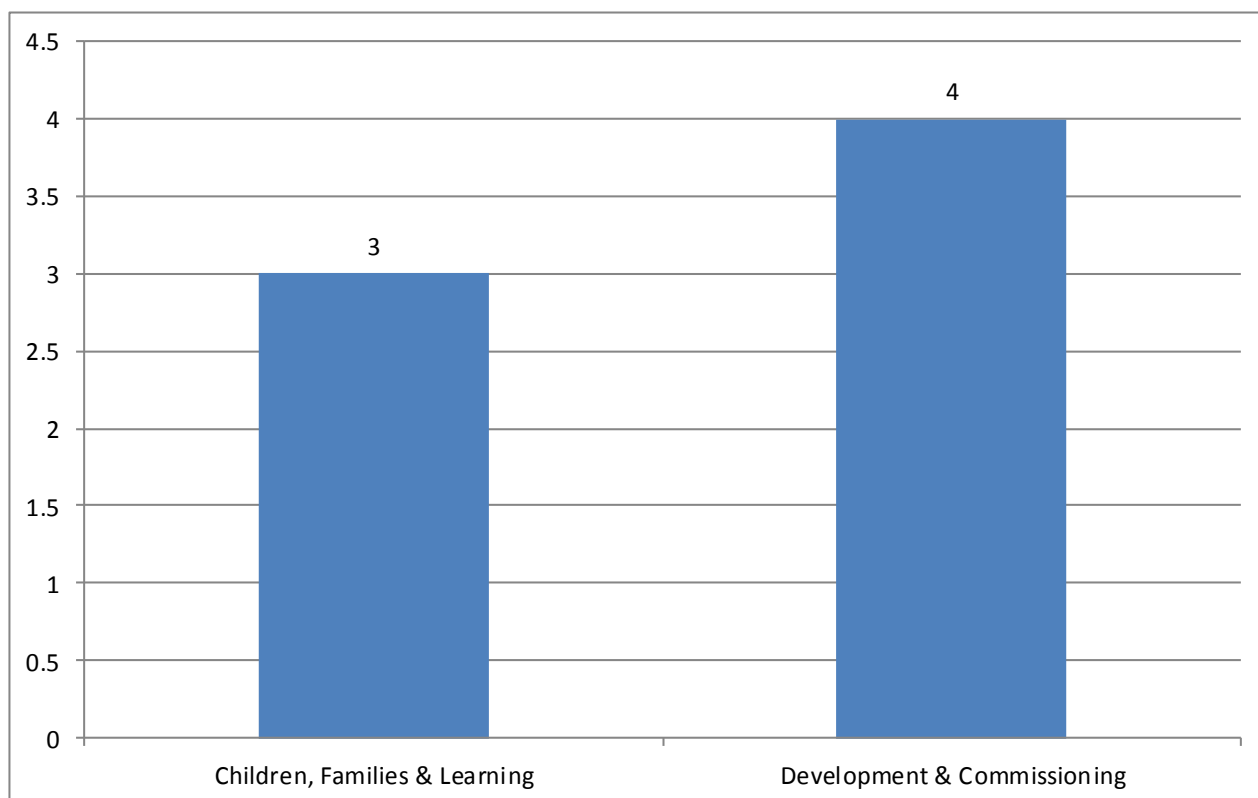
Educational Services, Placement & Assets, Admissions & Transport received one compliment.

Family Support, Specialist Family Support received one compliment.

Social Care & Youth Offending, Youth Offending, Prevention & Restorative Justice received two compliments.

Comments by Service Area/Team

Overview



NB. While some Adult and Children's Social Care comments were handled in accordance with the corporate procedure the majority were handled in accordance with either the Adults or Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure. Details of those complaints are contained within the Adults and Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports.

Children, Families and Learning

Educational Services, Early Years, Early Years received one comment.

School & Pupil Support Services, Capital Assets received one comment.

Social Care & Youth Offending, Youth Offending received one comment.

Development & Commissioning

Commissioning received one comment.

Communities, Community Safety received two comments.

Communities, Welfare Rights received one comment.

Complaints by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached in relation to those complaints received during 2013/14.

Stage 1

| Service Area/Team | Inconclusive | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld | Withdrawn | Total |
|--|--------------|------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| People | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Adult Social Care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Children and Adults Learning Disability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Life Stages 0-25 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Life Stages 0-25 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Children and Adults Learning Disability | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Adult Social Care | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Children Families & Learning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Educational Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Family Support | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Area Team 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Family Support | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Placement & Assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Admissions & Transport | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| SEN Assessment & Provision | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Placement & Assets | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total for Educational Services | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Family Support | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Anti Social Behaviour | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Anti Social Behaviour | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Area 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Area 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Family Support | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| School and Pupil Support Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Admissions and Transport | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Transport | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Admissions and Transport | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Capital Assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Capital Assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Learning and Skills and 11-19 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Learning and Skills and 11-19 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| PRU Headteacher | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for PRU Headteacher | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| SEN Assessment and Provision | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for SEN Assessment and Provision | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for School and Pupil Support Services | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Social Care and Youth Offending | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Child Care Duty | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Child Care Duty | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Social Care and Youth Offending | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Children Families & Learning | 2 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 15 |
| Development & Commissioning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Commissioning | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Commissioning | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Communities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Safety | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Community Safety | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Communities | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Contracts and Quality | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Contracts and Quality | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Development and Commissioning (Adults) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Welfare Rights | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Welfare Rights | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Development and Commissioning (Adults) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Development & Commissioning | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total for People | 2 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 20 |

Stage 2

| Service Area/Team | Inconclusive | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld | Withdrawn | Total |
|---|--------------|------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| People | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Children Families & Learning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Educational Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Placement & Assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Admissions & Transport | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| SEN Assessment & Provision | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Placement & Assets | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Educational Services | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Social Care and Youth Offending | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Child Care Duty | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Child Care Duty | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Social Care and Youth Offending | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Children Families & Learning | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Development & Commissioning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Communities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Safety | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Community Safety | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Communities | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Development & Commissioning | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for People | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

Organisational Learning

All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2013/14. Some examples of these are detailed below.

Following the complaint that was upheld for School & Pupil Support Services, Admissions & Transport, Transport it was agreed that we would look to employ staff with the appropriate skills to supervise children with behavioural difficulties whilst using school transport.

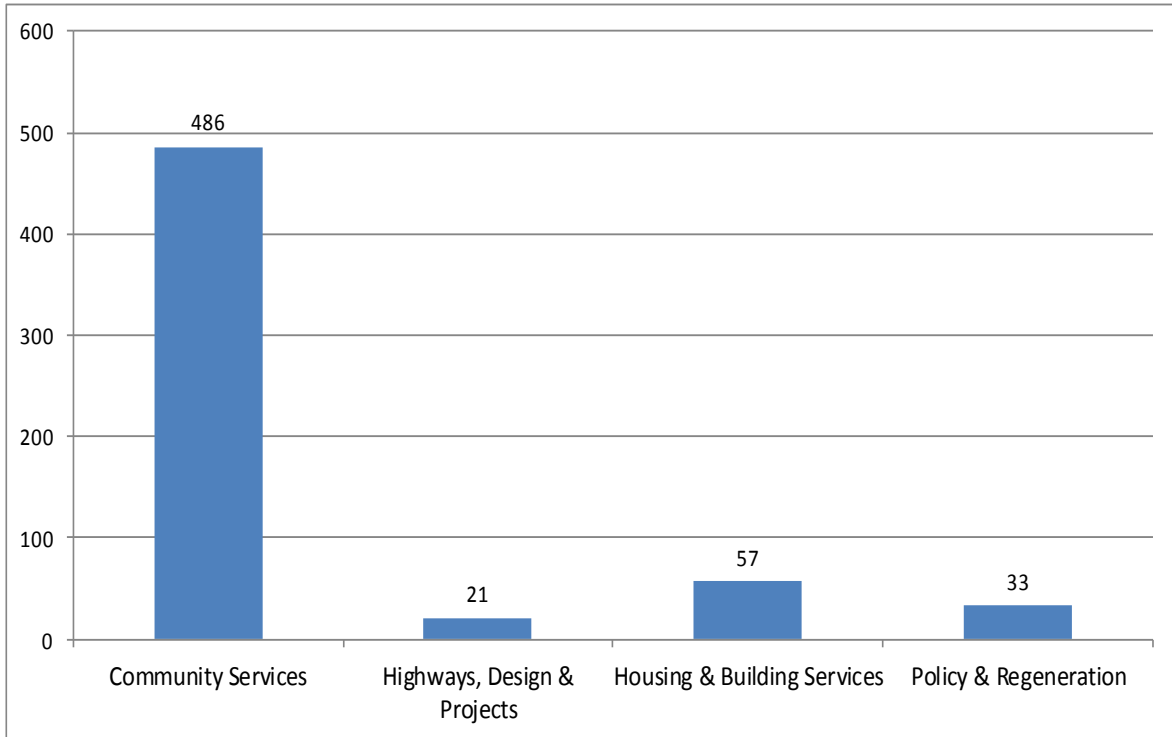
Following the Stage 1 complaint for Communities, Community Safety that was partially upheld it was agreed that the Council would improve our process for determining which cases are appropriate for mediation, according to criteria that are outlined to the parties involved in advance, with plenty of time for them to consider the best option for them.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

Services for Place

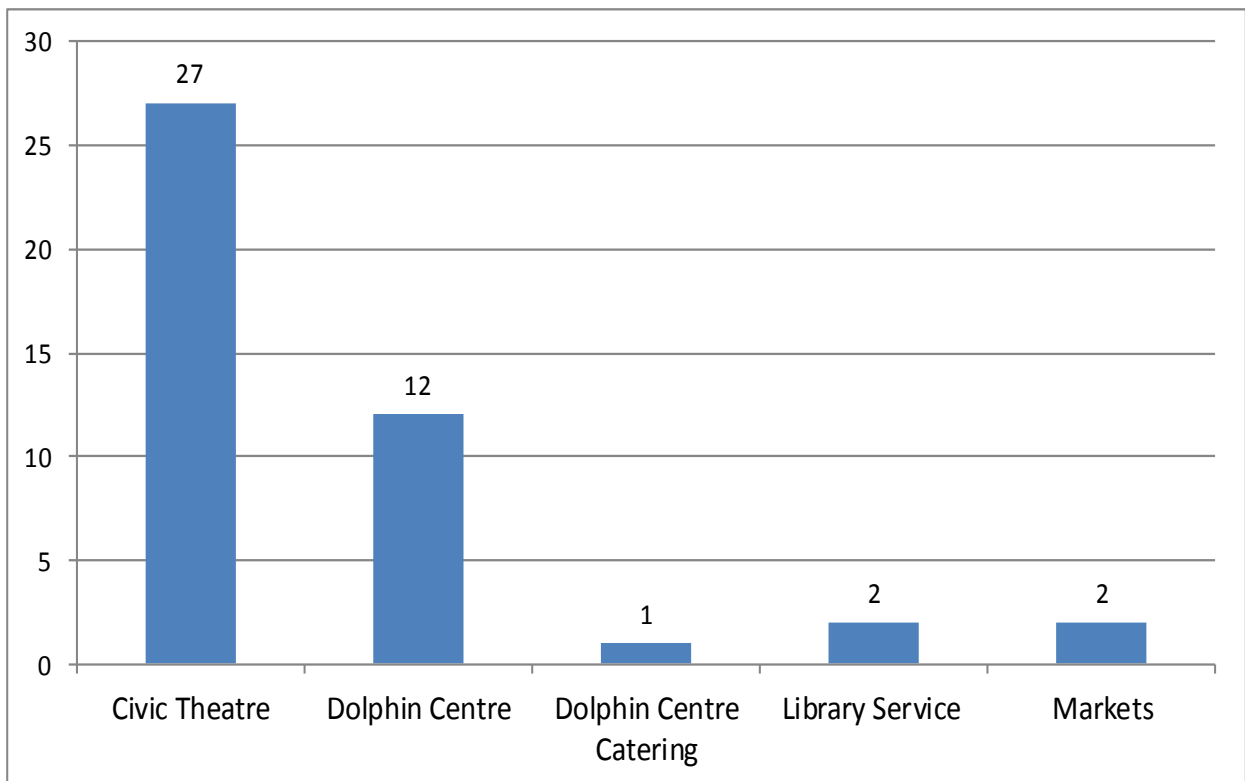
Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



NB. While some Housing and Building Services complaints were handled in accordance with the corporate procedure the majority were handled in accordance with the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure. Details of those complaints are contained in the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report.

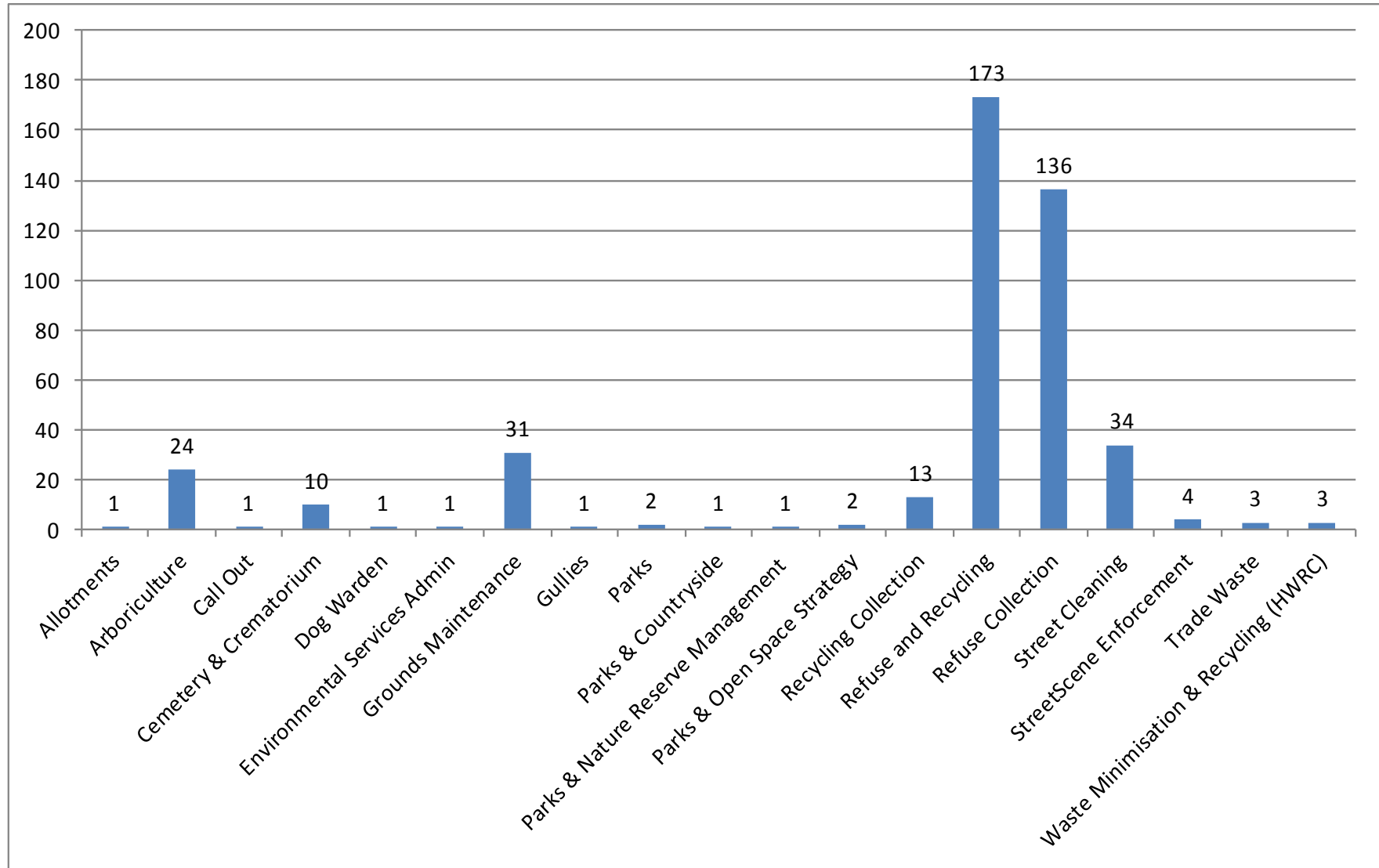
Community Services – Culture



There was an increase in the number of complaints received for the Civic Theatre compared to 18 in 2012/13. The most common cause of complaint was staff being too lenient in dealing with anti-social behaviour in the crowd. On the other hand the second most common cause of complaint was dissatisfaction with being asked to leave the theatre as a result of their behaviour.

The Dolphin Centre saw an increase in the number of complaints received, from 5 in 2012/13. There were no identifiable themes.

Community Services - Environmental Services



There was an increase in complaints for Arboriculture from seven in 2012/13. Complaints generally resulted from a lack of response to initial enquiries and/or dissatisfaction with a decision not to undertake works to a tree for the reasons requested.

There was an increase in complaints for Cemetery & Crematorium from three in 2012/13. The majority of complaints related to grounds maintenance within cemeteries.

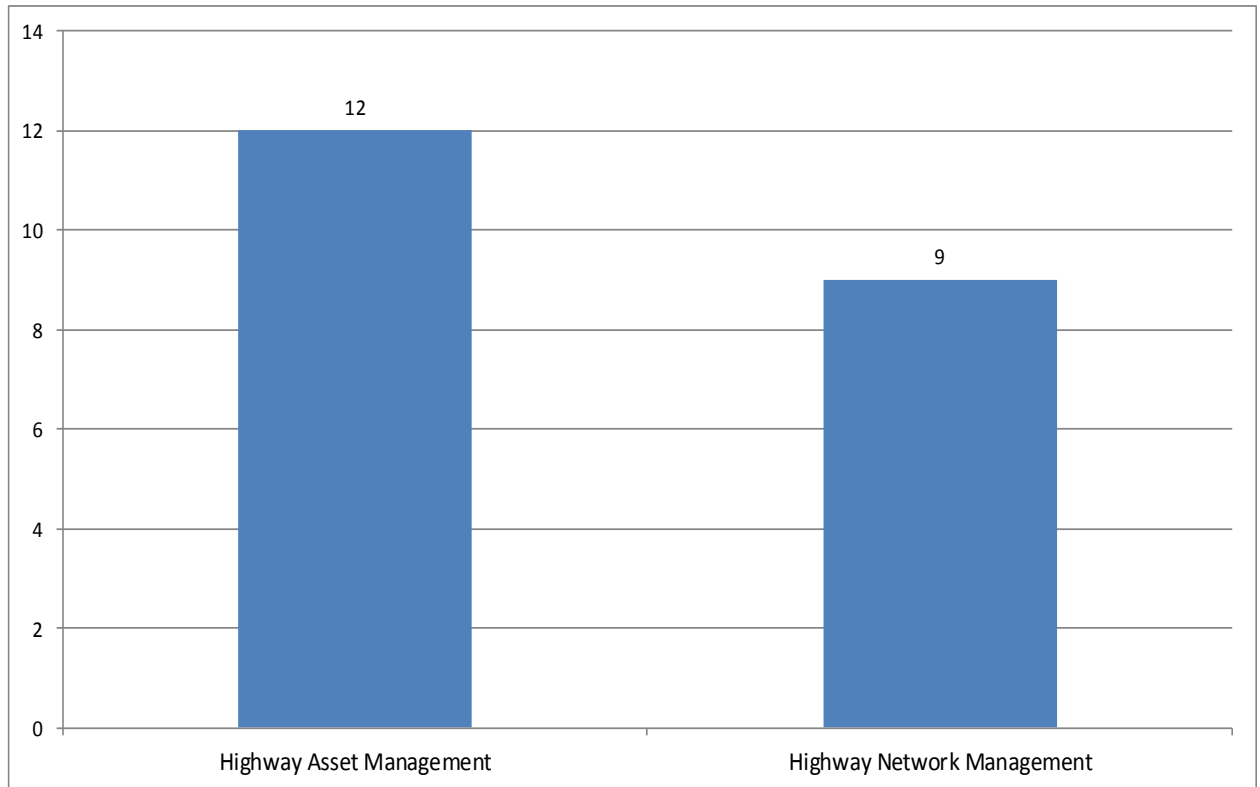
Complaints for Grounds Maintenance increased from 14 in 2012/13 and generally resulted from a lack of response to initial enquiries and/or dissatisfaction with grass and hedge cutting.

Overall the Council received 322 complaints relating to refuse and recycling collections compared to 55 in 2012/13. Following a change to the Council's structure part way through the year, complaints about refuse and recycling collections are now recorded separately. While it was not practicable to disaggregate the 173 complaints logged to Refuse and Recycling, the majority of these related to dissatisfaction with the introduction of wheeled bins and/or problems with refuse collections following the introduction of wheeled bins. Common themes were the unsuitability of properties for a wheeled bin, missed and repeatedly missed collections and assisted collections and wheeled bins being left obstructing access following collection. Almost all of the complaints logged to Refuse Collection concerned the issues outlined above. Complaints for Recycling were about missed and repeatedly missed collections.

There was an increase in complaints about street cleaning from 19 in 2012/13. The most common complaint for Street Cleaning was the lack of street sweeping in certain areas. Other complaints included delays in removing fly-tips and graffiti.

As a result of the high volume of complaint received, 137 of the Stage 1 complaints received for Environmental Services were not responded to. The decision was taken by the to close approximately 110 complaints without response primarily concerning one off missed collections, where the refuse had been collected in subsequent weeks and we had not received any further contact from the complainant.

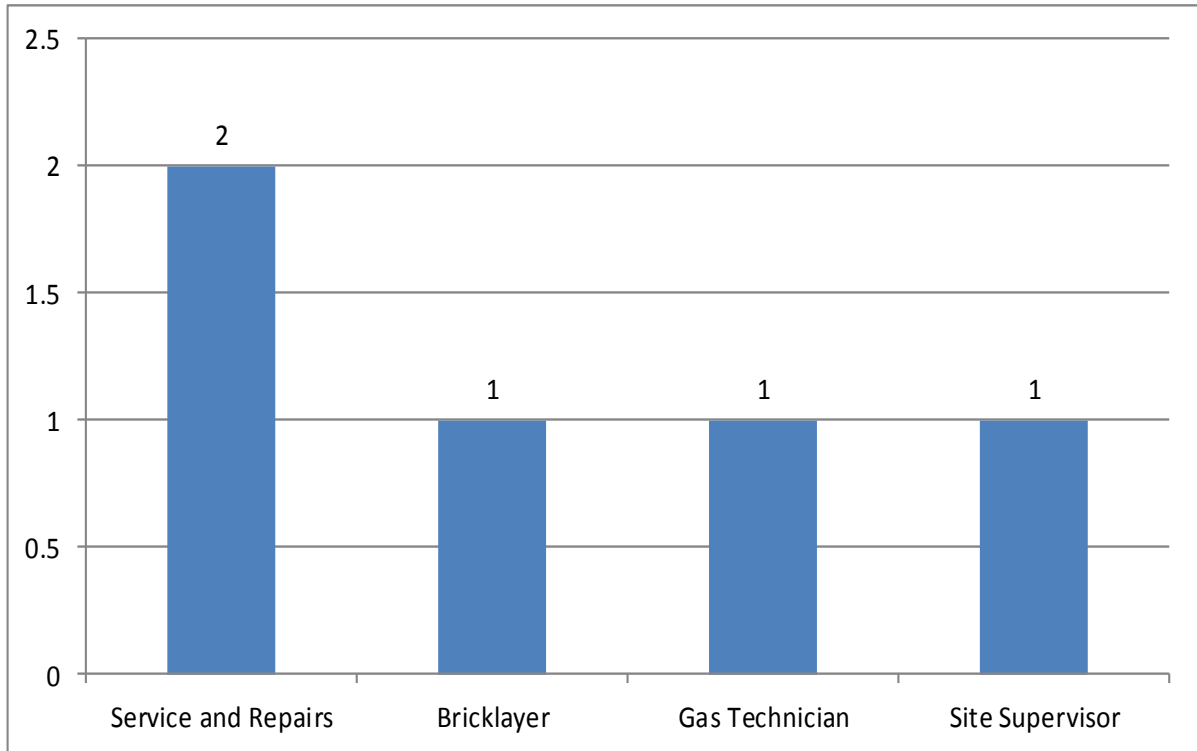
Highways, Design and Projects



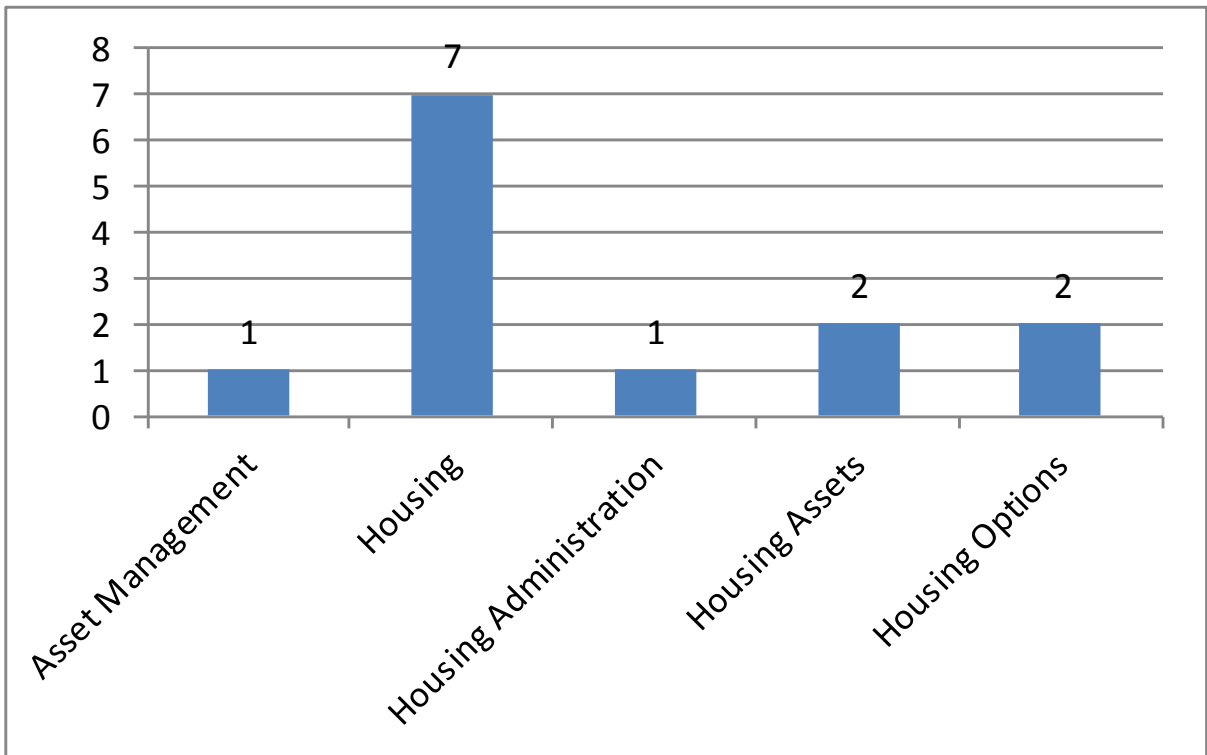
Highway Asset Management received two fewer complaints than in 2012/13. There were no identifiable themes.

Highway Network Management received the same number of complaints as in 2012/13.

Housing & Building Services - Building Services



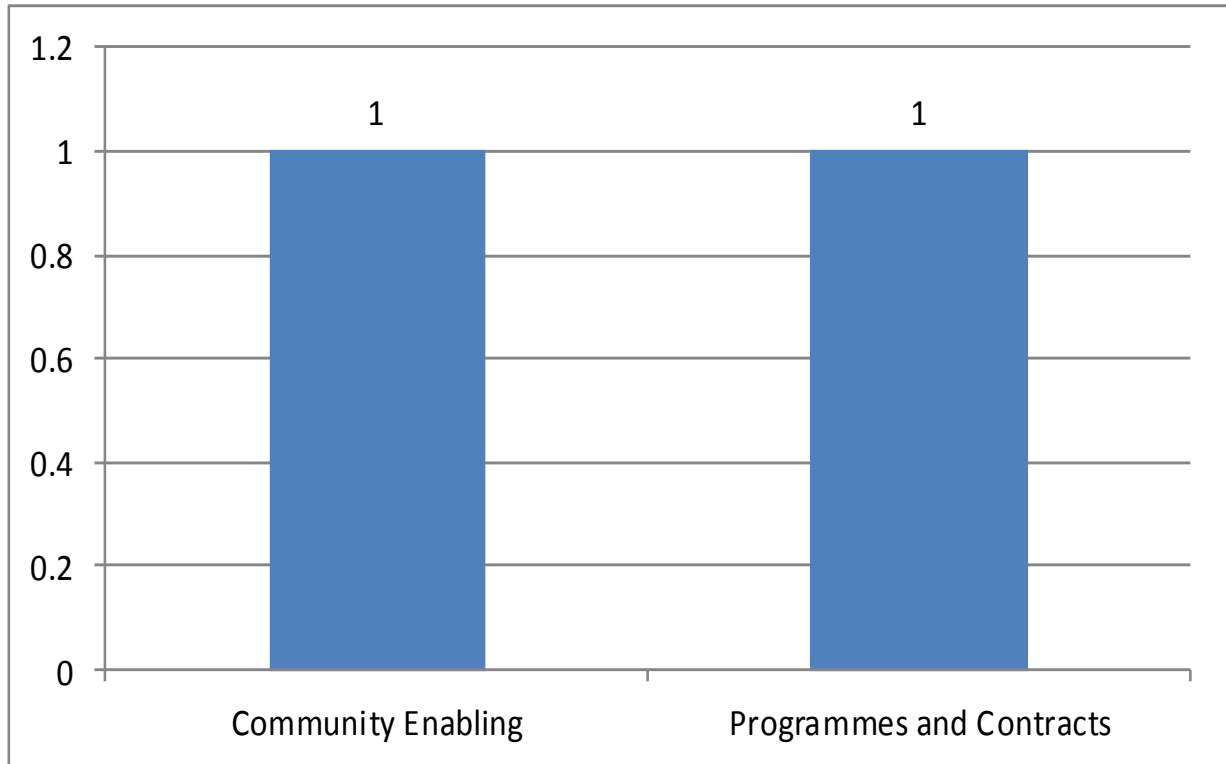
Housing & Building Services – Housing



Housing & Building Services – Revenues & Benefits

Revenues & Benefits received 39 complaints, compared to 21 in 2012/13. The most common cause of complaint was dissatisfaction with the administration of Council Tax.

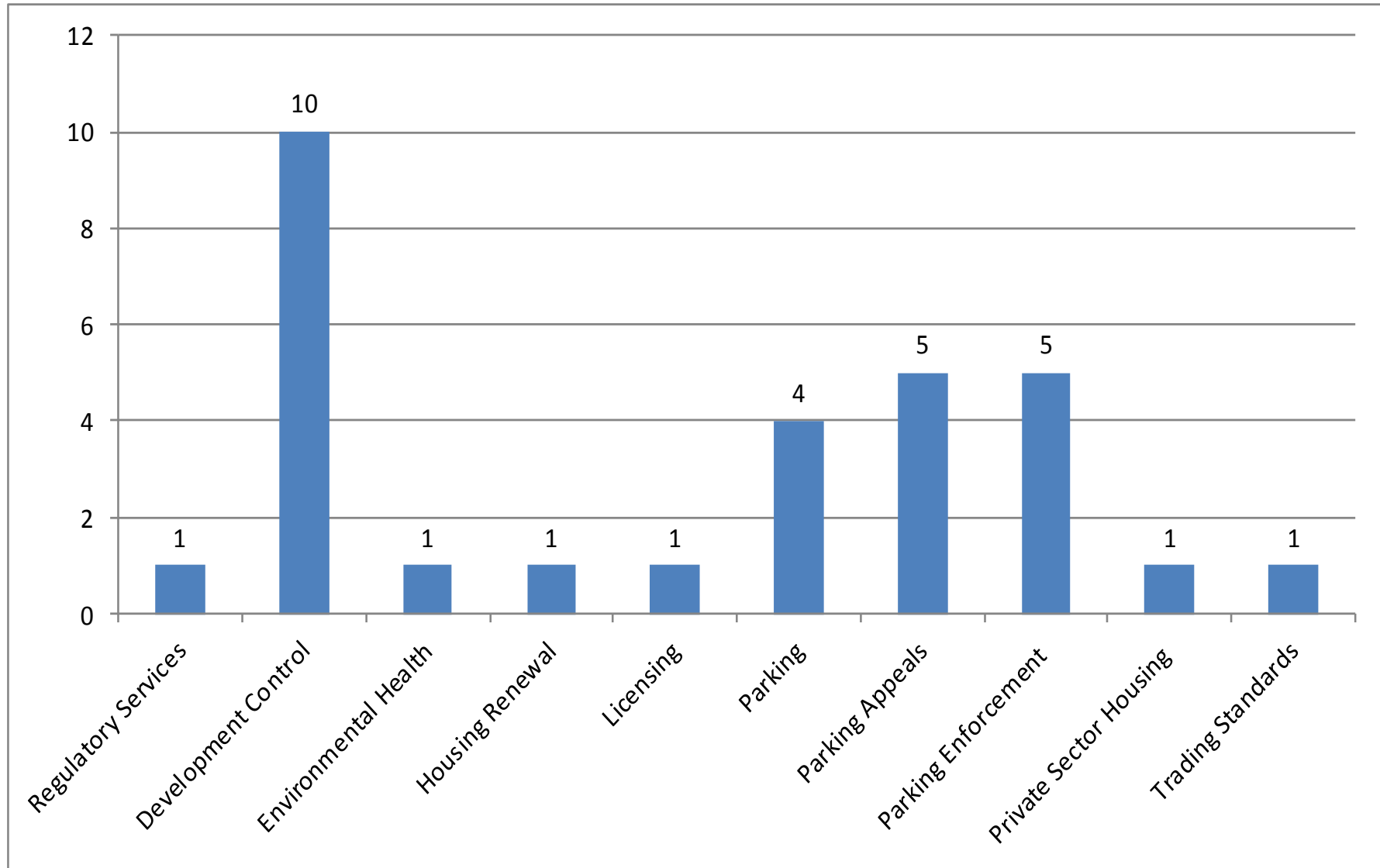
Policy and Regeneration - Programme and Projects



Policy and Regeneration – Economic Regeneration

One complaint was received for Business Start-Up Coach.

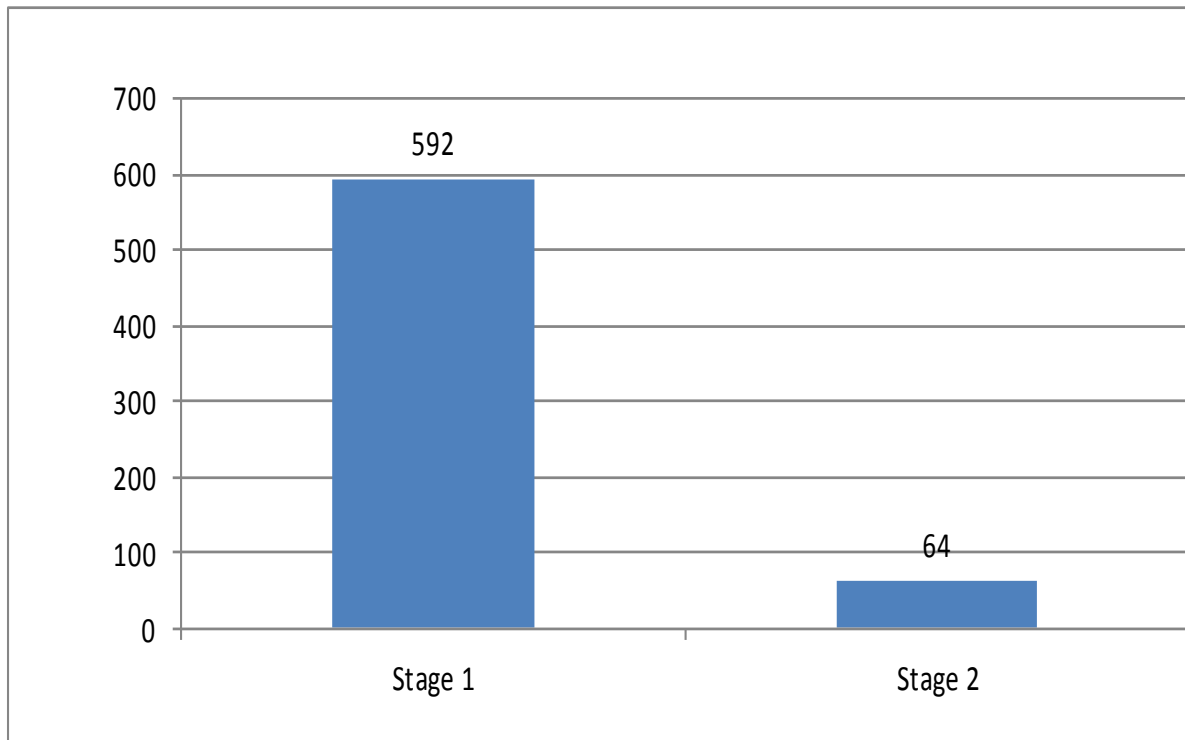
Policy and Regeneration - Regulatory Services



Development Control received three more complaints than in 2012/13, however, this was still significantly less than in previous years. The most common complaint was about lack of enforcement action.

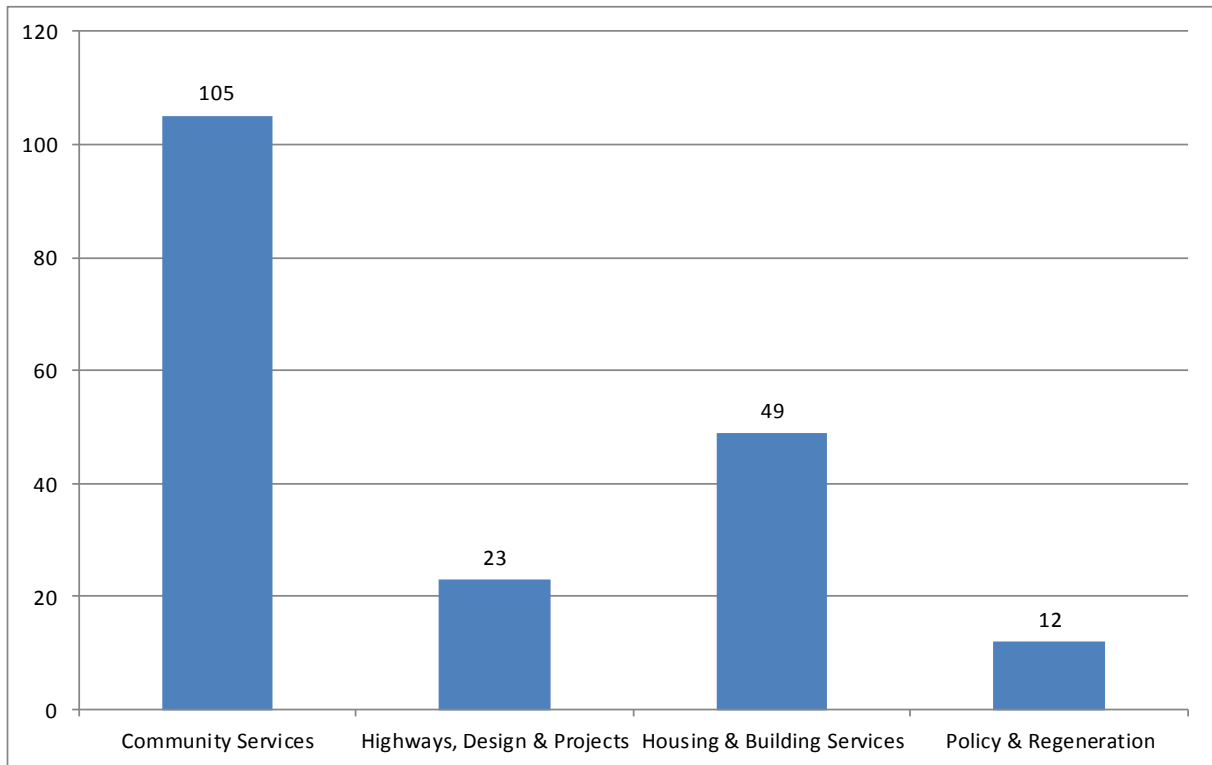
The most common complaint for Parking, Parking Appeals and Parking Enforcement was dissatisfaction with staff attitude.

Complaints by Stage



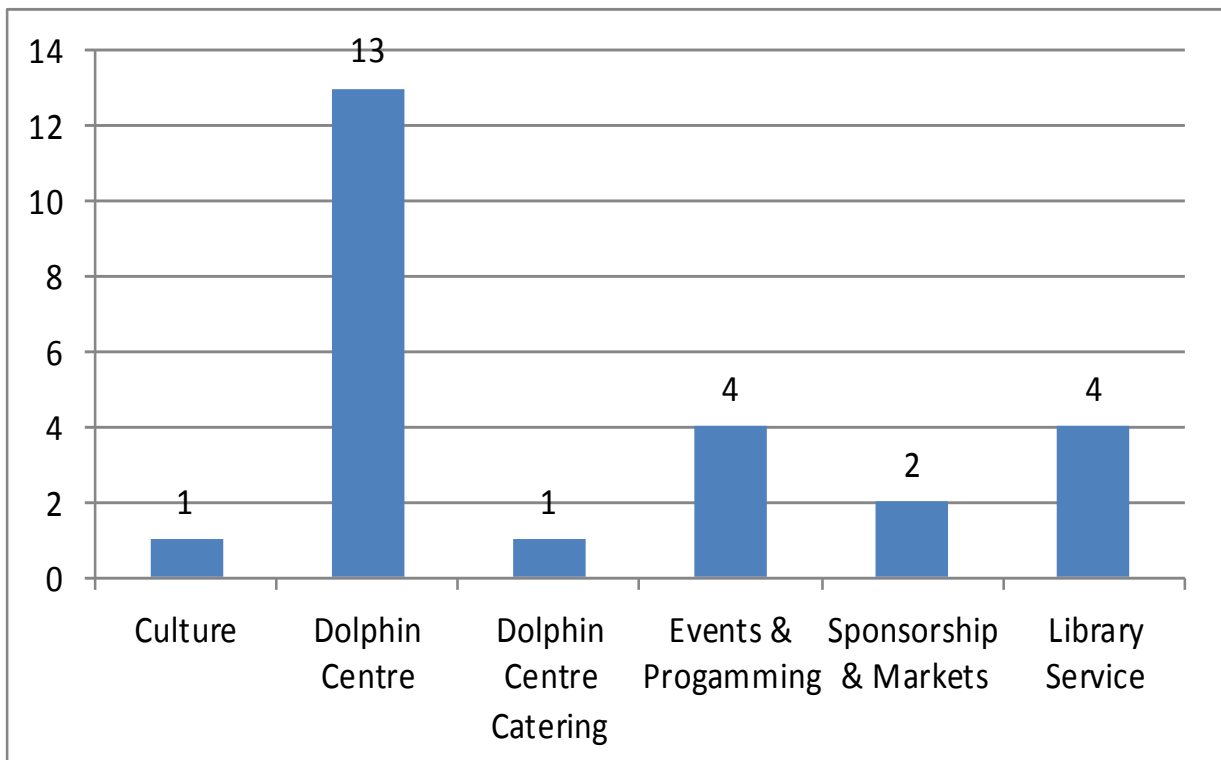
Compliments by Service Area/Team

Overview



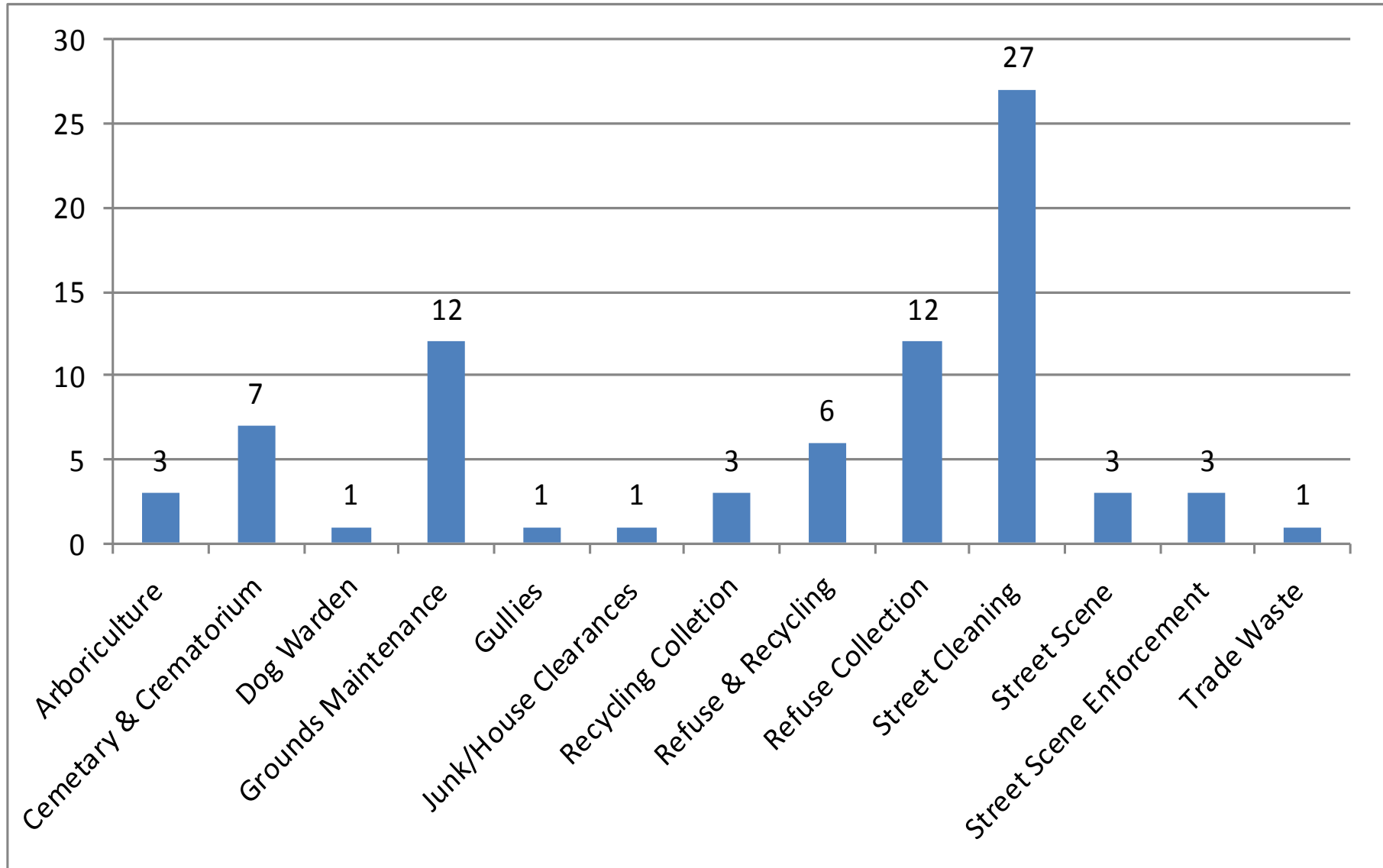
NB. While some Housing and Building Services compliments were recorded under the corporate procedure the majority were recorded under the Housing Complaints Procedure. Details of those compliments are contained in the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report.

Community Services – Culture



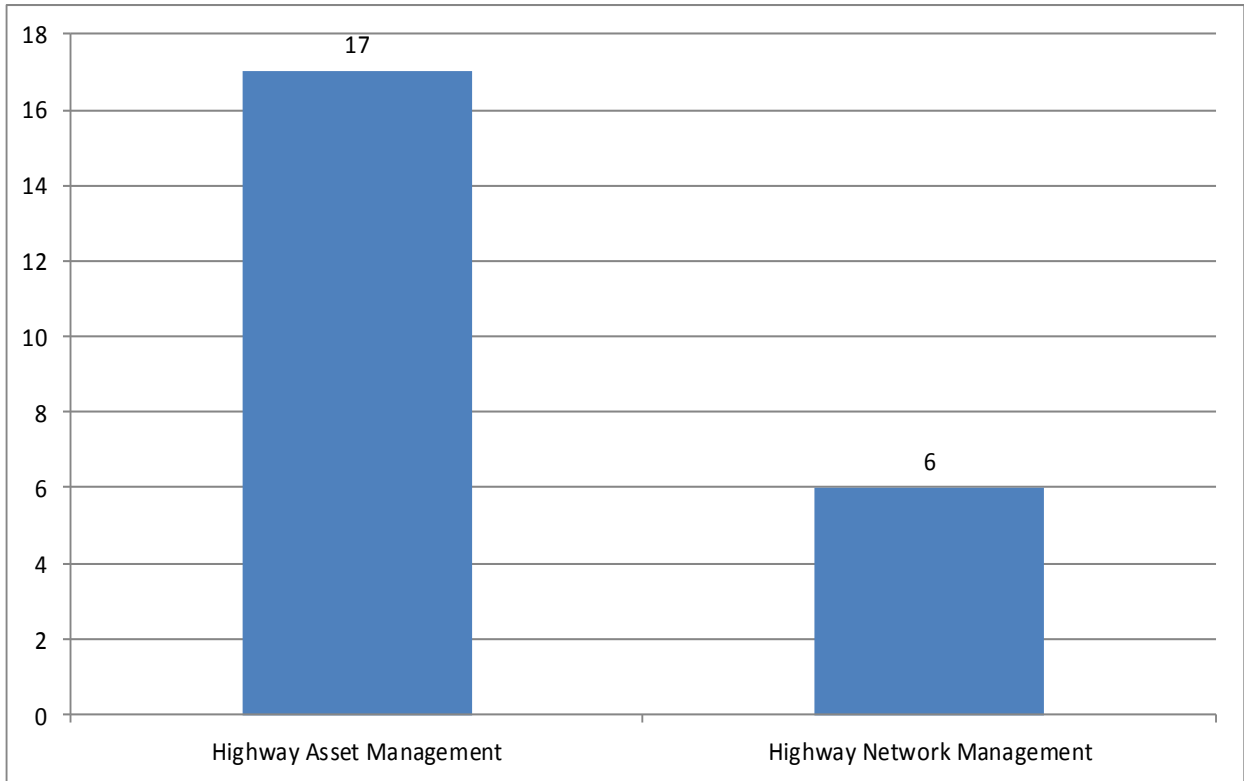
Compliments for the Dolphin Centre were received in relation to the sport and leisure facilities, the café, the staff and events; including weddings and Christmas party nights.

Community Services – Environmental Services



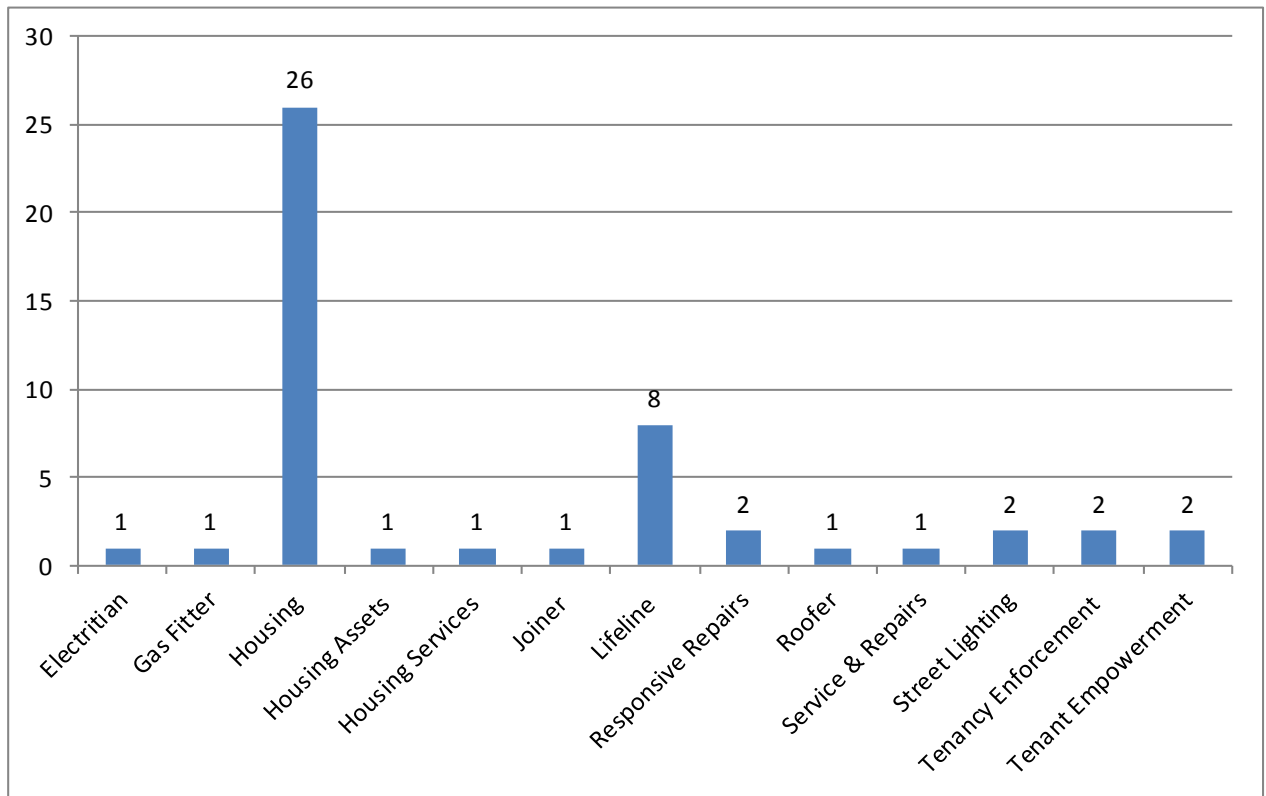
The compliments for Ground Maintenance, Refuse and Recycling and Street Cleansing concerned the general high quality of service provided.

Highway, Design and Projects



Compliments for Highway Asset Management were mainly for the quality and timeliness of repairs to potholes, footpaths and street lights.

Housing & Building Services



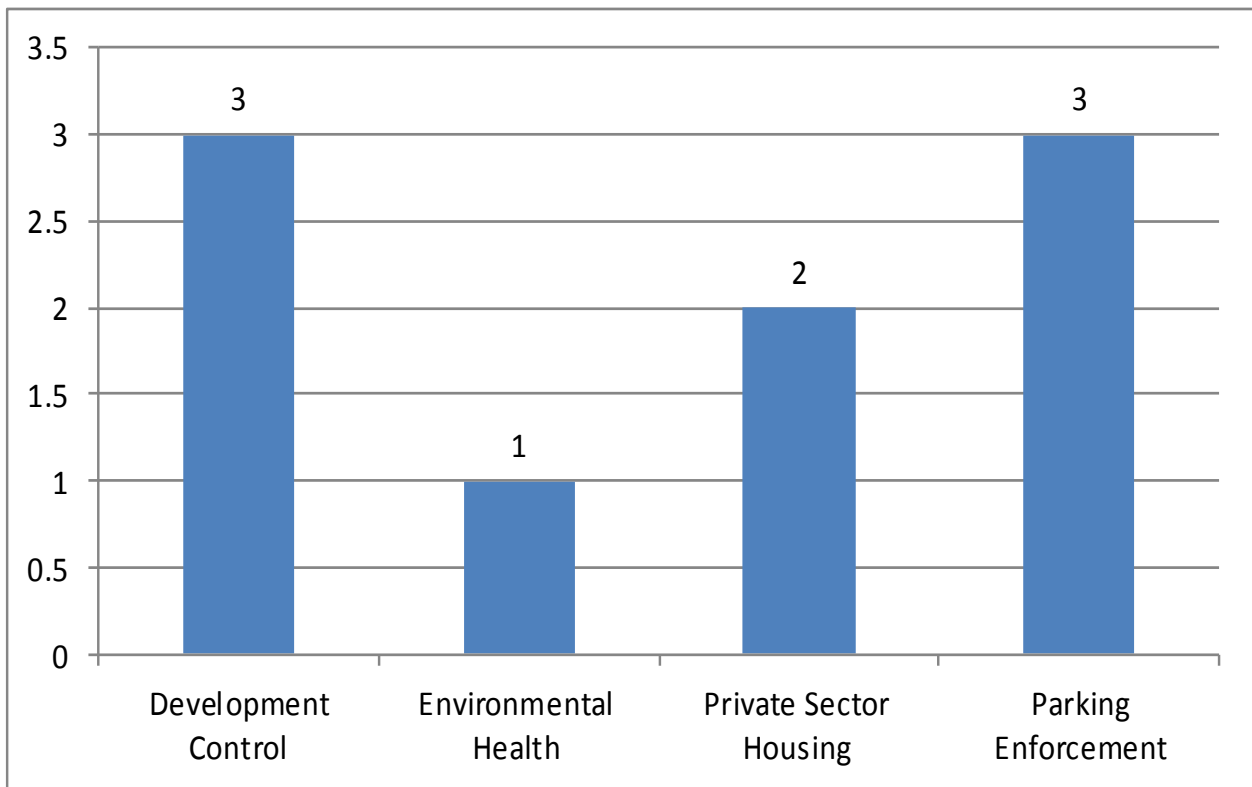
Policy and Regeneration – Economic Regeneration

One compliment was received for Town Centre.

Policy and Regeneration – Economic Regeneration

One compliment was received for Sustainable Transport.

Policy and Regeneration – Regulatory Services

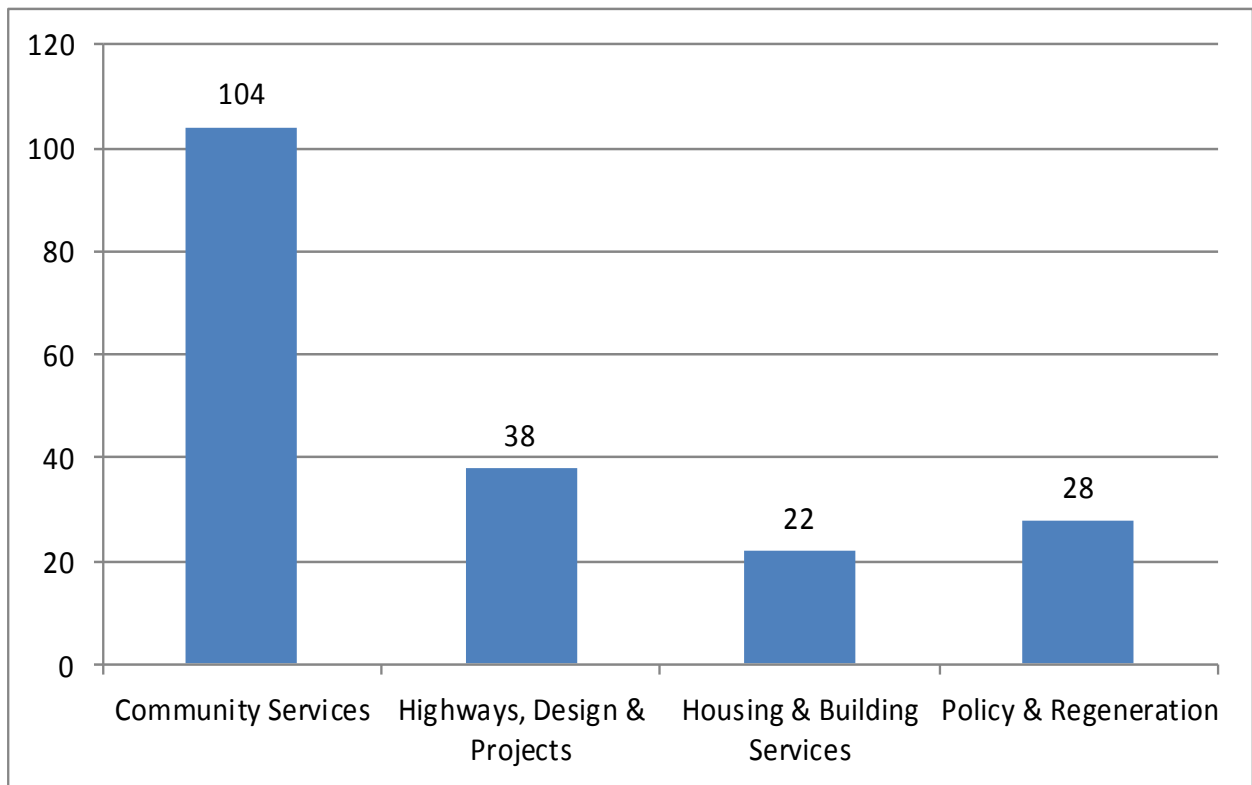


Policy and Regeneration – Strategy and Commissioning

One compliment was received for Transport, Environment and Sustainability.

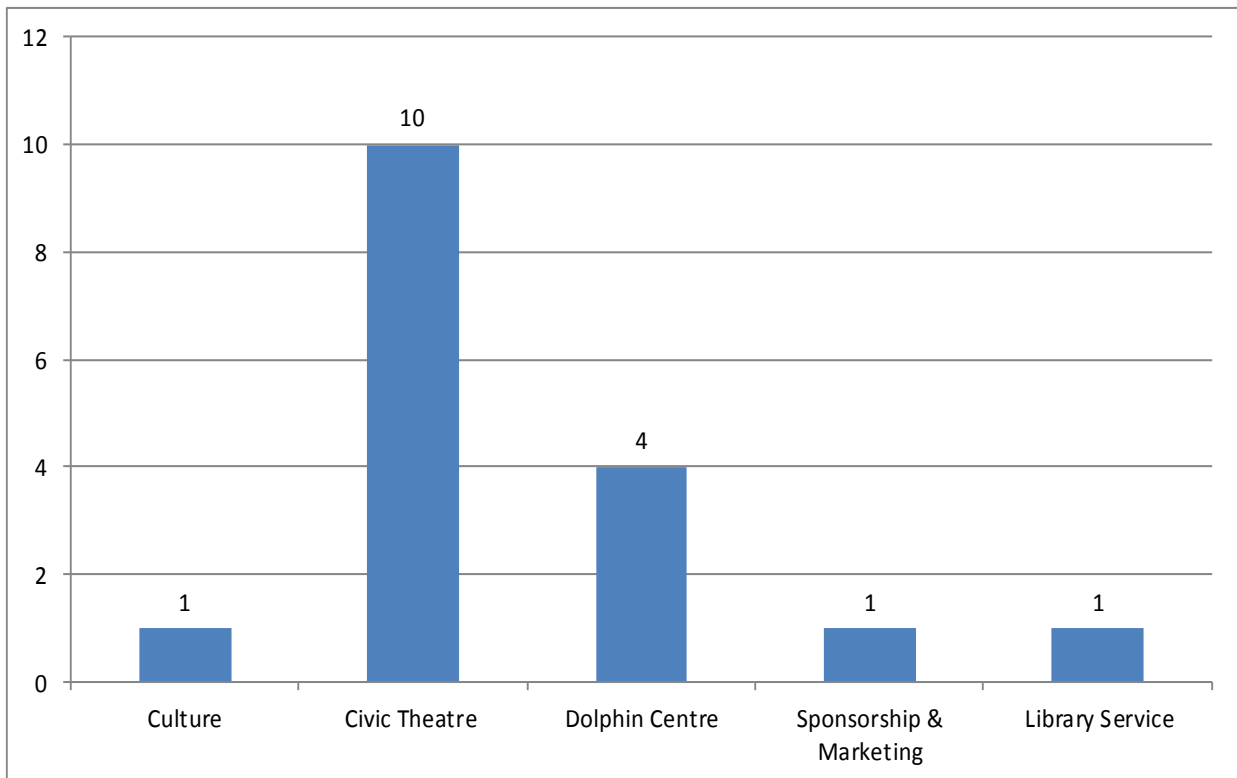
Comments by Service Area/Team

Overview



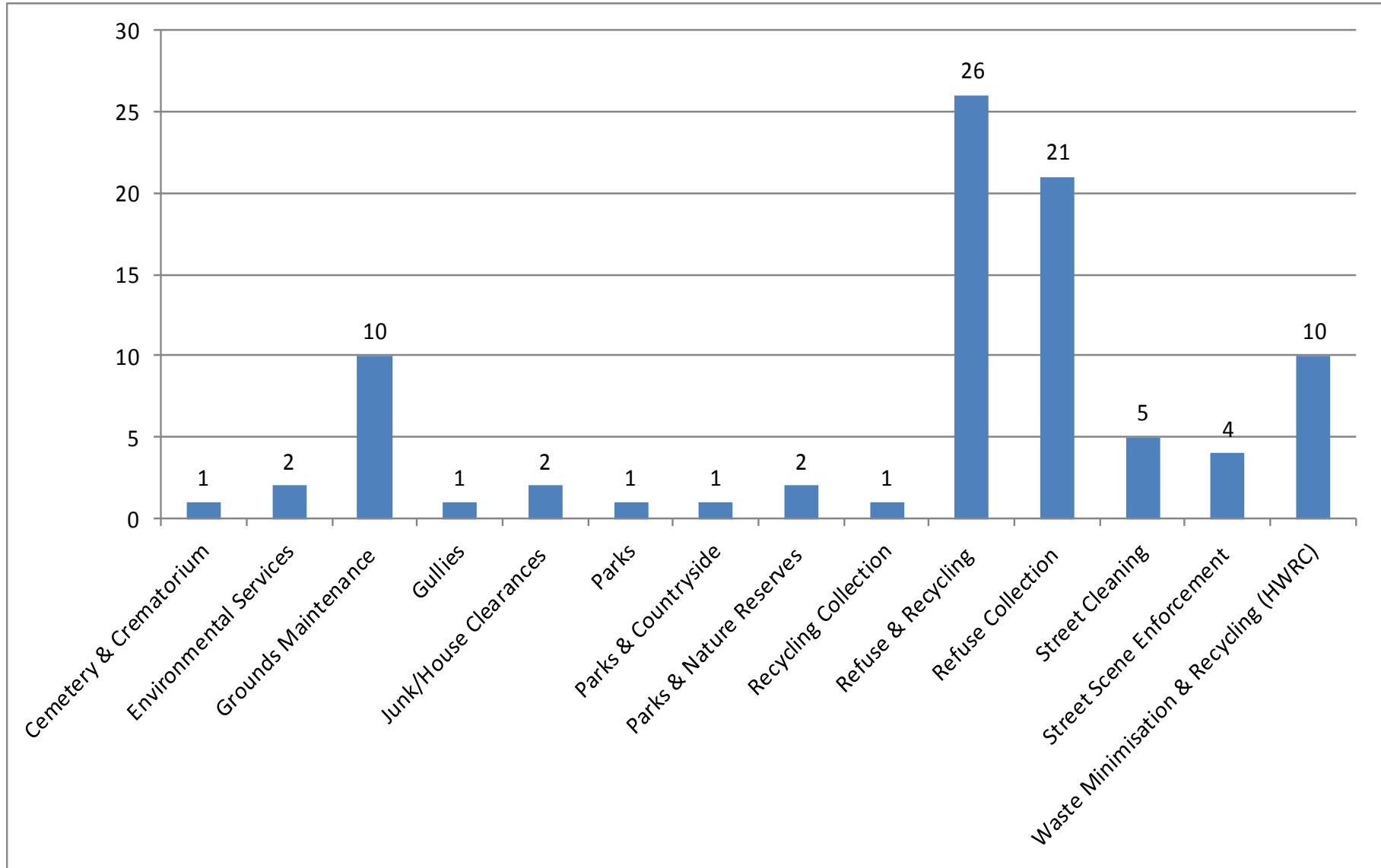
NB. While some Housing and Building Services comments were recorded under the corporate procedure the majority were recorded under the Housing Complaints Procedure. Details of those compliments are contained in the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report.

Community Services - Culture



The majority of comments relating to the Civic Theatre concerned dissatisfaction with the quality of productions.

Community Services – Environmental Services

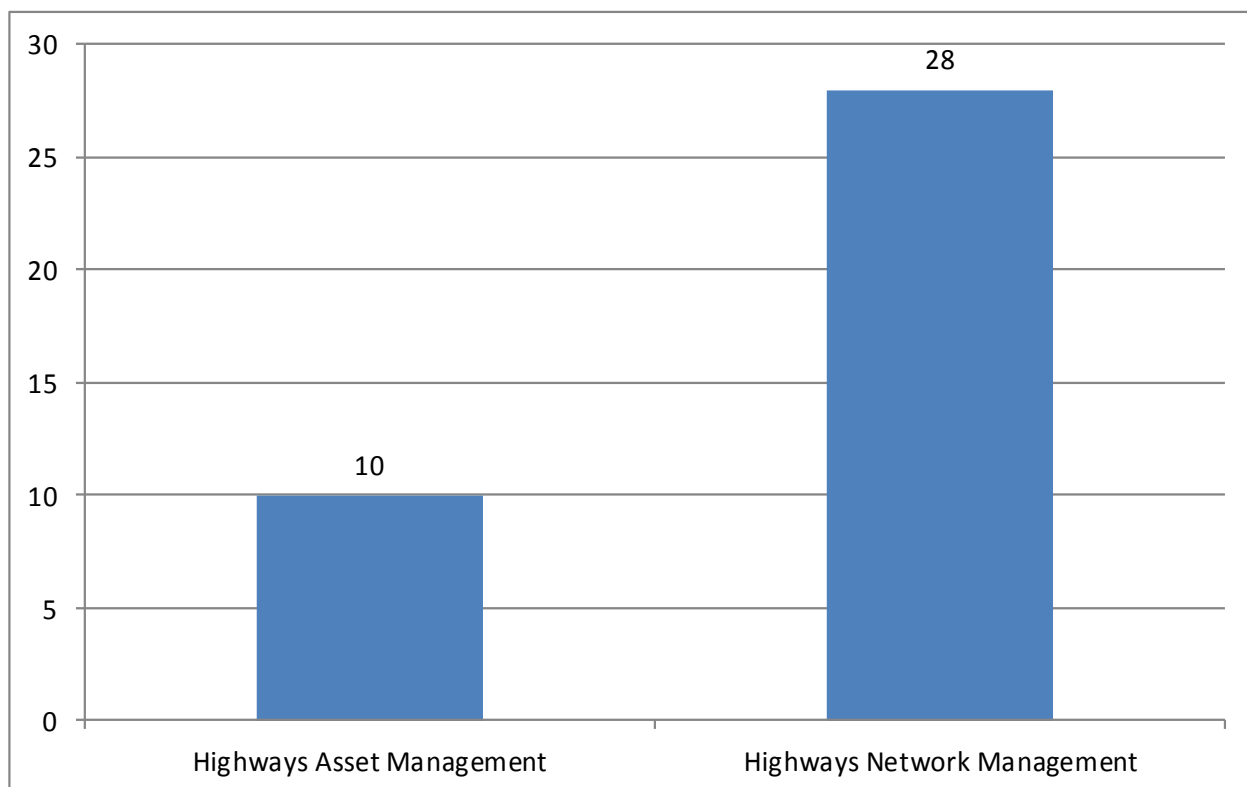


The majority of comments for Grounds Maintenance related to grass cutting.

The most common comments in relation to Refuse and Recycling concerned the introduction of wheeled bins, other comments concerned missed collections and the Council no longer offering a recall service for refuse and recycling.

The majority of comments for the Household Waste Recycling Centre concerned the changes introduced, specifically the introduction of the height restriction and permit scheme.

Highway, Design and Projects



There were no discernable themes among the comments received for Highways, Design and Projects.

Housing & Building Services – Building Services

Building Services received one comment.

Housing & Building Services – Housing

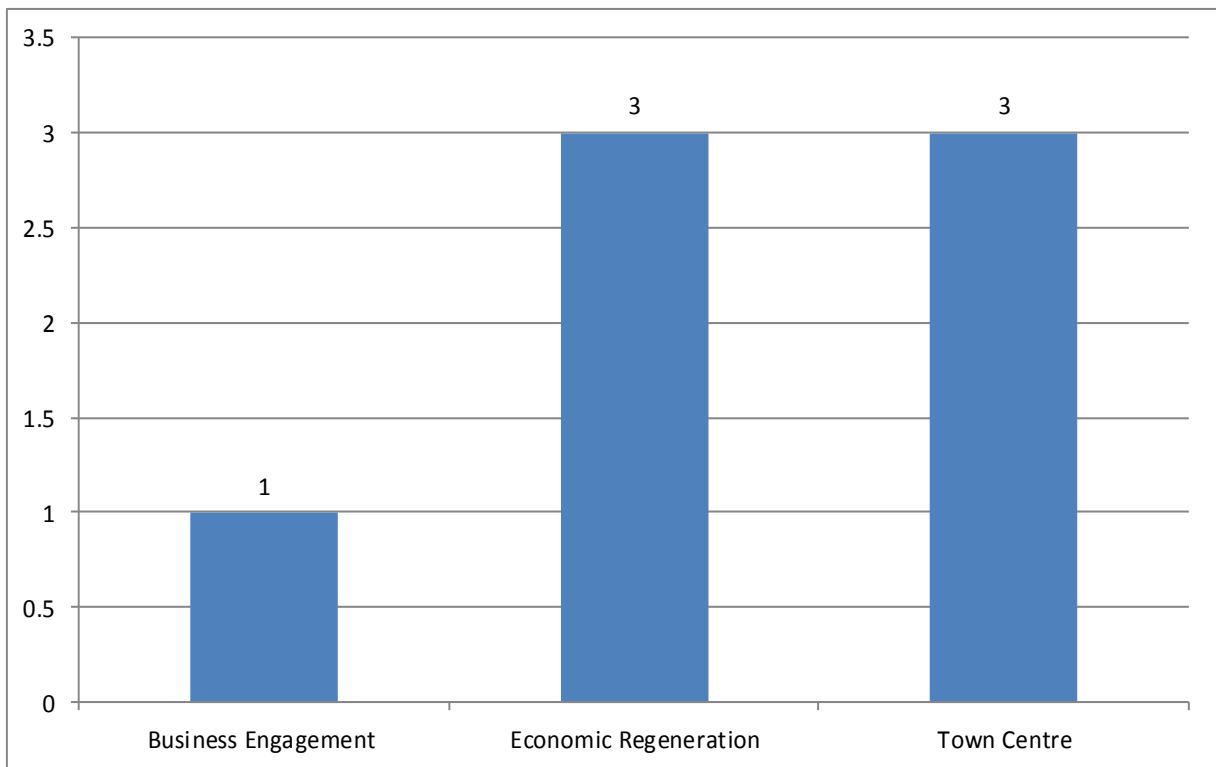


Housing & Building Services – Revenues & Benefits

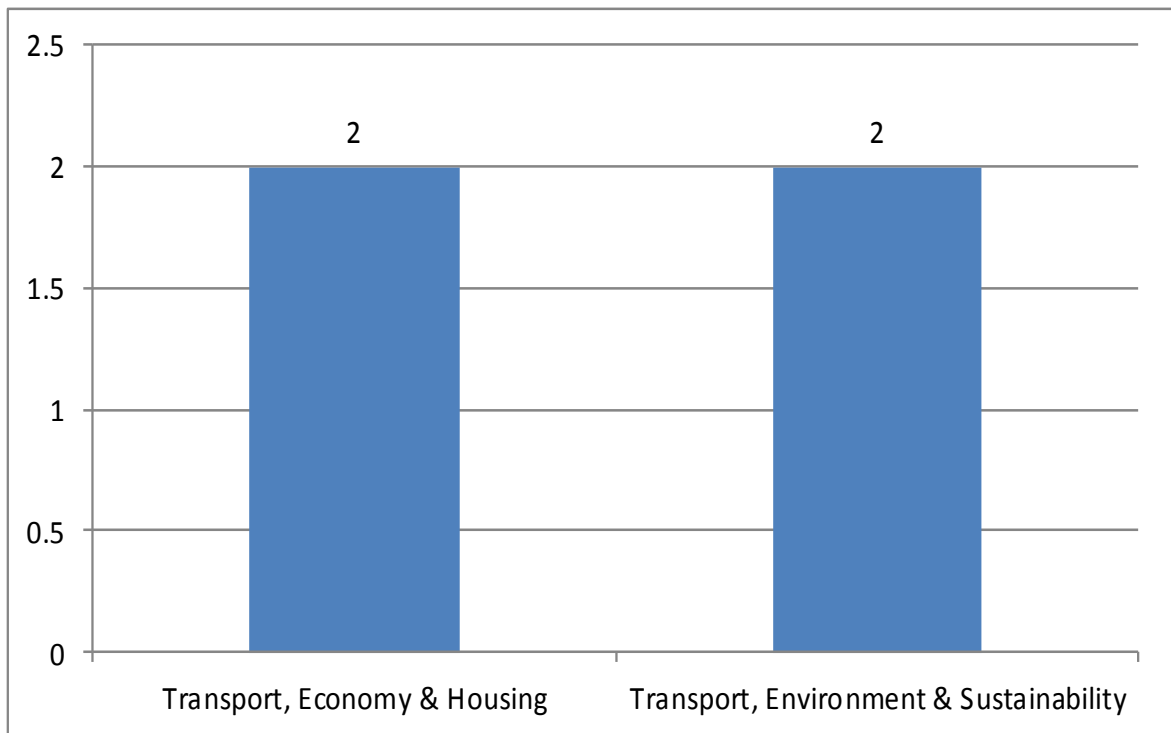
Revenues & Benefits received fourteen comments.

The only identifiable theme was people's dissatisfaction with the changes to the Council Tax exemption for unoccupied properties.

Policy and Regeneration – Economic Regeneration



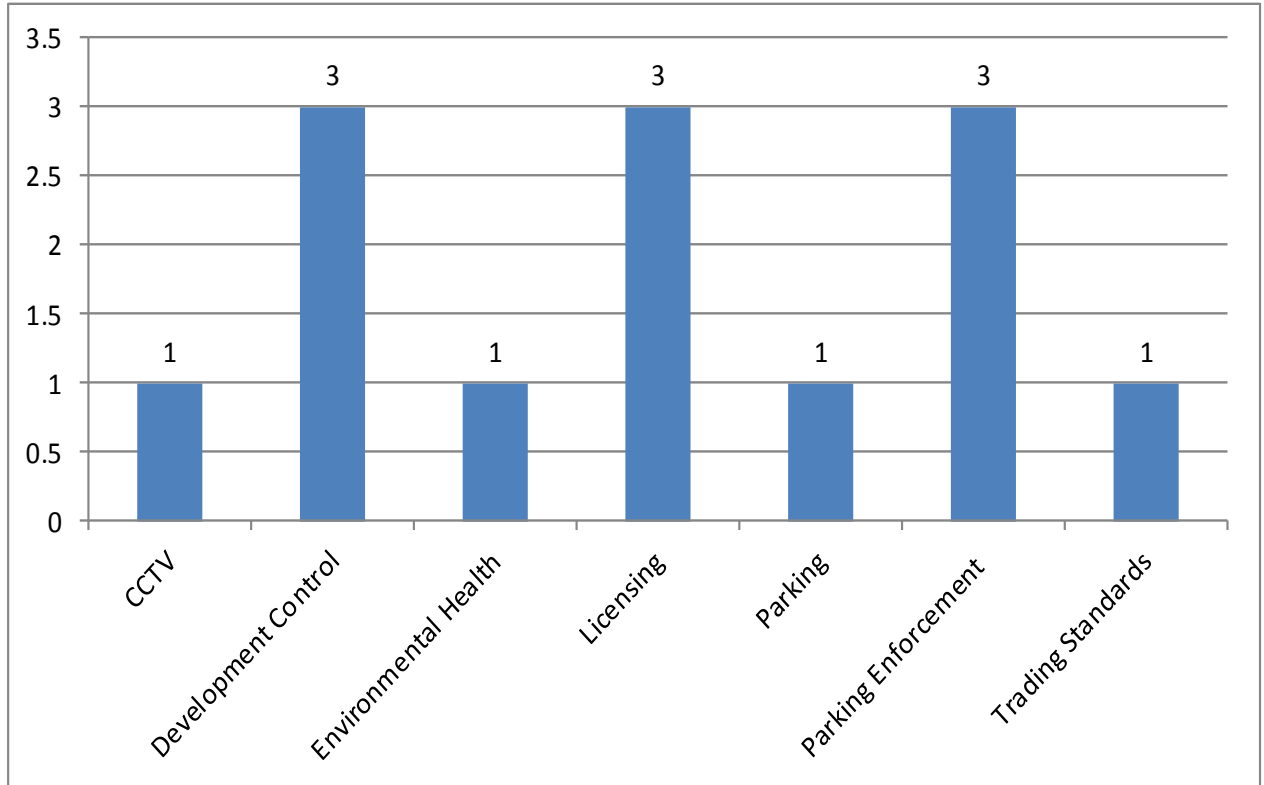
Policy and Regeneration – Strategy & Commissioning



Policy and Regeneration – Programme & Projects

Sustainable Transport received four comments.

Policy and Regeneration – Regulatory Services



Complaints by Outcome

Stage 1

The below tables show the decisions reached in relation to those complaints received during 2013/14.

| Service Area/Team | Closed With No Response | Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response) | Inconclusive | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld | Withdrawn | Total |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Place | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Culture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Civic Theatre | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 23 |
| Total for Civic Theatre | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 23 |
| Cultural Facilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Civic Theatre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Dolphin Centre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Total for Cultural Facilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Cultural Services Operations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dolphin Centre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| Dolphin Centre Catering | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Markets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Cultural Services Operations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Library Service | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Library Service | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Culture | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 3 | 21 | 2 | 42 |
| Environmental Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cemetery and Crematorium | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| East Cemetery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| North Cemetery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| West Cemetery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Cemetery and Crematorium | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| Environmental Crime | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Dog Warden | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| StreetScene Enforcement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Environmental Crime | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Environmental Services Admin | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Environmental Services Admin | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Parks and Countryside | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Arboriculture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Parks | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Parks & Nature Reserve Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Parks & Open Space Strategy | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Waste Minimisation & Recycling (HWRC) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Parks and Countryside | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Street Scene | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Refuse and Recycling | 93 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 68 | 6 | 0 | 173 |
| Street Cleansing (including gullies) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Street Scene Enforcement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Street Scene | 93 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 86 | 7 | 0 | 202 |
| StreetScene | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Arboriculture | 2 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 17 |
| Call Out | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Grounds Maintenance | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Gullies | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Recycling Collection | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Refuse Collection | 25 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 5 | 53 | 3 | 0 | 106 |
| Street Cleaning | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 17 |
| Trade Waste | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total for StreetScene | 36 | 13 | 3 | 20 | 8 | 76 | 9 | 0 | 165 |
| Waste | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HWRC | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Waste | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Environmental Services | 137 | 14 | 9 | 32 | 19 | 165 | 16 | 0 | 392 |
| Total for Community Services | 137 | 14 | 11 | 46 | 22 | 186 | 18 | 0 | 434 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Highways, Design and Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Highway Asset Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 12 |
| Total for Highway Asset Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 12 |
| Highway Network Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| Total for Highway Network Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| Total for Highways, Design and Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 21 |
| Housing & Building Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Building Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Service and Repairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Gas Technician | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Service and Repairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Site Supervisor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Site Supervisor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Building Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Housing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Total for Housing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Housing Assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total for Housing Assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total for Housing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 2 | 31 |
| Total for Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 2 | 31 |
| Total for Housing & Building Services | 0 | 0 | 2 | 12 | 9 | 15 | 4 | 42 |
| Housing Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asset Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Asset Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Total for Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Housing Administration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Housing Administration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing Options | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total for Housing Options | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total for Housing Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Policy and Regeneration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Economic Regeneration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Business Start-Up Coach | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Business Start-Up Coach | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Economic Regeneration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Programme & Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Enabling - in People | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Community Enabling - in People | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Programmes and Contracts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Programmes and Contracts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Programme & Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Regulatory Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Development Control | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Total for Development Control | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Environmental Health | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Environmental Health | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing Renewal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Housing Renewal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Licensing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Parking | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Parking & Appeals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Parking Enforcement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Total for Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 16 |
| Total for Regulatory Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 21 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 28 |
| Total for Policy and Regeneration | 0 | 0 | 1 | 22 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 31 |
| Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Benefits Operations & Performance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Benefits Operations & Performance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Taxation Operations & Performance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total for Taxation Operations & Performance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total for Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| Total for Place | 137 | 14 | 14 | 96 | 45 | 209 | 27 | 542 |
| Total | 137 | 14 | 14 | 96 | 45 | 209 | 27 | 542 |

Stage 2

| Service Area/Team | Inconclusive | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld | Withdrawn | Total |
|--|--------------|------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Place | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Culture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Civic Theatre | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total for Civic Theatre | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Cultural Facilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dolphin Centre | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Cultural Facilities | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Culture | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Environmental Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Environmental Crime | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| StreetScene Enforcement | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Environmental Crime | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Street Scene | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Refuse and Recycling | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Street Cleansing (including gullies) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Street Scene | 0 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 11 |
| StreetScene | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Arboriculture | 0 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Grounds Maintenance | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Recycling Collection | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Refuse Collection | 1 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 16 |
| Street Cleaning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for StreetScene | 1 | 8 | 6 | 12 | 2 | 29 |
| Total for Environmental Services | 1 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 2 | 41 |
| Total for Community Services | 1 | 13 | 12 | 18 | 2 | 46 |
| Highways, Design and Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Highway Asset Management | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Highway Asset Management | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Highways, Design and Projects | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing & Building Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Building Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Service and Repairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Service and Repairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Building Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Total for Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Total for Housing & Building Services | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Housing Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Housing | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Housing | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing Administration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Housing Administration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Total for Housing Services | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Policy and Regeneration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Programme & Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Programmes and Contracts | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Programmes and Contracts | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Programme & Projects | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Regulatory Services | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Development Control | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total for Development Control | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Private Sector Housing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Private Sector Housing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Parking | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total for Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total for Regulatory Services | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Total for Policy and Regeneration | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Total for Place | 1 | 22 | 16 | 21 | 3 | 63 |
| Total | 1 | 22 | 16 | 21 | 3 | 63 |

Organisational Learning

All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2013/14. Some examples of these are detailed below.

Following a complaint for Community Enabling – In People the Council developed a leaflet that sets out timescales and process for the Disabled Facilities Grant and made this information available on the Council's website.

Following a complaint for the Dolphin Centre it was highlighted at leisure staff training sessions and via a memo that the Dolphin Centre is a breastfeeding friendly premises and as such customers are welcome to breastfeed anywhere in the Dolphin Centre.

Following a complaint for Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture, received during Wimbledon, the tennis nets were put up in Stanhope Park.

Following numerous complaints for Refuse Collection and Refuse and Recycling assurances were given to residents and crews were reminded to ensure wheeled bins are returned to the point they are collected from.

Following a complaint for Refuse Collection the Council provided training for its staff on reporting and recording fly-tipping.

Following a complaint for Revenues & Benefits the Council reviewed reminder letters to ensure instructions about making payments are clear and staff were reminded of the correct procedures for taking telephone payments.

Following another complaint for Revenues & Benefits the Council Tax class F exemption form was reviewed to make it clearer to the applicant that they need to notify the Council when probate has been granted.

One complaint for Revenues & Benefits highlighted an indexing problem with the change of address form which was rectified by ICT.

Another complaint for Revenues & Benefits highlighted the fact that the machine used seal letters is not 100% effective. As a result an additional visual check is now made.

Following a complaint for Arboriculture about a non-Council owned tree blocking the light from a street light, the Council undertook the necessary works to the tree and sought to recover the costs from the owner.

Following a complaint about various issues relating to the development at Warwick Square the Council spoke to the developer who agreed to review the current site compound conditions and make arrangements to remove any surplus rubbish or excess packaging and speak to their staff about the position of parked construction vehicles and resulting obstructions to local road users.

Following a complaint for Private Sector Housing the Manager reviewed the teams practice and provide training as necessary to ensure officers are able to comply with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004.

Further recommendations

Action should be taken to address the ongoing issues in relation to Refuse Collection, in particular ensuring wheeled bins are returned to the point of collection and not left in a manner that causes an obstruction. Such action is likely to ensure the Council receives a similar number of complaints in 2014/15 to that in the years leading up to 2013/14.

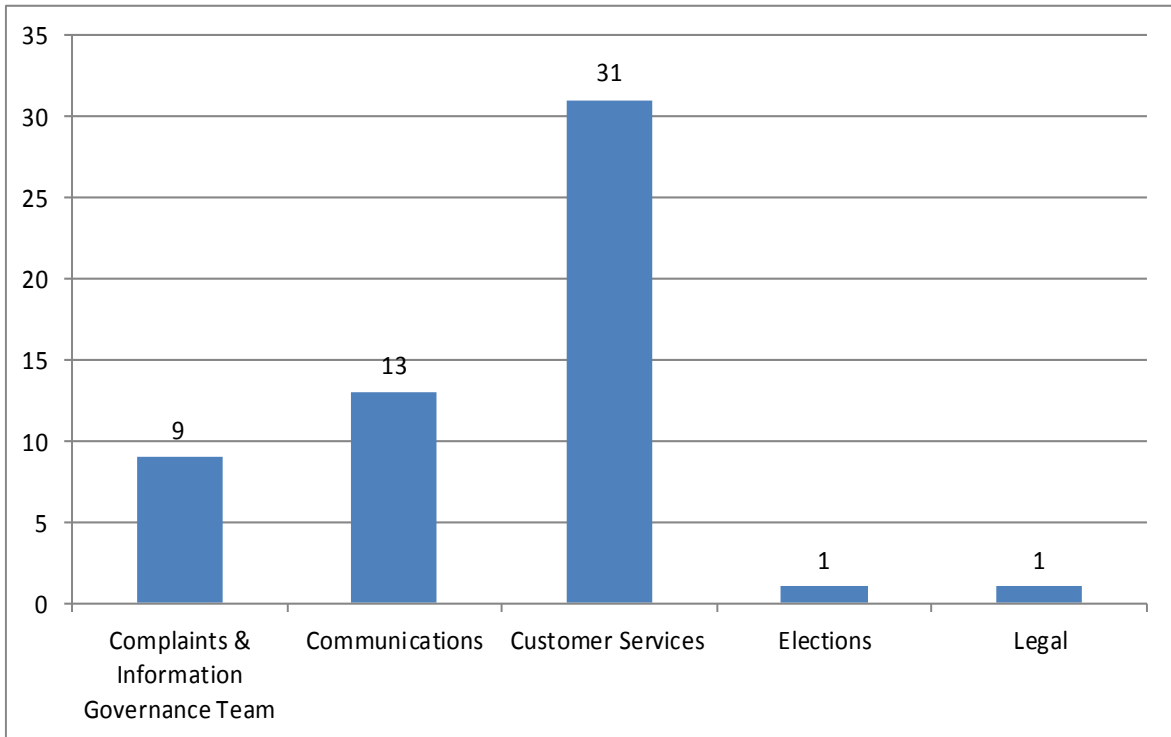
N.B. Following discussions with the service, prior to the publication of this report, action has been taken and as a result the Council has seen a reduction in the number of complaints received (17 in the first quarter of 2014/15).

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

Resources Group

Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview

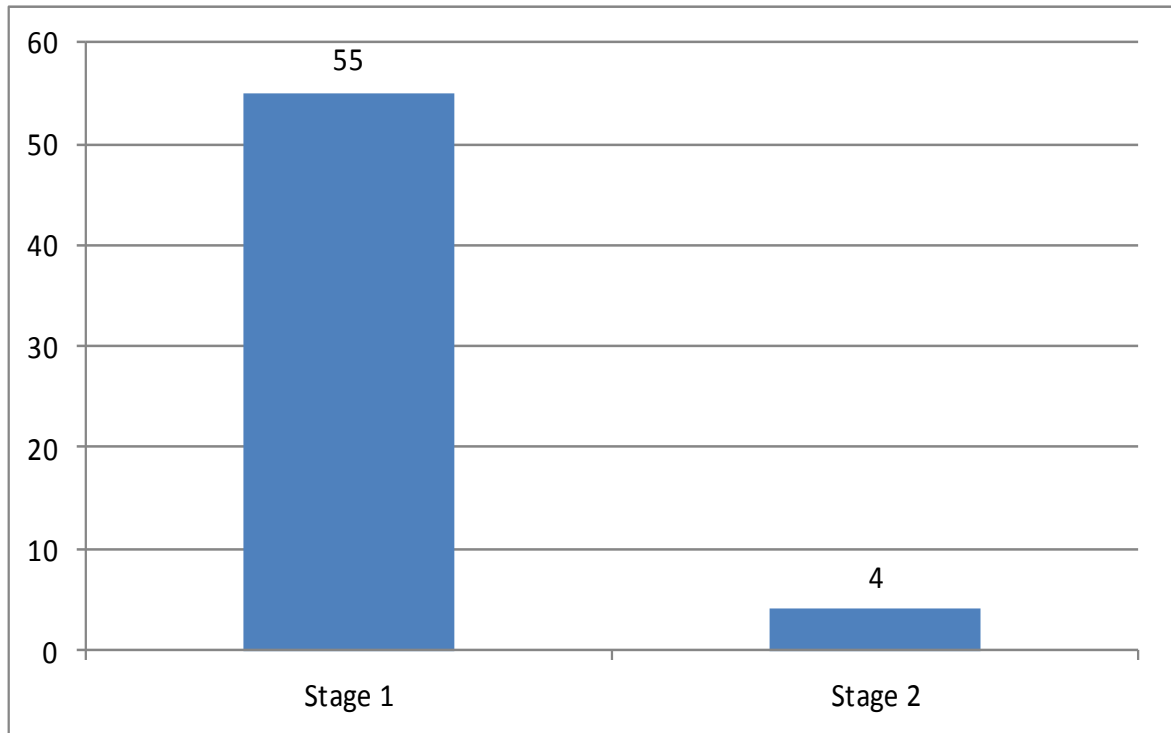


The majority of complaints logged to the Complaints & Information Governance Team were about the Council failing to adhere to its own complaints procedure(s).

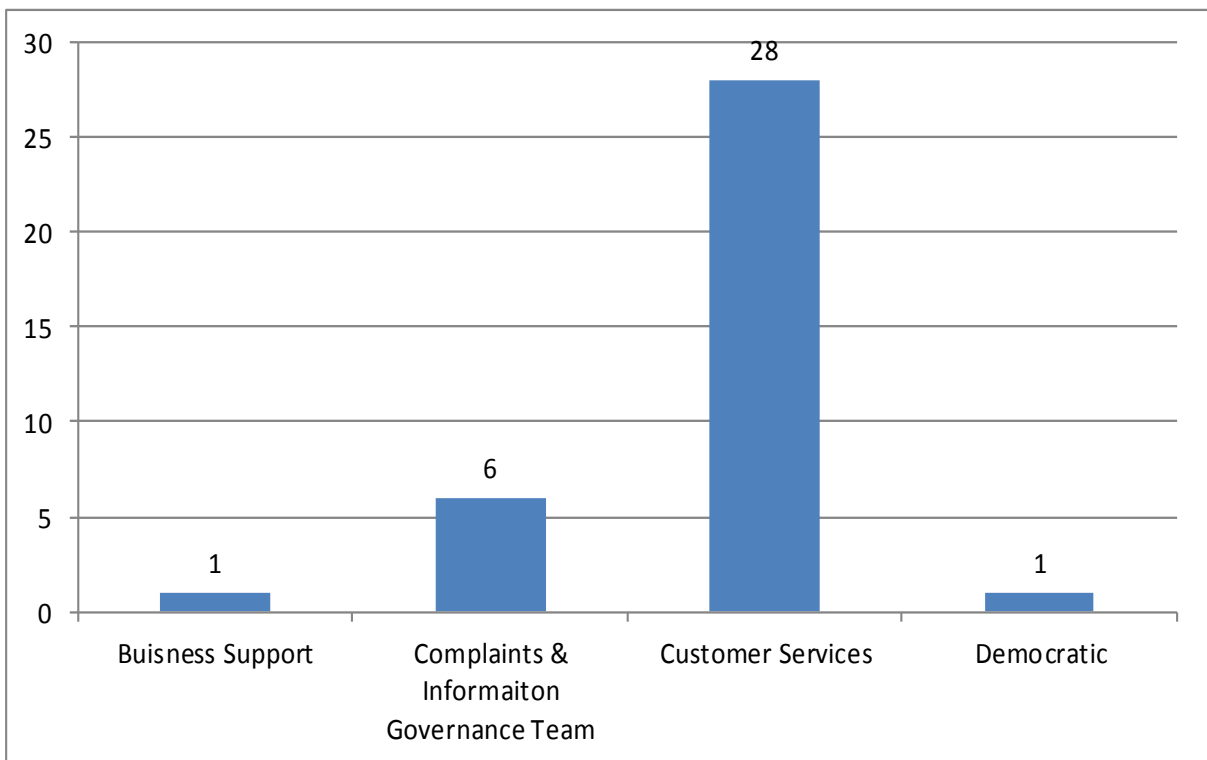
All of the complaints received for Communications concerned inaccurate information relating to the Easter Bank Holiday refuse collections, printed in the March edition of the Darlington Together magazine.

Complaints for Customer Services related to waiting times, as well as the general level of service and the quality of advice provided.

Complaints by Stage

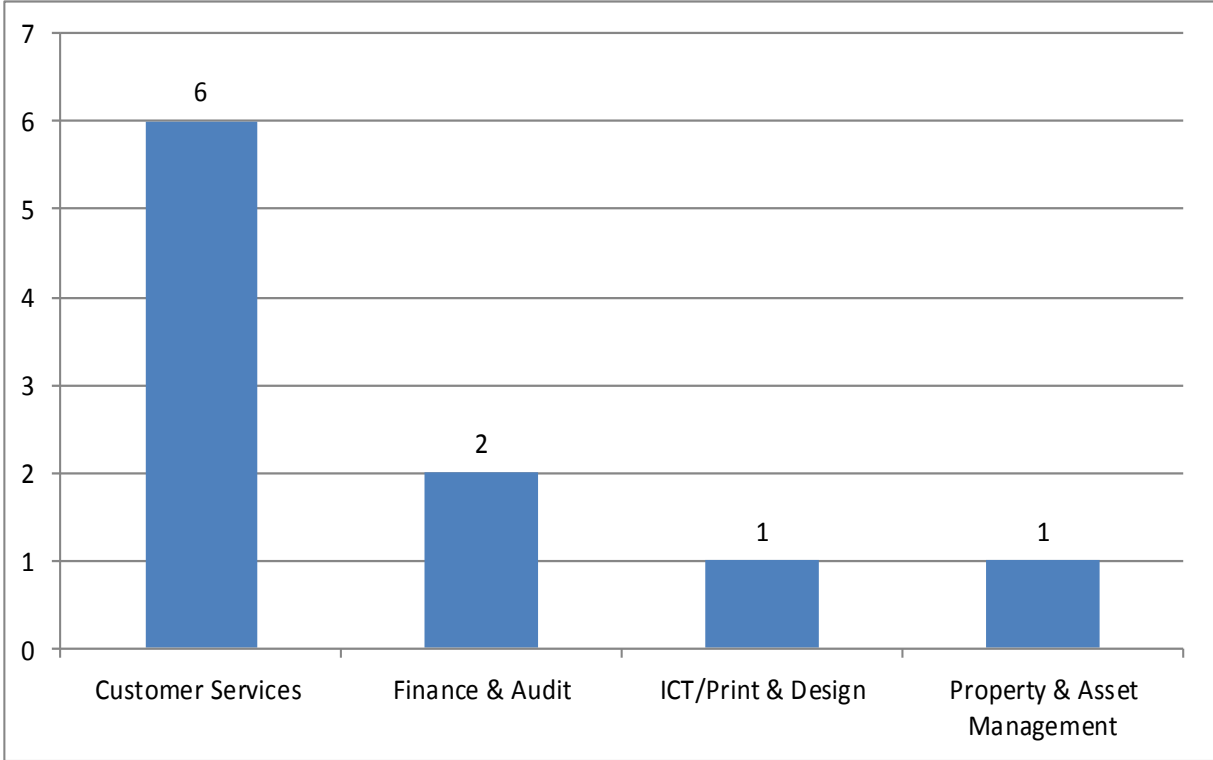


Compliments by Service Area/Team



The compliments for Customer Services related to the prompt, professional and helpful service provided.

Comments by Service Area/Team



Complaints by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached in relation to those complaints received during 2013/14.

Stage 1

| Service Area/Team | Inconclusive | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld | Withdrawn | Total |
|---|--------------|------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Resources | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finance and HR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Corporate Assurance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Complaints & Information Governance Team | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Total for Complaints & Information Governance Team | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Total for Corporate Assurance | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Total for Finance and HR | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Resources | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Communications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Communications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| Total for Communications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| Total for Communications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| Democratic & Customer Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Customer Services | 1 | 6 | 3 | 20 | 0 | 30 |
| Total for Customer Services | 1 | 6 | 3 | 20 | 0 | 30 |
| Elections | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Elections | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Democratic & Customer Services | 1 | 6 | 4 | 20 | 0 | 31 |
| Information & Insight | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Complaints and Information Governance | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Complaints and Information Governance | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Information & Insight | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Legal Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Planning | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Planning | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Legal Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Resources | 1 | 7 | 6 | 33 | 0 | 47 |
| Total for Resources | 3 | 8 | 8 | 35 | 0 | 54 |
| Total | 3 | 8 | 8 | 35 | 0 | 54 |

Stage 2

| Service Area/Team | Inconclusive | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld | Withdrawn | Total |
|---|--------------|------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Resources | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finance and HR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Corporate Assurance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Complaints & Information Governance Team | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Complaints & Information Governance Team | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Corporate Assurance | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Finance and HR | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Resources | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Democratic & Customer Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Customer Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Customer Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Total for Democratic & Customer Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Information & Insight | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Complaints and Information Governance | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Complaints and Information Governance | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Information & Insight | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total for Resources | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Total for Resources | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |

Organisational Learning

All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2013/14. Some examples of these are detailed below.

Following several complaints logged to the Complaints & Information Governance Team staff were reminded of the process/timescales to be followed when investigating stage 1 complaints.

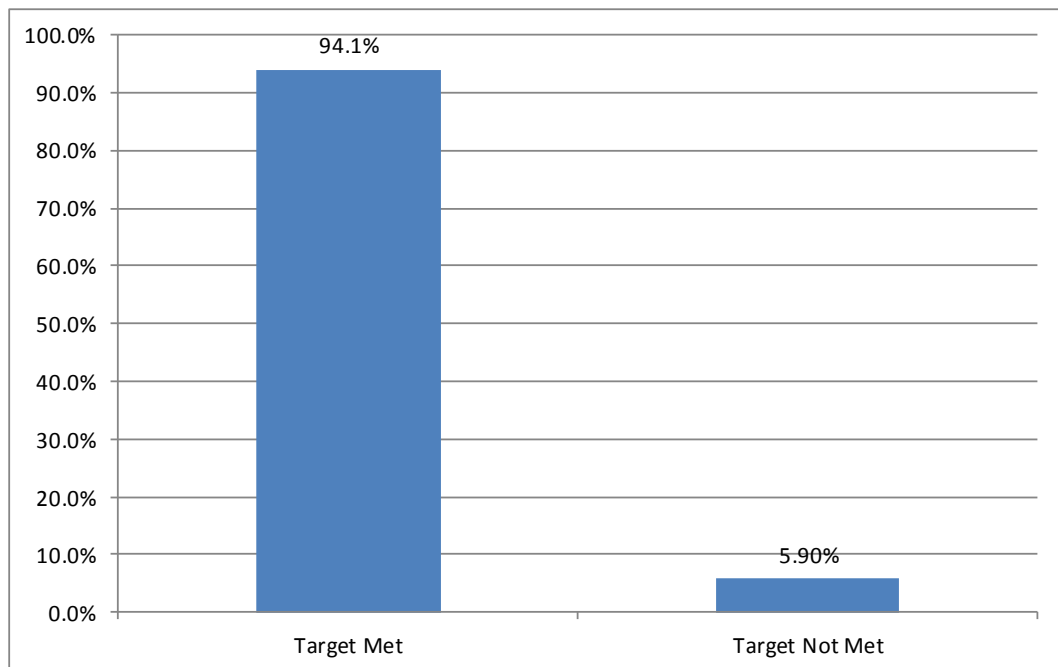
Following a complaint for Customer Services the Team Leader reiterated with staff the process for making appointments for customers applying for re-housing through the Choice Based Lettings process.

Following the complaint for Elections all canvassers were contacted to be reminded of the instructions given at the training session regarding the delivery of canvass forms i.e. that they must be completely posted through the letterboxes of all properties.

Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

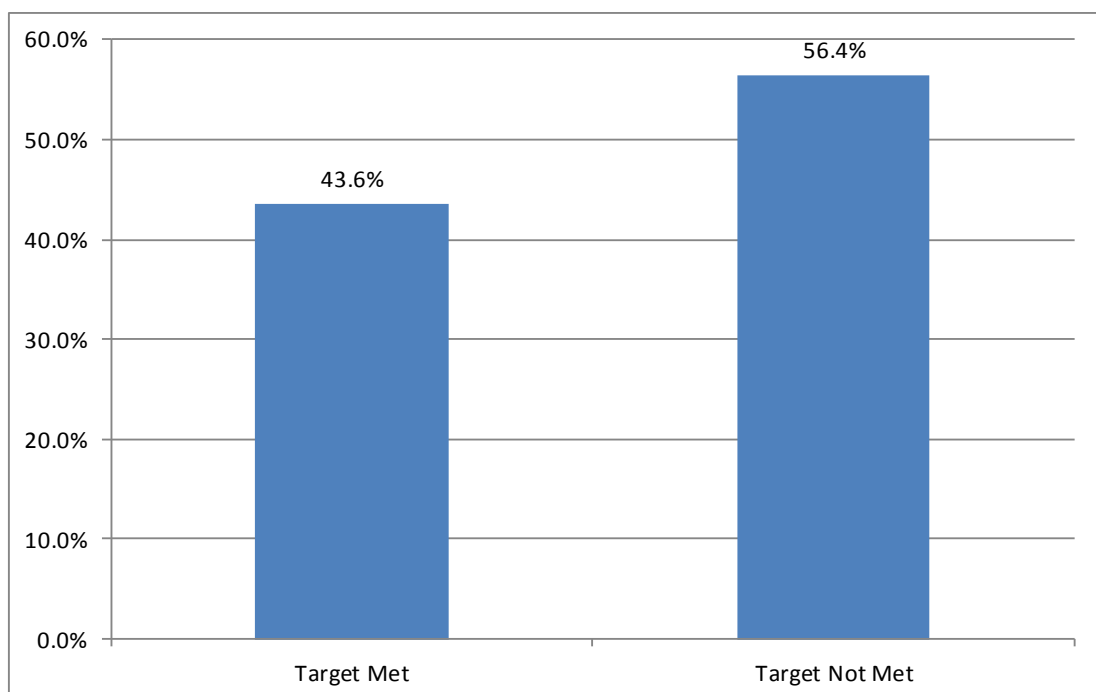
Stage 1

Performance against Stage 1 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



The most common reason that the Stage 1 acknowledgement target was not met was because the complaint was not forwarded to the CIG Team on the day of receipt. Information is provided in the procedure practice guidance on how officers can ensure complaints reach the CIG Team in time to be acknowledged and the CIG Team addresses the issue individually with officers each time it occurs.

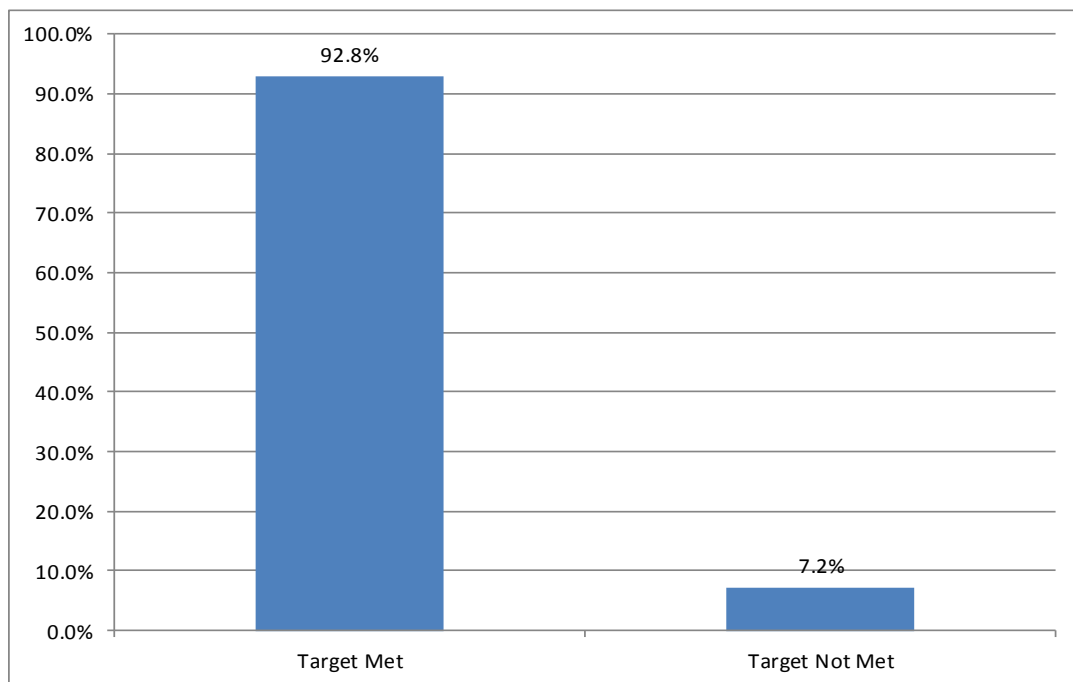
Performance against Stage 1 response target (20 working days)



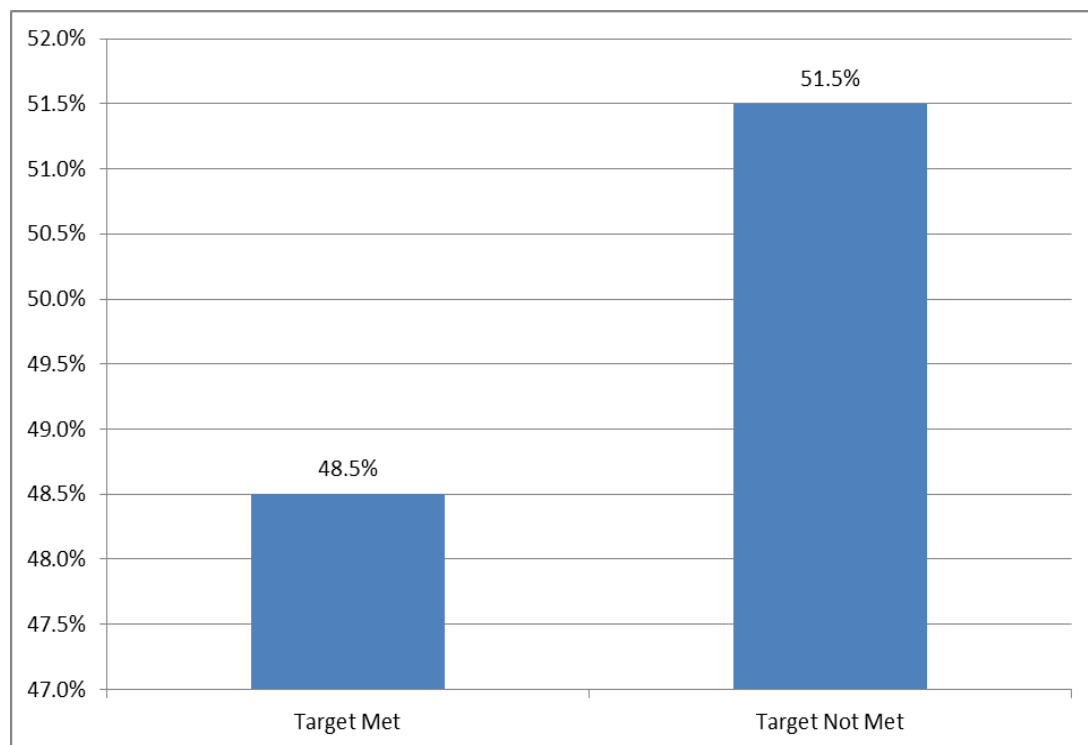
There was a reduction in the number of complaints responded to within timescale from 72.3% in 2012/13. This was again primarily as a result of the difficulties we experienced in dealing with the extremely high volume of complaints received following the introduction of wheeled bins. There was also some anecdotal evidence to suggest that the reduction in the number of Council staff and the associated increase in workload experienced by officers contributed to this reduction in performance. A further 14.7 % of complaints were responded to within 35 working days and a further 4.8% within 42 working days. The remaining 36.9% were not responded to until after 42 working days. The procedure makes provisions for responding officers to agree an extension with the complainant where necessary, however, this did not happen in the majority of cases.

Stage 2

Performance against Stage 2 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



Performance against Stage 2 response target (25 working days)



There was a reduction in the number of complaints responded to within timescale from 73.8% in 2012/13. This was again primarily as result of the extremely high volume of complaints received following the introduction of wheeled bins and the subsequent increase in the number of stage 2 complaints the Council's received (66 compared to

58 in 2012/13 - *A further 12 Stage 2 complaints were investigated under the Council's Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure*). In the majority of cases where it was not going to be possible to meet the timescales an extension was agreed with the complainant in accordance with the provisions of the procedure.

Performance against Local Performance Indicators

Number of Stage 1 complaints escalated to Stage 2

Target for 2013/14 - 51

Actual for 2013/14 - 62

Target met - *X*

Number of maladministration decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman

Target for 2013/14 - 0

Actual for 2013/14 - 1

Target met - *X*

Full details of decisions made by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to complaints regarding Darlington Borough Council were reported to Cabinet on 3 December 2013 and 1 July 2014.