



**Corporate Complaints,
Compliments and
Comments
Annual Report
2017/18**

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Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2017/18 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.

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

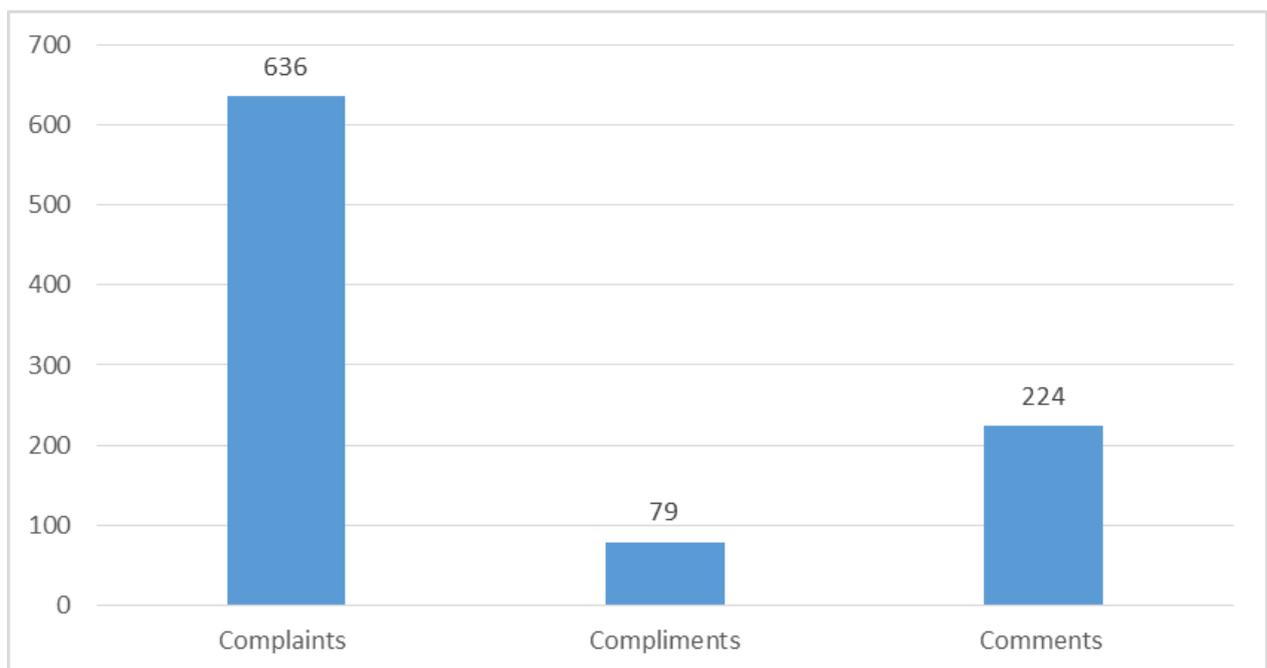
Between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 the Council received a total of 939 representations under the corporate procedure, an increase from 713 in 2016/17.

The Council received 636 complaints, a significant increase from 412 in 2016/17. The primary reason for this was the increase in complaints about missed refuse collections following the introduction of the Council's policy to no longer provide a recall service. 628 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure, while 8 were initially dealt with at Stage 2. 80 Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 88 complaints were investigated at Stage 2, an increase from 61 in 2016/17.

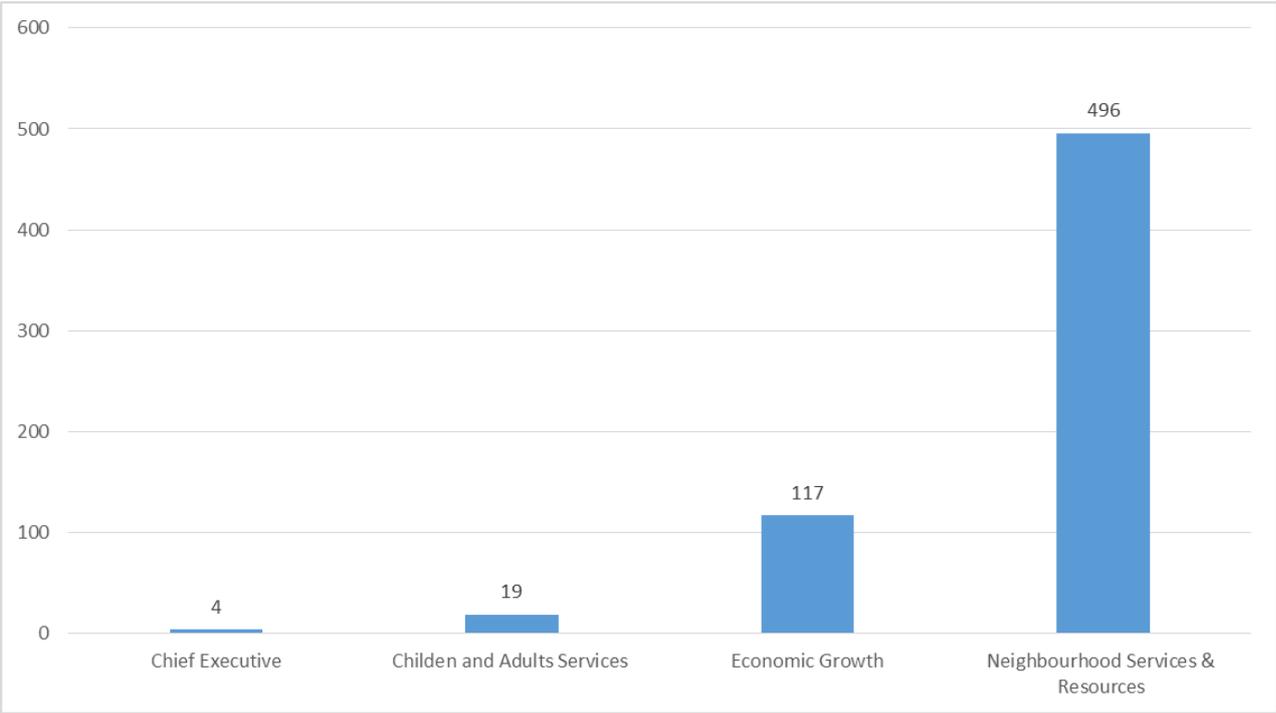
The Council received 79 compliments, a decrease from 106 in 2016/17.

The Council also received 224 comments, an increase from 195 in 2016/17.

Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments

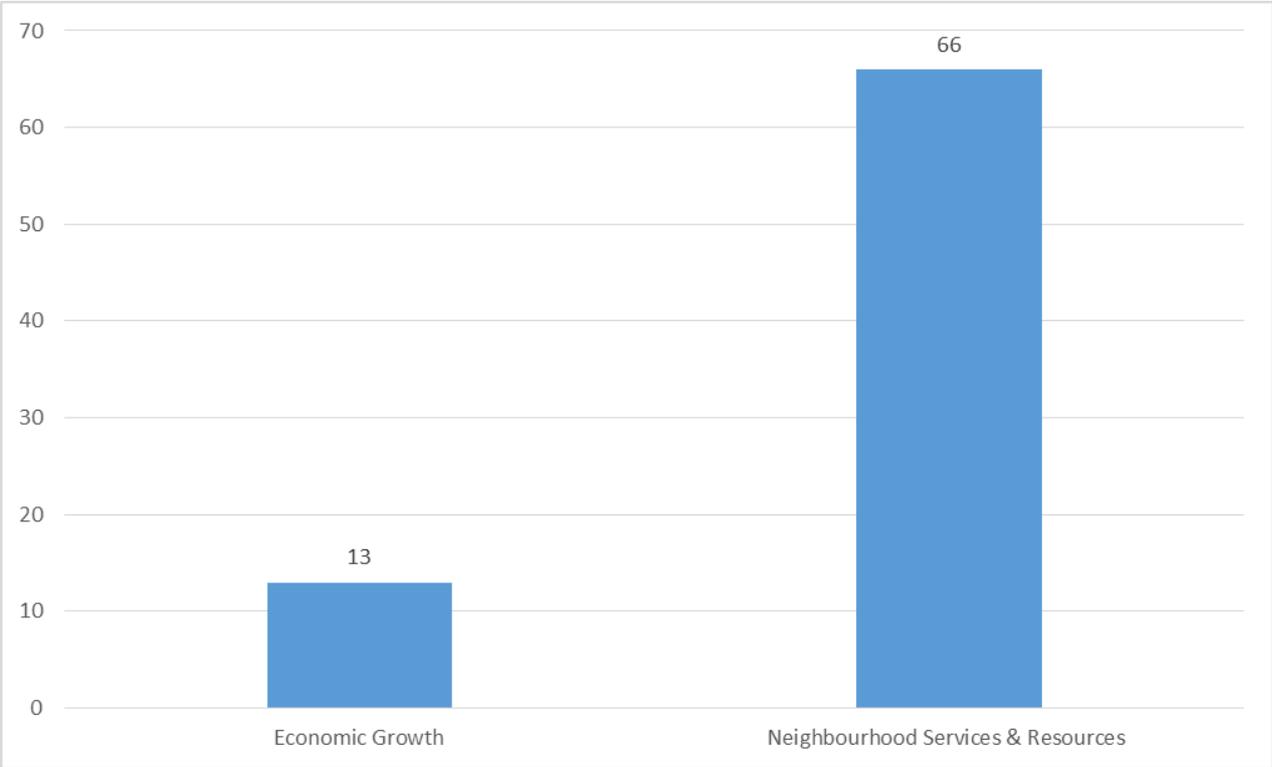


Complaints by Department

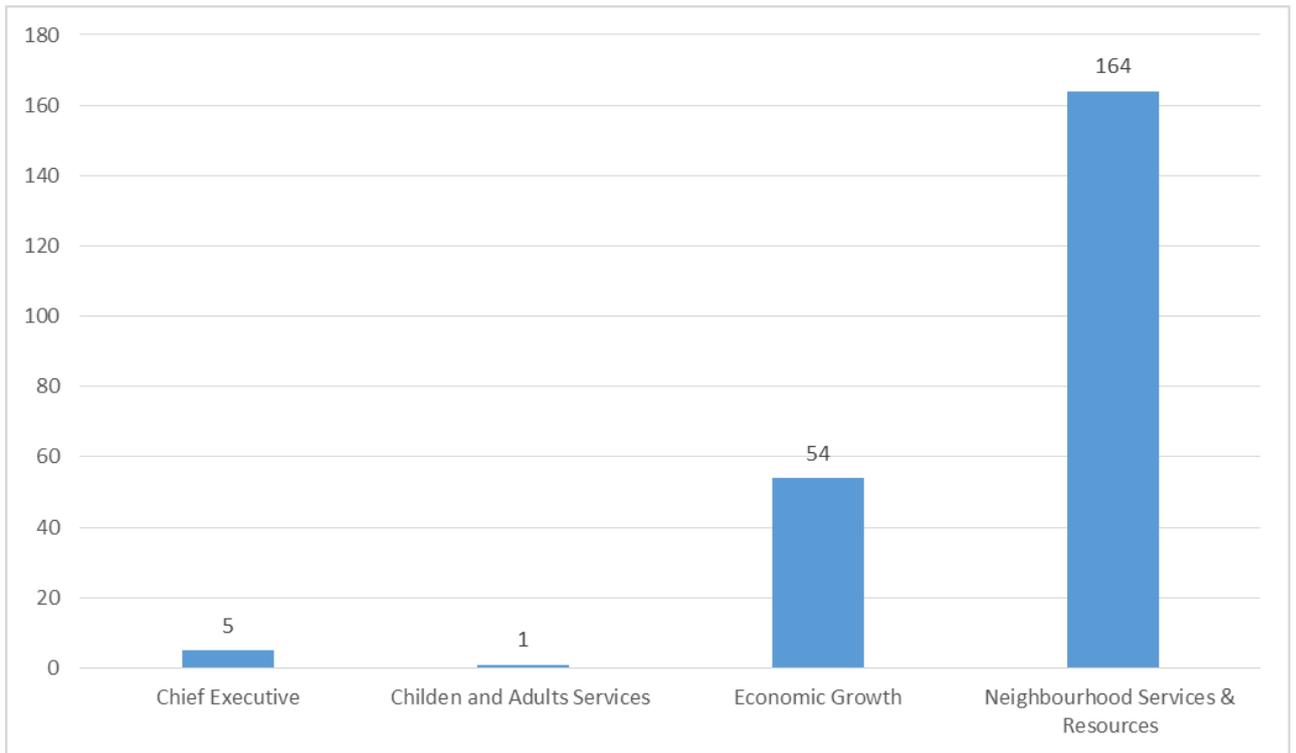


Neighbourhood Services and Resources received 496 complaints, a significant increase from 284 in 2016/17.

Compliments by Department



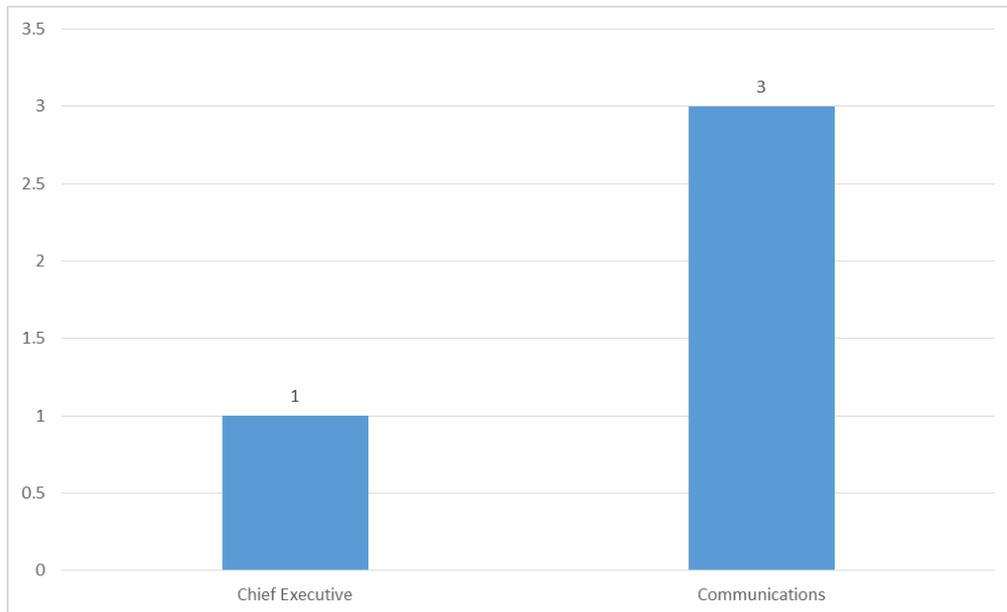
Comments by Department



Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department Chief Executive

Complaints by Service Area/Team

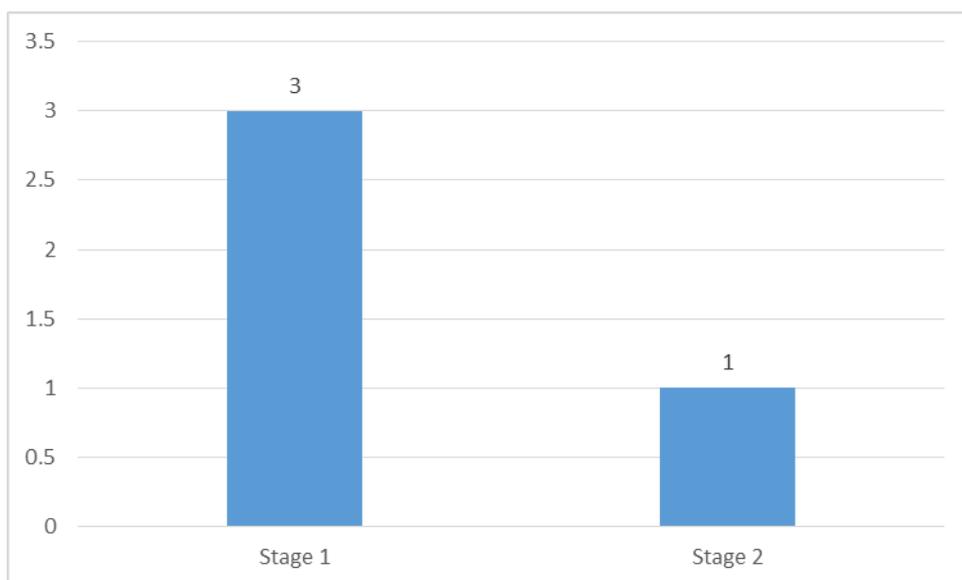
Overview



Chief Executive received 4 complaints, an increase from 2 in 2016/17.

Communications received 3 complaints, compared to 2 in 2016/17.

Complaints by Stage



N.B. 1 complaint was escalated directly to Stage 2.

Compliments by Service Area/Team

Chief Executive received 0 compliments, the same as in 2016/17.

Comments by Service Area/Team

Chief Executive received 5 comments, an increase from 1 in 2016/17.

Complaint by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2017/18.

Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strategy, Performance & Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Communications	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Communications	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Strategy, Performance & Communications	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Chief Executive	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Chief Executive	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	0	0	0	1	0	1

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, a service improvement was made following a complaint investigation during 2017/18.

Communications

Following the complaint determined for Communications it was agreed the Council would ensure it included all responses in future consultation evaluations.

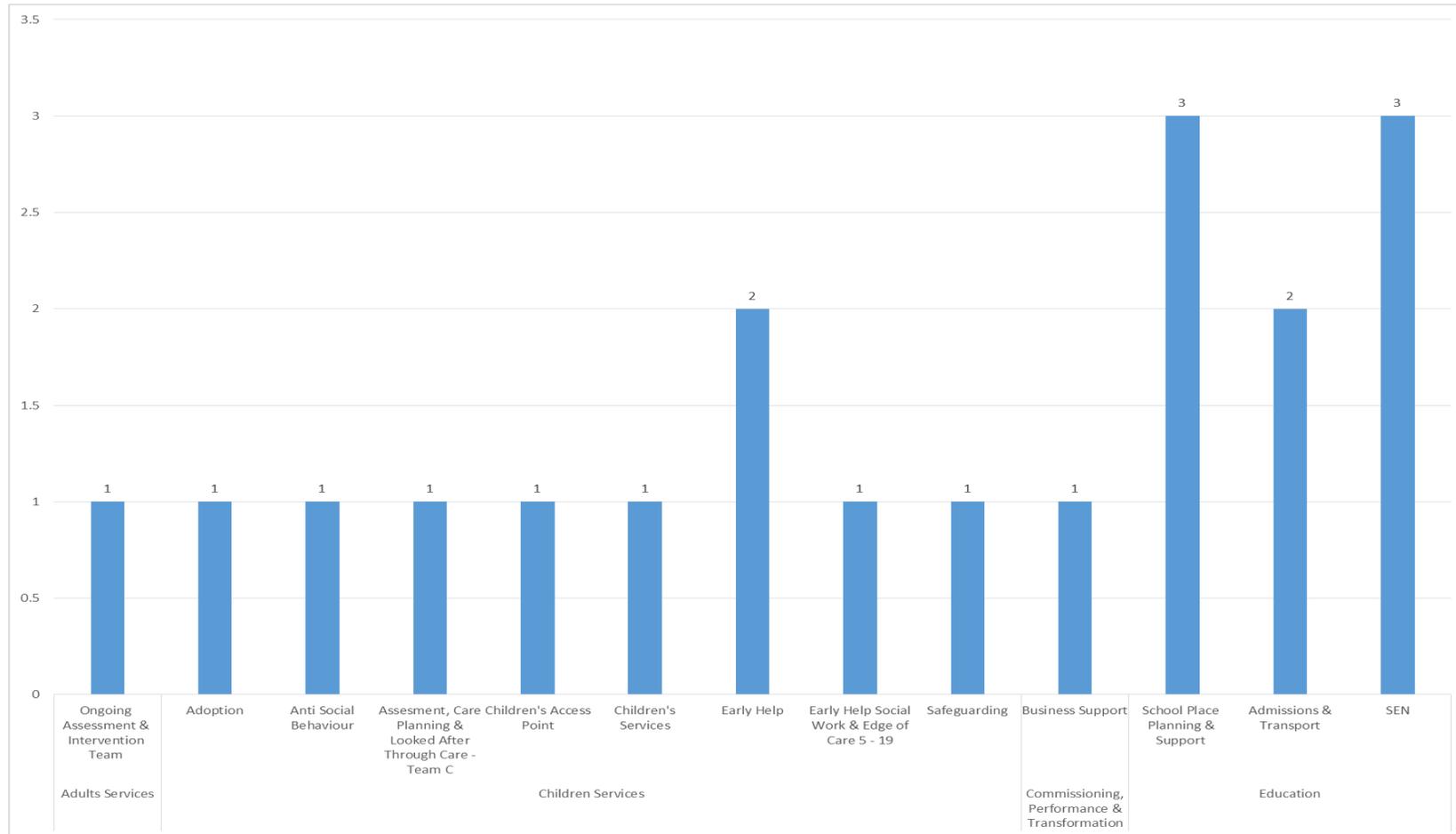
Further recommendations

There are no further recommendations for Chief Executive.

Children and Adults Services

Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



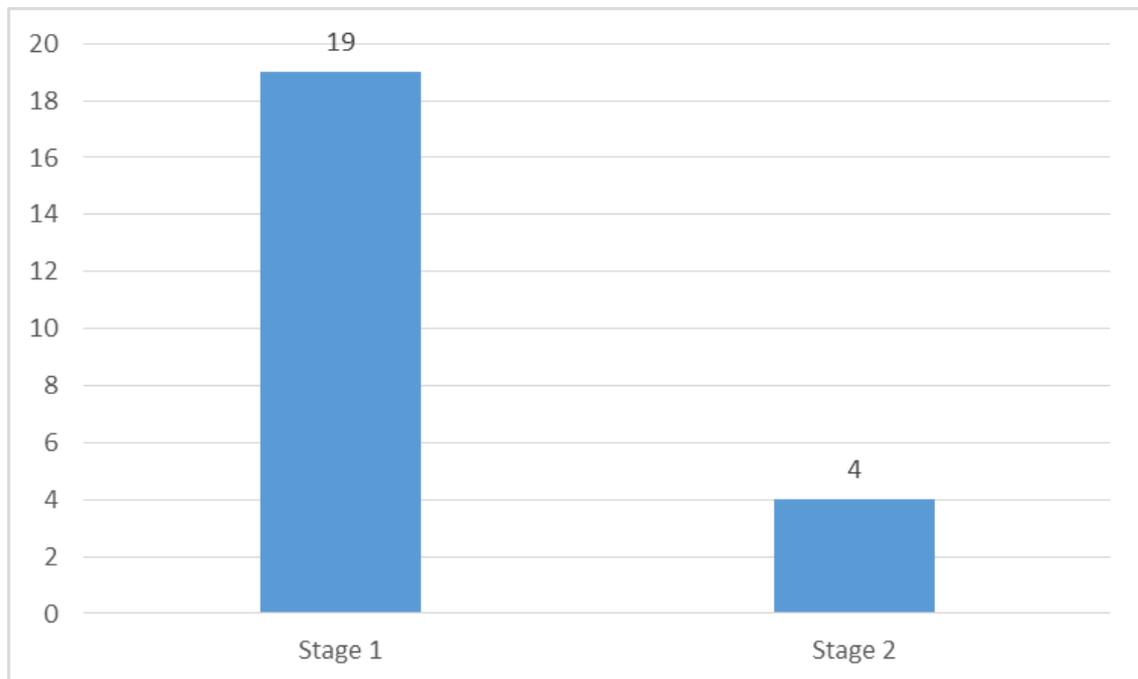
Children & Adult Services received 19 complaints, a decrease from 22 in 2016/17.

Adults Services received 1 complaint, a decrease from 3 in 2016/17.

Children Services received 9 complaints, an increase from 3 in 2016/17.

Education received 8 complaints, a decrease from 16 in 2016/17. Admissions and Transport received 2 complaints, a decrease from 10 in 2016/17 and SEN received 3 complaints, a decrease from 5 in 2016/17.

Complaints by Stage



Compliments by Service Area/Team

Children & Adults Services received 0 corporate compliments, a decrease from 2 in 2016/17.

Comments by Service Area/Team

Children & Adults Services received one corporate comment for Admissions & Transport during 2017/18, the same as in 2016/17.

Complaint by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2017/18.

Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Children and Adults Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adults	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Adults	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Children's Services	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ass., Care Planning & Looked After Through Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Team C	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Team C	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Ass., Care Planning & Looked After Through Care	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Education Lead Role	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Education Lead Role	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
First Contact & Early Help Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Access Point	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Children's Access Point	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Early Help	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Early Help	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Youth Offending Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti Social Behaviour	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Youth Offending Service	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for First Contact & Early Help Services	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Placements & Adoption	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adoption	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Total for Adoption	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Placements & Adoption	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Safeguarding	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Review and Development Safeguarding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for Review and Development Safeguarding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
School and Pupil Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Admissions and Transport	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Admissions and Transport	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Special Educational Needs	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Special Educational Needs	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for School and Pupil Support	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total for Children's Services	0	0	0	5	3	3	1	1	12
Commissioning, Performance & Transformation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Support	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Business Support	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Commissioning, Performance & Transformation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Place Planning & Support Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3
Total for School Place Planning & Support Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3
SEN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Admissions & Transport	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total for Admissions & Transport	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
SEN	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for SEN	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for SEN	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
Total for Education	0	0	1	2	0	3	1	1	7
Total for Children and Adults Services	0	0	1	8	3	7	2	2	21

Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Children and Adults Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Safeguarding	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement	0	1	0	0	0	1
School and Pupil Support	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Educational Needs	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Special Educational Needs	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for School and Pupil Support	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Children's Services	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total for Children and Adults Services	0	1	2	0	0	3

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 2017/18. Some examples of these are detailed below.

Admissions and Transport

The Council agreed to inform providers they must contact parents before a change of transport provider.

The Council agreed to discuss with staff the need to check with Democratic Services regarding whether or not appeal paperwork has been received, so they can provide parents a definite answer.

The Council agreed to discuss with staff the assessment needed to ascertain whether a parent is in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit for the purposes of a free bus pass.

The Council considered providing details of the existing routes to parents so they can make an informed decision about whether or not to apply for a place on non-statutory school transport and ensured that where a stop is no longer used along an existing route that stop is removed from the route.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

It was agreed that the Council would ensure that where an early years setting, further education college or other post-16 institution does not reply to a request to convene and hold a meeting on the Council's behalf or refuses to do so, the Council would put timely arrangements in place to ensure the EHC Plan is reviewed in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014.

All SEN case workers were reminded of the need to follow up on actions in a timely manner, using time management tools as appropriate, in particular submitting transport requests in a timely manner and liaising with transport staff as soon as they become aware of a need for transport.

The Council agreed to ensure the required notice period is given in relation to future reviews and a reasonable period of time is allowed for individuals to complete their section of the EHC Plan, within the maximum time permitted.

Education Lead Role

It was agreed the Safeguarding Board would formally consider a policy on peer on peer bullying.

Refresher training was also provided for staff with regards to professional conduct.

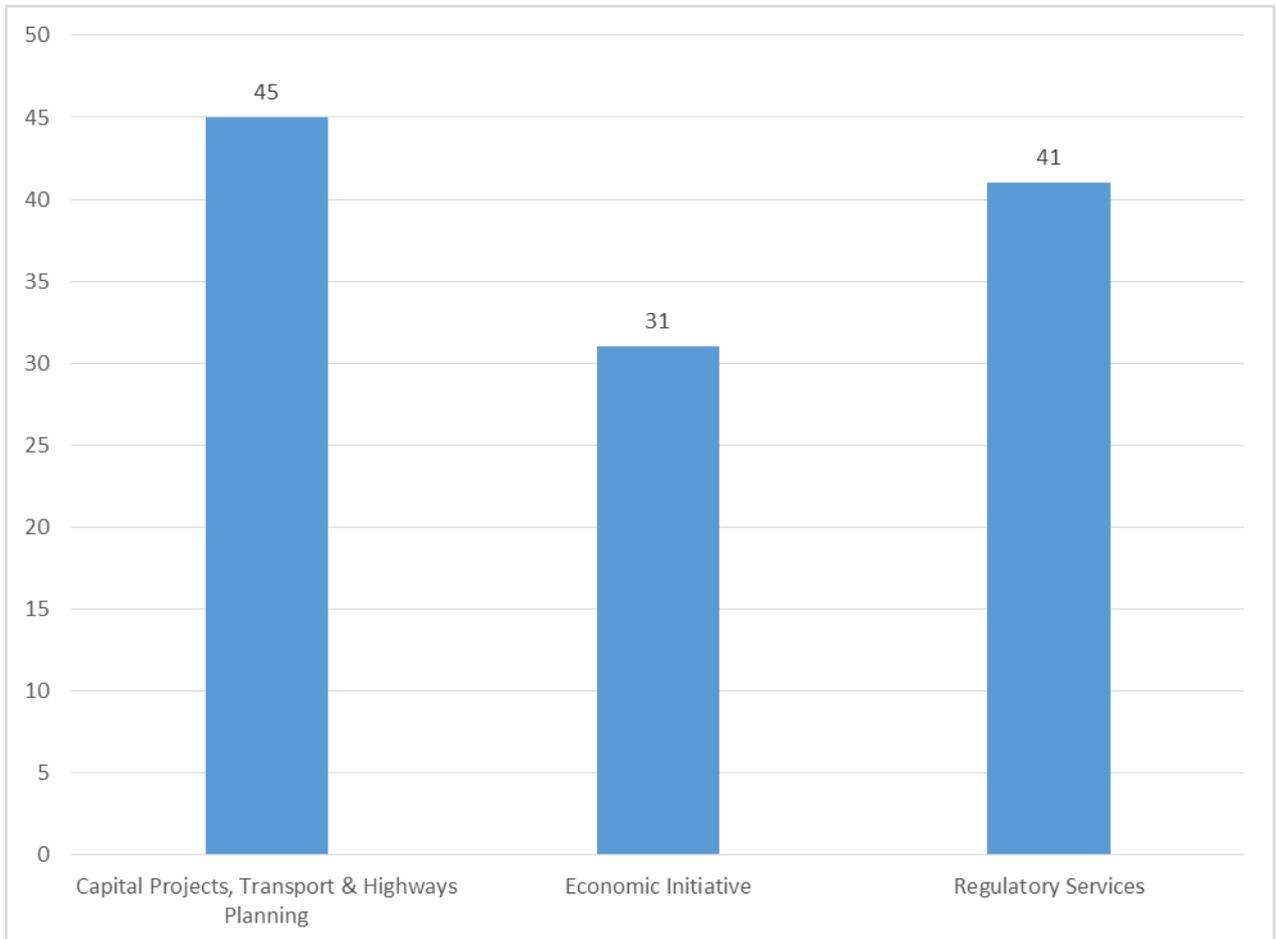
Further recommendations

There are no further recommendations for Children & Adult Services.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department Economic Growth

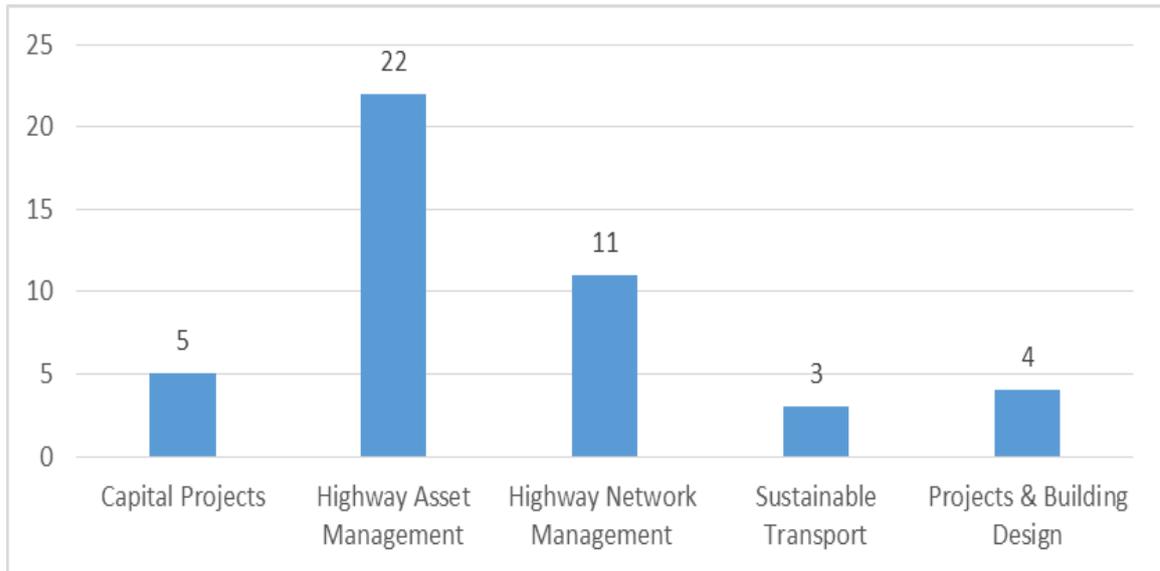
Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



Economic Growth received 117 complaints, an increase from 106 in 2016/17.

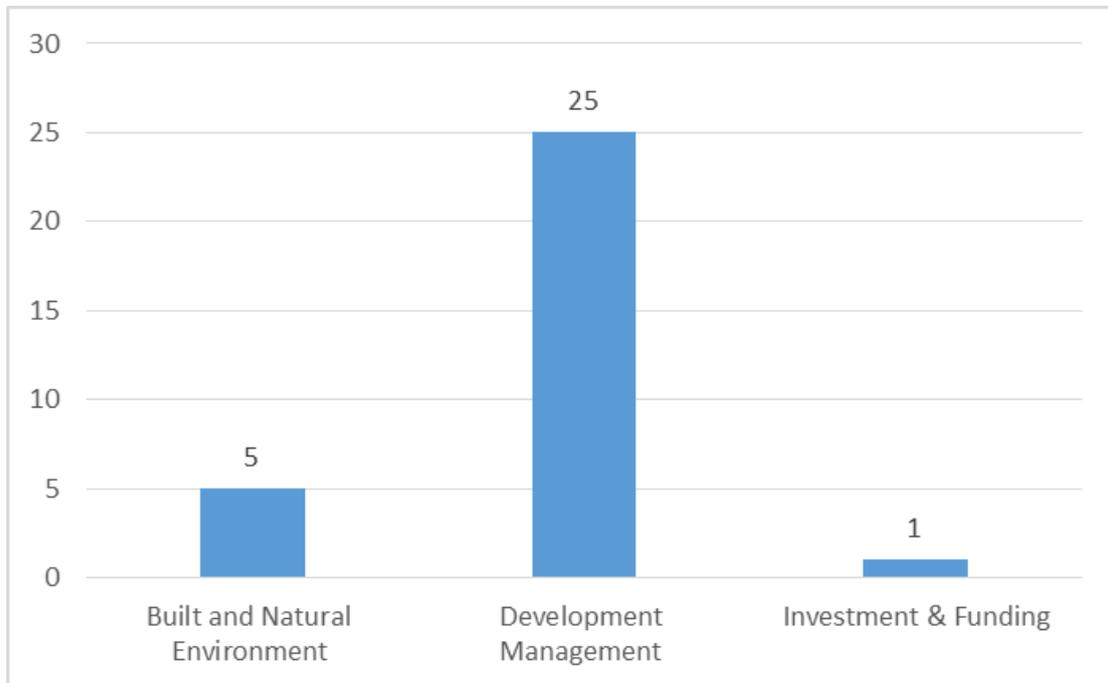
Capital Projects, Transport & Highways



Highway Asset Management received 22 complaints, compared to 21 in 2016/17. There were no discernable themes in the complaints received.

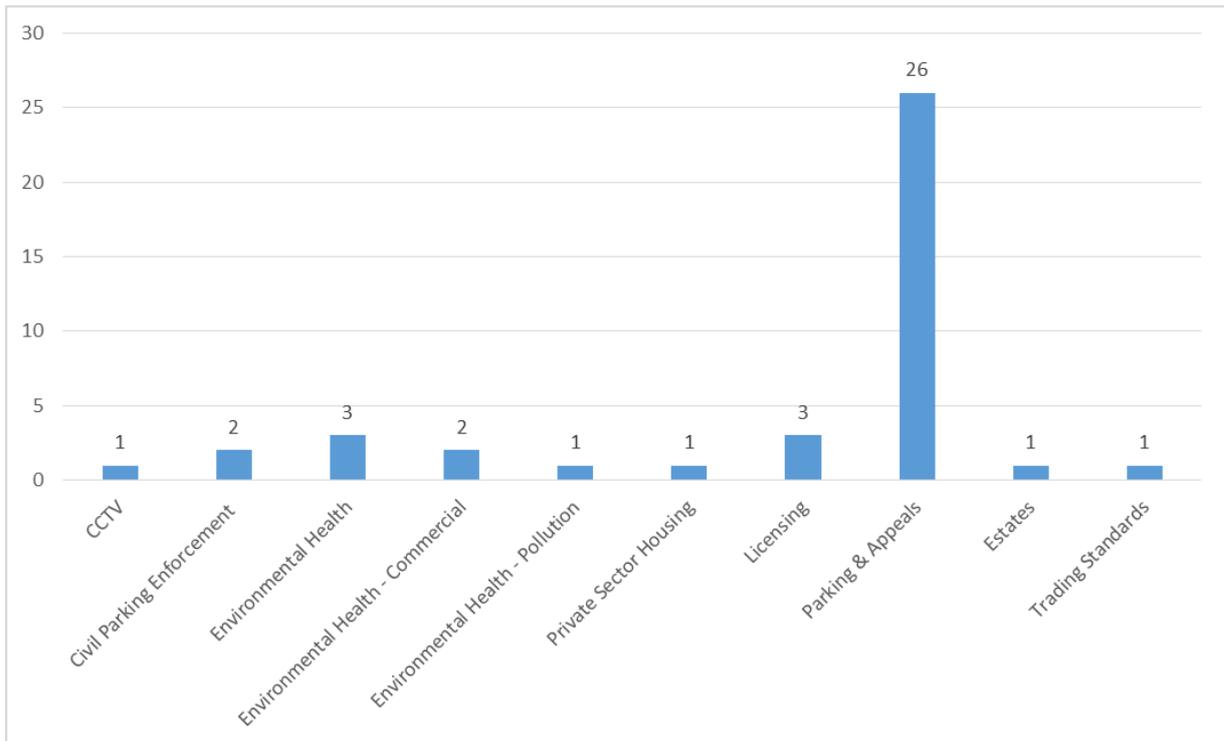
Highway Network Management received 11 complaints, a decrease from 20 in 2016/17. This was primarily as a result of the decrease in complaints about people's dissatisfaction with the Council's decision not to renew their concessionary bus pass following the introduction of the new assessment process on 1 April 2016.

Economic Initiative



Development Management received 25 complaints, a decrease from 29 in 2016/17. The most common themes were lack of communication and people's dissatisfaction with the handling of particular planning applications.

Regulatory Services



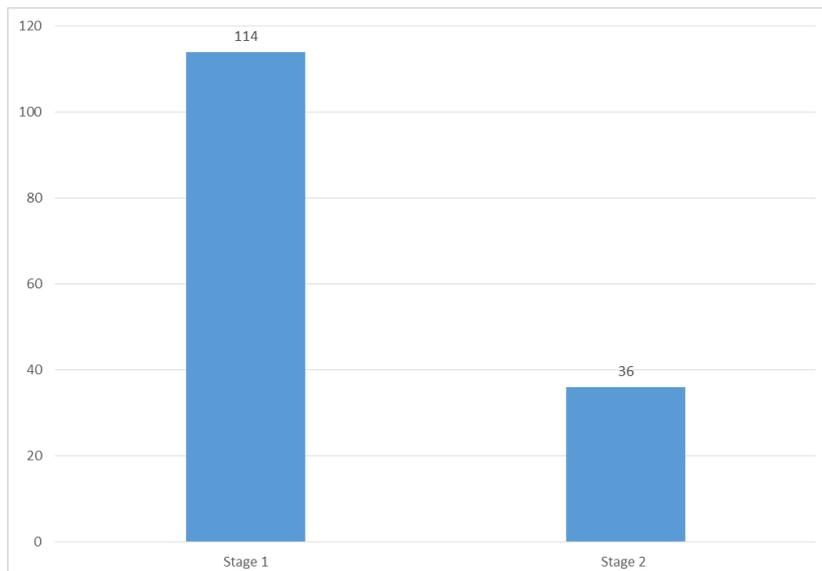
CCTV received 1 complaint, a decrease from 3 in 2016/17.

Environmental Health received 4 complaints, compared to 3 in 2016/17.

Licensing received 4 complaints, compared to 3 in 2016/17.

Parking & Appeals received 26 complaints, an increase from 14 in 2016/17. The most common cause of complaint remained dissatisfaction with staff attitude/behaviour.

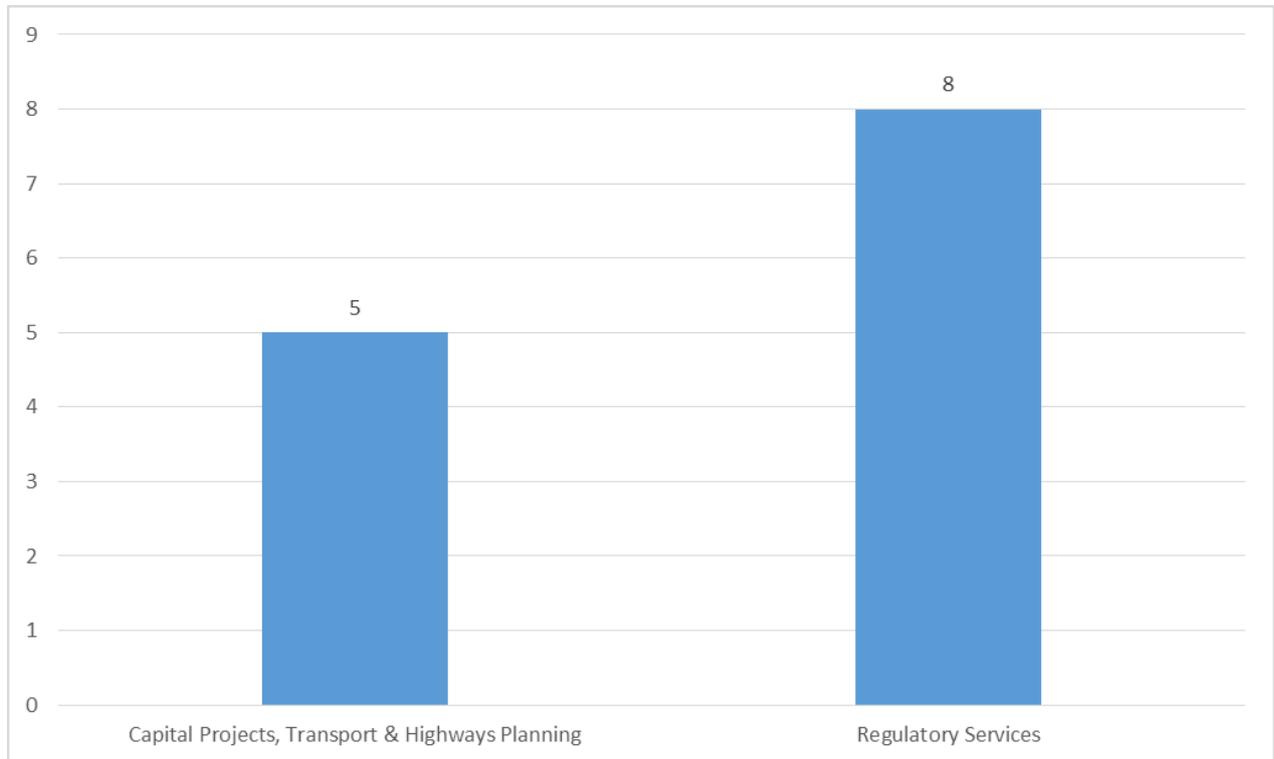
Complaints by Stage



NB. 3 complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2.

Compliments by Service Area/Team

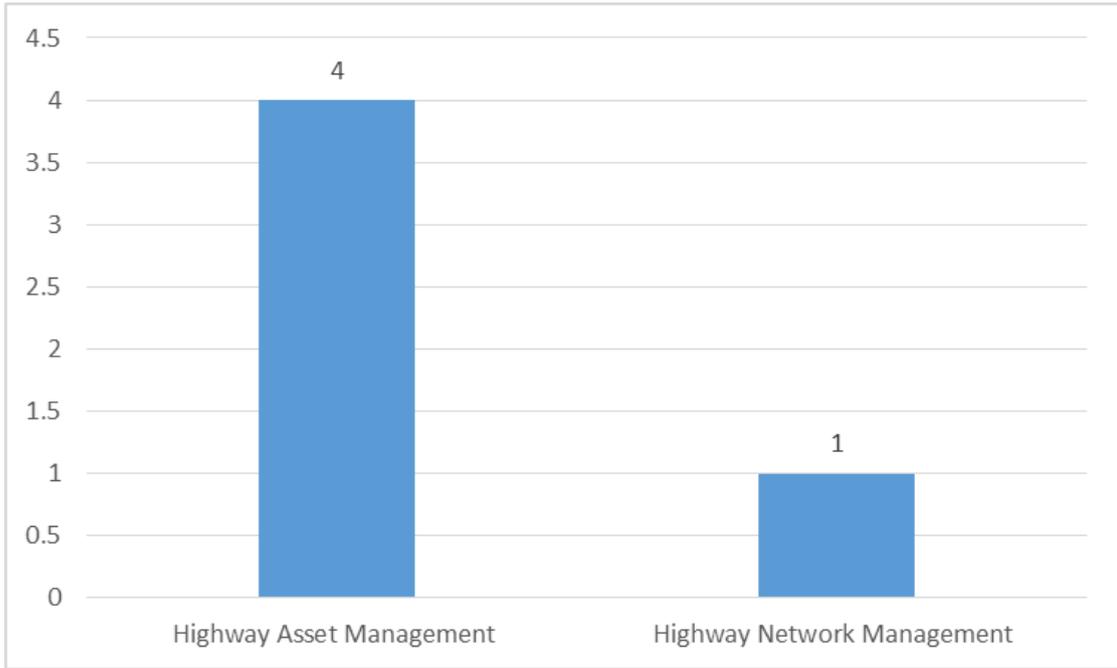
Overview



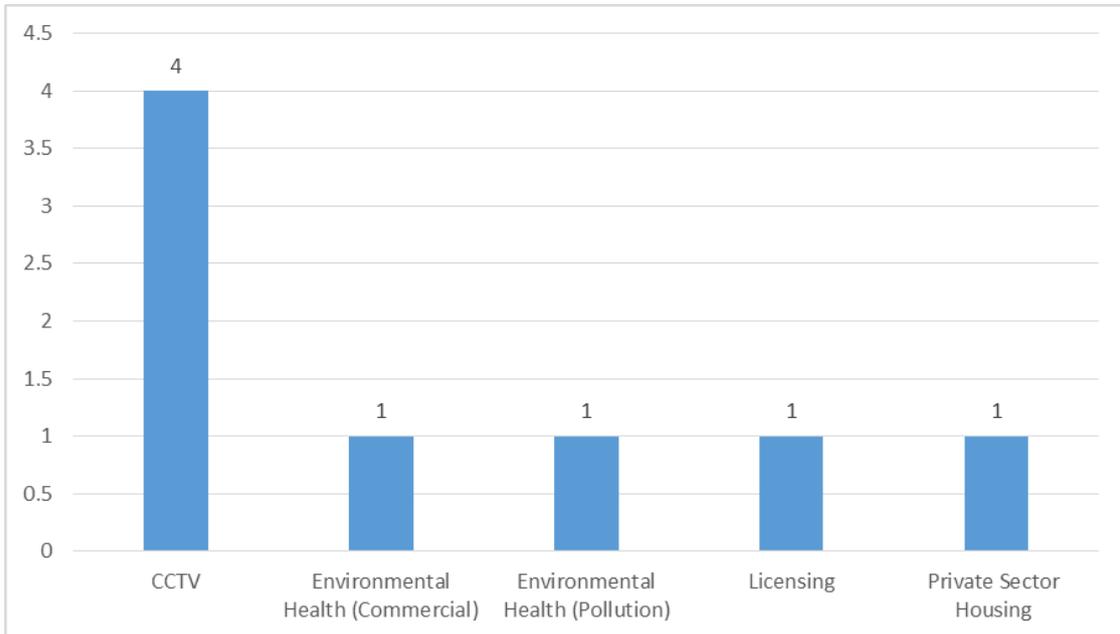
Regulatory Services received 8 compliments, compared to 3 in 2016/17.

Capital Projects, Transport & Highways Planning received 5 compliments, a decrease from 8 in 2016/17.

Capital Projects, Transport & Highways Planning

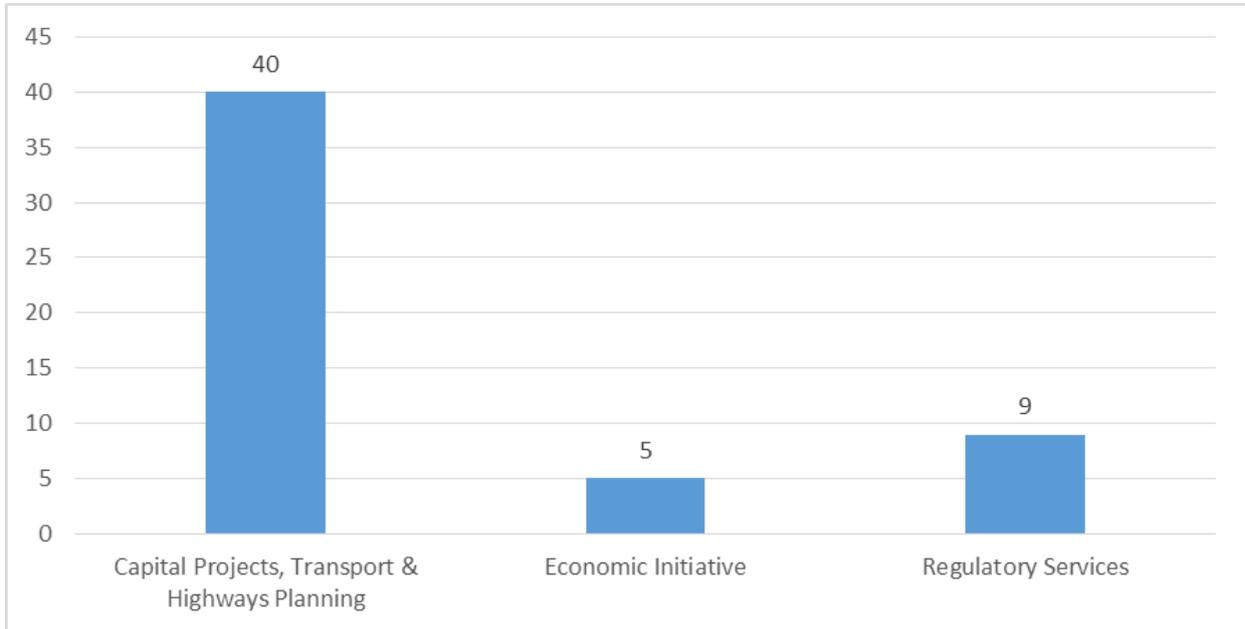


Regulatory Services



Comments by Service Area/Team

Overview

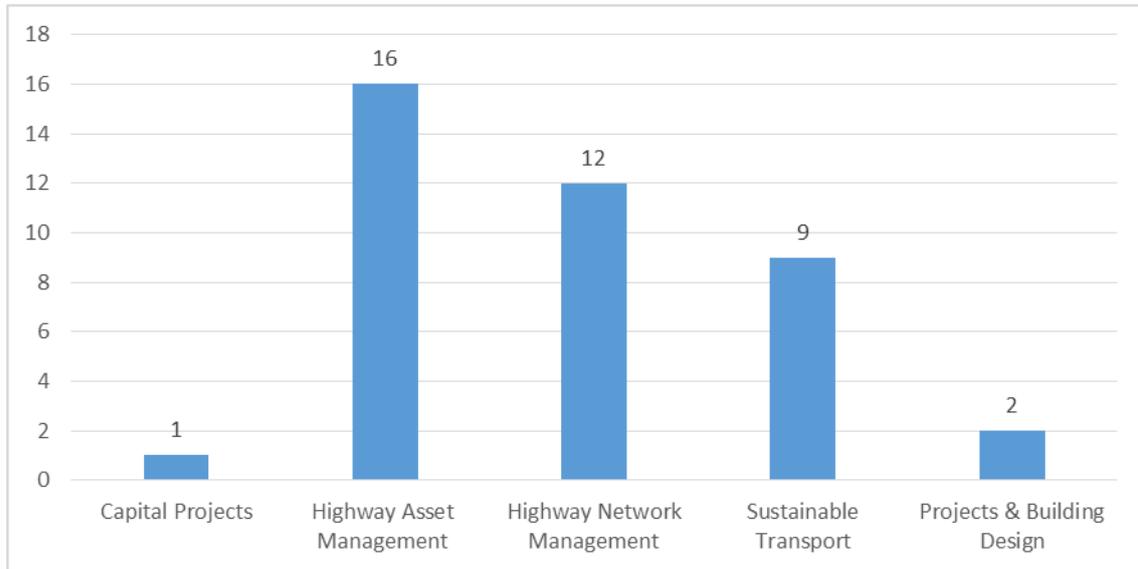


Capital Projects, Transport & Highways received 40 comments, a decrease from 50 in 2016/17.

Economic Initiative received 5 comments, an increase from 0 in 2016/17.

Regulatory Services received 9 comments, the same number as in 2016/17.

Capital Projects, Transport & Highways

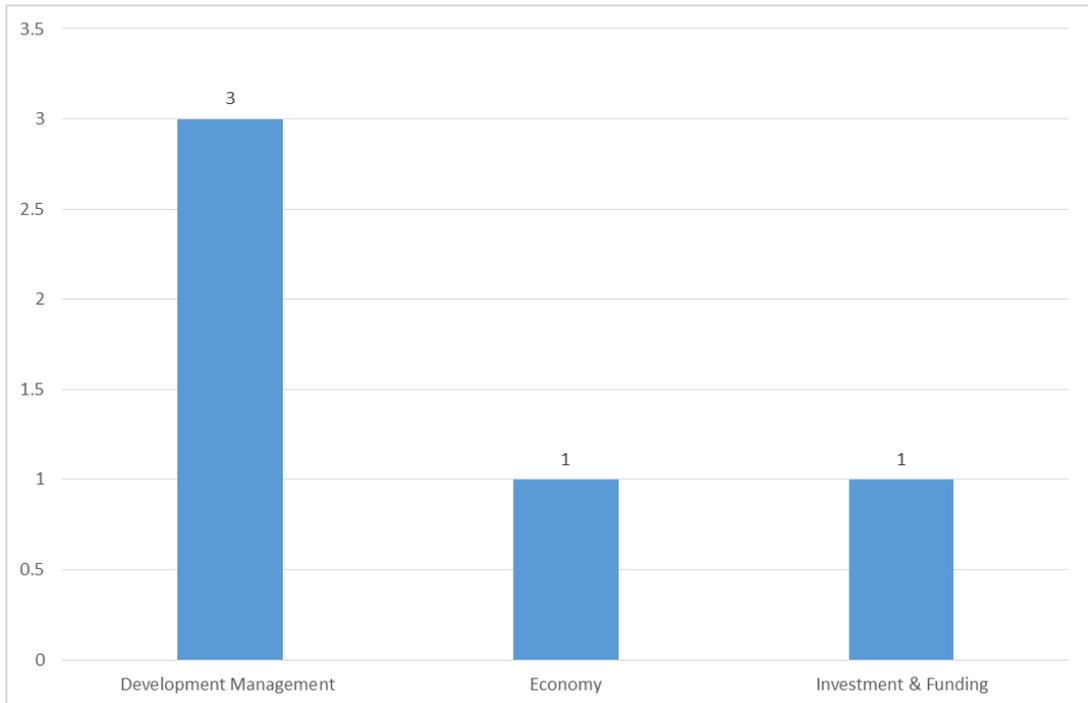


Capital Projects received 1 comment, the same number as in 2016/17.

Highway Asset Management received 16 comments, a decrease from 24 in 2016/17 and Highways Network Management received 12 comments, a decrease from 25 in 2016/17. Common themes included signage, road works and residents parking in various locations. The reduction in comments for Highway Network Management can in part be attributed the recording of comments about Sustainable Transport under a separate heading.

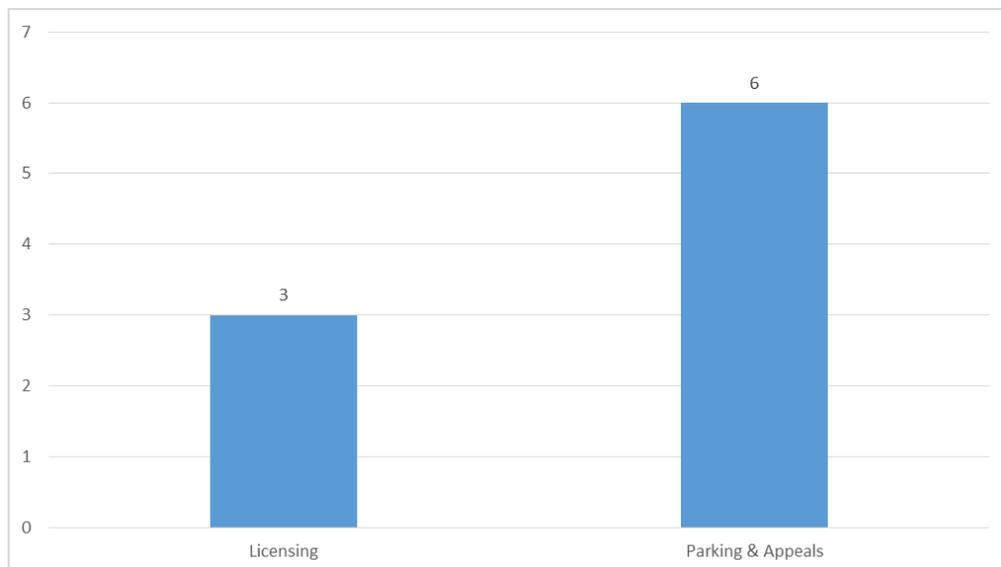
Projects & Building Design received 2 comments, compared to 0 in 2016/17.

Economic Initiative



Economic Initiative received 5 comments, an increase from 0 in 2016/17.

Regulatory Services



Licensing received 3 comments, an increase from 1 in 2016/17.

Parking & Appeals received 6 comments, an increase from 4 in 2016/17. Residents Parking was the most common issue.

Complaints by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2017/8.

Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Economic Growth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Projects, Transport & Highways Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Projects	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Total for Capital Projects	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Total for Highway Asset Management	1	0	0	9	1	3	2	16
Sustainable Transport	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total for Sustainable Transport	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total for Highway Network Management	0	1	0	12	0	0	1	14
Total for Projects & Building Design	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	4
Total for Capital Projects, Transport & Highways Planning	1	1	0	24	2	7	3	38
Economic Initiative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Built and Natural Environment	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
Total for Built and Natural Environment	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
Total for Development Management	1	7	1	4	3	2	3	21
Total for Investment & Funding	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Place Strategy	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Economic Initiative	1	9	2	5	4	2	4	27
Regulatory Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCTV & Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCTV	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for CCTV	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Civil Parking Enforcement	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for CCTV & Parking	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Commercial	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total for Commercial	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total for Pollution	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Environmental Health	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	5
Total for Parking	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2

Private Sector Housing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Private Sector Housing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Licensing	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Total for Licensing	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Total for Parking & Appeals	0	0	0	15	5	5	0	25
Total for Private Sector Housing, Licensing & Parking	0	0	0	17	5	6	0	28
Total for Property and Asset Management	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Property Asset Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estates	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Estates	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Property Asset Management	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Trading Standards/Animal Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trading Standards	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Trading Standards	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Trading Standards/Animal Welfare	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Regulatory Services	1	0	1	25	7	8	2	44
Transport & Capital Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highway Asset Management	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Highway Asset Management	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Transport & Capital Projects	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Economic Growth	3	10	4	54	13	17	9	110

Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Economic Growth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Projects, Transport & Highways Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highway Asset Management	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total for Highway Asset Management	0	1	2	0	0	3
Highway Network Management	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total for Highway Network Management	0	2	1	0	0	3
Projects & Building Design	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Projects & Building Design	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Capital Projects, Transport & Highways Planning	1	3	3	0	0	7
Economic Initiative	0	0	0	0	0	0
Built and Natural Environment	0	1	1	1	0	3
Total for Built and Natural Environment	0	1	1	1	0	3
Development Control	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Development Control	0	0	1	0	0	1
Development Management	0	7	3	1	0	11
Total for Development Management	0	7	3	1	0	11
Total for Economic Initiative	0	8	5	2	0	15
Regulatory Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Health	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pollution	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Pollution	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Environmental Health	0	2	0	0	0	2
Licensing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for Licensing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Private Sector Housing	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Private Sector Housing	0	0	1	0	0	1
Private Sector Housing, Licensing & Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0
Licensing	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Licensing	0	1	0	0	0	1
Parking & Appeals	0	3	1	0	0	4
Total for Parking & Appeals	0	3	1	0	0	4
Total for Private Sector Housing, Licensing & Parking	0	4	1	0	0	5
Property and Asset Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Property and Asset Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Property Asset Management	0	0	0	0	0	0

Estates	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Estates	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Property Asset Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Regulatory Services	0	8	2	0	1	11
Transport & Capital Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for Capital Projects	0	0	0	0	1	1
Highway Asset Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Highway Asset Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Highways Network Management	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Highways Network Management	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Transport & Capital Projects	0	1	0	1	1	3
Total for Economic Growth	1	20	10	3	2	36

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 2017/18. Some examples of these are detailed below.

Development Management

It was agreed the Development Manager would ensure all reports deal with proper planning analysis of the proposals against the development plan and that neighbour comments are fully explored and assessed in the report.

It was also agreed the Development Manager would review the use of conditions, provide training for officers in the use of conditions and there construction and improve scrutiny of reports in this respect.

It was agreed the Council would refer explicitly within application reports to the duty to determine applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise i.e. the duty under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

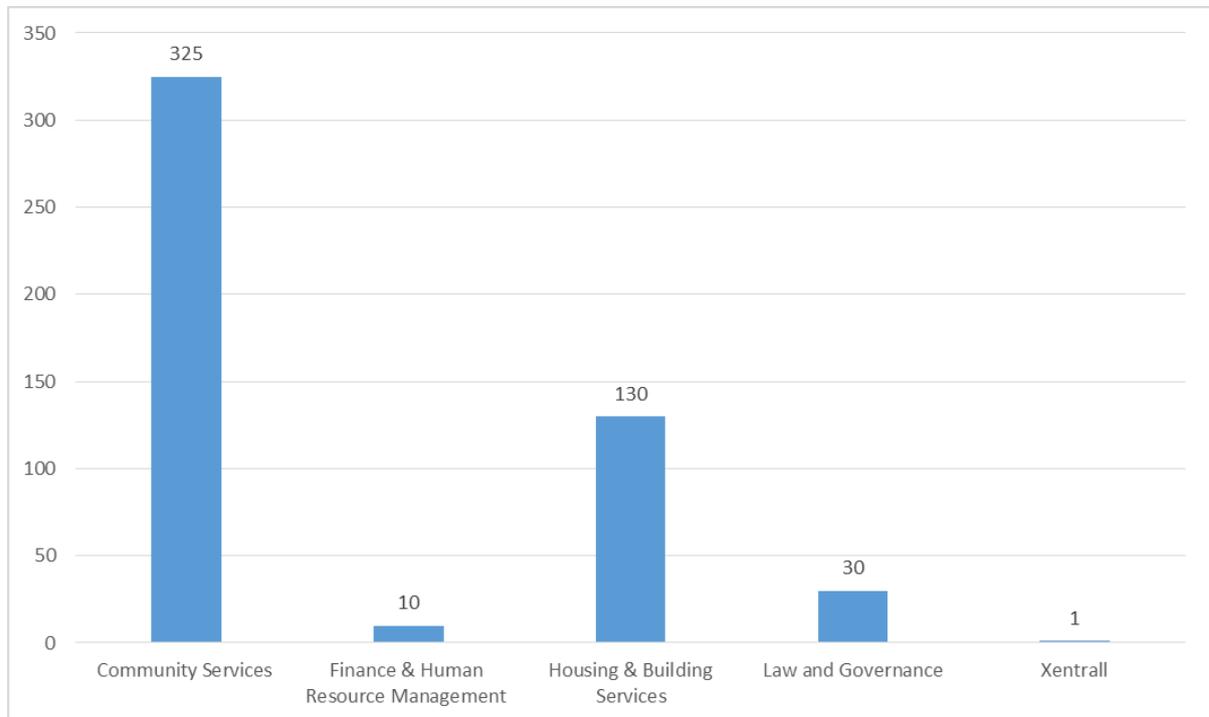
It was also agreed there would be a review of enforcement processes where breaches of planning have occurred but are not harmful so that these may be closed as soon as possible.

Further recommendations

There are no further recommendations for Economic Growth.

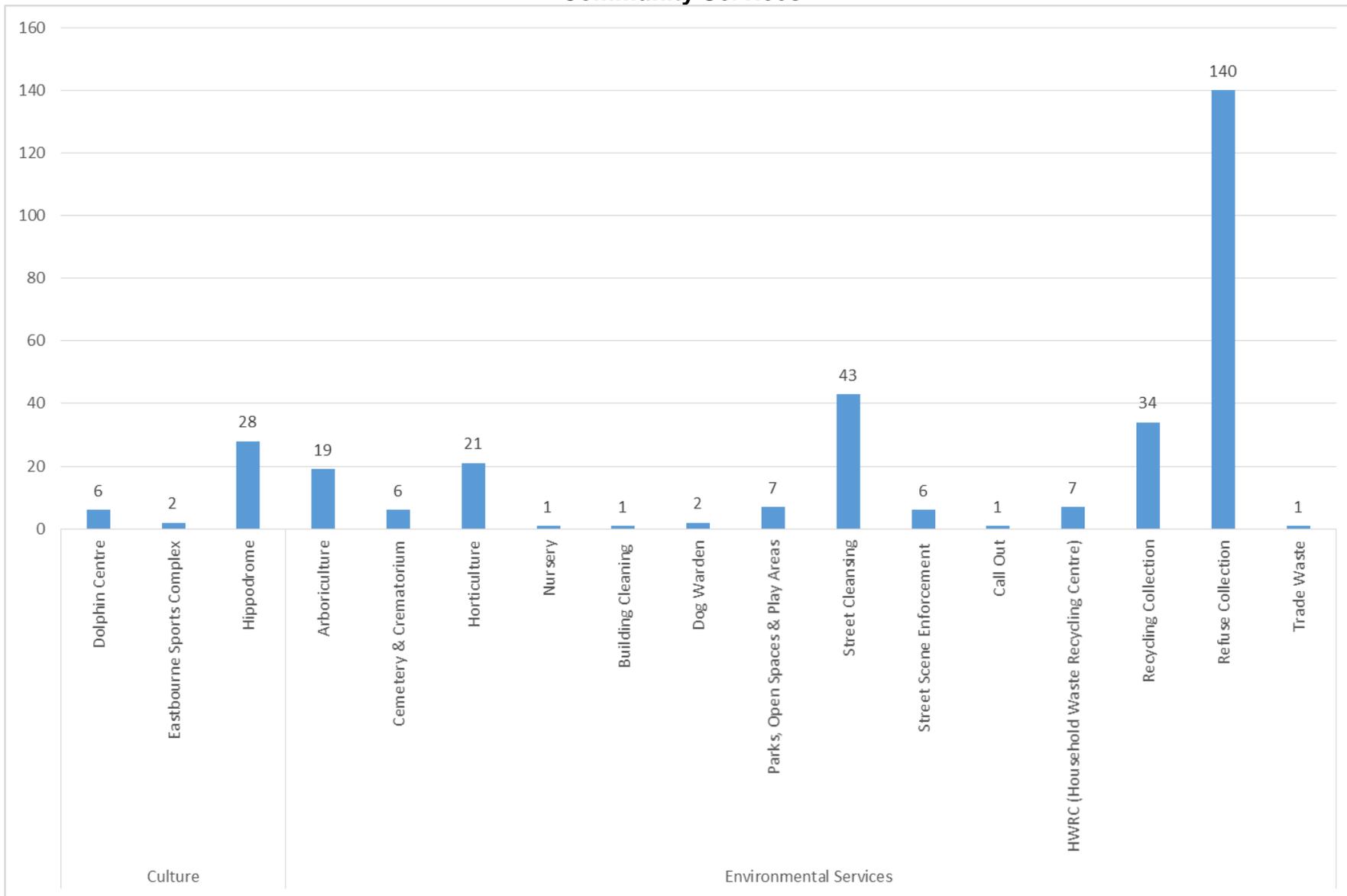
Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department Neighbourhood Services and Resources Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



Community Services received 325 complaints, a significant increase from 192 in 2016/17.

Community Services



Dolphin Centre received 6 complaints, an increase from 4 in 2016/17.

Hippodrome received 28 complaints, an increase from 3 in 2016/17 (this was as a result of the theatre being closed for refurbishment during 2016/17). The Civic Theatre received 24 complaints during 2015/16. The most common themes were issues with seating and communication/bookings.

Arboriculture received 19 complaints, a decrease from 22 in 2016/17. As in 2016/17 these 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.

Cemeteries and Crematorium received 6 complaints, an increase from 4 in 2016/17.

Street Cleansing received 43 complaints, an increase from 22 in 2016/17. These primarily related to the lack and quality of service provided.

Street Scene Enforcement received 6 complaints, a decrease from 11 in 2016/17.

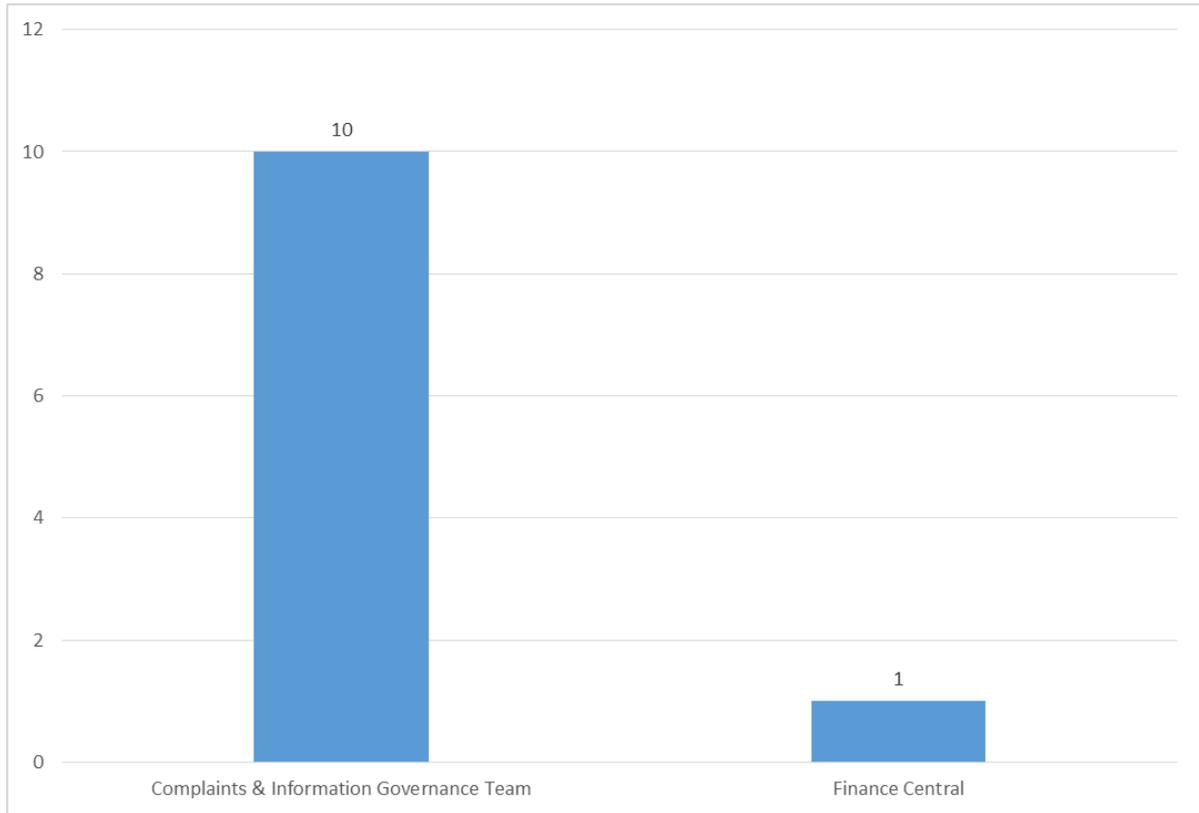
Horticulture received 21 complaints, an increase from 15 for Grounds Maintenance in 2016/17. These primarily related to grass cutting.

Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) received 7 complaints, an increase from 5 in 2016/17.

Recycling Collection received 34 complaints, compared to 35 in 2016/17. Complaints primarily related to collections being missed on one or more occasions.

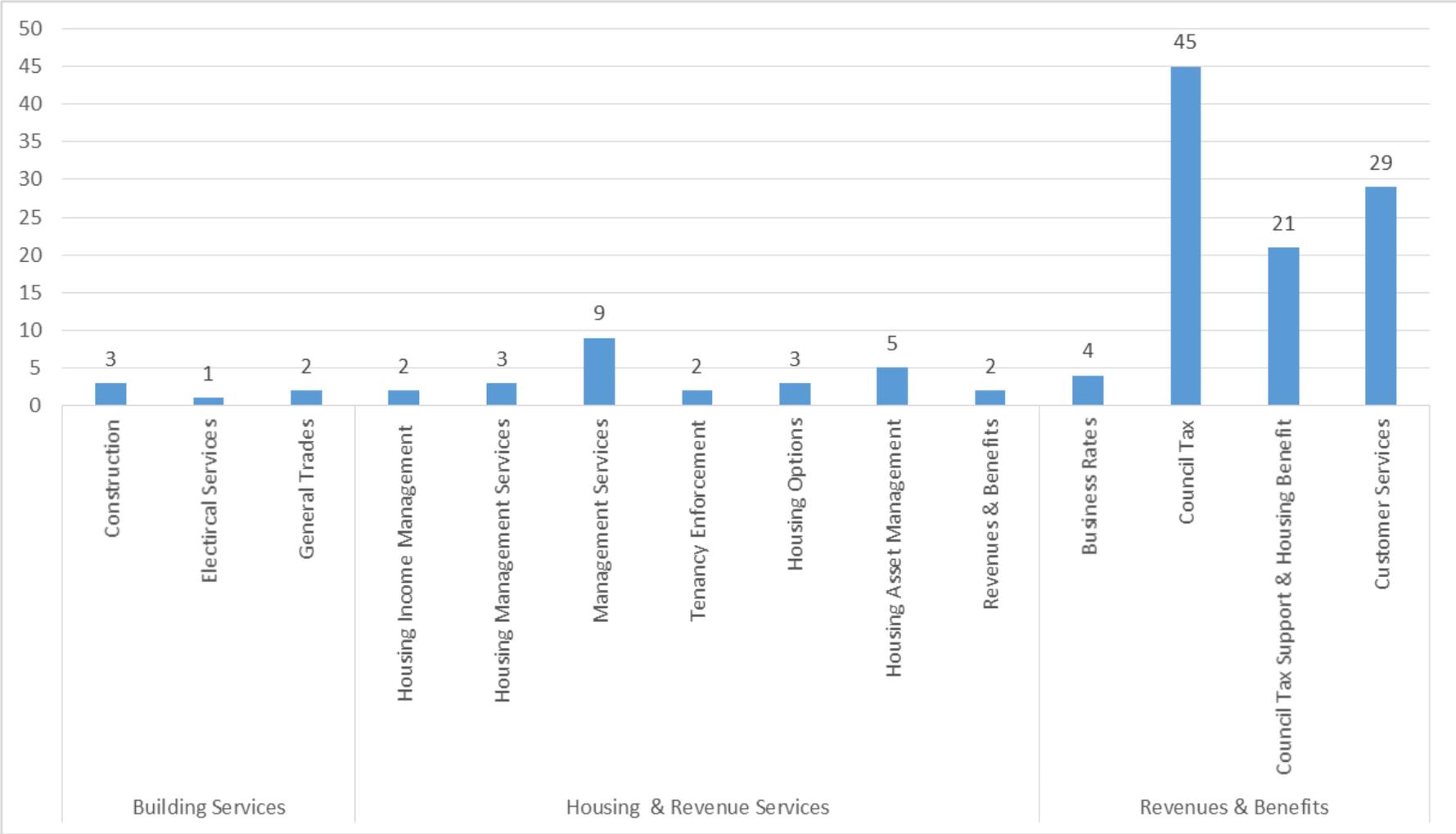
Refuse Collection received 140 complaints, an increase from 56 in 2016/17. Complaints primarily related to collections being missed on one or more occasions. The significant increase in complaints can be attributed to people being more inclined to complain following the introduction of the policy to no longer providing recall service.

Finance and Human Resource Management



The Complaints and Information Governance Team received 10 complaints, an increase from 1 in 2016/17. The most common theme was dissatisfaction with the response to a subject access request.

Housing and Building Services



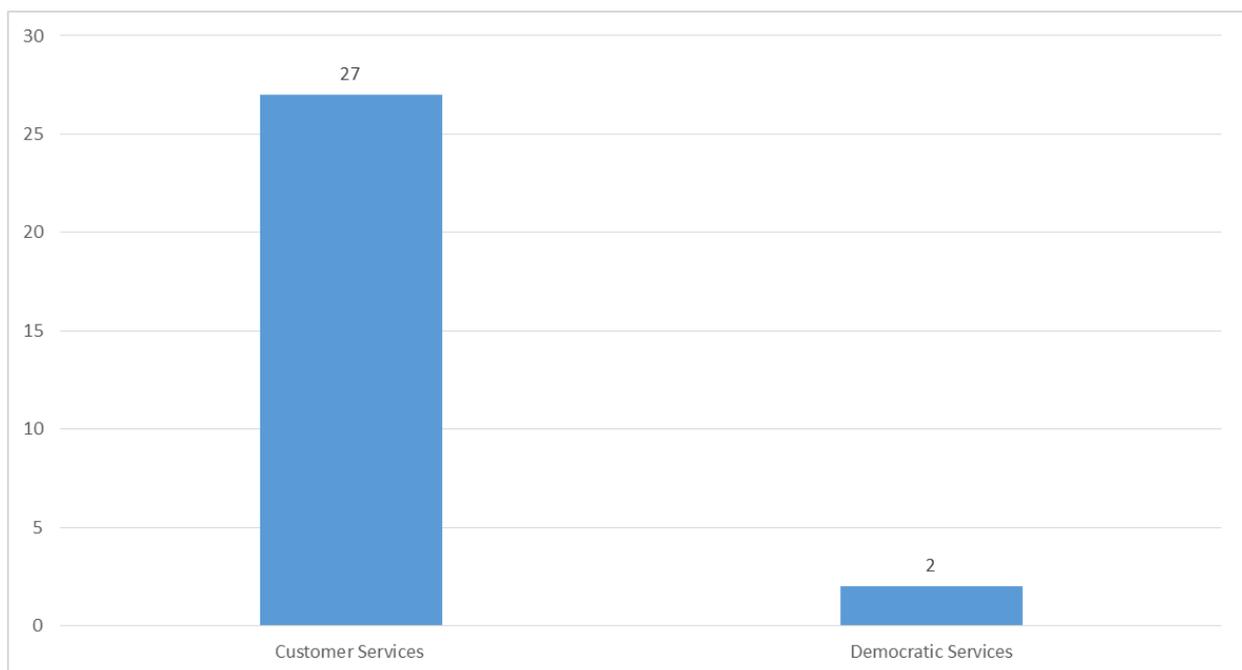
Housing Management Services/Management Services received 12 corporate complaints, compared to 3 in 2016/17. There were no discernable themes in the complaints received.

Council Tax received 45 complaints, compared to 35 in 2016/17. Half of the complaints received concerned people's dissatisfaction with the move to on-line forms.

Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit received 21 complaints, an increase from 10 in 2016/17. These related to people's dissatisfaction with the service and information provided.

Customer Services received 56 complaints (27 while located within Law and Governance - below and a further 29 following them being relocated within Housing and Building Services), an increase from 17 in 2016/17. The most common theme was dissatisfaction with telephone waiting times. Other issues complained about included the attitude of Customer Service Advisors and the accuracy of the advice provided.

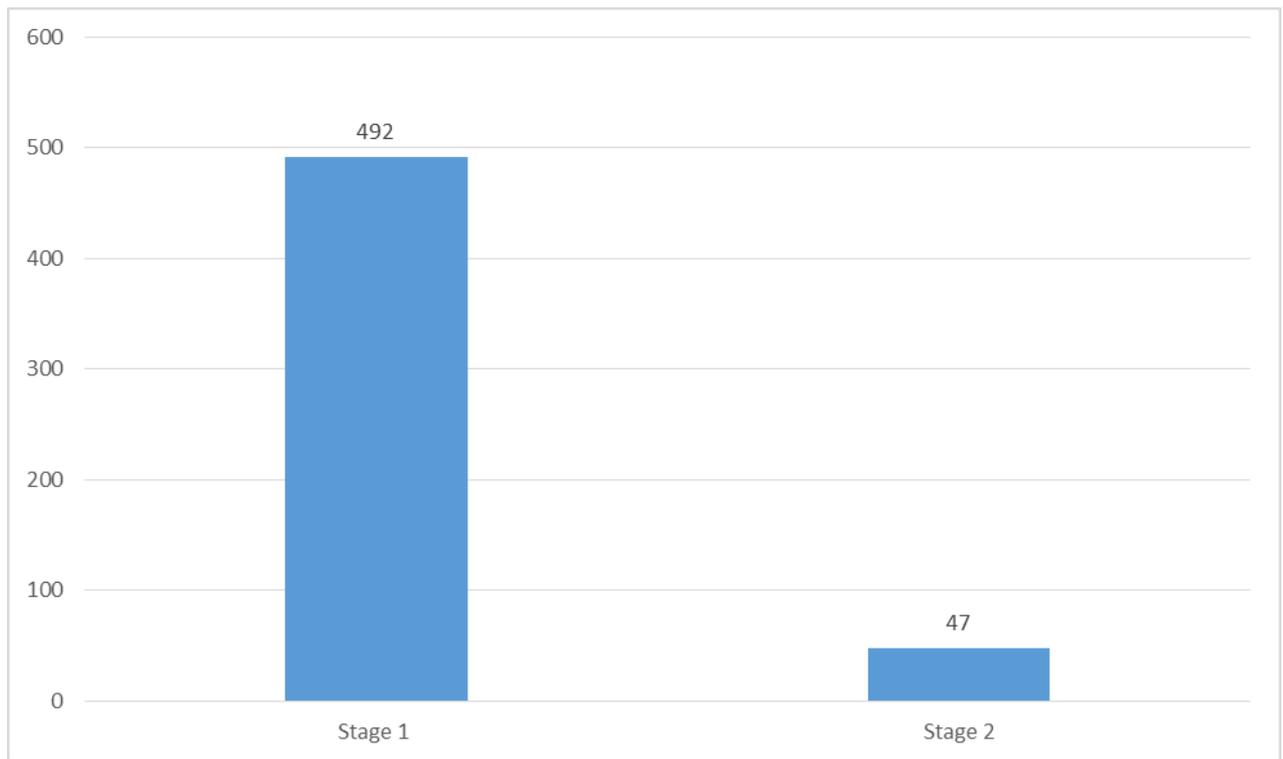
Law and Governance



For full details of Customer Services complaints please see the Housing and Building Services section above.

Democratic services received 2 complaints, compared to 1 in 2016/17.

Complaints by Stage



N.B. 4 complaints were escalated directly to stage 2.

Complaint by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2017/18.

Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Neighbourhood Services & Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Director Chief Executive's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic & Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Customer Services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Democratic & Customer Services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Organisational Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Web & Social Media	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Web & Social Media	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Organisational Planning	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Assistant Director Chief Executive's	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Community Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	6
Total for Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	6
Eastbourne Sports Complex	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total for Eastbourne Sports Complex	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Healthy Darlington	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Healthy Darlington	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Hippodrome	0	0	1	2	0	10	1	14
Total for Hippodrome	0	0	1	2	0	10	1	14
Total for Culture	0	0	1	3	1	16	2	23
Environmental Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arboriculture	0	3	0	12	3	4	0	22
Total for Arboriculture	0	3	0	12	3	4	0	22
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	5
Total for Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	5
Environmental Crime &	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Enforcement									
Total for Environmental Crime & Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Horticulture	0	0	0	7	2	10	1		20
Total for Horticulture	0	0	0	7	2	10	1		20
HWRC	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
Total for HWRC	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
Junk/House Clearances	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		2
Total for Junk/House Clearances	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		2
Nursery	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1
Total for Nursery	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1
Recycling Collection	0	0	0	2	0	0	0		2
Total for Recycling Collection	0	0	0	2	0	0	0		2
Refuse Collection	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
Total for Refuse Collection	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
Street Cleaning	0	0	1	1	0	1	0		3
Total for Street Cleaning	0	0	1	1	0	1	0		3
Street Scene	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Dog Warden	0	0	0	1	0	1	0		2
Parks, Open Spaces & Play Areas	0	0	0	5	0	0	0		5
Street Cleansing	0	0	0	14	5	18	1		38
Street Scene Enforcement	0	0	0	4	0	2	0		6
Total for Street Scene	0	0	0	24	5	21	1		51
Waste & Transport Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Call Out	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
HWRC	0	0	0	4	1	0	0		5
Recycling Collection	0	0	3	12	1	17	0		33
Refuse Collection	0	0	12	63	5	51	1		132
Trade Waste	0	0	0	0	0	1	0		1
Total for Waste & Transport Services	0	0	15	80	7	69	1		172
Total for Environmental Services	0	3	19	129	17	108	5		281
Total for Community Services	0	3	20	132	18	124	7		304
Finance & Human Resource Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	0	0	3	1	1	0		5
Total for Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	0	0	3	1	1	0		5
Total for Finance & Human Resource Management	0	0	0	3	1	1	0		5

Housing & Building Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total for Construction	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Electrical Services	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
General Trades	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total for Maintenance	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	3
Total for Building Services	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	6
Housing & Revenue Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Income Management	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Income Management	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Housing Management Services	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Management Services	0	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	8
Tenancy Enforcement	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total for Housing Management Services	0	0	4	6	3	0	0	0	13
Housing Options & Lifeline	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Options	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total for Housing Options & Lifeline	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total for Housing & Revenue Services	0	0	4	8	4	0	0	0	16
Housing Asset Management	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	5
Total for Housing Asset Management	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	5
Housing Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Management	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total for Housing Management	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Housing Options & Advice	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Options & Advice	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Services	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Business Rates	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total for Business Rates	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Council Tax	0	0	1	33	3	6	2	2	45
Total for Council Tax	0	0	1	33	3	6	2	2	45
Council Tax Support & Housing Benefit	0	0	2	9	5	2	0	0	18
Total for Council Tax Support & Housing Benefit	0	0	2	9	5	2	0	0	18
Customer Services	0	0	2	10	4	6	0	0	22
Total for Customer Services	0	0	2	10	4	6	0	0	22
Total for Revenues & Benefits	0	0	5	53	14	15	2	2	89
Total for Housing & Building Services	0	0	11	65	23	17	3	3	119

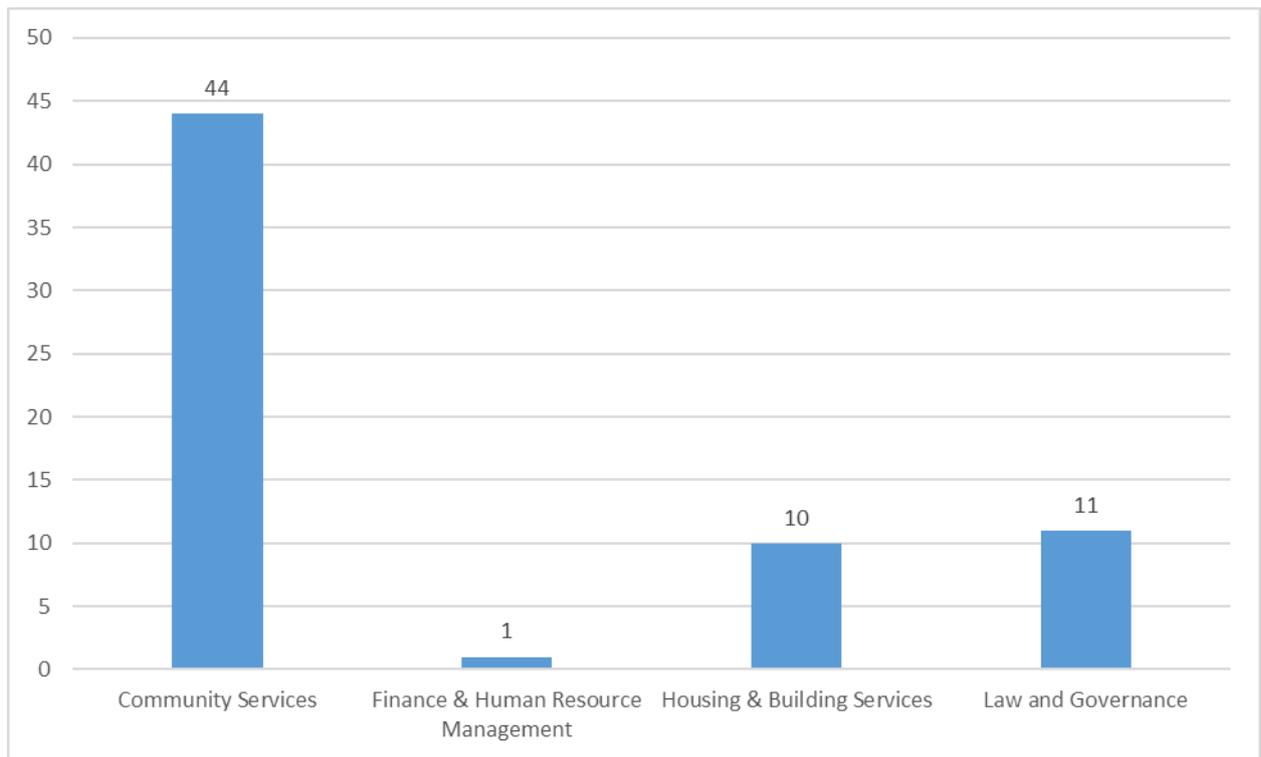
Law and Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic and Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	0	0	3	5	5	12	3	28	
Total for Customer Services	0	0	3	5	5	12	3	28	
Democratic Services	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	
Total for Democratic Services	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	
Total for Democratic and Customer Services	0	0	3	7	5	13	3	31	
Total for Law and Governance	0	0	3	7	5	13	3	31	
Xentrall Shared Services	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Total for Xentrall Shared Services	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Total for Neighbourhood Services & Resources	1	3	35	208	47	155	13	462	

Stage 2 Outcomes

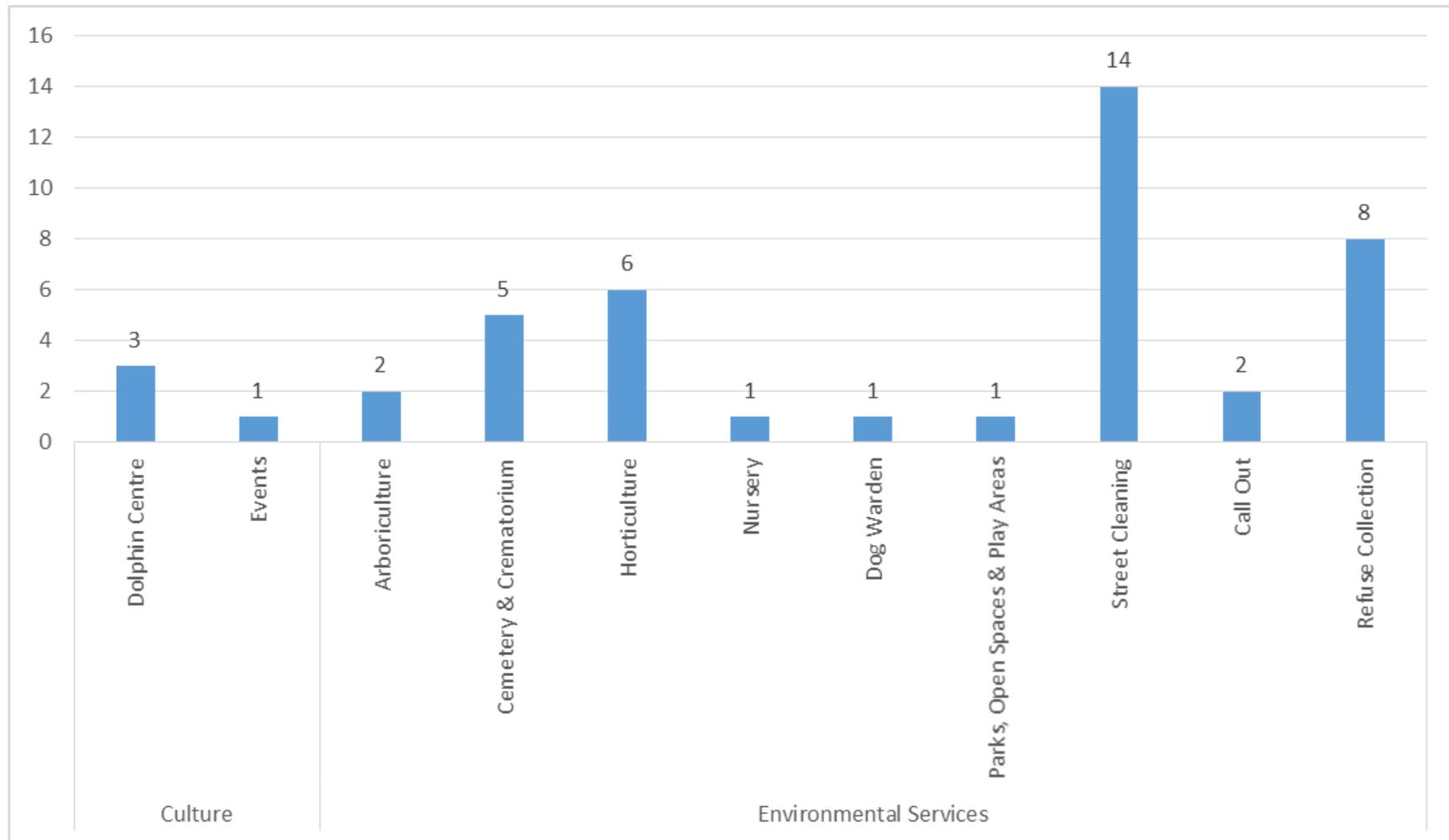
Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Neighbourhood Services & Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arboriculture	0	2	5	1	0	8
Total for Arboriculture	0	2	5	1	0	8
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	0	1	1
Horticulture	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Horticulture	0	0	2	0	0	2
HWRC	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for HWRC	0	1	0	0	0	1
Street Scene	0	0	0	0	0	0
Street Cleansing	0	0	1	0	0	1
Street Scene Enforcement	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Street Scene	0	1	1	0	0	2
Waste & Transport Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recycling Collection	0	0	0	1	0	1
Refuse Collection	0	2	0	2	0	4
Total for Waste & Transport Services	0	2	0	3	0	5
Total for Environmental Services	0	6	8	4	1	19
Total for Community Services	0	6	8	4	1	19
Finance & Human Resource Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total for Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	1	0	1	0	2
Corporate Assurance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Corporate Assurance	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Finance & Human Resource Management	0	1	0	2	0	3

Housing & Building Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Construction	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Building Services	0	0	1	0	0	1
Housing & Revenue Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Management Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Management Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing & Revenue Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Asset Management	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total for Housing Asset Management	0	2	1	0	0	3
Housing Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choice Based Lettings	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Choice Based Lettings	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Management	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Options & Advice	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Options & Advice	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Housing Services	0	3	0	0	0	3
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rates	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Business Rates	0	1	0	0	0	1
Council Tax	0	4	1	0	0	5
Total for Council Tax	0	4	1	0	0	5
Council Tax Support & Housing Benefit	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total for Council Tax Support & Housing Benefit	1	0	1	0	0	2
Customer Services	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Customer Services	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Revenues & Benefits	1	5	2	1	0	9
Total for Housing & Building Services	1	11	4	1	0	17
Law and Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic and Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Customer Services	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Democratic and Customer Services	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Law and Governance	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total for Neighbourhood Services & Resources	1	18	14	7	1	41

Compliments by Service Area/Team Overview



Community Services



Dolphin Centre received 3 compliments, the same number as in 2016/17.

Cemeteries and Crematorium received 5 compliments, compared to 6 in 2016/17.

Horticulture received 6 compliments, a decrease from 13 in 2016/17.

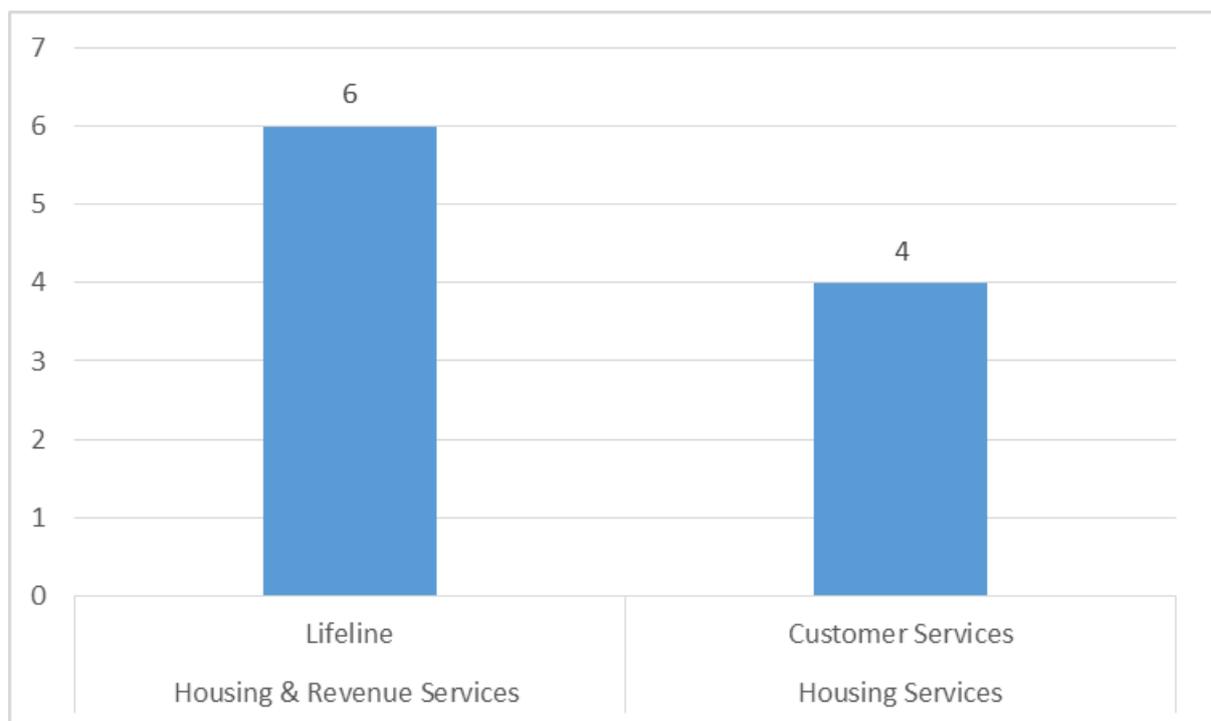
Street Cleaning received 14 compliments, compared to 15 in 2016/17.

Refuse Collection received 8 compliments, a decrease from 14 in 2016/17.

Finance and Human Resource Management

Complaint & Information Governance Team received 1 compliments, a decrease from 6 in 2016/17.

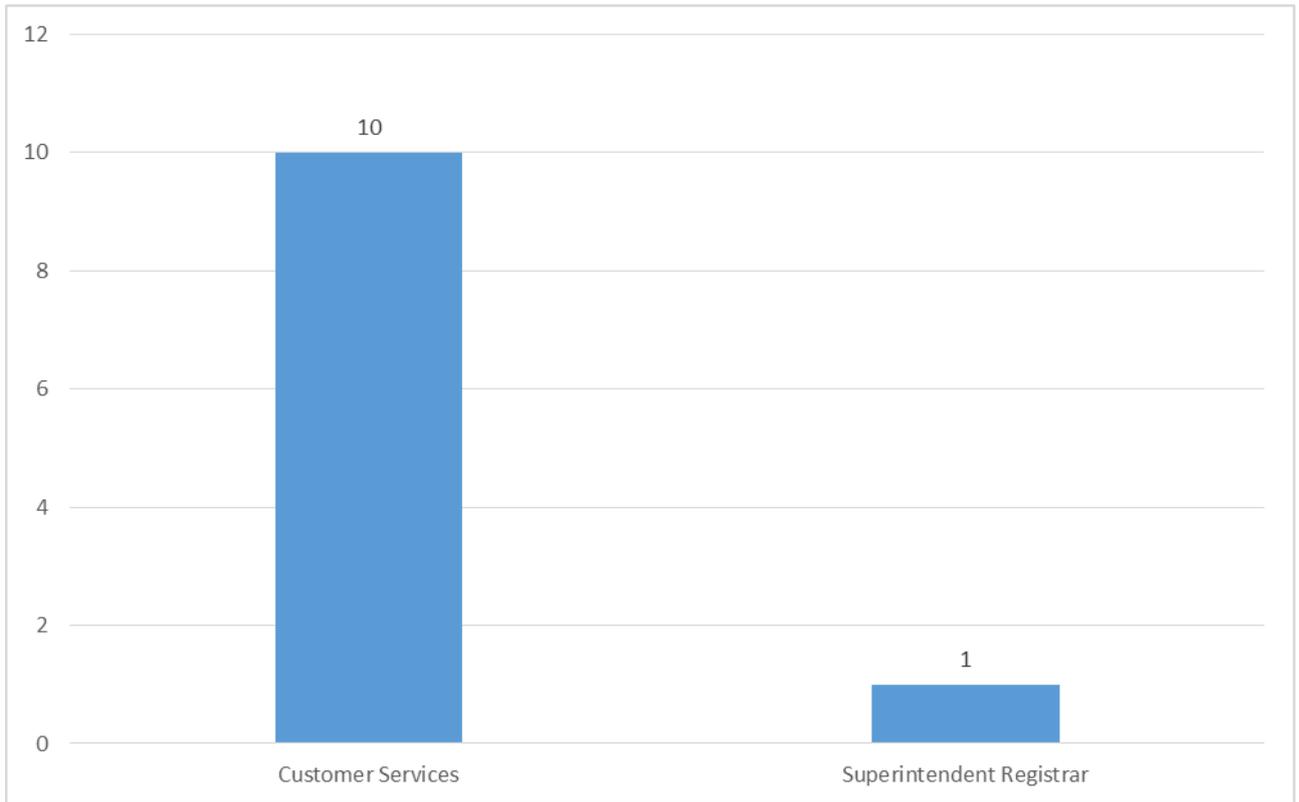
Housing and Building Services



Lifeline received 6 compliments, an increase from 3 in 2016/17.

Customer Services received 14 compliments (see below), a decrease from 17 in 2016/17.

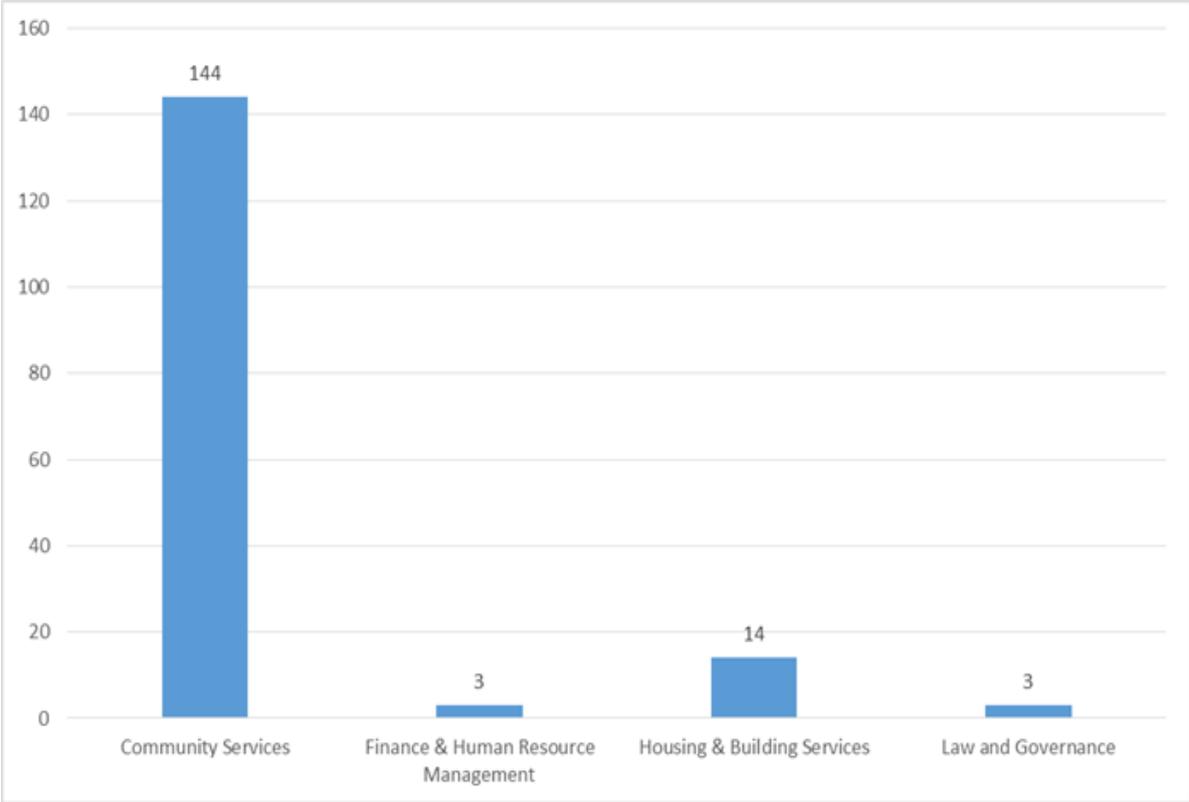
Law and Governance



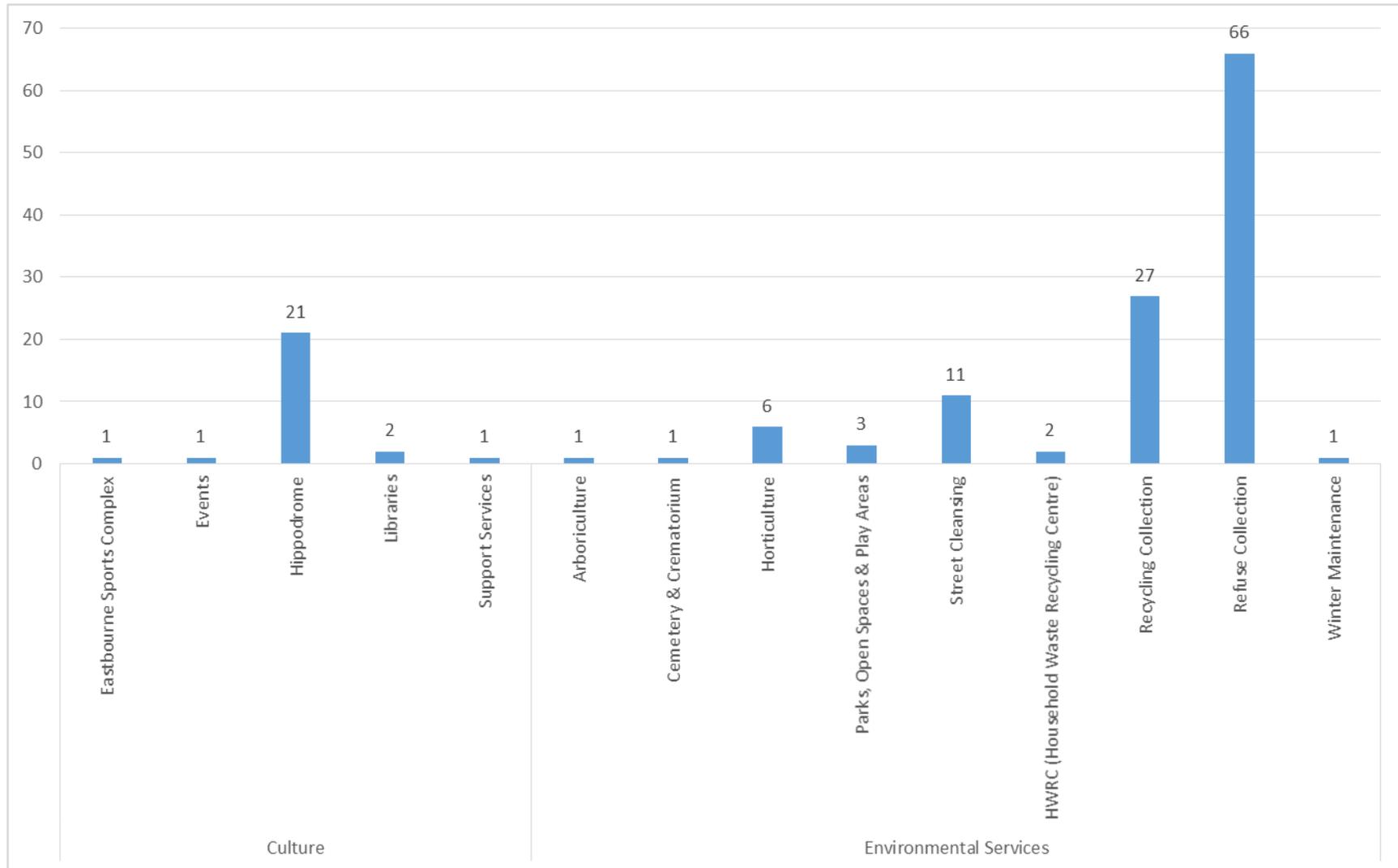
Customer Services received 14 compliments (see above), a decrease from 17 in 2016/17.

Superintendent Registrar received 1 complaint, a decrease from 3 in 2016/17.

Comments by Service Area/Team Overview



Community Services



Hippodrome received 21 comments, an increase from 5 in 2016/17 (when the theatre was closed for refurbishment). The Civic Theatre received 15 comments 2015/16. The most common themes were ticket prices and dissatisfaction with the pantomime.

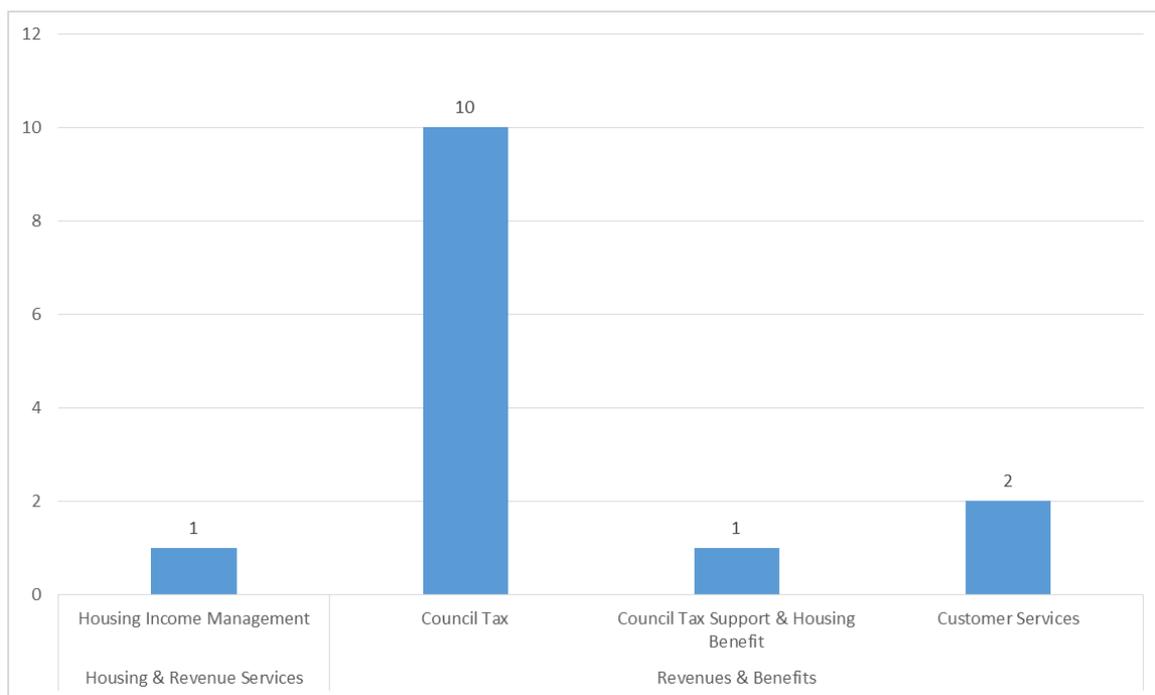
Horticulture received 6 comments, a decrease from 11 in 2016/17. There were no discernable themes in the comments received.

Parks, Open Spaces & Play Areas received 3 comments, a decrease from 6 in 2016/17.

Recycling Collection received 27 comments, an increase from 23 in 2016/17. The most common theme was people's dissatisfaction with the Council's policy to no longer provide a recall service.

Refuse Collection received 66 comments, a significant increase from 32 in 2016/17. The most common theme was people's dissatisfaction with the Council's policy to no longer provide a recall service.

Housing and Building Services



Council Tax received 10 comments, a decrease from 13 in 2016/17. There were no discernible themes.

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 2017/18. Some examples of these are detailed below.

Arboriculture

It was recommended Arboricultural Services should review processes to ensure queries are responded to in a timely manner, Arborists have the correct equipment when attending a job and dates and times a tree was inspected are included in response letters to members of the public.

Complaints & Information Governance Team

It was agreed the Council would look at ways to improve the speed with which it is able to comply with subject access requests (requests for personal information).

Construction

The Housing Asset Manager reminded all staff of the requirement to consult with residents before commencing works to fences where necessary.

Council Tax

The technical issues customers experienced following the introduction of on-line forms have now been resolved.

Customer Services

Additional staffing resource was brought in, as a response to the complaints about telephone waiting times.

Further training was undertaken with the Casual Registrar on appropriate facilities available for breastfeeding mothers.

Healthy Darlington

It was agreed the Council would revisit the definition of disability in line with the Equality Act so that the criteria for the Healthy Darlington Everyone scheme can be updated accordingly.

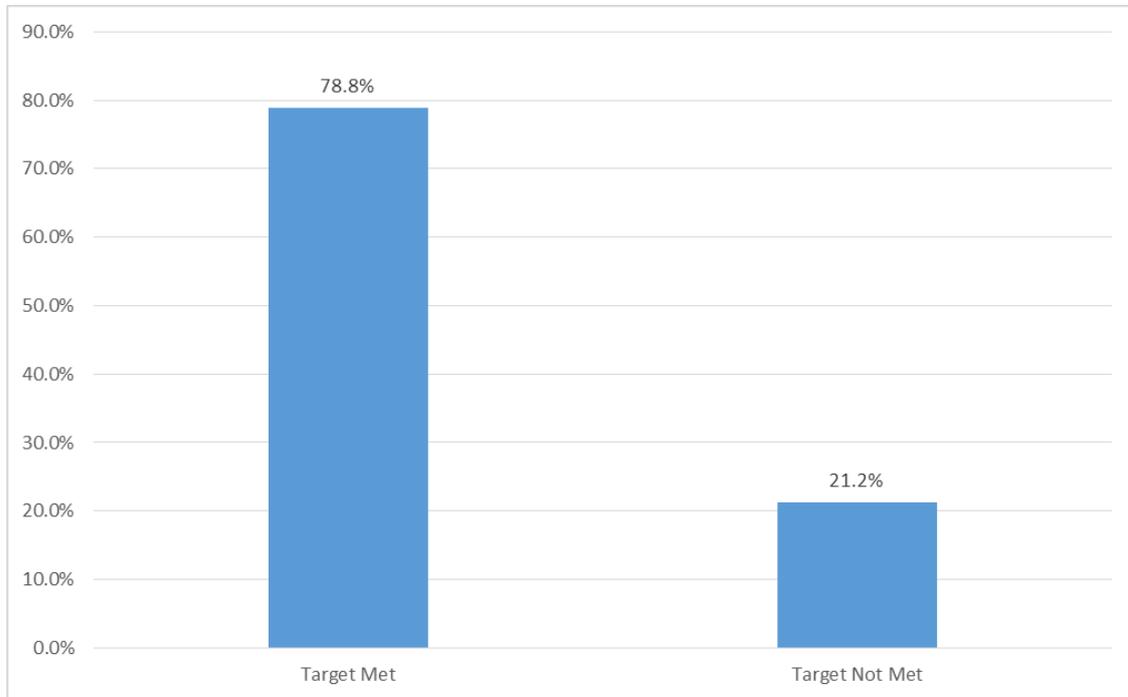
Further recommendations

There are no further recommendations for Neighbourhood Services and Resources.

Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

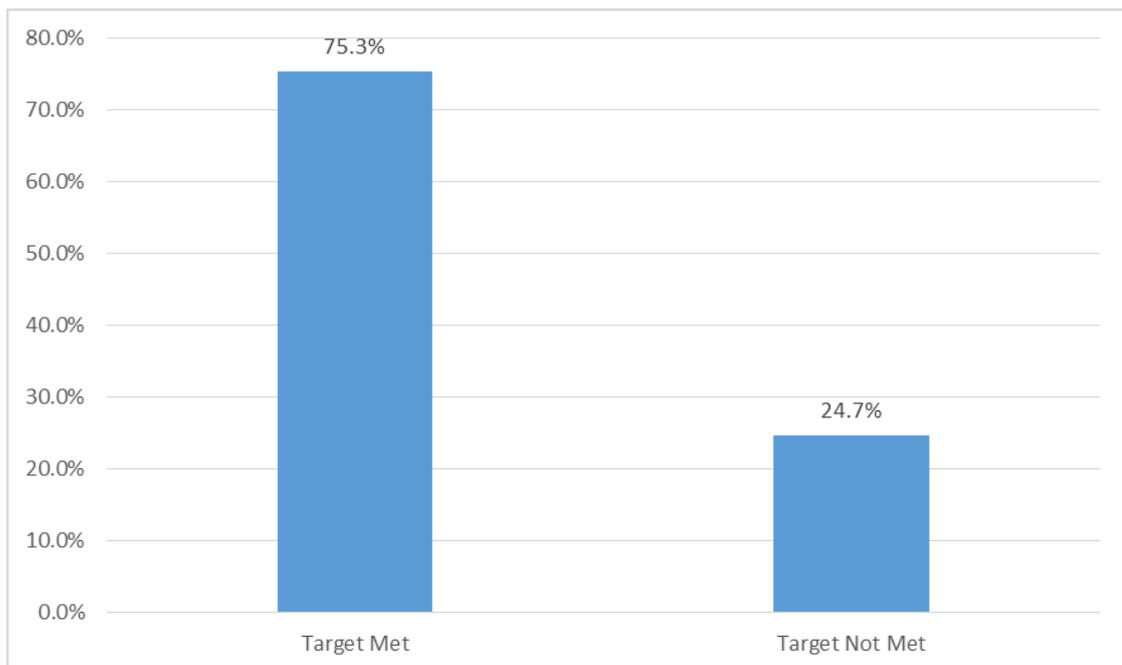
Stage 1

Performance against Stage 1 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



This was a reduction in performance from 95% in 2016/17.

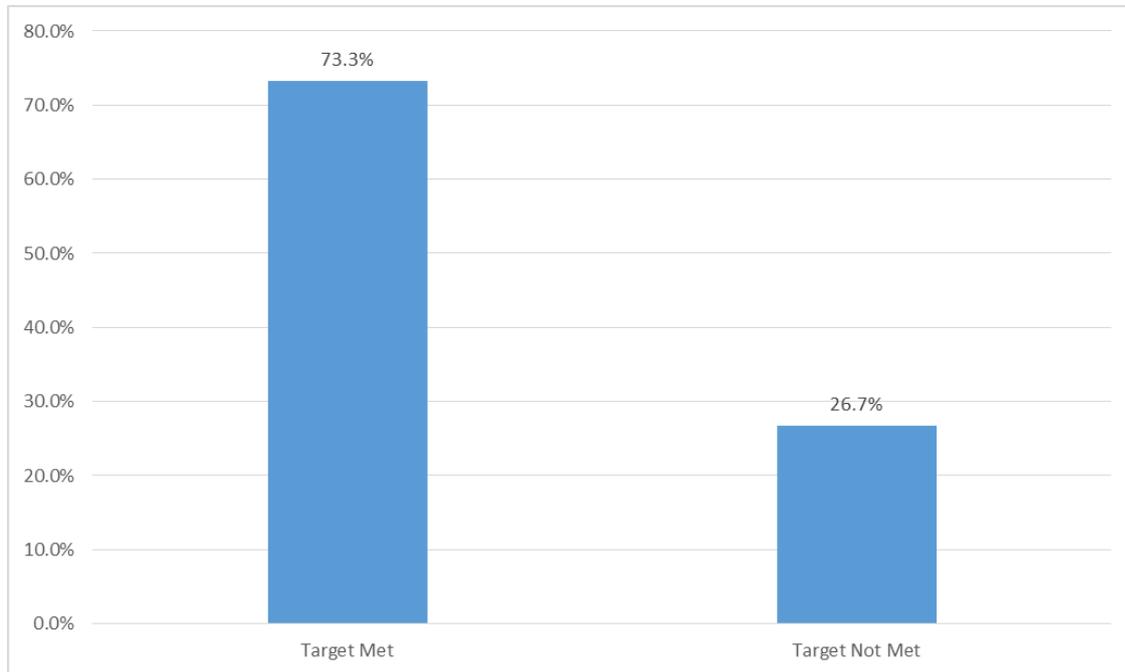
Performance against Stage 1 response target (25 working days)



This was a reduction in performance from 76.7% in 2016/17.

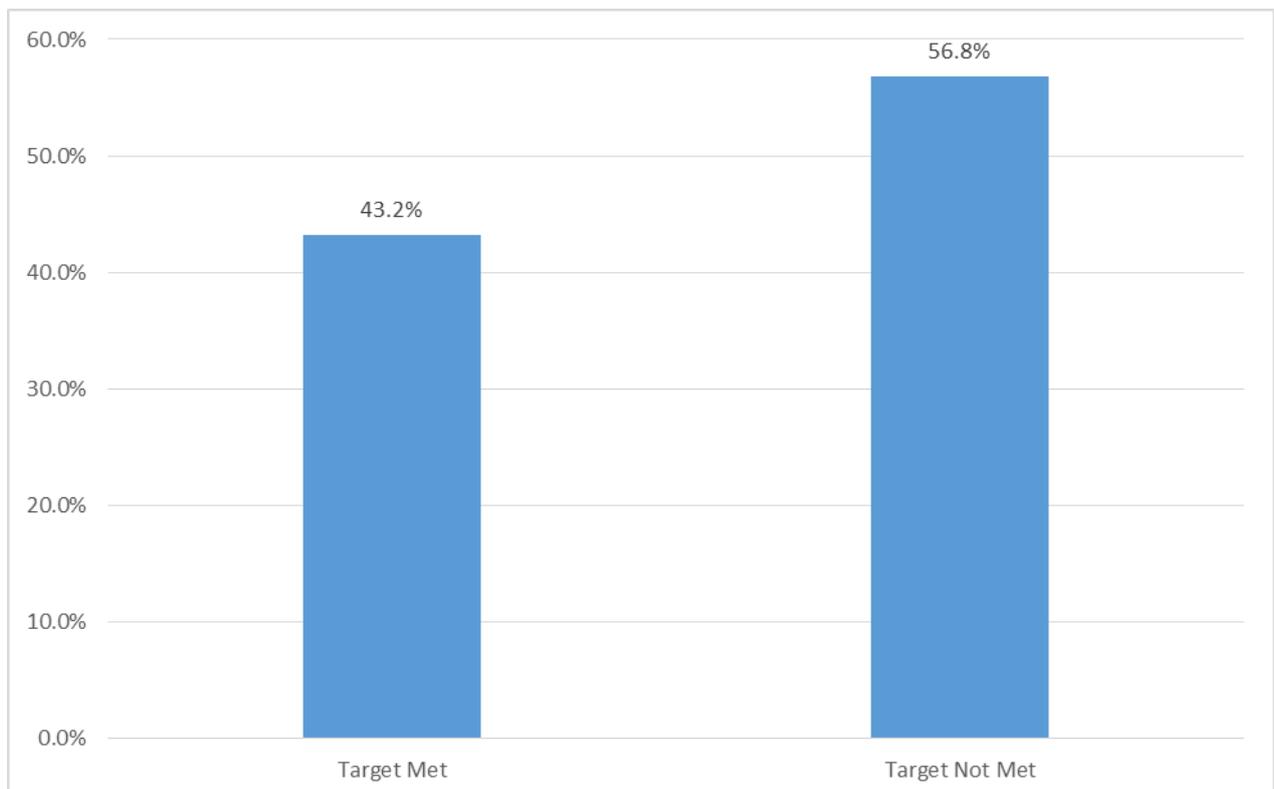
Stage 2

Performance against Stage 2 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



This was a reduction in performance from 93.5% in 2016/17.

Performance against Stage 2 response target (30 working days)



This was a reduction in performance from 68.3% in 2016/17. In the majority of cases where it was not possible to respond within timescale the Complaints and Information Governance Manager agreed an extension with the complainant in accordance with the provisions of the procedure.

The overall reduction in performance can be attributed primarily to the increase in the volume of representations made under the procedure during 2017/18.

Performance against Local Performance Indicators

In relation to corporate complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government Ombudsman. The Council received 2 maladministration decision during 2017/18, an increase from 1 in 2016/17.

Full details of those complaints determined by the LGSCO are included in the Cabinet reports of 5 December 2017 and 9 October 2018 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).