

**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 12 June 2019

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Resources And  
People Services)

**SUBJECT:** Customer Feedback Reporting 2018/2019

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## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure for 2018/2019 (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019).

1.2 To raise awareness of implemented and planned improved processes as result of trends seen in the reporting.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To note the report and where appropriate highlight areas for further consideration.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 East Lothian Council complies with the model complaints handling procedure (CHP) for local authorities introduced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

**Stage 1 (Frontline Resolution)** - Complaint dealt with at point of service within 5 working days

**Stage 2 (Investigation)** – Complaint investigated; acknowledged within 3 working days and response provided within 20 working days. If complainants remain dissatisfied after completing this process they have a legal right of appeal to the SPSO.

- 3.2. Complaints handled at Stage 1 where customers are not satisfied with the response, escalate to Stage 2. Such complaints continue to be recorded separately. This ensures that the reporting of complaints “escalated to Stage 2” are more accurate.
- 3.3 The Customer Feedback and FOI team have experienced some challenges around staffing and increased workload over the last year. A new Team Leader has been appointed who brings renewed focus around compliance and complaint handling. Susan Farrow joined the team on the 8<sup>th</sup> April and brings a wealth of knowledge to this area.
- 3.4 A new Feedback Officer, Alisdair Dawson joined the team on the 15<sup>th</sup> April bringing a wealth of knowledge around complaint handling.
- 3.5 The Feedback Team continue to support service areas. There will be increased focus over the next year around training and communication and using feedback data to inform service improvements.
- 3.6 The Council continues to record and report on complaints received by the Contact Centre, local area offices and the Customer Feedback Team. Service areas are encouraged to report complaints they receive through these channels to ensure recording is as accurate as possible.
- 3.7 In previous reports it was highlighted that a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management software – case handling) could be utilised to send automated reminders for open cases and on-line reporting. The replacement solution, OCP (On-line Customer Portal) has been purchased and existing CRM services are currently being migrated over. Customer Feedback and FOI are estimated to migrate Autumn 2019. Improved processes and on-line capability will further improve efficiencies and communication within the team once implemented.
- 3.8 This report covers all Council services.

### 3.9 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK OVERVIEW 2018/2019

3.9.1 During 2018/2019, East Lothian Council received **717** complaints, compared with **922** in 2017/2018. Whilst there is a reduction, overall 2018/2019 was a positive year in terms of Customer Feedback in relation to decrease in Stage 2 complaints and the number of not upheld complaints. This will be detailed further in the report.

#### 2018/2019

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	634	244	109
2	83		

#### 2017/2018

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	761	178	79
2	161		

3.9.2 Complaint **response times** were as follows:

**Stage 1: 55%** (347 of 634) responded to within 5 working days.

**Stage 2: 54%** (45 of 83) responded to within 20 working days.

3.9.3 Response times have reduced since 2017/2018 from 65% to 55% for Stage 1 and from 55% to 54% for Stage 2. Moving forward there will be increased closer working between the Customer Service and FOI Team and Service Areas to improve overall response times.

Whilst the response time is longer than the SPSO guidelines, customers are advised if their Stage 2 complaint is going to take more than 20 days and provided with regular updates, where required.

### **3.10 COMPLAINT ANALYSIS 2018/2019**

3.10.1 Complaint **outcomes** were as follows:

**Stage 1: 634** complaints received

Not Upheld 59% (376)

Partially Upheld 19% (125)

Upheld 13% (83)

Escalated to Stage 4.7% (30)

**Please note: Totals will not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received.**

The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2018/2019** were:

**Property Maintenance 27%** (171)

**Waste Services 14%** (89)

**Road Services 9%** (55)

**Stage 2: 83** complaints received

Not Upheld 64% (53)

Partially Upheld 28% (23)

Upheld 7% (6)

**Please note: Totals will not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received.**

The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 2** complaints in **2018/2019** were:

**Education 37%** (31)

**Property Maintenance 12%** (10)

**Planning 8%** (7)

Whilst **Road services** received 9% (55) of all total Stage 1 complaints received in 2018/2019 (634). Of the complaints received, over 50% were not upheld.

**Waste Services** received 14% (89) of all Stage 1 complaints (634) and has remained the same as 2017/2018. Of the complaints received, over 72% were not upheld.

**Property Maintenance** Stage 1 complaints have risen from 143 in 2017-2018 to 171 this year. However, Stage 2 complaints have seen a positive decrease from 12 to 10. Of the complaints received, over 50% were not upheld.

**3.10.2 A table of all Service Area Complaints in 2018/2019 is shown in Appendix 2.**

### **3.11 COMPLIMENTS OVERVIEW 2018/2019**

3.11.1 **244** compliments were received in **2018/2019**.

The following Service Area received a high percentage of compliments:

**Adult Wellbeing 19%** (46)

**Customer Services 19%** (46)

**Property Maintenance 17%** (41)

This follows the trend seen in previous years as these Service Areas have a high volume of customer facing interactions and as such have more opportunity to receive more feedback; both compliments and complaints.

### **3.12 COMMENTS OVERVIEW 2018/2019**

3.12.1 **109** comments were received in 2018/2019.

There is no trend of comments specific to any one Service Area.

### **3.13 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AS A RESULT OF FEEDBACK**

3.13.1 As a result of feedback received the following improvements and actions have been carried out:

#### **Roads**

Overall the level of complaints are down in comparison to last year. 2017-2018 77 complaints whilst 2018-2019 attracted 58 complaints.

Street lighting faults continue to be a theme year on year with challenges over certain quarters. Particular challenges in the service area have been around staffing resources and a backlog of faults.

These challenges have been addressed with a further vacant post filled and careful management has allowed a reduction in the backlog which going forward will improve the overall performance in this regard.

#### **Waste**

Overall the two themes that were identified within the complaints received in regards to waste, these were recycling and bin collection. Complaints received in relation to recycling and bin collection have reduced since 2017/2018 from 120 to 89, 2018/2019.

#### **Property Maintenance**

Overall the level of complaints in regards to property maintenance received by the complaints team have increased in 2018/2019, 181 from 153 2017/2018. The main theme being service delivery. In regards to this service 60% of the overall complaints received were not upheld.

The Service Area has recently restructured re-aligning staffing resource to enable them to meet their current and future priorities. Improved data sharing will be a priority over 2019/2020 to inform the service area and enable them to address issues around service delivery reflected in complaint data.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONIONS**

4.1 None

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Financial – None

5.2 Personnel – None

5.3 Other – None

#### **6. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy

#### **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2018/2019

7.2 Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2018/2019

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Susan Farrow
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<b>DATE</b>	1 June 2019

## Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2018/2019

Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Compliments	Comments
<b>Adult Wellbeing</b>											
Total	31	19	7	6	0	5	3	1	1	46	4
<b>Arts Development</b>											
Total	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
<b>Building Maintenance</b>											
Total	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Building Standards</b>											
Total	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Children's Services</b>											
Total	8	7	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Community Housing</b>											
Total	53	41	3	3	6	6	5	0	1	12	8
<b>Community Partnerships</b>											
Total	10	5	2	0	3	3	2	1	0	2	3



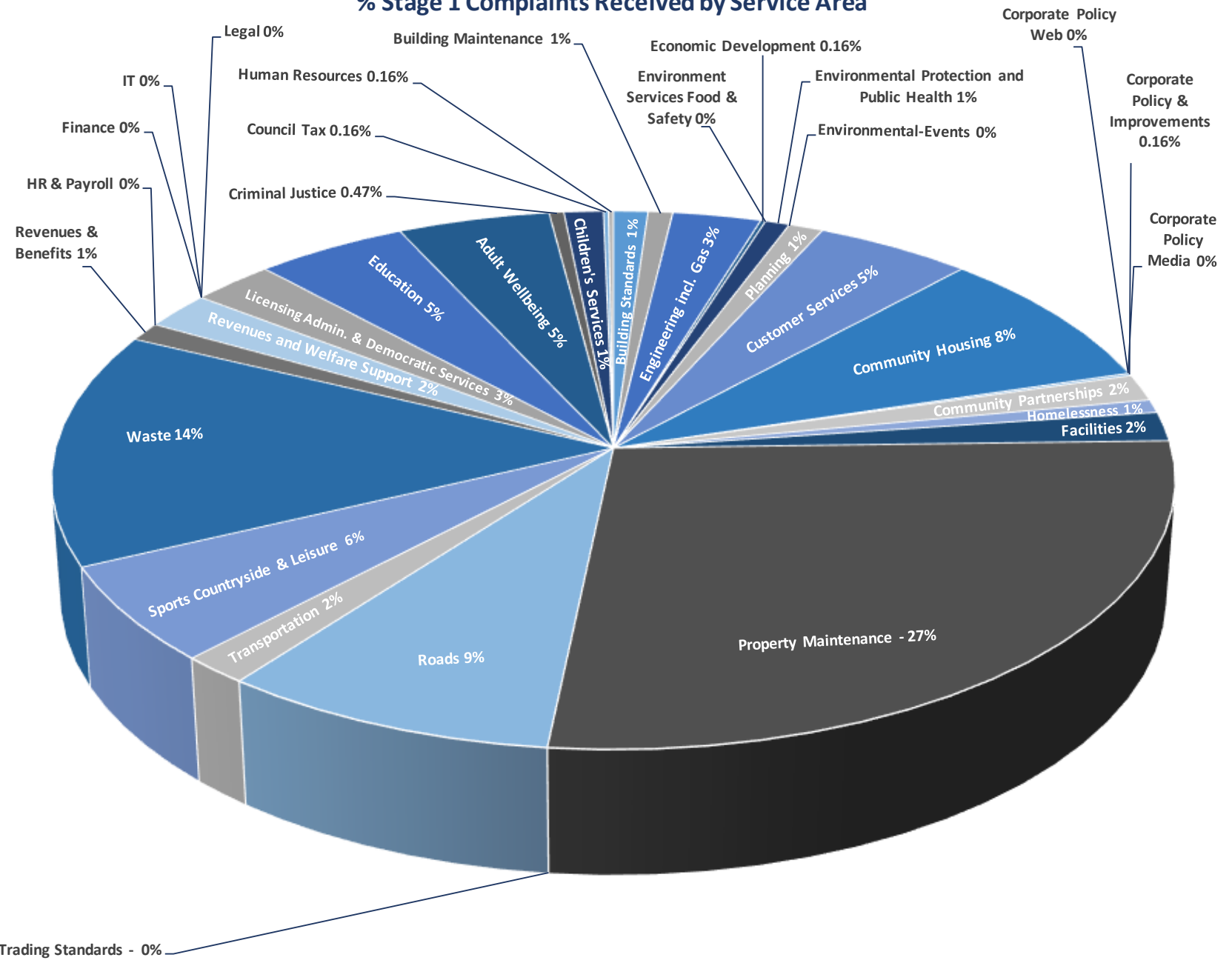
Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Compliments	Comments
<b>Corporate Policy &amp; Improvements</b>											
Total	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	10
<b>Corporate Policy Media</b>											
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Corporate Policy Web</b>											
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Council Tax</b>											
Total	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Criminal Justice</b>											
Total	3	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Customer Services</b>											
Total	32	22	6	2	0	2	2	0	0	46	3
<b>Economic Development</b>											
Total	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Education</b>											
Total	31	18	6	2	5	31	19	10	2	0	3



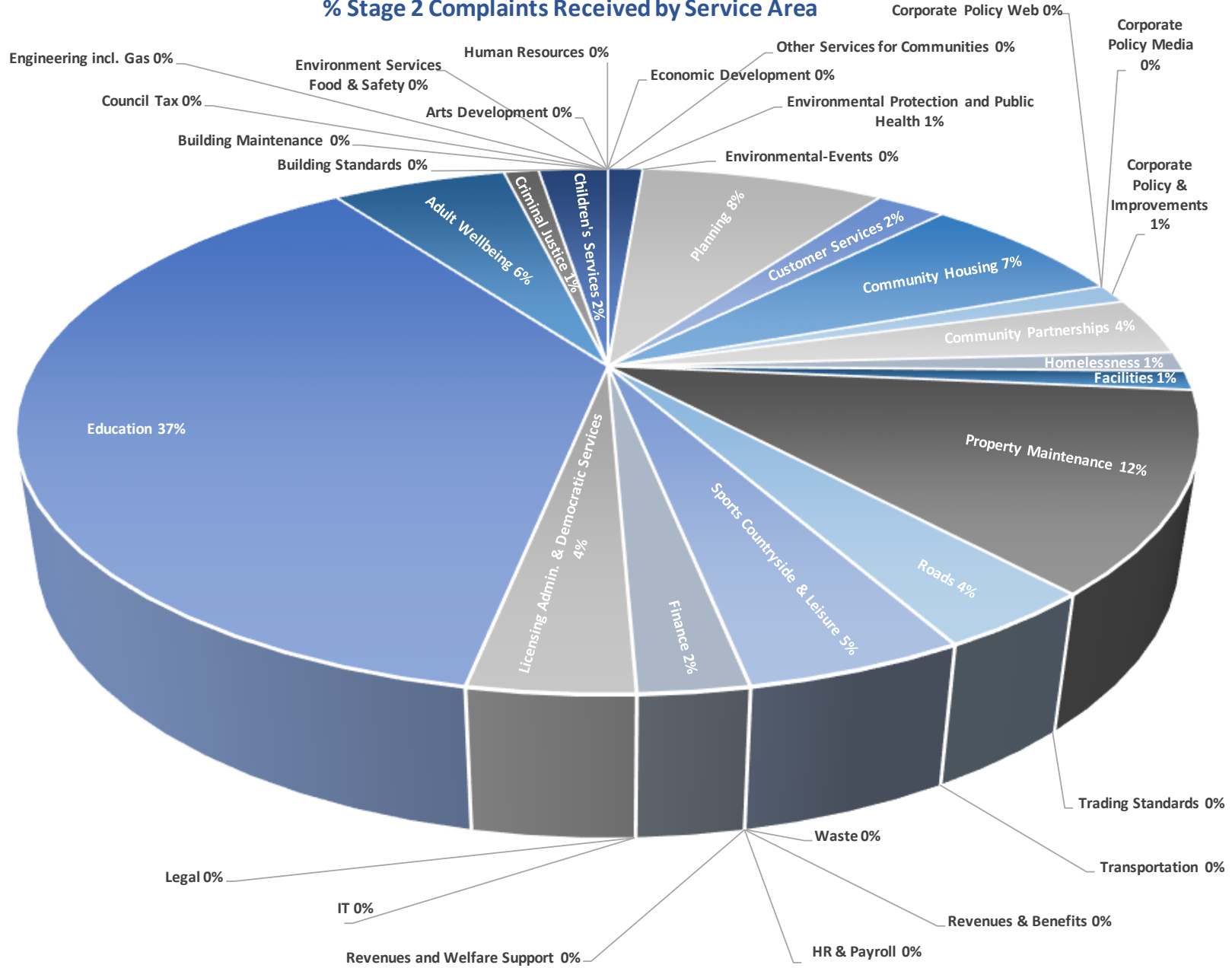
Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Compliments	Comments
<b>Human Resources</b>											
Total	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>IT</b>											
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Legal</b>											
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Licensing Admin. &amp; Democratic Services</b>											
Total	17	10	2	3	2	3	1	2	0	8	5
<b>Other Services for Communities</b>											
Total	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Planning</b>											
Total	7	4	0	1	2	7	5	2	0	2	4
<b>Property Maintenance</b>											
Total	171	99	40	22	11	10	5	4	1	41	4
<b>Revenues &amp; Benefits</b>											
Total	7	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Compliments	Comments
<b>Revenues and Welfare Support</b>											
Total	14	7	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	1
<b>Roads</b>											
Total	55	42	9	4	0	3	2	1	0	11	23
<b>Sports Countryside &amp; Leisure</b>											
Total	37	16	9	12	0	4	4	0	0	26	11
<b>Trading Standards</b>											
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Transportation</b>											
Total	11	4	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Waste</b>											
Total	89	64	18	7	0	0	0	0	0	24	18

### % Stage 1 Complaints Received by Service Area



### % Stage 2 Complaints Received by Service Area



## Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2018/2019

Service Area	Stage 1 % responded to in 5 Working days	Stage 2 % responded to in 20 Working days
Adult Wellbeing	45%	40%
Arts Development	100%	**
Building Maintenance	100%	**
Building Standards	0%	**
Children's Services	33%	0%
Community Housing	41%	83%
Community Partnerships	50%	33%
Corporate Policy & Improvements	0%	100%
Corporate Policy Media	**	**
Corporate Policy Web	**	**
Council Tax	0%	**
Criminal Justice	33%	0%
Customer Services	63%	50%
Economic Development	0%	**
Education	55%	61%
Engineering incl. Gas	50%	**
Environment Services Food & Safety	**	**
Environmental Protection and Public Health	80%	0%
Environmental-Events	**	**
Facilities	64%	100%
Finance	**	0%
Homelessness	100%	0%
HR & Payroll	**	**
Human Resources	100%	**
IT	**	**
Legal	**	**
Licensing Admin. & Democratic Services	76%	50%
Other Services for Communities	100%	**

Service Area	Stage 1 % responded to in 5 Working days	Stage 2 % responded to in 20 Working days
Planning	43%	57%
Property Maintenance	44%	30%
Revenues & Benefits	57%	**
Revenues and Welfare Support	79%	**
Roads	44%	100%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	43%	75%
Trading Standards	**	**
Transportation	73%	**
Waste	90%	**

\*\* no complaints recorded