

Place Scrutiny Committee

30 January 2020

Quarterly Complaints Update - Place

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Executive Director: Jonathan Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic

Report Author: Tony Bygrave
Title: Senior Assurance Officer (Complaints)
Tel: 01305 225011
Email: antony.bygrave@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation: That the Committee note the performance of complaints made again functions within the Place Directorate.

Reason for Recommendation: To have an awareness of the numbers and types of complaints and the organisational learning.

1. Executive Summary

This quarterly report provides an update on the numbers, types and outcomes of complaints made against services that sit within the Place Directorate. As raised at the last quarterly update, there have been issues trying to amalgamate complaints figures for cases handled by each of the predecessor Councils. There is now a central corporate complaints team situated within the Assurance Service, and good progress is being made on a single point of entry. The Quarter 2 statistics included within this report continue to bring together all of the complaints relating to 'Place' into a single declaration. At this stage, there is no available comparative data for previous quarters, with the figures included relating to ex Dorset County Council functions.

Key messages for this quarter are:

- There have been 103 complaints relating to Place functions, (up from 90 during Q1). 54 of which were managed as formal complaints;

- There were 8 complaints escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman and no findings of maladministration, accepting that some are still open cases.
- 12% of the complaints received were found to be fully or partially justified;
- The 20 day timescale has been missed on 18% of cases, up sharply from 4% Q1
- We are starting to see some organisational learnings from Place complaints with 14 cases providing genuine value

The vision of the new central team continues to be to work with services to ensure greater organisational learning, but this is a heartening step.

2. Financial Implications

None

3. Climate implications

None

4. Other Implications

None

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk LOW

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

None. The Corporate Complaints policy has been subject to an EQIA

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Q2 Complaints

8. Background Papers

None

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

dorsetcomplaints



2019/20

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	Number of FORMAL complaints	44	54			In Q2 we received and responded to 54 formal complaints process. This shows an increase on the 44 in Q1.
	Number of INFORMAL complaints	46	49			In Q2 we received and responded to 49 informal complaints, broadly the same as Q1.
	Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	0/0	0/8			There have been 8 approaches to the LGSCO this quarter, but none were upheld.
	Timescales (overdue)	4%	18%			In Q2 18% of complaint responses were over the 20 working day deadline. This is a big increase on the 4% in Q1.
	% fully justified complaints	3%	6%			Of the 103 complaints received in Q2, 6% were fully justified. This is a slight increase on Q1.
	% part justified complaints	2%	6%			Of the 103 complaints received in Q2, 6% were partially justified. This is a slight increase on Q1.
	Compliments	34	28			In Q2 we received 28 compliments. Some examples will appear in the full report.
	Learnings	2	14			Of the 103 complaints received in Q2 14 brought learning points. We continue to invite greater directorate engagement to ensure learning points are collected and lessons learned.

Place - total Q2 complaints = 103

2019/20

performance

Summary of Q2 Complaints

Quarter 2 Total Complaints Place 103

Complaints handling staff have received **103** communications for Quarter 2. **49** were dealt with informally, and **54** formally through Dorset Council's Whole Authority complaints process. There were no decisions from the LGSCO in Q2, and no maladministration found. We only have historic data from DCC, and this Q1 report represents the first time we can confidently report on the total combined complaints of the new council.

Summary of Complaints

2019/20

Total Communications to Complaints **103**

Total Formal Complaints **54**

Total Informal Representations **49**

LGSCO **8**

Main Theme -Service Provision

Some complaints have more than 1 theme depending on complexity. However, the majority of cases fall under 'Service Provision' with a perceived lack of, delay to, of dissatisfaction with, service levels.

Service Provision Breakdown

Service Provision - Delay in providing services 5

Service Provision - Failure to provide service 6

Service Provision - Inadequate Service 9

Service Provision - Quality of Service 29

Service Provision - Professional Practice of Staff 5

Service Provision - unspecified 78

Timescales

Place complaints & concerns should be investigated and responded to within 20 working days. 82%

of the timescales were met in Quarter 2. Although a slight slip on usual standards, Place still demonstrate the best efforts on timescales across Dorset.

Timescales 2019/20

Responses within 20 days 82%

Responses Overdue **18%**

Complaints by Team

Complaints by Team Q2

Assets & Property 2

Community & Public Protection 0

Environment & Wellbeing 13

Highways 42

Planning 33

Travel Dorset 4

Customer Services/Libraries 9

Complaints personnel continue to encourage more engagement when considering learning points and actions arising from complaints. However, we are happy to report a vast improvement in value from complaints. 14 learning points is a massive step. We are also working a lot more closely with DWP and are happy to report an encouraging forecast for Q3, as learnings are starting to come in.

Service Review will reduce the instances of a delay (prompted by complaint)
The Head of Highways recognises that, currently, there is an inconsistent parking strategy across the whole of Dorset. A Parking Strategy Manager is being appointed to ensure that we have a consistent approach to parking in Dorset in the future.

Many people would like there to be no more development, and this isn't possible because people do still want new homes and jobs (and we have statutory duties to plan for such development). In our communications on planning issues, try to include more about why we need economic development and housing growth. This is ongoing – especially during local plan consultations

The ineffective monitoring of the email account has led to a failure to respond. In order to prevent this service failure from occurring again, a clear system for monitoring the email account has been implemented, to ensure staff check it at set and frequent intervals. Arranged for further advice to be given to staff member with regard to dealing with customers. Once again, Service Review will reduce the instances of a delay

Apology and reminder to driver of DC vehicle re appropriate conduct (completed - no further action required).

Discussion with team leader to ensure customer receive a timely response to correspondence sent to travel team generic inbox.

MG to make Enforcement Officers aware of the need for clarity when offering advice
We are not able to retrospectively amend the decision notice, but we will seek to resolve this matter informally through discussion with the applicant's agent. In addition, I have discussed this matter with the planning case officer, and we will seek to avoid any similar disparity arising in the future.

Parking Service Manager has arranged a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Cruise

Company with a view to identifying a more suitable site for the dropping of passengers. Once this meeting has taken place I hope there will be a new location that we can agree upon.

Complaint was about parking metre taking money but not registering that the money had been paid. PH asked officers to look at the machine and put some signage or stickers with contact details if the machines are not working. He offered the complainant two free parking sessions on next visit to Penny's Walk by way of recompense for inconvenience and being out of pocket.

Damage to complainant's driveway - Dorset Council to have the damage repaired, (actioned).

Problems with lax working practices. This has been addressed via a team talk to the gang by the manager.

Compliments

We have collected 28 compliments across the directorate in Q2.

What people are saying:

Having spent a week driving around Dorset (mainly the Swanage area) I just wanted to say how impressed I am with the roads in the county. If there's any chance of you guys showing your opposite numbers in Surrey how to look after roads that would be a bonus. Keep up the good work. A big 'Thank You' to the 2 gentlemen for replacing the gully - they did a brilliant job and it looks really good.

I would just like to let you know how professional, polite and clean your work man that showed up yesterday to carry out the work.

NB Highways have been unable to provide Q2 compliments figures due to a reporting issue.

Compliments are being promoted and we hope locality teams will make use of the new address in an effort towards producing a more balanced report:

Compliments@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Local Government Social Care Ombudsman -(LGSCO)

There were 8 approaches from the LGSCO this quarter in relation to Place issues. None currently upheld.

Ombudsman Link:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKLGO/bulletins/2204c0b>

A look forward....

The Complaints Team are continuing their efforts to raise the profile of learning from complaints, by attending meetings, booking time with managers and engaging in person. It is clear that the culture of emailing isn't helpful – and face to face has been much more successful in generating some value.

Tranche 2 has recognised we are 1.5 FTEs short since Shaping Dorset began. We are happy to advise that Lisa Camp will be joining us from (former) DCP, and he hope to fill the remaining vacancy before the new year. This will enable us to do much more in promoting learnings and actions in person.

Tony Bygrave

Senior Assurance Officer– Complaints Team

Governance and Assurance Services

Chief Executive's Department

(01305) 225011

710 5011 (internal)

Complaints Page – Find out more

<https://dorsetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/find-out-about/informationmanagement/>

[complaints#cat-termName](#)

Complaints Team Home Page

<https://dorsetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/howwework/teams/Pages/Compliments-and-Complaints.aspx>