



## Performance Management Board

25 September 2018

### Annual Customer Feedback Report 2017/18

## Report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services

### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. This report summarises the complaints received during 2017/18 and provides a comparison to previous performance. Key points include:

- There has been a decline in the number of total complaints since 2011/12 by 65.5% (116 to 40).
- The percentage of complaints escalated past Stage 1 has increased to 32.5% (13/40) in 2017/18.
- Consistency in handling complaints has stayed at a high level, as has the number of complaints that are responded to within target time – 39 out of 40.
- Analysis of the 40 complaints received in 2017/18 showed that 47.5% were unjustified.
- The Council received 69 compliments about its services in 2017/18 – 19 more than the previous year.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that this report is accepted as a true record of customer feedback in 2017/18.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

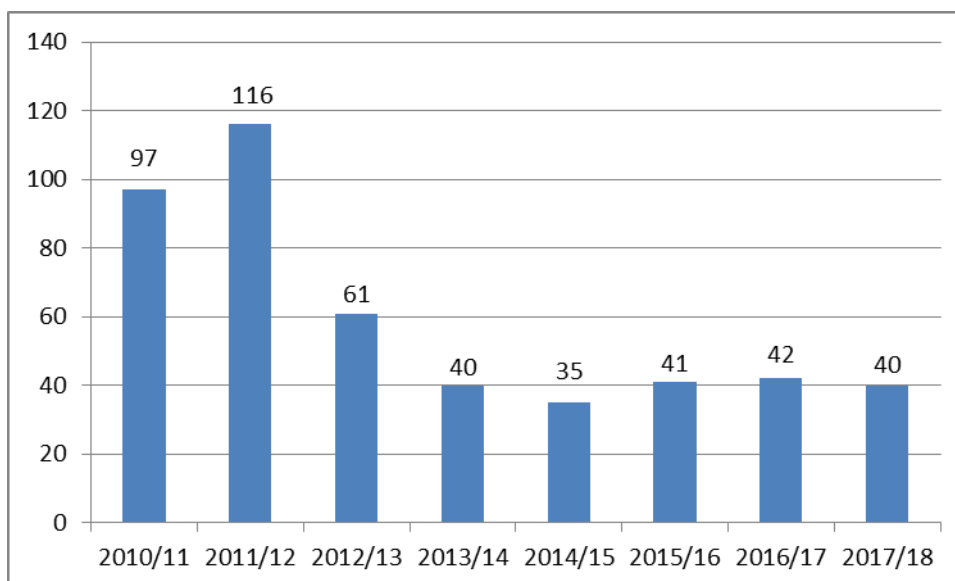
3.1 Officers work hard to investigate complaints quickly and thoroughly. Learning points are identified and fed back at team meetings. Where the interpretation of policy is at the root of the problem this is considered and changes made where necessary.

### 4. Supporting Evidence

#### 4.1. Total Complaints

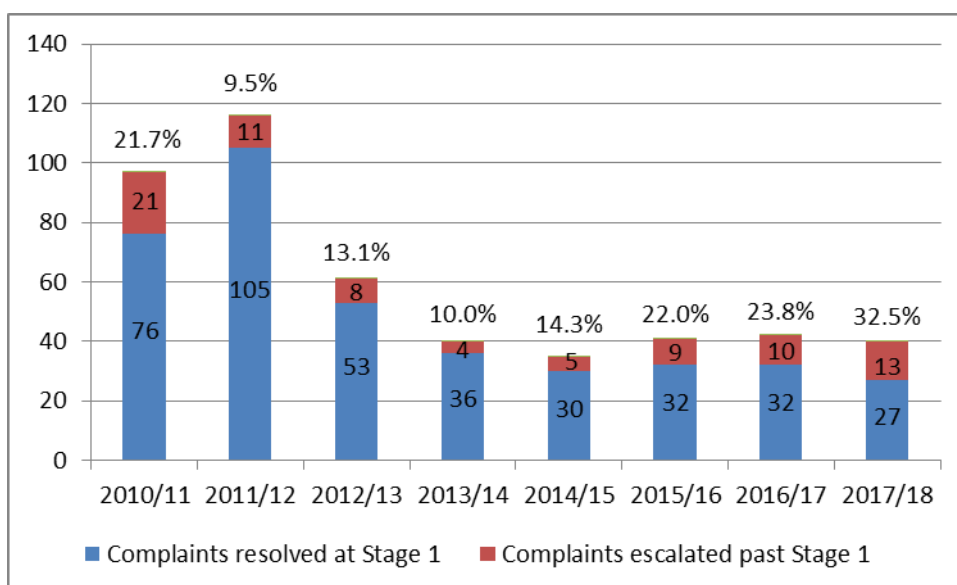
The number of complaints received by the Council in 2017/18 was 40. This is very similar to last year's total. The trend for complaints received by the Council over the last few years is shown on the graph below. It initially showed a positive downward trend, and has evened out over the last five years to show a very consistent level. This is against a background of reduced

resources and, therefore, officers doing things differently and looking to improve services.



**Total Complaints Year by Year**

#### 4.2. Escalation of Complaints



**Percentage of complaints escalated past Stage 1**

The standard of response at Stage 1 remains high and, more often than not, the complaint is concluded at this stage. However, 13 out of 40 complaints were escalated to Stage 2, the subjects being:

- A neighbouring planning application (five)
- An alleged breach of data protection
- A parking fine
- The length of time to reach a decision on a planning application
- An alleged breach of equality rights

- An eviction from Hound Lodge
- Non-gritting of Council premises leading to a fall
- Proper procedures not followed during determination of planning application
- The handling of a food / hygiene inspection

The percentage of escalations past Stage 1 in 2017/18 is slightly higher than in recent years. The overall number of complaints is still relatively low, with 32.5% of complaints escalated. This is, in part, a reflection of the overall low number of complaints received.

#### 4.3 Complaints handling – Timeliness and Quality of Response

39 out of 40 complaints in 2017/18 were answered within target time. Figures for each service area are shown in the table below. It is felt that complaints were well-handled in all cases.

Service Area	Total Complaints	In Target Time (10 working days)	%
Finance and Corporate Services	4	4	100
Neighbourhoods	22	22	100
Communities	11	10	90.9
Transformation	3	3	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>97.5</b>

#### 4.4 Justified Complaints

A complaint is adjudged to be justified if an individual or service area has done something wrong to cause the complaint, or if the level of service does not come up to the standard expected.

If learning points arise as a result of someone complaining about a particular service area, they are raised at sectional team meetings as part of on-going training for staff.

21 out of 40 (52.5%) complaints were judged to have been justified. This is a slightly higher total than last year when 14 out of 42 (33.3%) were felt to have been justified.

#### 4.5 Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Statistics

Occasionally, complainants escalate their complaints to the LGO. This is an option when the Council's process has been exhausted and the customer still does not consider that they have achieved a satisfactory outcome.

During 2017/18, the LGO received 11 complaints and/or enquiries about services offered by Rushcliffe Borough Council:

- three were about Planning and Development
- three were about Corporate and Other Services
- three were about Environment Services
- two were about Housing

The LGO issued 11 decisions on complaints received about the Council: five were closed after initial enquiries; three were referred back for local resolution; and three were upheld.

The LGO data is shown in the table below, along with a comparison with other local authorities in the immediate area.

Local Authority	Decisions made 2017/18						
	Total	Upheld	Not upheld	Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Invalid or incomplete	Referred back to LA
Rushcliffe	11	3	0	0	5	0	3
Ashfield	16	1	4	1	3	1	6
Bassetlaw	18	3	3	1	7	0	4
Broxtowe	9	0	0	2	4	0	3
Gedling	7	0	0	0	4	0	3
Mansfield	17	3	2	0	5	0	7
N & S	16	0	0	1	7	0	8
Charnwood	22	1	1	0	10	0	10
N W Leics	4	0	1	0	1	2	0
Melton	8	0	0	1	1	0	6
S Kesteven	14	1	2	0	3	0	8

#### 4.6 Distribution of complaints between service areas

The table in **Appendix 1** gives brief details of the complaints received during the year 2017/18, how they were distributed across the four service areas, whether they were resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2, and whether or not they were felt to be justified.

#### 4.7 Complaints Monitoring

The satisfaction rate for the handling of complaints in 2017/18 was 100%. Two complainants returned monitoring forms. Of those, both people were satisfied.

The level of response remains very sporadic, and as such, no firm conclusions can be drawn. The feeling is that where a problem has been easy to fix, and

the customer has got their desired outcome, satisfaction tends to be higher. Where the complaint involves a protracted case, involving services such as benefits or planning, the complaint is as of a result of misinterpretation / misunderstanding of policy, and so satisfaction tends to be much lower.

#### 4.8 Compliments

The number of recorded compliments has risen by a third. We reminded managers to ensure compliments are passed onto the Performance Team. The distribution among service areas is shown in the table below, along with a comparison to last year:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Number of Compliments 2017/18</b>	<b>Number of Compliments 2016/17</b>
Finance and Corporate Services	9	2
Neighbourhoods	24 (+ 3 for Streetwise)	32 (+ 1 for Streetwise)
Communities	24	14
Transformation	8	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>51</b>

## 5 Risk and Uncertainties

Serious reputational damage could be suffered if the Council fails to respond appropriately to complaints. Annual training is offered to those investigating and responding to complaints, and support is given to individuals during the process to ensure a thorough investigation is undertaken and the response to the complainant is clear, complete and customer focused.

## 6 Implications

### 6.1 Financial Implications

Very occasionally compensation is given where complainants find themselves out of pocket due to an error made by the Council.

### 6.2 Legal Implications

Should complaints remain dissatisfied after the Council has concluded its investigation they can take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

### 6.3 Equalities Implications

The Council and its officers strive to treat each complaint on its merits.

### 6.4 Other Implications

There are no other implications in this report.

## 7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The successful resolution of complaints can support all three of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that this report is accepted as a true record of customer feedback in 2017/18.

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<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Complaints by Service Area

**Appendix 1**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>	<b>Subject of complaint</b>	<b>Resolved at Stage 1 or 2</b>	<b>Justified?</b>
Neighbourhoods	22	7 x dealings with Housing staff	1 x Stage 2; 6 x Stage 1	3 x Yes; 4 x No
		3 x dealings with Env.Health staff	1 x Stage 2; 2 x Stage 1	3 x No
		2 x issues with parking fines	1 x Stage 2; 1 x Stage 1	1 x Yes; 1 x No
		2 x admin of green bin scheme	2 x Stage 1	2 x Yes
		2 x claim of equality / disability discrimination	1 x Stage 2; 1 x Stage 1	2 x Yes
		2 x R2Go / Streetwise staff abuse / actions	2 x Stage 1	2 x Yes
		1 x alleged breach of data protection	1 x Stage 2;	No
		1 x taxi licensing	Stage 1	Yes
		1 x noise nuisance	Stage 1	No
		1 x mowing on Green Line	Stage 1	Yes
Communities	11	9 x issues regarding planning applications	7 x Stage 2; 2 x Stage 1	5 x Yes; 4 x No
		1 x resident who fell at West park	Stage 2	No
		1 x cleanliness of RBC facility	Stage 1	Yes
Finance and Corporate Services	4	3 x Council tax issue	3 x Stage 1	3 x Yes
		1 x dealings with Benefits staff member	Stage 1	No
Transformation	3	2 x issues at RCCC	2 x Stage 1	2 x No
		1 x alleged equality issues	Stage 1	No