

Informal Joint Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Biannual Corporate Complaints and Compliments Digest	
Report No:	PAS/FH/14/004	
Decisions plan reference:	Not applicable	
Report to and date:	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	26 November 2014
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Purpose of report:	To report and provide an overview of the number and range of corporate complaints and compliments received during the period 1 April to 30 September 2014. This report includes information relating to Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council working together as West Suffolk, with data being shown for the individual councils as appropriate.	
Recommendation:	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: The Committee is asked to consider the latest digest and make any recommendations to the relevant Cabinet arising from the information in the report.	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:		• Not applicable	
Alternative option(s):		• Not applicable	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Failure to record complaints and use feedback to inform service delivery.	Medium	Complaints procedure in place and regular reporting to management and members.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix A – Information on complaints and compliments received.	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 The aim of the digest is to provide an overview of the number and type of corporate complaints that the councils receive, as well as monitoring effectiveness at responding and learning from any mistakes that have been made. Across both councils 26 corporate complaints and 59 compliments were received during April to September 2014 and data is provided for the individual councils.
- 1.1.2 Corporate complaints are co-ordinated and monitored by the Customer Services Team. The Team is supported in this work via a network of service complaints co-ordinators who are responsible for ensuring responses within their service areas are made in accordance with the councils' complaints procedure.
- 1.1.3 The councils operate a two step corporate complaints procedure which is implemented if complaints are not resolved by services. Step 1 involves a complainant who is dissatisfied with any part of the councils' service, or wishes to point out a fault, making a complaint by email, telephone, letter or via one of the feedback forms available on-line. Complainants receive a response within five working days which provides them with the name of the person dealing with the complaint and either responds to the complaint and explains how the situation has been dealt with or lets them know that the complaint will require more investigation and advises when they can expect to receive a full reply.
- 1.1.4 If a complainant is not satisfied with the response received under Step 1 of the procedure, they can request that the complaint moves to Step 2. This involves the complaint being investigated by Legal and Democratic Services who will provide an explanation of how the situation has been handled, the investigations that have taken place and whether the response provided is reasonable and fair.
- 1.1.5 The councils aim to fully respond to 90% of Step 1 and Step 2 complaints within 20 working days (from the date of acceptance of the complaint at each step). However, it is recognised that some complaints, and particularly at Step 2, can involve complex investigations and can take longer than 20 working days to complete. If additional time is required, this is agreed with the complainant.
- 1.1.6 The report also includes details on the number of compliments that the councils receive. The monitoring of compliments is important as it provides an opportunity to recognise services, teams or individual members of staff who have been praised by the customer for delivering an excellent service.

1.2 Local Government Ombudsman Report 2013/2014

- 1.2.1 Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of our Step 1 and 2 procedures they can ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to investigate the matter. The LGO informs us of the outcomes of individual complaints submitted to them (i.e whether the matter was upheld, not upheld

or partly upheld).

1.2.2 Between 1 April to 30 September 2014 the LGO received one complaint about Forest Heath District Council which was upheld and compensation paid to the complainant. The LGO did not uphold any complaints about St Edmundsbury Borough Council during this period. More detailed information relating to these outcomes will be provided in the LGO's Annual Review due in May 2015.

1.3 **Complaints**

1.3.1 A breakdown of corporate complaints in the period 1 April to 30 September 2014, including outcomes and lessons, can be found at **Appendix A**.

1.4 **Compliments**

1.4.1 As part of the monitoring of feedback from our customers, the Customer Service Team maintains records of compliments received for particular services or individuals. Services are asked to pass on positive feedback in order to promote a culture which acknowledges and celebrates excellent customer service and also provides an opportunity to share that learning with other staff members. Between 1 April to 30 September 2014, 59 compliments were received by both councils. A breakdown of compliments received by service is attached at **Appendix A**.