



**Corporate Complaints,
Compliments and
Comments
Annual Report
2019/20**

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Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2019/20 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 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 Council's Complaints Investigator, 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 and Social Care 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 2019 and 31 March 2020 the Council received a total of 987 representations under the corporate procedure, a decrease from 1,064 in 2018/19.

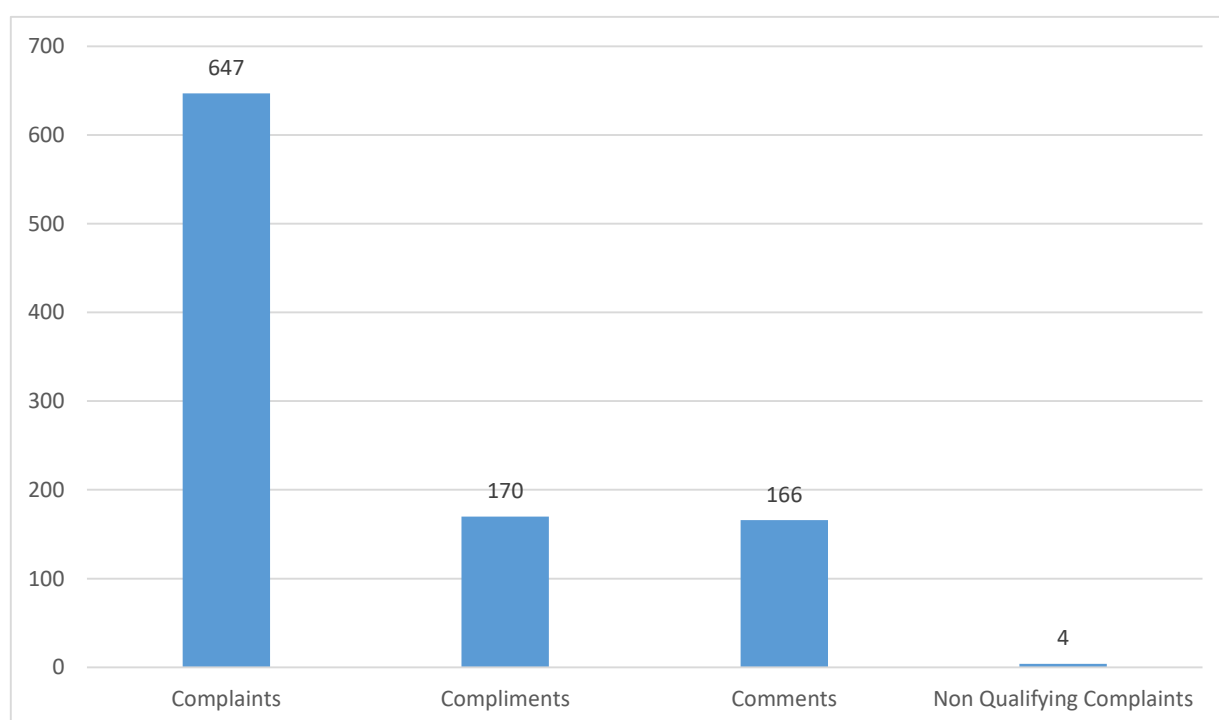
The Council received 647 complaints, an increase from 624 in 2018/19. 632 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure, whilst 15 were initially dealt with at Stage 2. 44 Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 59 complaints were investigated at Stage 2, a decrease from 71 in 2018/19.

The Council received 170 compliments, a decrease from 199 in 2018/19.

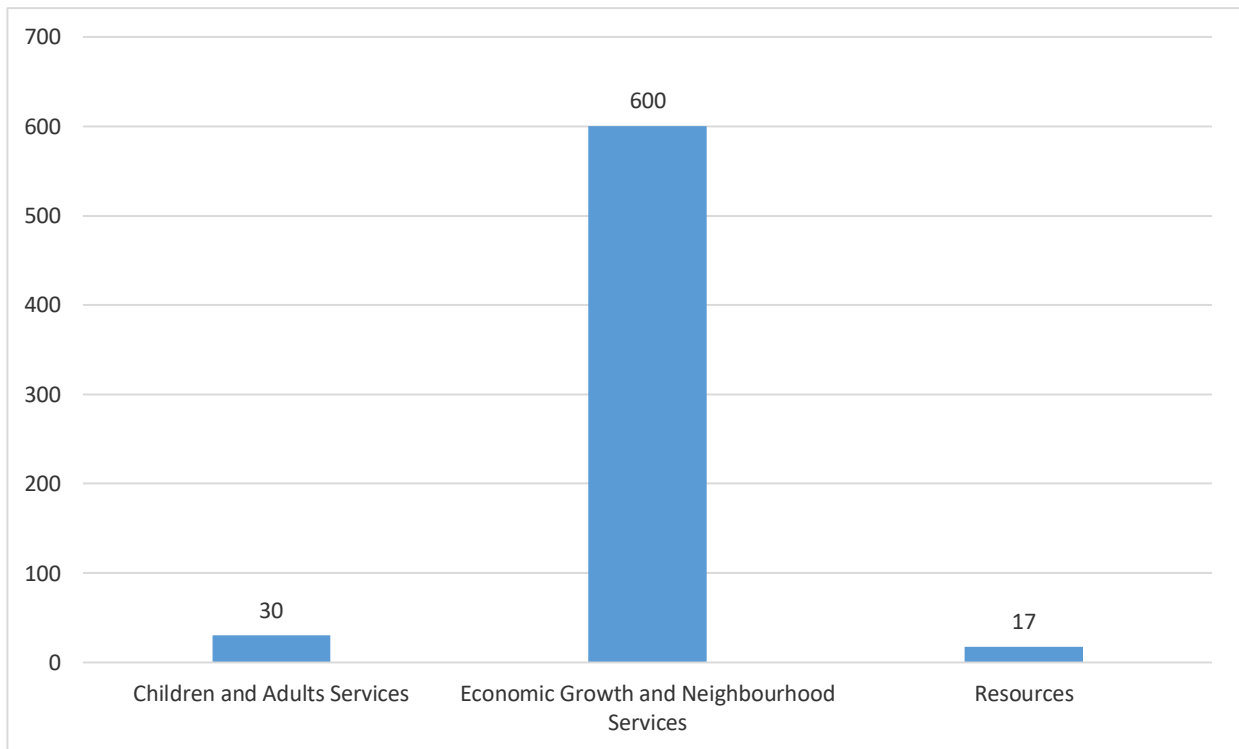
The Council also received 166 comments, a significant decrease from 236 in 2018/19.

The Council also received 4 non-qualifying complaints.

Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments

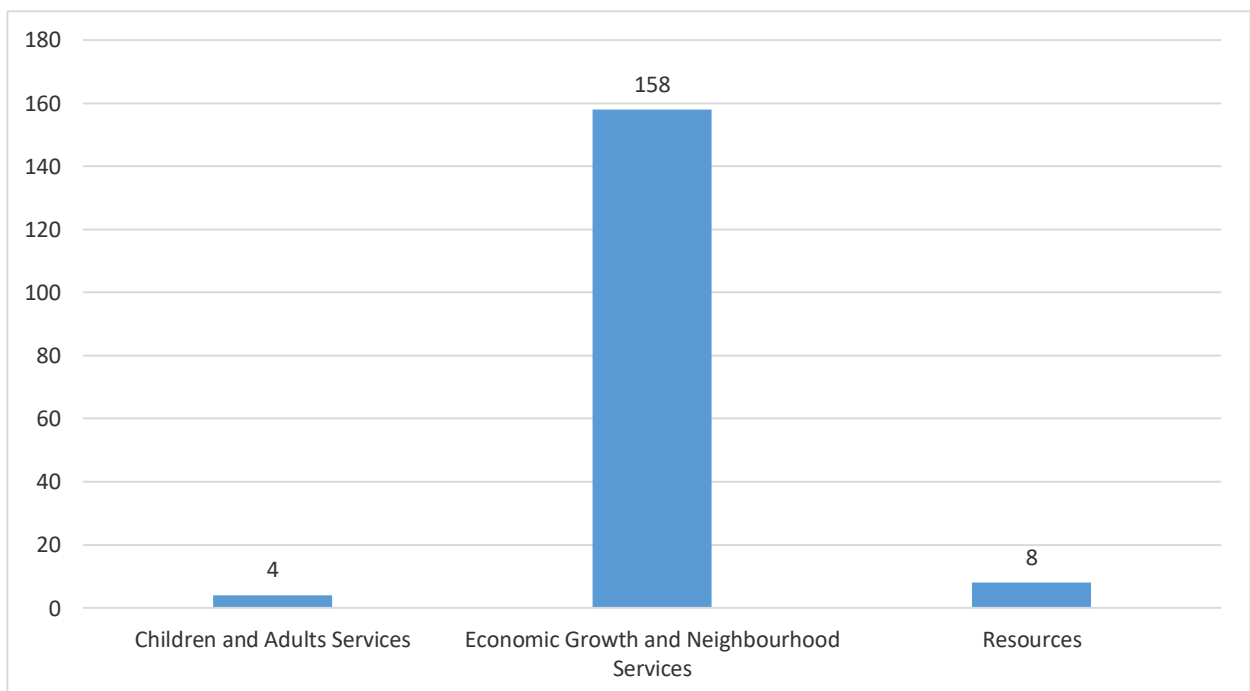


Complaints by Department



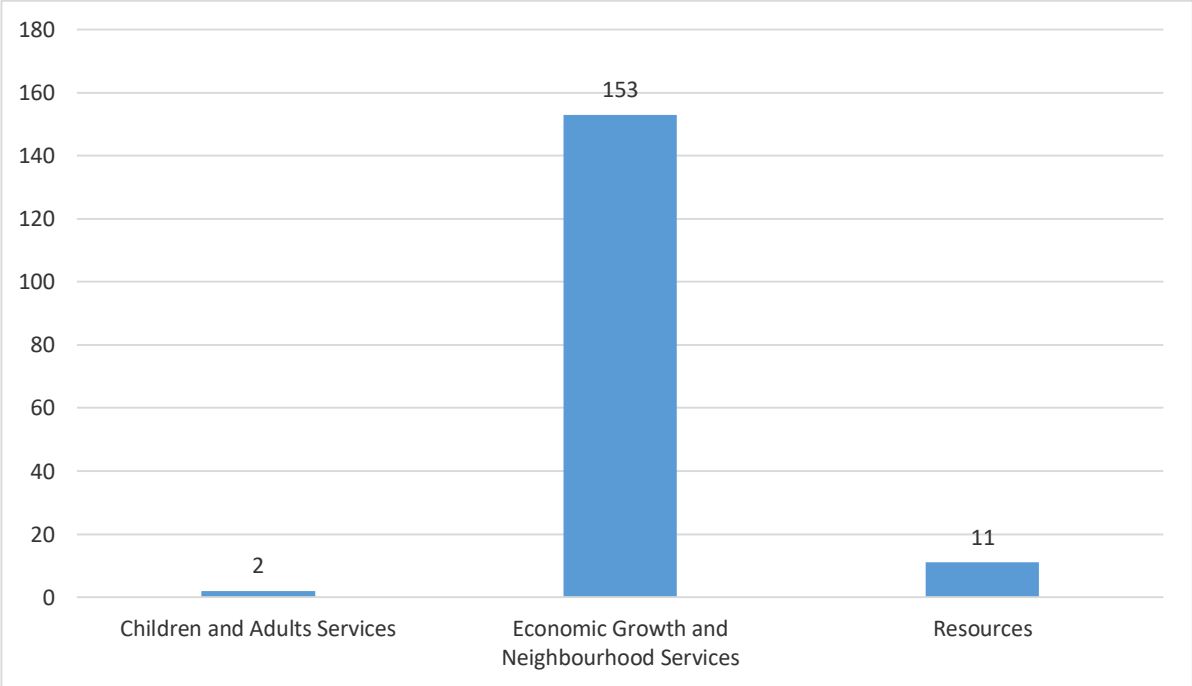
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services received 600 complaints, an increase from 577 in 2018/19.

Compliments by Department



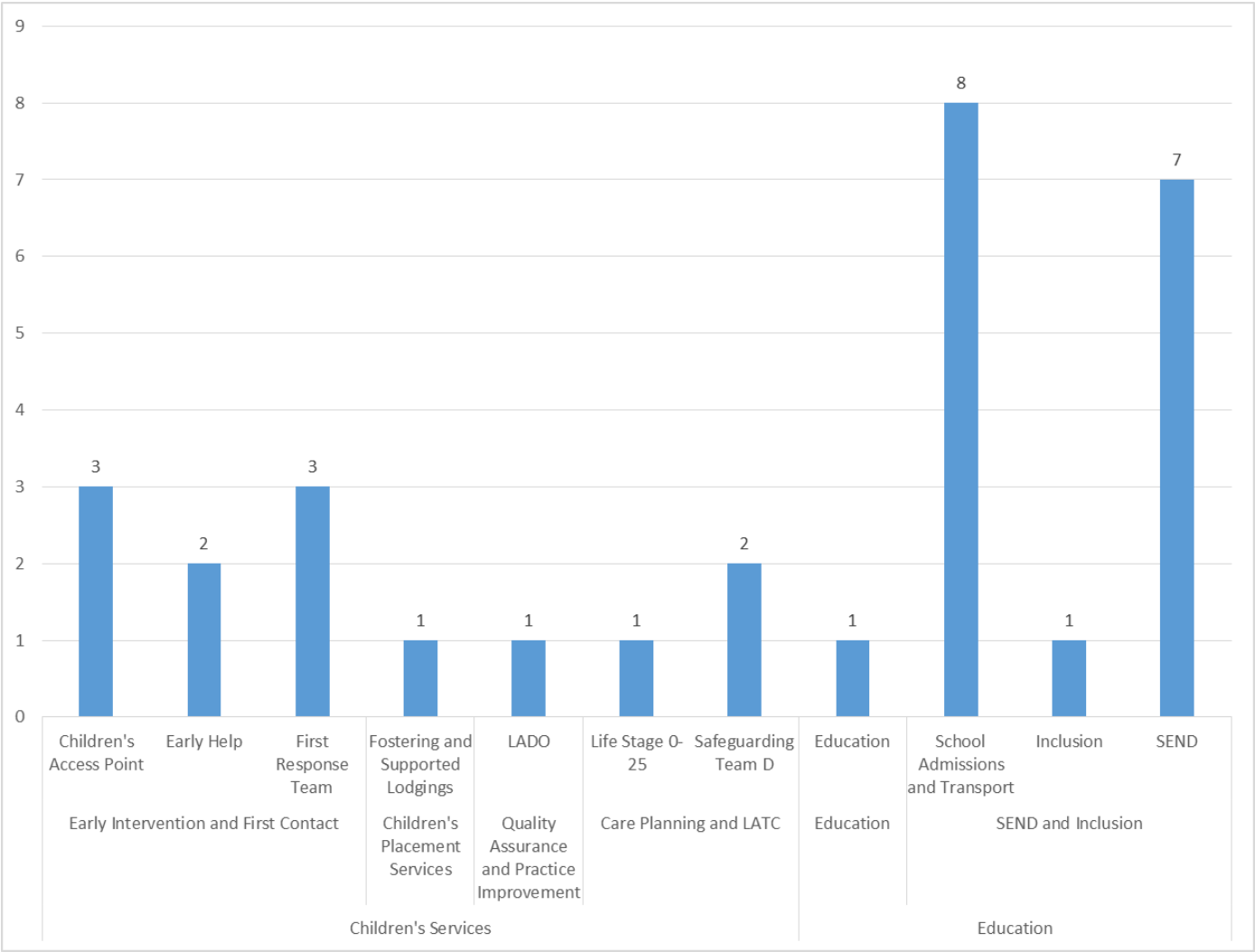
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services received 158 compliments, a decrease from 190 in 2018/19.

Comments by Department



Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services received 153 comments, a decrease from 226 in 2018/19.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department
Children and Adults Services
Complaints by Service Area/Team
Overview



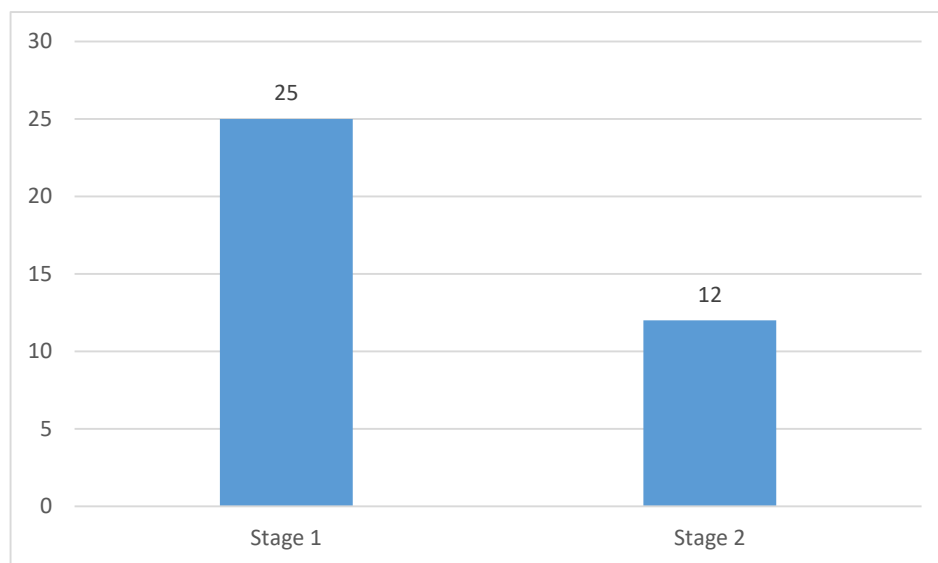
Children and Adults Services received 30 complaints, a slight decrease from 31 in 2018/19.

Adult Services received 0 complaints, the same as in 2018/19.

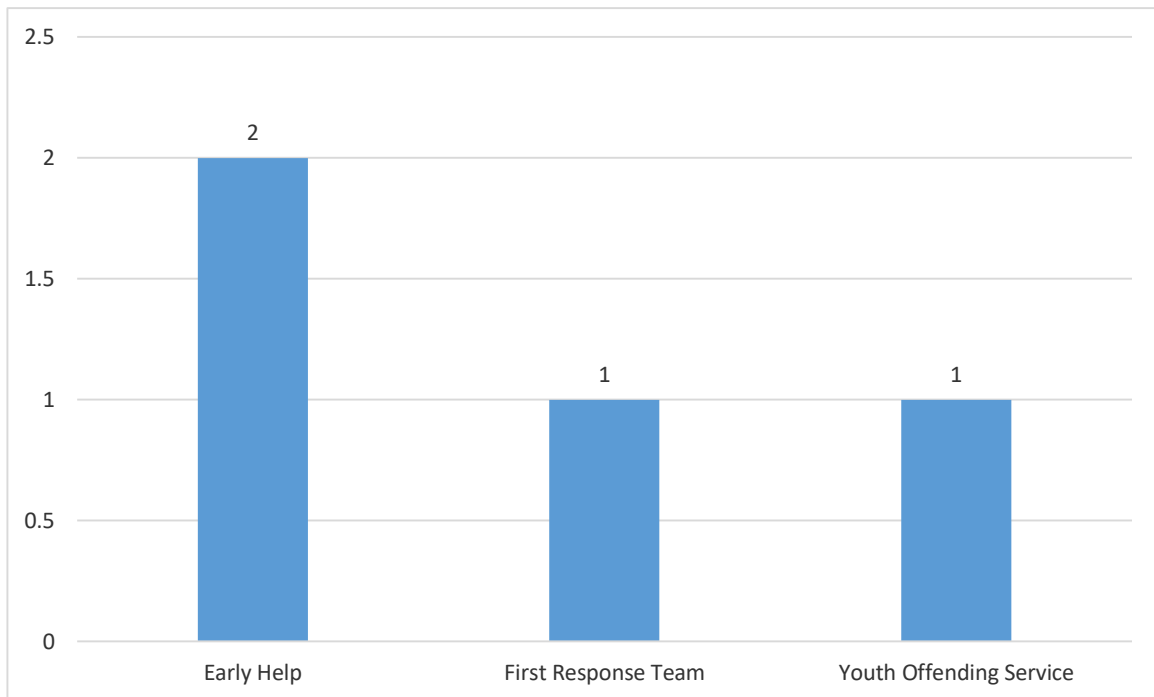
Children's Services received 13 complaints, a decrease from 18 complaints in 2018/19. Poor communication was the most common cause of complaint in Children's Services.

Education received 17 complaints, an increase from 14 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was dissatisfaction with Education Health Care (EHC) Plans and School Transport.

Complaints by Stage

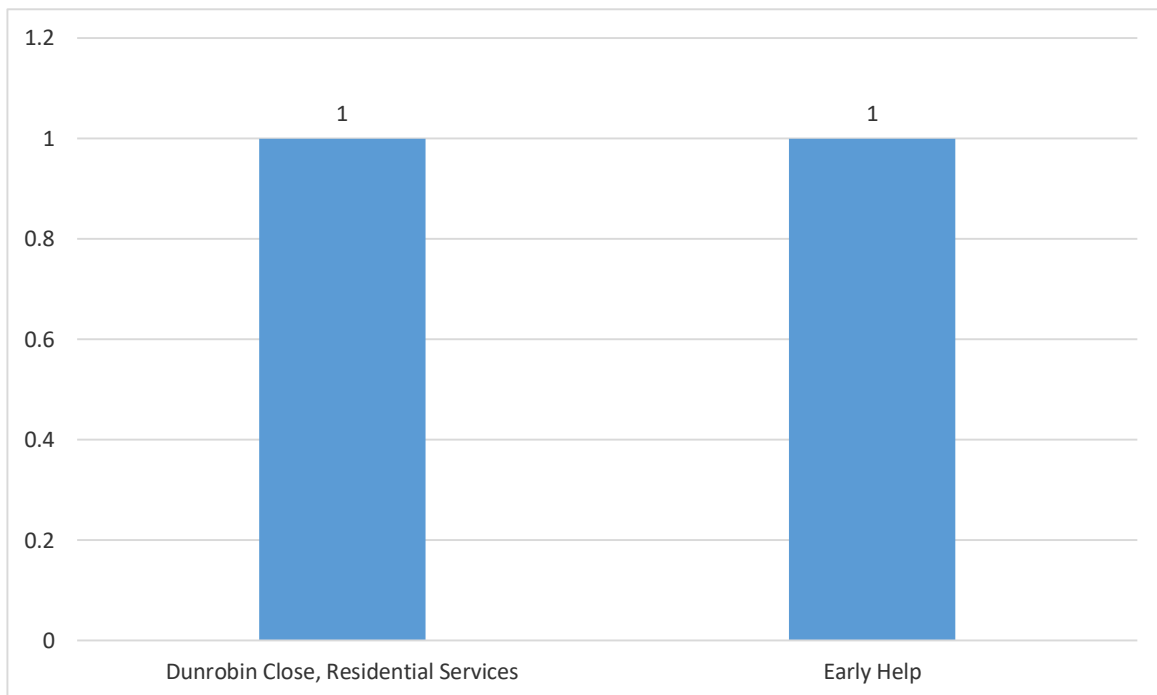


Compliments by Service Area/Team



Children and Adults Services received 4 corporate compliments, a slight decrease from 6 in 2018/19.

Comments by Service Area/Team



Children and Adults Services received 2 corporate comments, a slight decrease from 4 in 2018/19.

Complaints by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2019/20. Some of the complaints determined during 2019/20 were received during 2018/19 and the first quarter of 2019/20, prior to the Council's structure change, hence them being logged against former services/teams.

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
Safeguarding Team D	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Life Stages 0 - 25	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Children's Access Point	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Early Help	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
First Response Team	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
LADO 19/20	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
SEND	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	6
School Admissions & Transport	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	7
Totals	0	0	2	9	5	4	3	23

Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Escalated to LGO (No S2 Response provided)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
16-19 Provision	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Safeguarding Team D	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Safeguarding Team A	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Children's Access Point	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Fostering & Supported Lodgings	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
LADO 19/20	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Education	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
SEND	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
School Admissions & Transport	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Totals	0	0	1	6	2	2	1	12

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 number of service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2019/20.

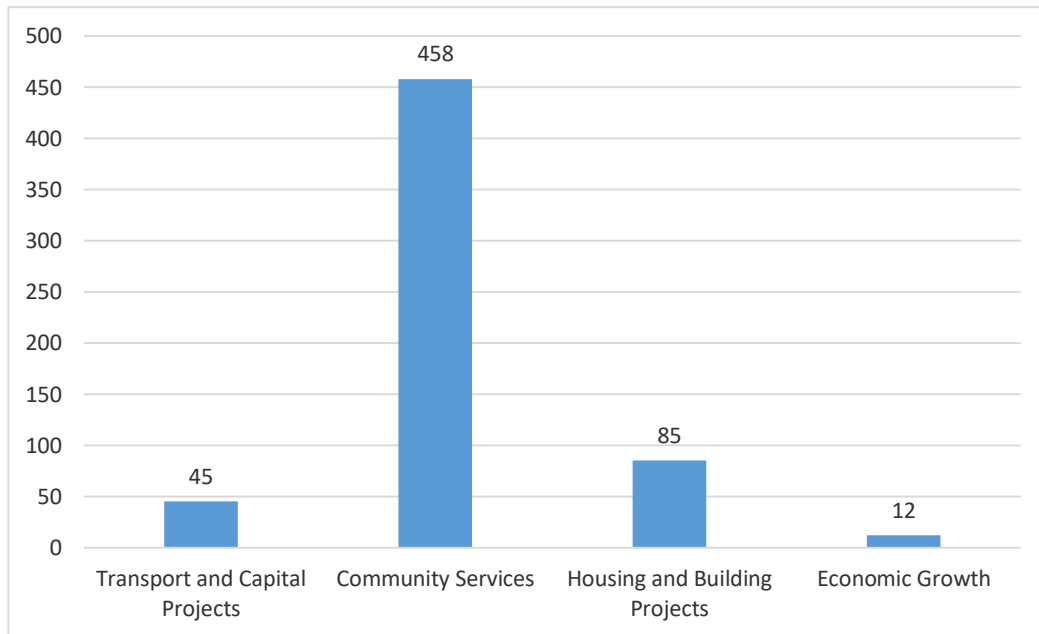
Following a complaint for the School Admissions and Transport, it was agreed that no decision to cease transport would be made without evidence of a graduated response to a situation and agreement by the Transport Manager.

Following a complaint for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), it was agreed that the views of Foster Carers involved in the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan process would be properly recorded. It was also agreed that the Council would review its policies, procedures or processes to ensure that where a child with an EHC Plan is out of education, the Council reviews or amends their EHC Plan in accordance with the timescales set out in the Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 – 25.

Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

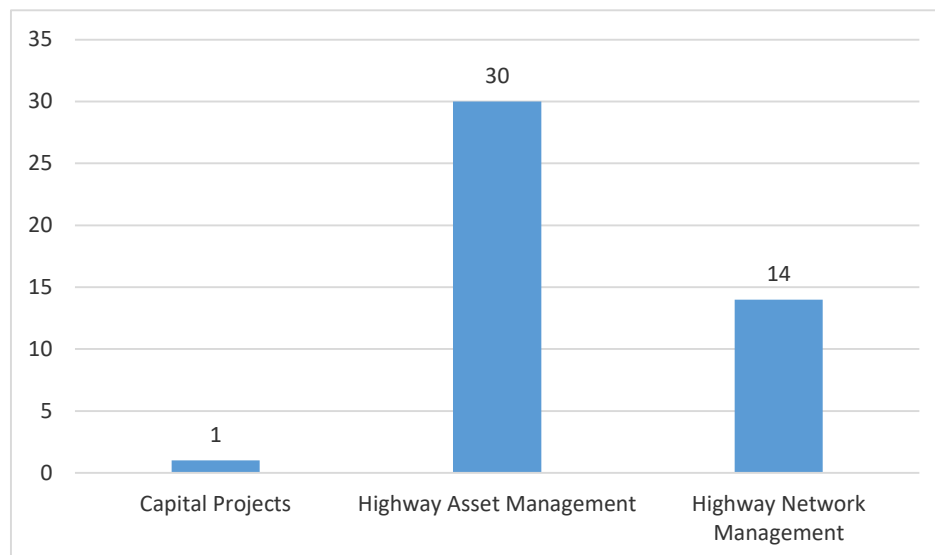
Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services received 600 complaints, an increase from 577 complaints in 2018/19.

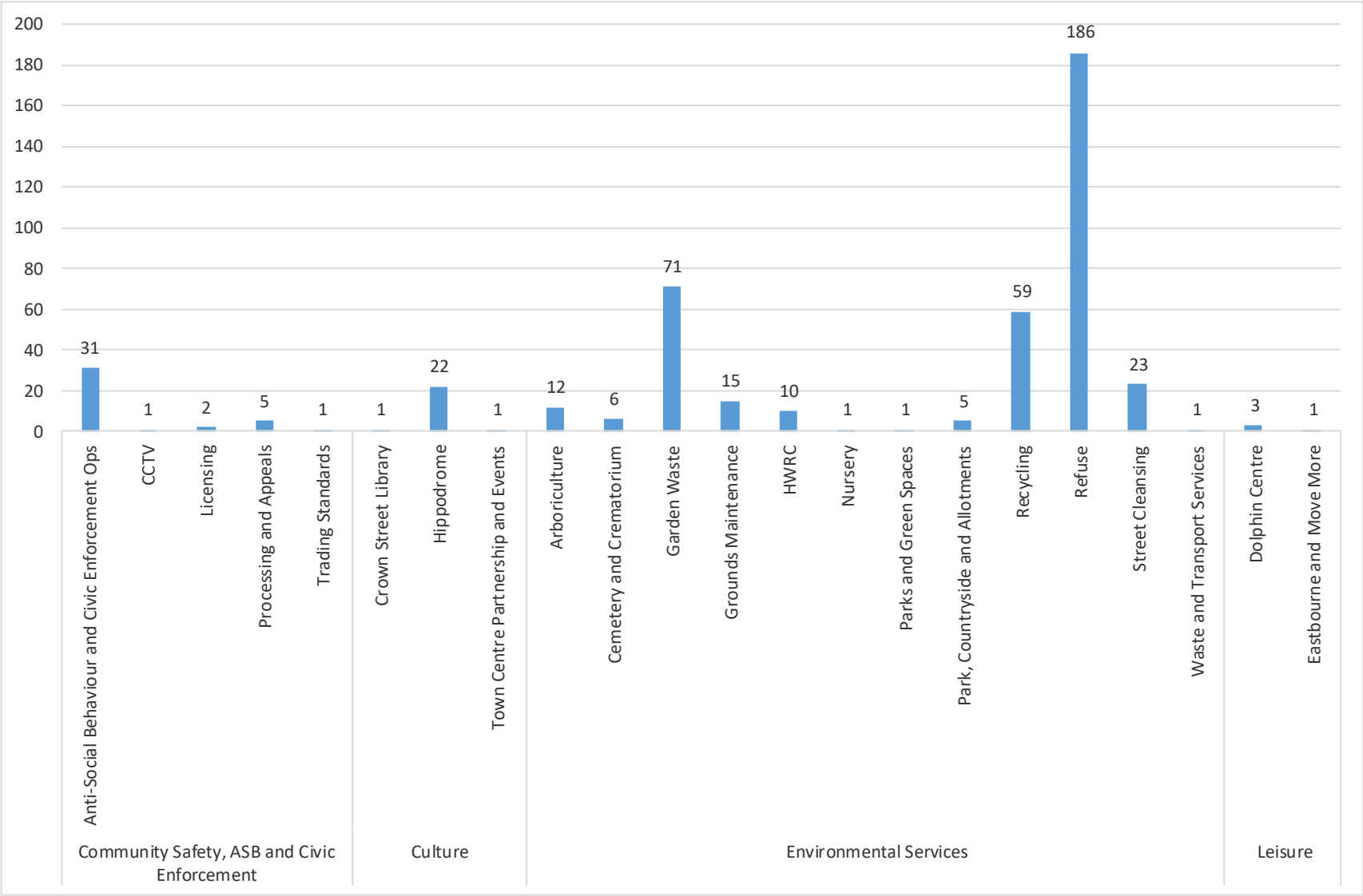
Transport and Capital Projects



Highway Asset Management received 30 complaints, a slight decrease from 31 in 2018/19. The most common themes were dissatisfaction with road resurfacing and lack of notification about road works.

Highway Network Management received 14 complaints, a slight decrease from 15 in 2018/19. There were no common themes identified.

Community Services



Community Services received 458 complaints, an increase from 388 2018/19.

ASB and Civic Enforcement Ops received 31 complaints, an increase from 15 complaints in 2018/19. Parking issues were the most common cause of complaint, followed by lack of response to reports.

The Hippodrome received 22 complaints, a significant decrease from 74 during 2018/19. A common theme was lack of enforcement action taken against customers causing a disturbance.

The Dolphin Centre received 3 complaints, a decrease from 5 in 2018/19.

Arboriculture received 12 complaints, a significant decrease from 23 in 2018/19. As in 2018/19 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 3 in 2018/19.

Grounds Maintenance received 15 complaints, an increase from 10 in 2018/19.

The new Garden Waste service received 71 complaints. This was mainly due to teething issues when the service was first launched.

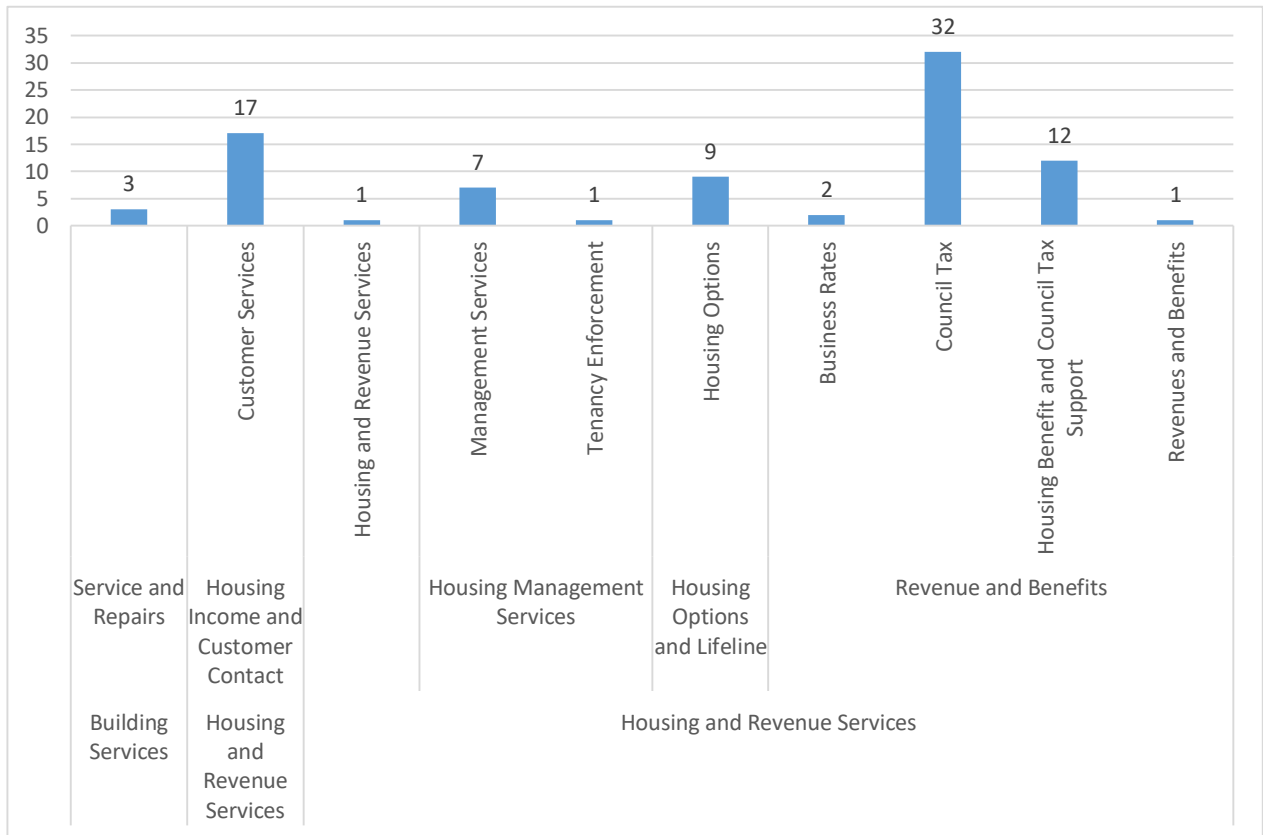
Street Cleansing received 23 complaints, the same amount received in 2018/19. These primarily related to the lack and quality of service provided.

Recycling Collection received 59 complaints, an increase from 44 in 2018/19. Complaints primarily related to collections being missed on one or more occasions.

Refuse Collection received 186 complaints, an increase from 150 in 2018/19. Complaints primarily related to collections being missed on one or more occasions. The continued high level of complaints can be attributed to people being more inclined to complain following the introduction of the Council's policy to no longer provide a recall service.

Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) received 10 complaints, an increase from 3 in 2018/19.

Housing and Building Projects



Housing and Building Services received 85 complaints, a significant reduction from 115 in 2018/19.

Service and Repairs received 3 complaints, an increase from 2 in 2018/19.

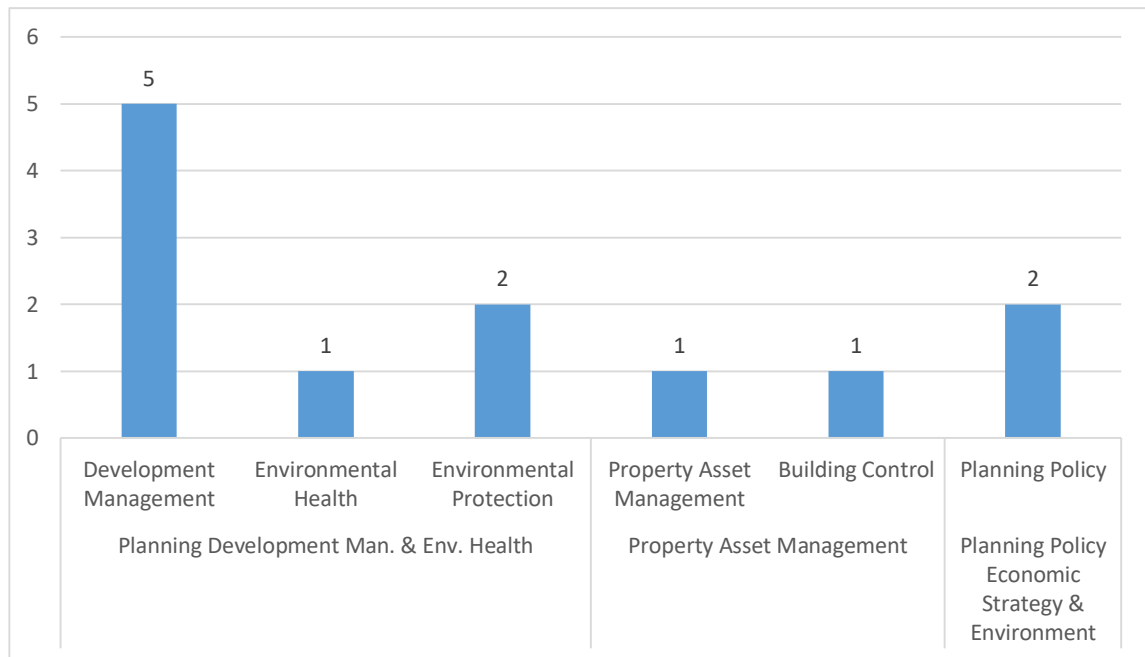
Customer Services received 17 complaints, a significant reduction from 28 in 2018/19.

Housing Management Services received 8 corporate complaints, an increase from 6 in 2018/19. There were no discernible themes in the complaints received.

Council Tax received 32 complaints, a significant decrease from 43 in 2018/19. Issues with communication was the only identifiable theme.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support received 12 complaints, an increase from 6 in 2018/19.

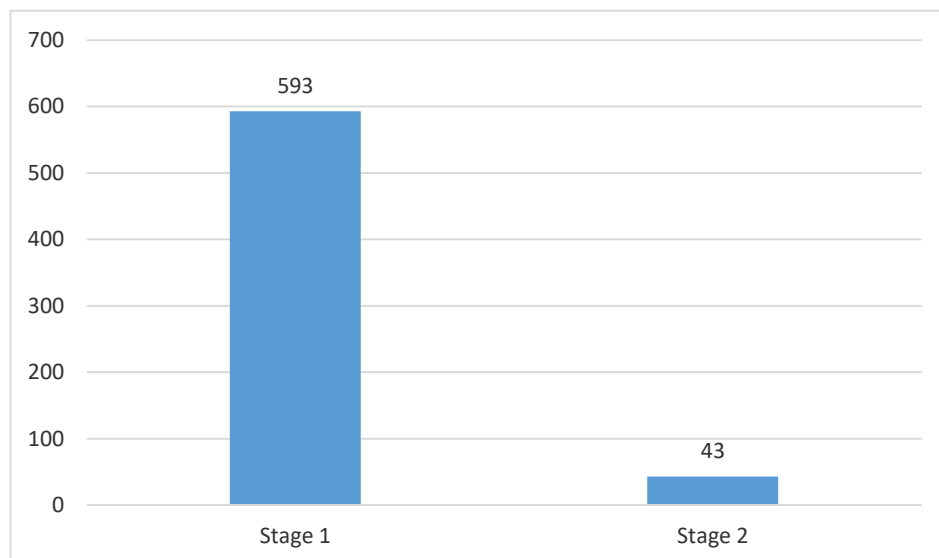
Economic Growth



Planning, Development Management and Environmental Health received 8 complaints, a significant decrease from 19 in 2018/19.

Development Management received 5 complaints, a decrease from 11 in 2018/19. There were no discernible themes identified.

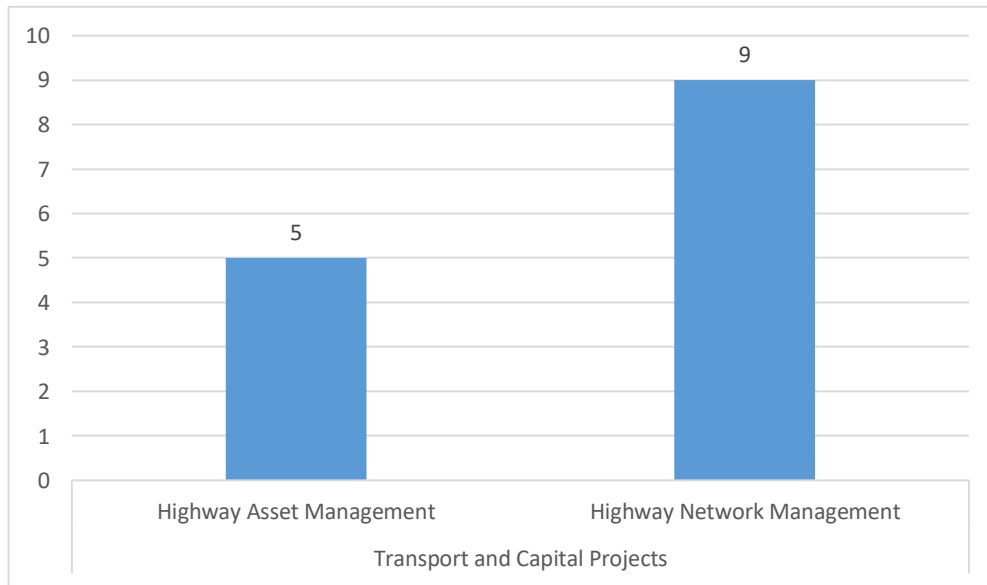
Complaints by Stage



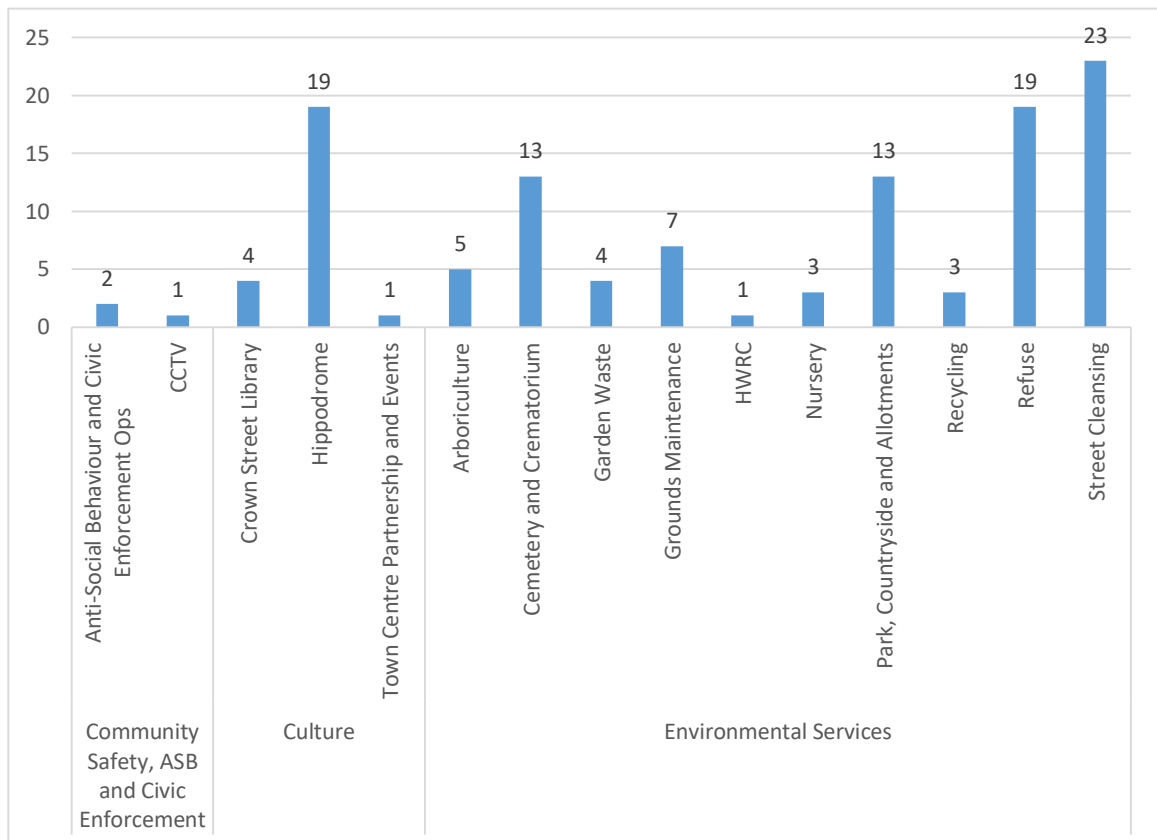
Seven complaints were escalated straight to stage 2.

Compliments by Service Area/Team

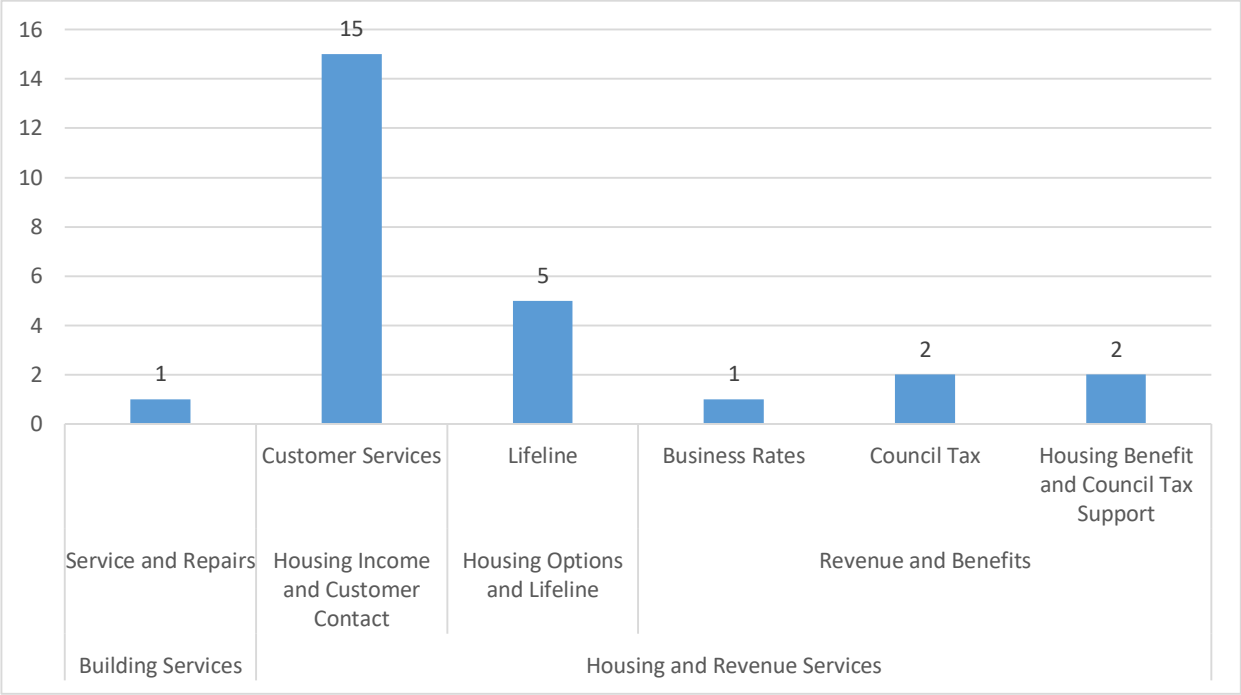
Transport and Capital Projects



Community Services

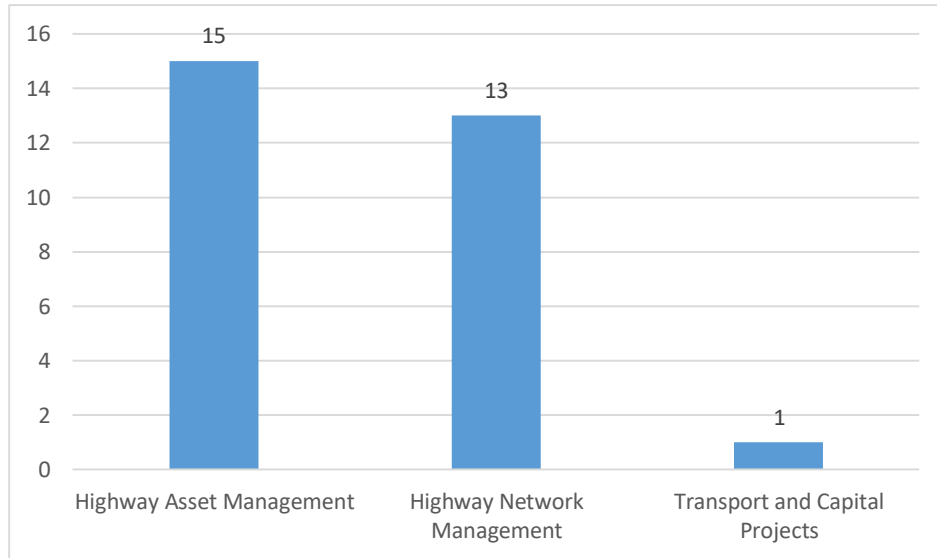


Housing and Building Services



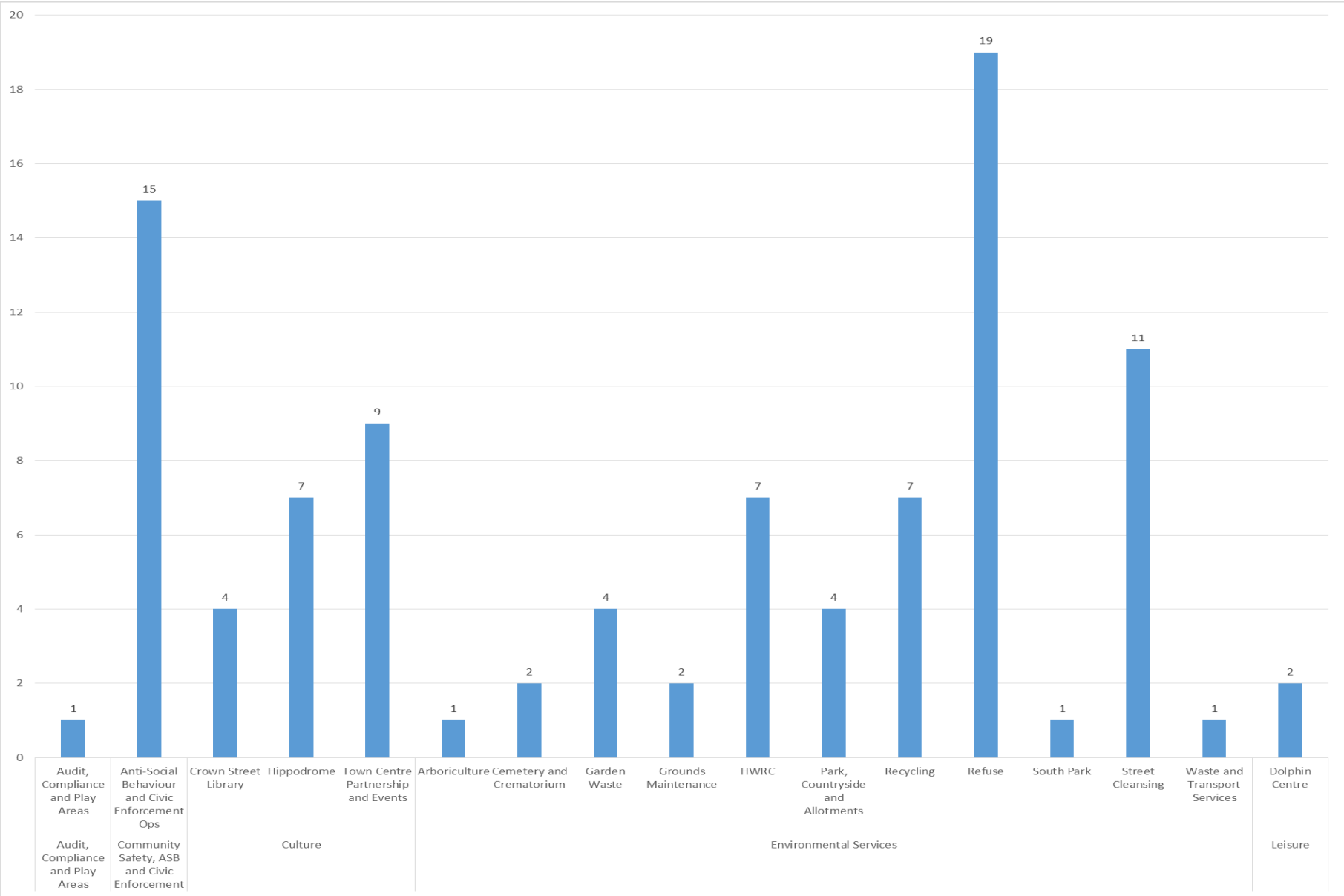
Comments by Service Area/Team

Transport and Capital Projects



There were no discernible themes in the comments received for Capital Projects, Transport and Highways Planning.

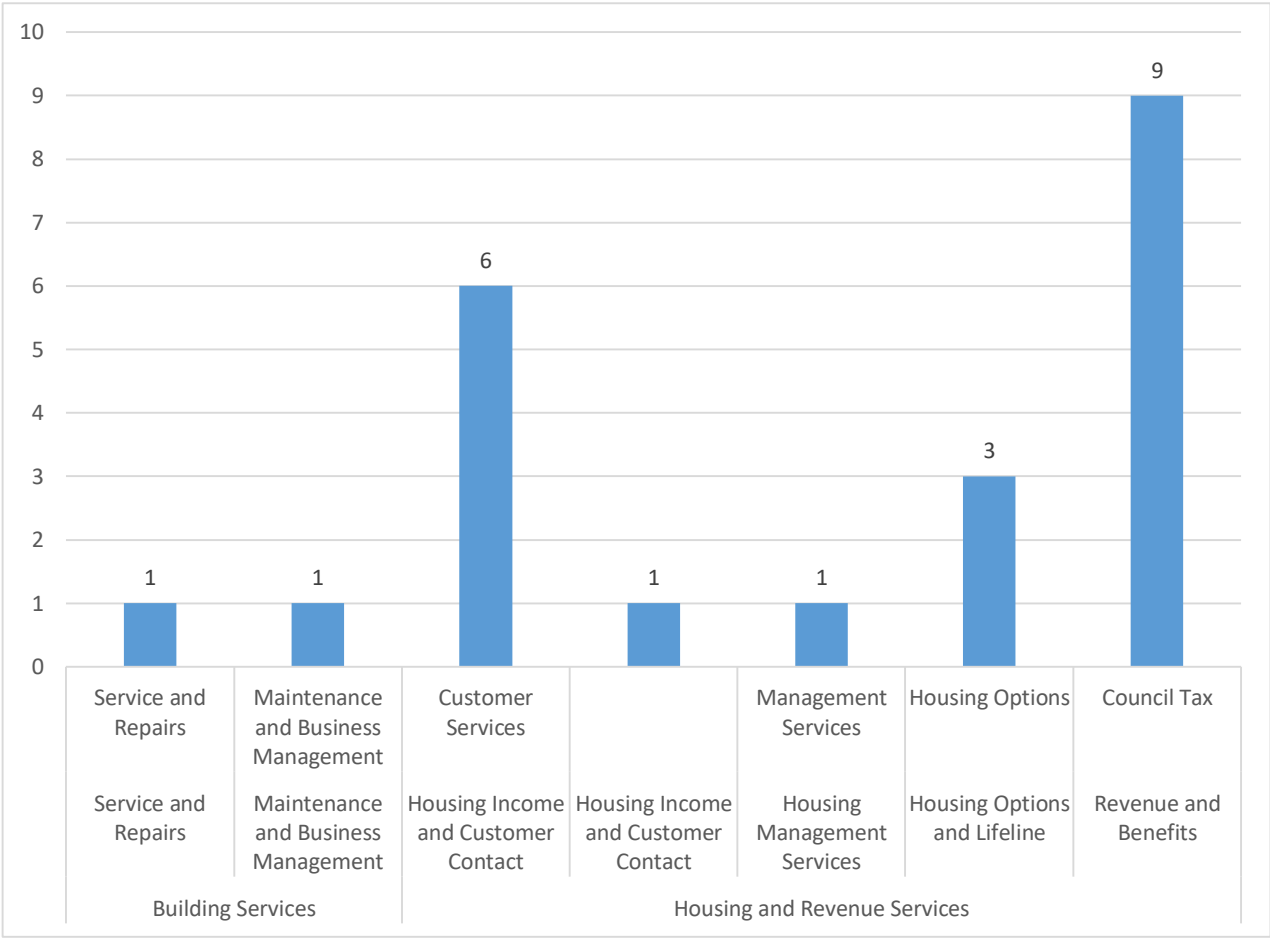
Community Services



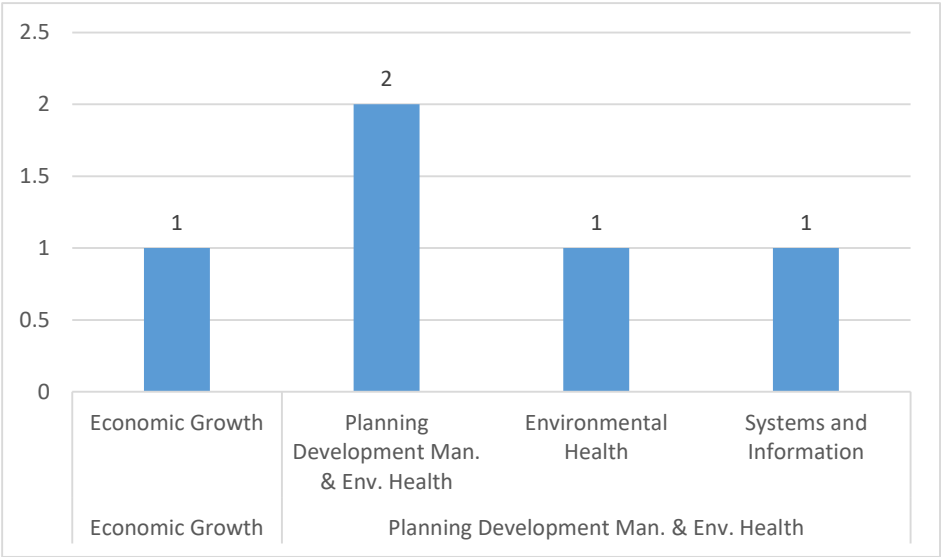
ASB and Civic Enforcement received 15 comments. Parking issues were the most common theme, particularly lack of enforcement action. There were no common themes in the comments for the Hippodrome.

Refuse received 19 comments, the most common themes were dissatisfaction with the charge for a replacement bin and the Council’s policy to no longer provide a recall service for missed bins.

Housing and Building Services



Economic Growth



Complaints by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2018/19. Some of the complaints determined during 2018/19 were received during 2018/19 and the first quarter of 2018/19, prior to the Council's structure change, hence them being logged against former services/teams.

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
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Highway Asset Management	0	0	1	14	7	5	2	29
Highway Network Management	0	0	0	5	3	2	0	10
ASB & Civic Enforcement	0	1	0	5	1	3	0	10
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	1	7	2	3	0	13
CCVT	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Processing & Appeals	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	4
Licensing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Trading Standards/Animal Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Hippodrome	0	0	0	8	2	10	0	20
Crown Street Library	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Town Centre Partnership & Events	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	0	0	5	1	5	0	11
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	5
Parks and Green Spaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Parks, Countryside & Allotments	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	4
Nursery	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	0	2	0	12	0	14

Street Cleansing	0	0	2	9	4	8	1	24
Waste & Transport Services	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Garden Waste	0	0	4	4	6	53	3	70
Recycling	0	0	2	23	7	27	2	61
Refuse	0	0	8	79	16	72	5	180
HWRC	0	0	0	5	3	2	0	10
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Eastbourne & Move More	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Service & Repairs 19/20	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Customer Services	0	0	0	3	2	5	5	15
Management Services	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	6
Tenancy Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Housing Options	0	0	0	4	4	1	0	9
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Private Sector Housing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Rates	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Council Tax	0	0	4	18	1	3	4	30
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	0	1	7	2	0	0	10
Planning Development Man. & Env. Health	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Development Management	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Environmental Health	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Environmental Protection	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Building Control	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Planning Policy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	0	1	23	229	65	221	26	565

Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Escalated to LGO (No S2 Response provided)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highway Asset Management	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Highway Network Management	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Capital Projects	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
ASB & Civic Enforcement	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hippodrome	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Cemeteries and Crematoria	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	5
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Street Cleansing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Garden Waste	0	0	1	1	0	4	0	6
Refuse	0	0	1	1	0	3	2	7
Recycling	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
HWRC	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Winter Maintenance & Call Out	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing & Revenue Services	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Management Services	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Options	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Council Tax	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	5
Customer Services	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Environmental Health	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2

Planning Development Man. & Env. Health	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Totals	0	0	4	25	8	10	5	52

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 number of service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2018/19.

As a result of a complaint for Highway Network Management, it was arranged for a dropped kerb to be placed on double yellow lines adjacent to a disabled parking bay near South Park.

A further complaint for Highways Network Management resulted in white access protection marking across a driveway being installed.

As a result of a complaint to ASB and Civic Enforcement, a bespoke hidden camera was acquired with a view to identifying fly-tippers and other offenders.

A further complaint to ASB and Civic Enforcement resulted in Civic Enforcement Officers receiving training with the dog warden regarding procedure when he is absent from work.

A complaint to the Hippodrome resulted in a review of processes regarding customers causing a disturbance, this also led to additional training with the front of house team and also ensured the security firm communicate clearly to managers.

As a result of a complaint to Cemeteries and Crematoria, it was arranged for the cemetery staff to receive chain saw training to allow the team to remove fallen trees in a timelier manner.

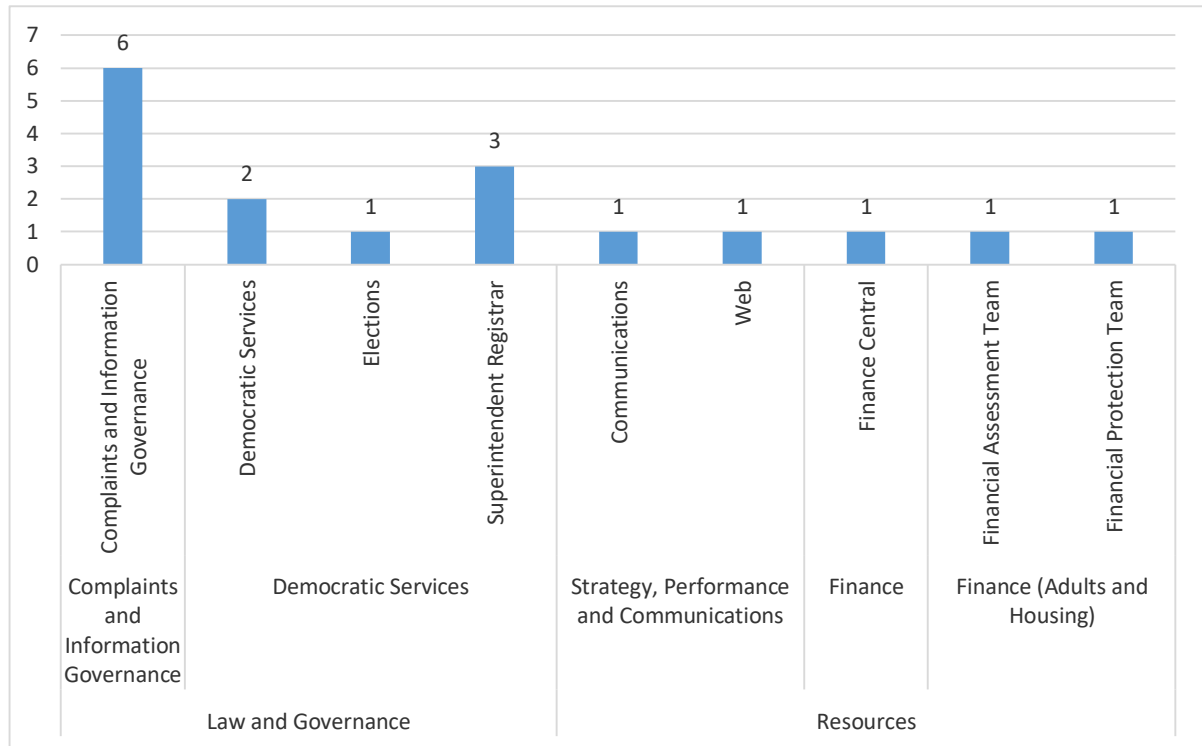
A complaint to Street Cleaning resulted in the organisation of a new route schedule for large sweepers to enable all areas to be swept in approximately a six week rota and have a more detailed record of not only when the road has been serviced but also if any problems have arisen.

As a result of a complaint to Customer Services, the scanning stations were moved further away from the kiosk to allow further access and more privacy.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department Resources

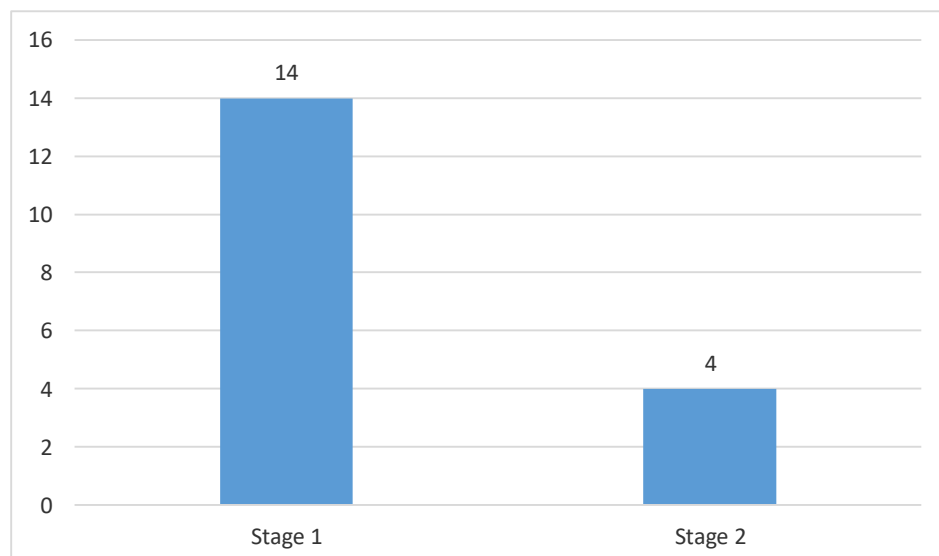
Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



The Complaints and Information Governance Team received 6 complaints, a reduction from 10 in 2018/19. The most common theme remained dissatisfaction with the response to subject access requests.

Complaints by Stage



Complaints by Outcome

The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2018/19. Some of the complaints determined during 2018/19 were received during 2018/19 and the first quarter of 2018/19, prior to the Council's structure change, hence them being logged against former services/teams.

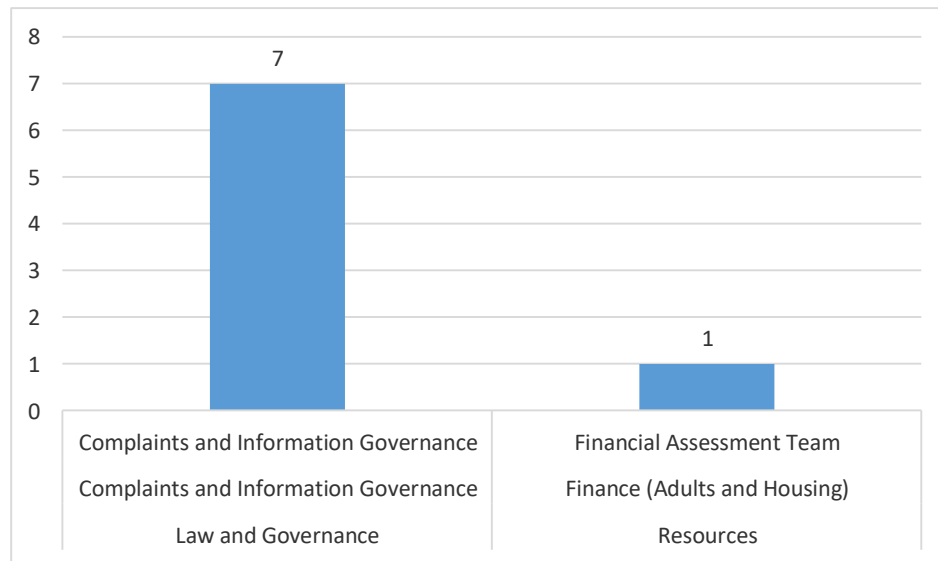
Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	4
Democratic Services	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Superintendent Registrar	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Web	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Financial Assessment Team	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Finance (Central/Treasury Management)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	0	0	0	4	4	4	0	12

Stage 2 Outcomes

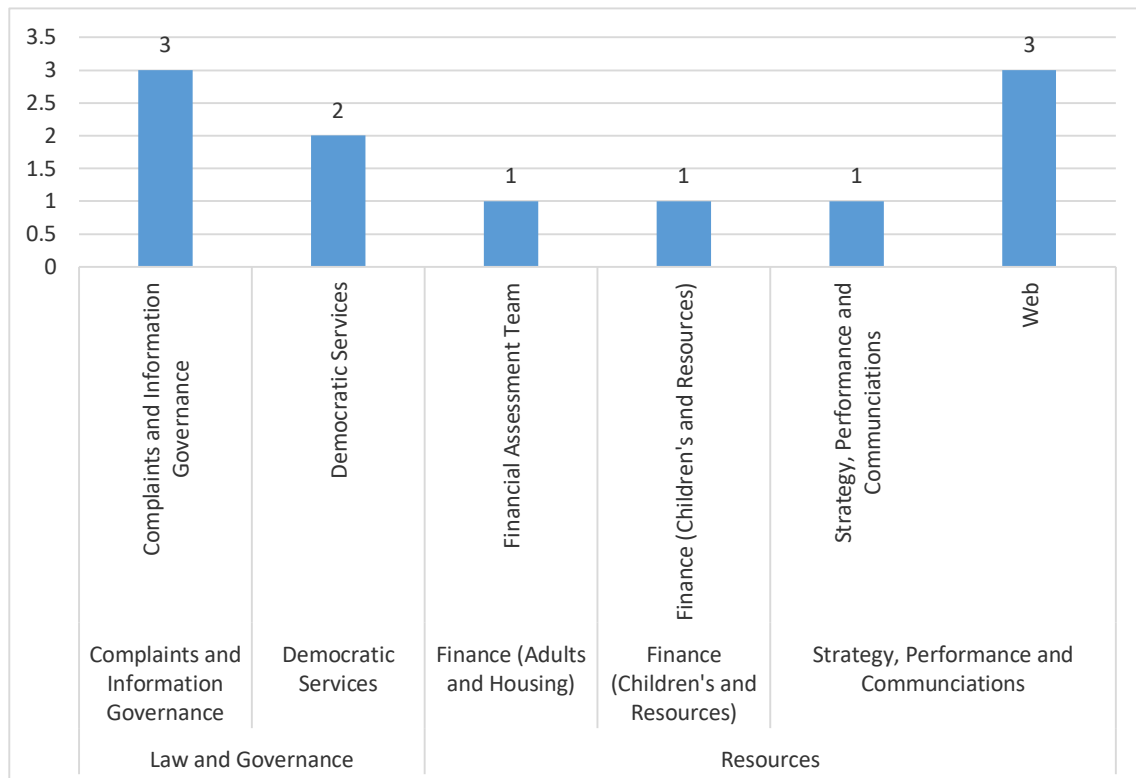
Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Escalated to LGO (No S2 Response provided)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Complaints & Information Governance Team	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Totals	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3

Compliments by Service Area/Team



Comments by Service Area/Team

Overview



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, one service improvements was made following a complaint investigation during 2018/19.

Following a complaint to the Elections Team regarding delayed receipt of ballot papers, it was agreed that future mailings will go directly into the Royal Mail, rather than via Adare Post.

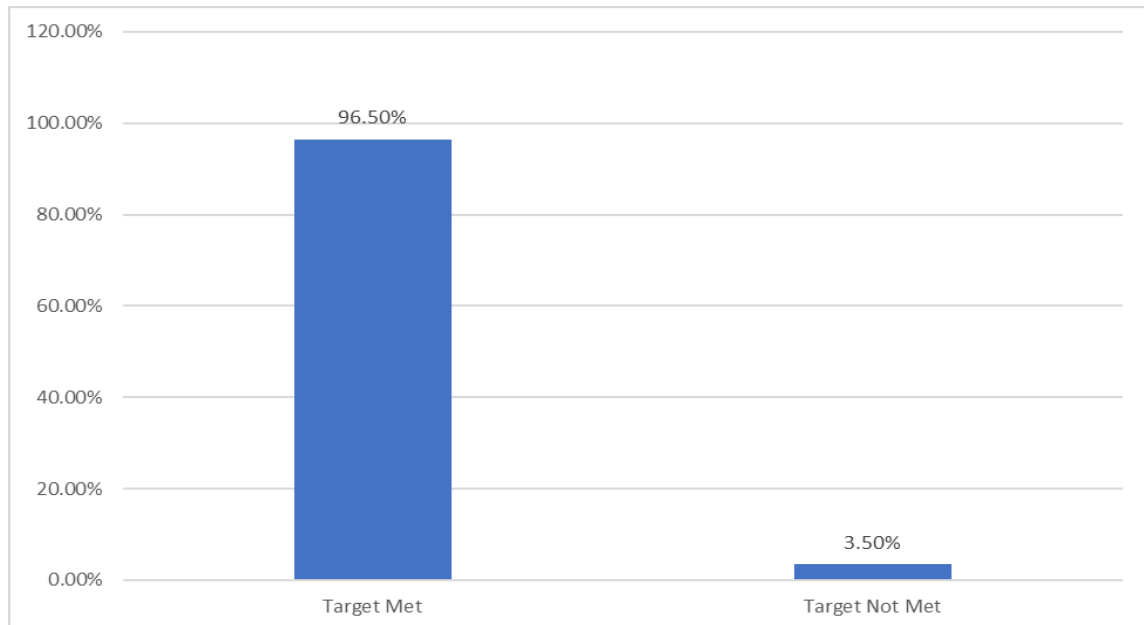
Following a complaint to the Complaints and Information Governance Team, it was agreed that, where appropriate, call recordings should be disclosed as part of a subject access request. Specifically in cases where an applicant requests details of calls or where their contact with the Council has been via the Contact Centre. Staff were reminded that on receipt of a request for call recordings, a copy is sent to the Contact Centre in addition to the services.

A complaint regarding Council's disregard of its statutory obligations under Regulations 113 (7) & (8) of the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 resulted in the necessary information being published on the website.

Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

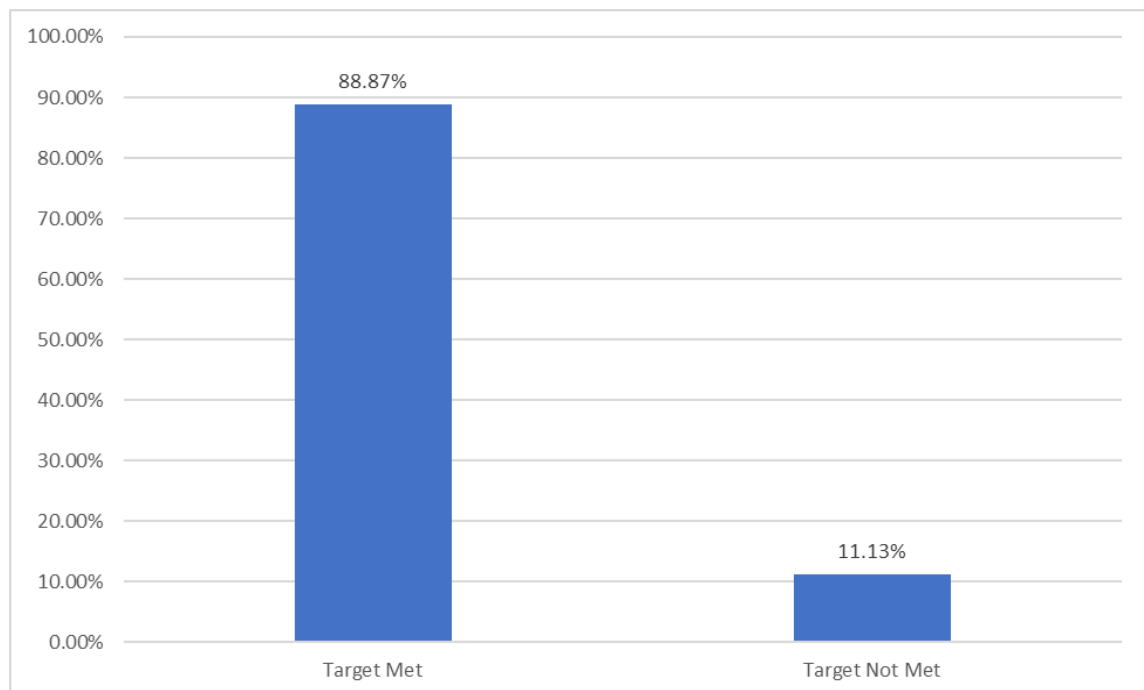
Stage 1

Performance against Stage 1 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



This was an increase in performance from 79.9% in 2018/19.

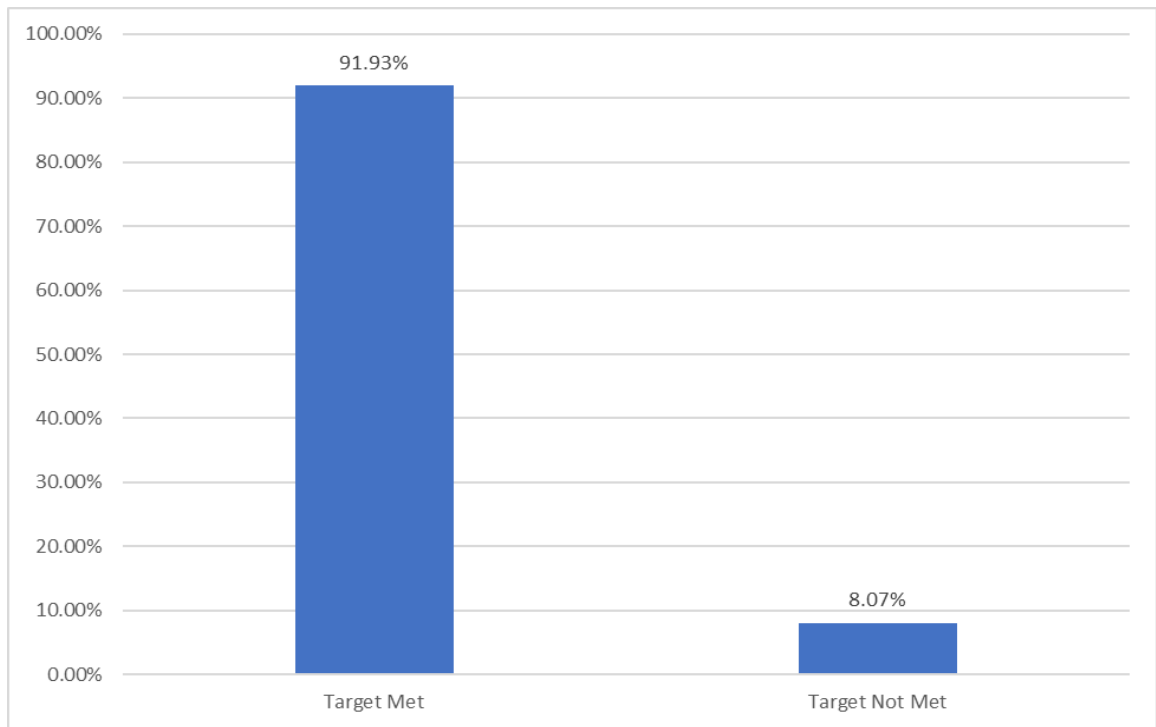
Performance against Stage 1 response target (25 working days)



This was an increase in performance from 80.8% in 2018/19.

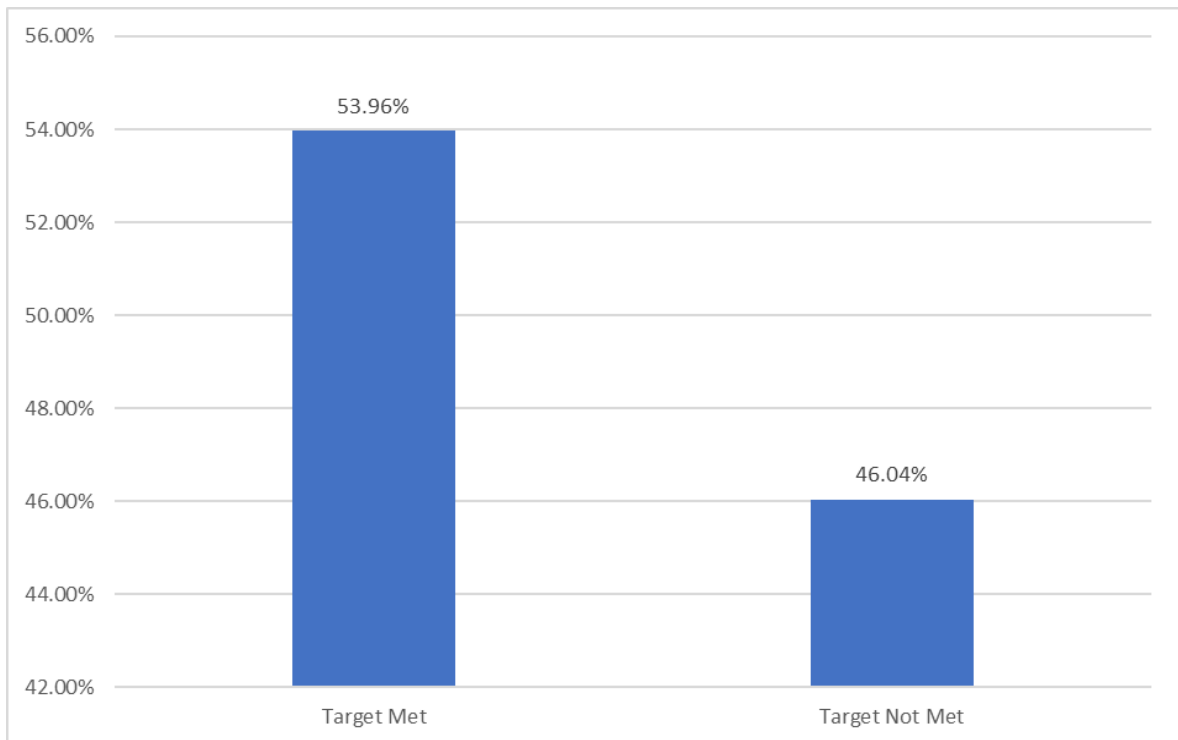
Stage 2

Performance against Stage 2 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



This was an increase in performance from 70% in 2018/19.

Performance against Stage 2 response target (30 working days)



This was an increase in performance from 30% in 2018/19.

Further Recommendations

The Council should work to improve performance against the Stage 2 response target.

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 and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received 1 maladministration decision during 2019/20, an increase from 0 in 2018/19.

Full details of those complaints determined by the LGSCO are included in the Cabinet reports of 3 December 2019 and 15 September 2020 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).