



# **DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

## **Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2023/24**

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## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2023/24 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 and performance 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.
2. 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**

3. 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, public health, some social housing complaints and Members which will be dealt with under separate procedures.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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**

7. 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, 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.
8. We have also 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.

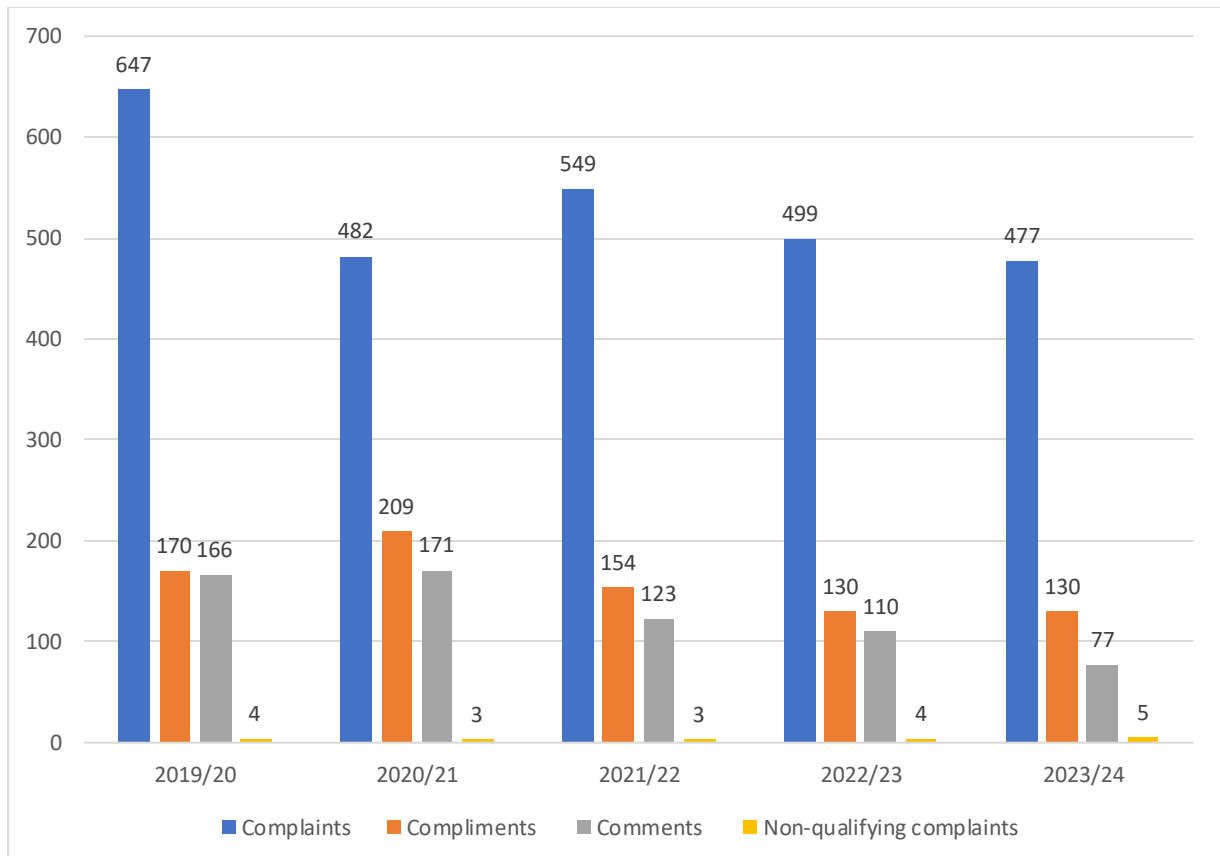
9. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

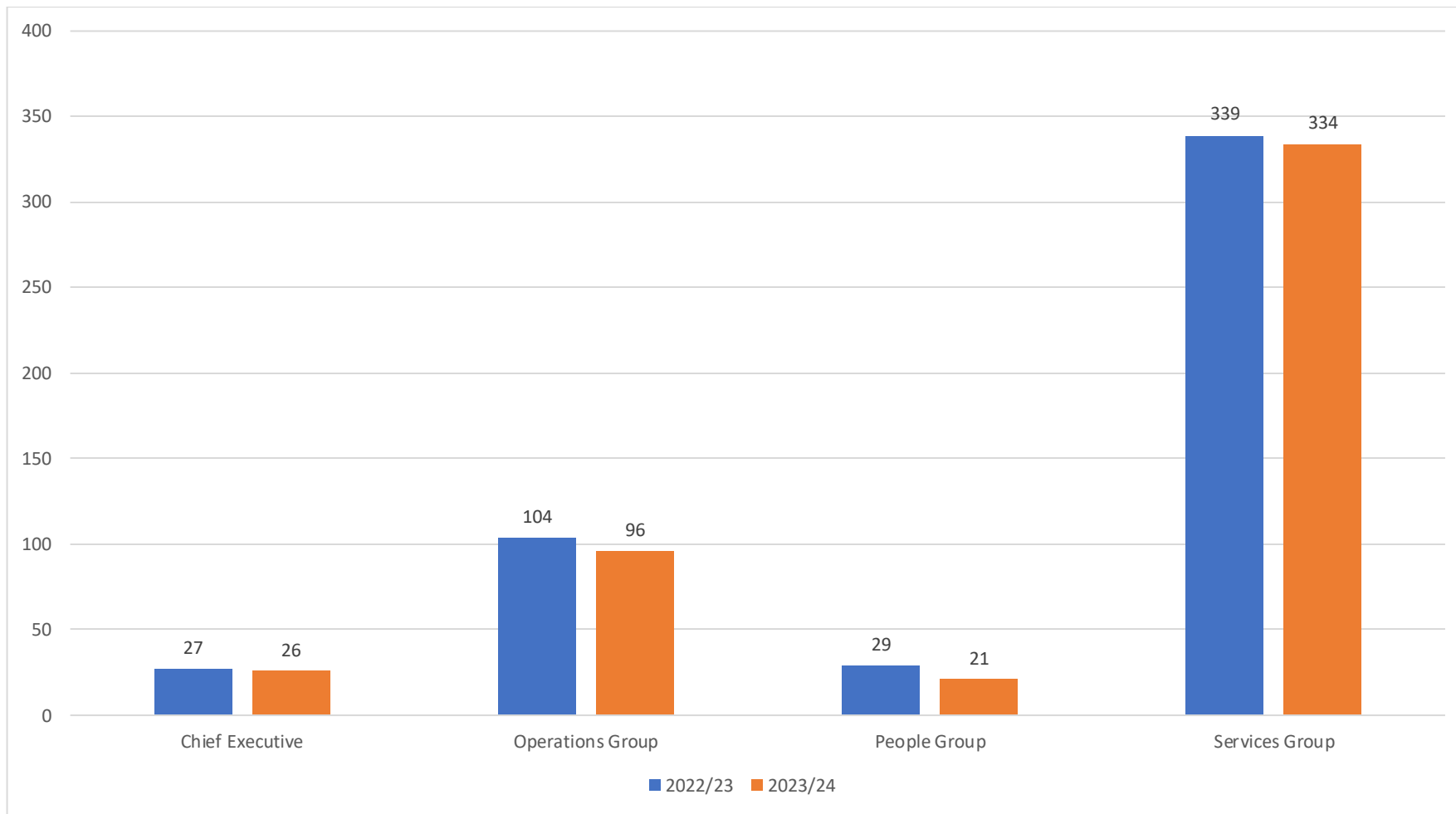
### Overview of Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

10. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 the Council received a total of 689 representations under the corporate procedure, a significant decrease from 743 in 2022/23, 829 in 2021/22, 865 in 2020/21 and 987 in 2019/20.
11. The Council received 477 corporate complaints in 2023/24, which was a decrease from 499 in 2022/23, 549 in 2021/22, 482 in 2020/21 and 647 in 2019/20. 463 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure, whilst 14 were escalated directly to Stage 2. 70 Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 84 complaints were investigated at Stage 2, a significant increase from 70 in 202/23 and 2021/22, 50 in 2020/21 and 59 in 2019/20.
12. The Council received 130 corporate compliments in 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23, and a significant decrease from 154 in 2021/22, 209 in 2020/21 and 170 in 2019/20.
13. The Council received 77 corporate comments in 2023/24, a significant decrease from 110 in 2022/23, 123 in 2021/22, 171 in 2020/21 and 166 in 2019/20.
14. The Council also received five non-qualifying corporate complaints in 2023/24, an increase from four in 2022/23, three in 2021/22 and 2020/21 and four in 2019/20.

### Total Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

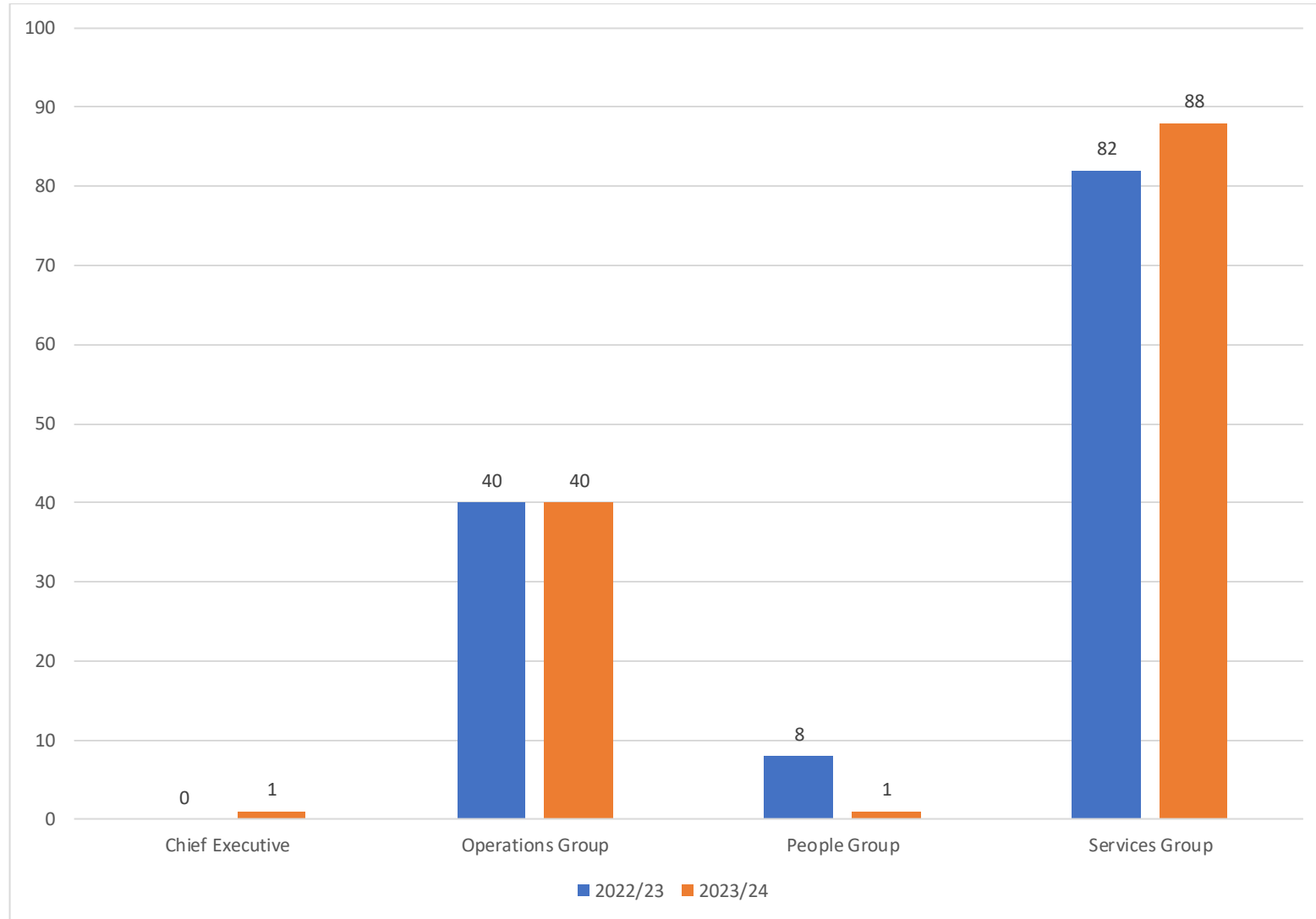


### Corporate Complaints by Department



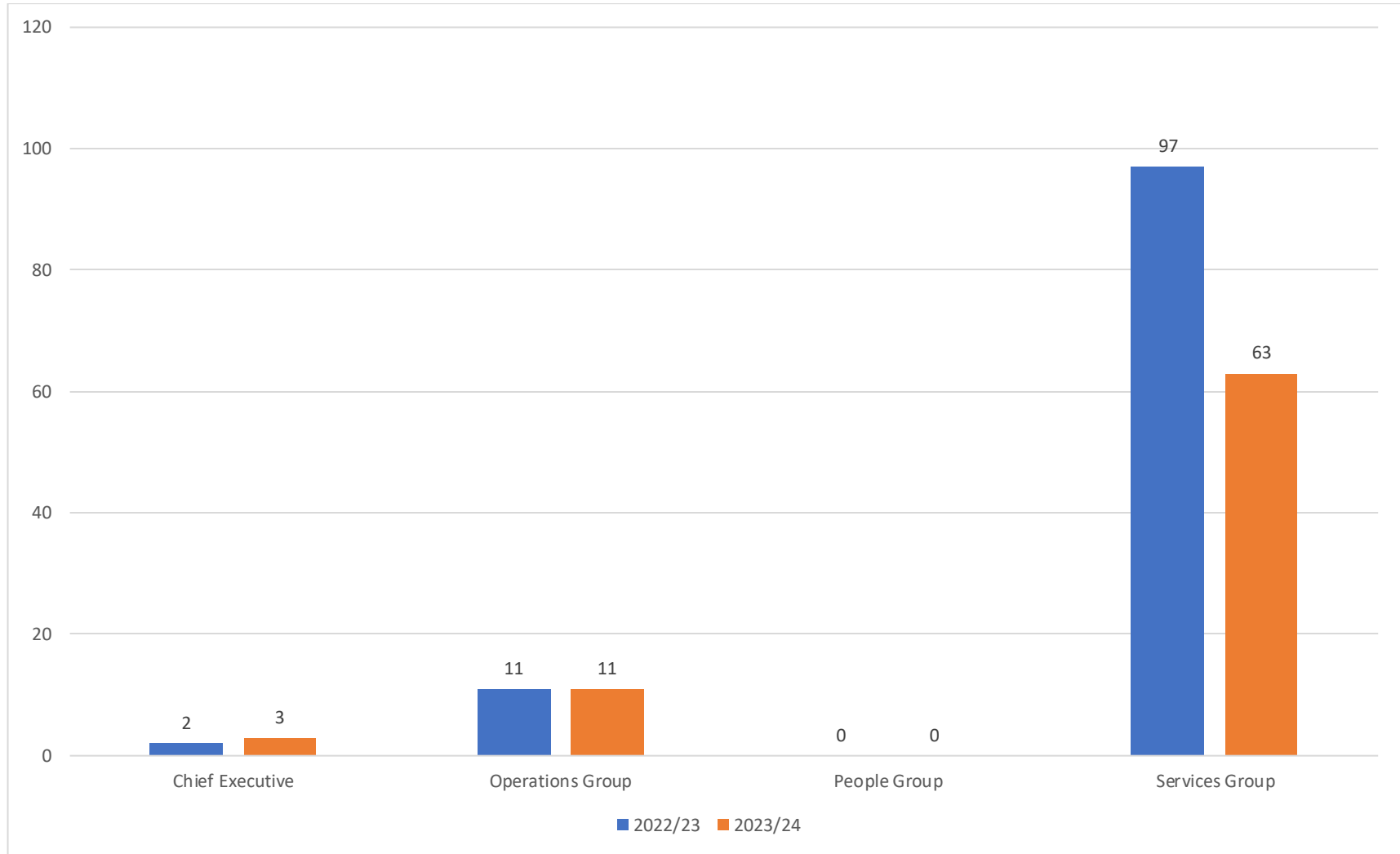
*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available prior to 2022/23 due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*

### Corporate Compliments by Department



*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available prior to 2022/23 due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*

### Corporate Comments by Department



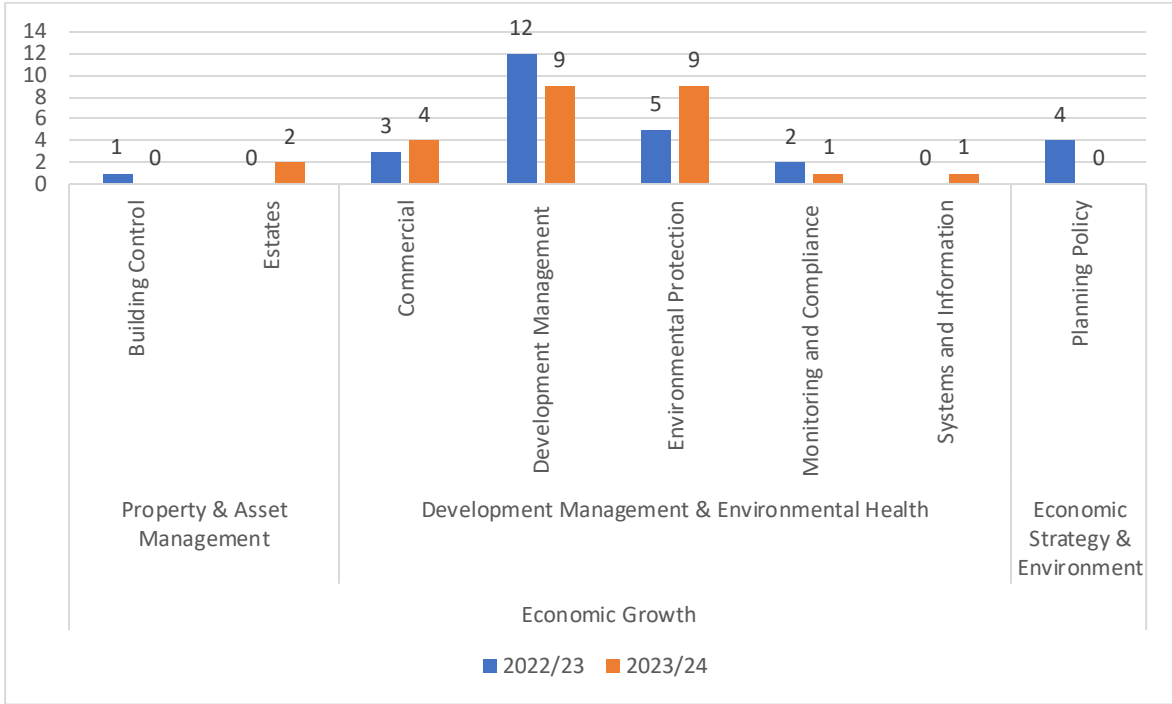
*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available prior to 2022/23 due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*



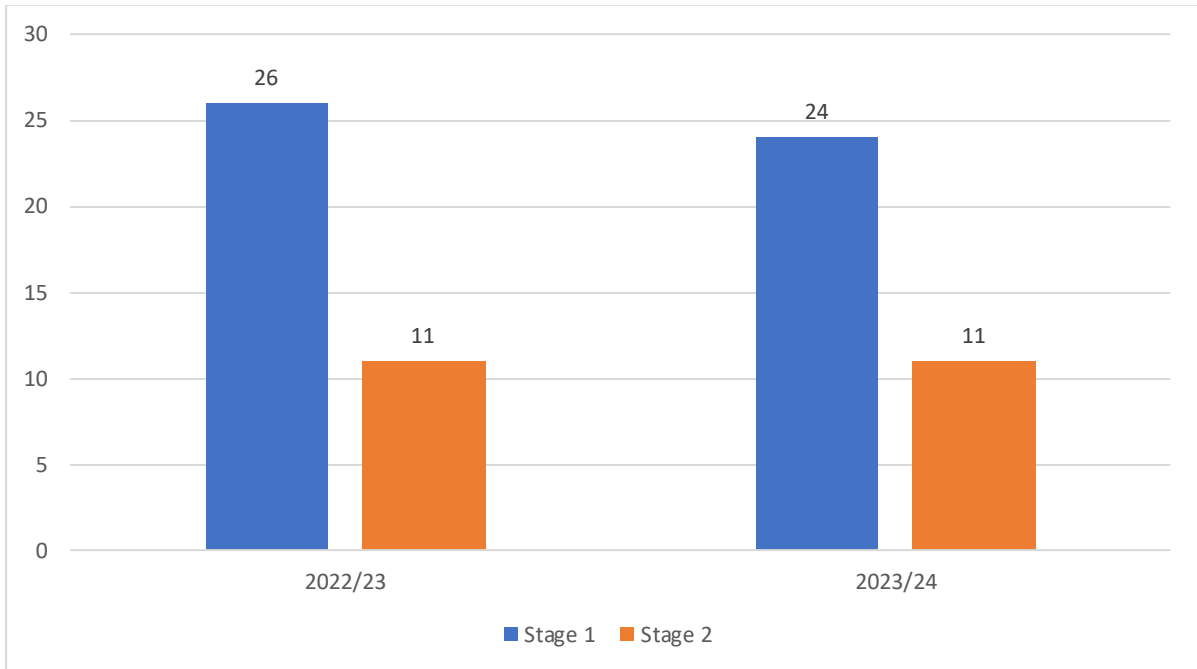
### Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

#### Chief Executive Complaints by Service Area/Team

15. Chief Executive received 26 corporate complaints during 2023/24.



#### Complaints by Stage



*N.B. Two complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2*

### Compliments by Service Area/Team

16. Chief Executive received one compliment for Building Control in 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

### Comments by Service Area/Team

17. Chief Executive received three comments in 2023/24, an increase from two in 2022/23. One for Development Management, one for Environmental Protection and one for Estates.

### Complaints by Outcome

18. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2023/24.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Planning Policy	0	2	0	0	0	2
Development Management	0	3	1	0	0	4
Commercial	0	1	0	2	0	3
Environmental Protection	0	2	2	2	0	6
Systems and Information	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>

#### Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Planning Policy	0	1	0	0	0	1
Development Management	0	3	3	0	0	6
Commercial	0	3	0	0	0	3
Environmental Protection	0	1	1	1	1	4
Systems and Information	0	0	0	1	0	1
Monitoring and Compliance	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>

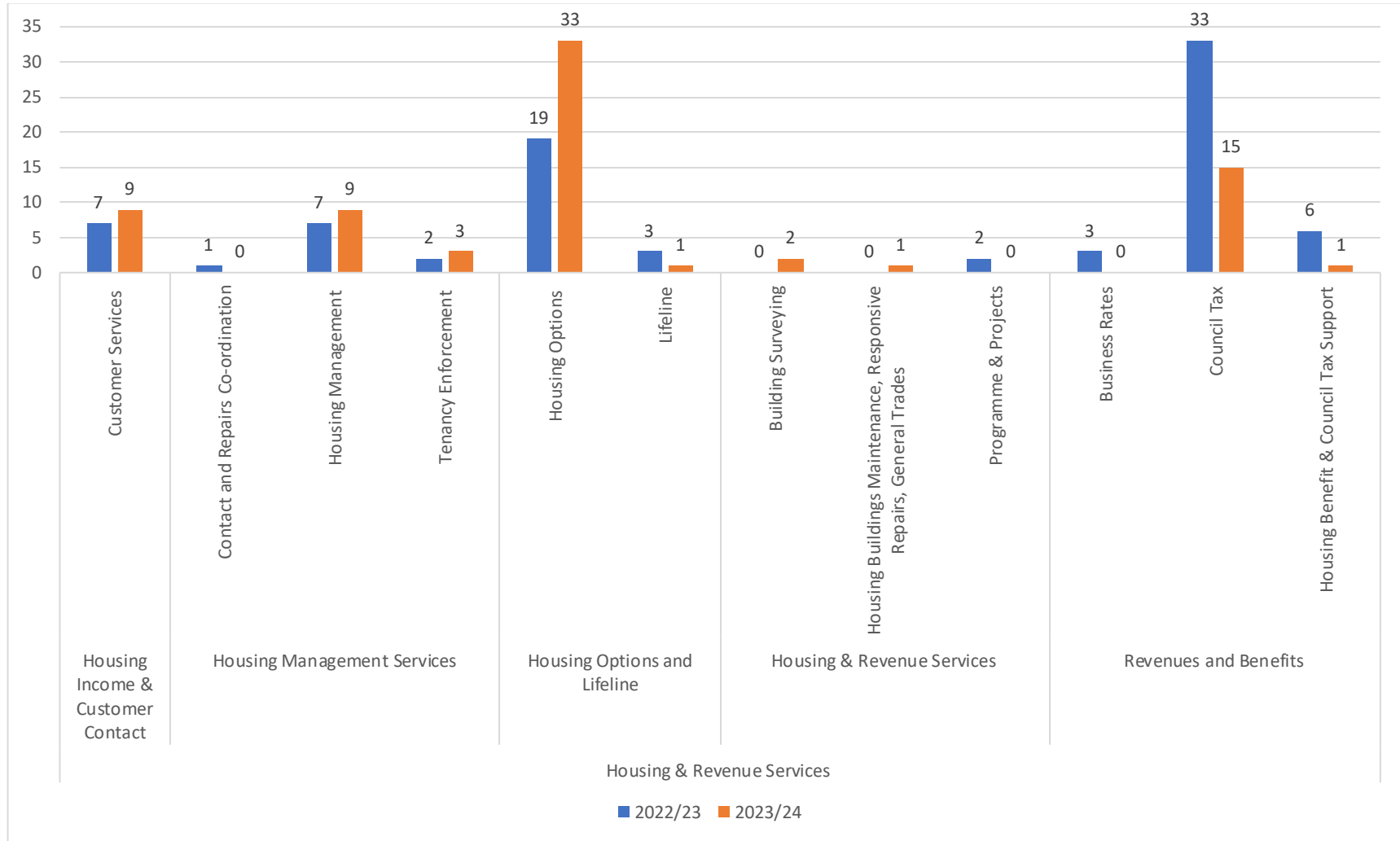
### Organisational Learning

19. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of corporate 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, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2023/24.
20. Following a complaint for Development Management, the Council made explicit reference to the factors which can impact on the timeliness of planning enforcement matters in section 3 of A Charter for Development Management.
21. Following another complaint for Development Management, learning from the complaint was shared with officers to ensure any future applications for works to trees are properly considered in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
22. Following a further complaint for Development Management, officers were reminded of the importance of responding to complaints in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure.

## Operations Group

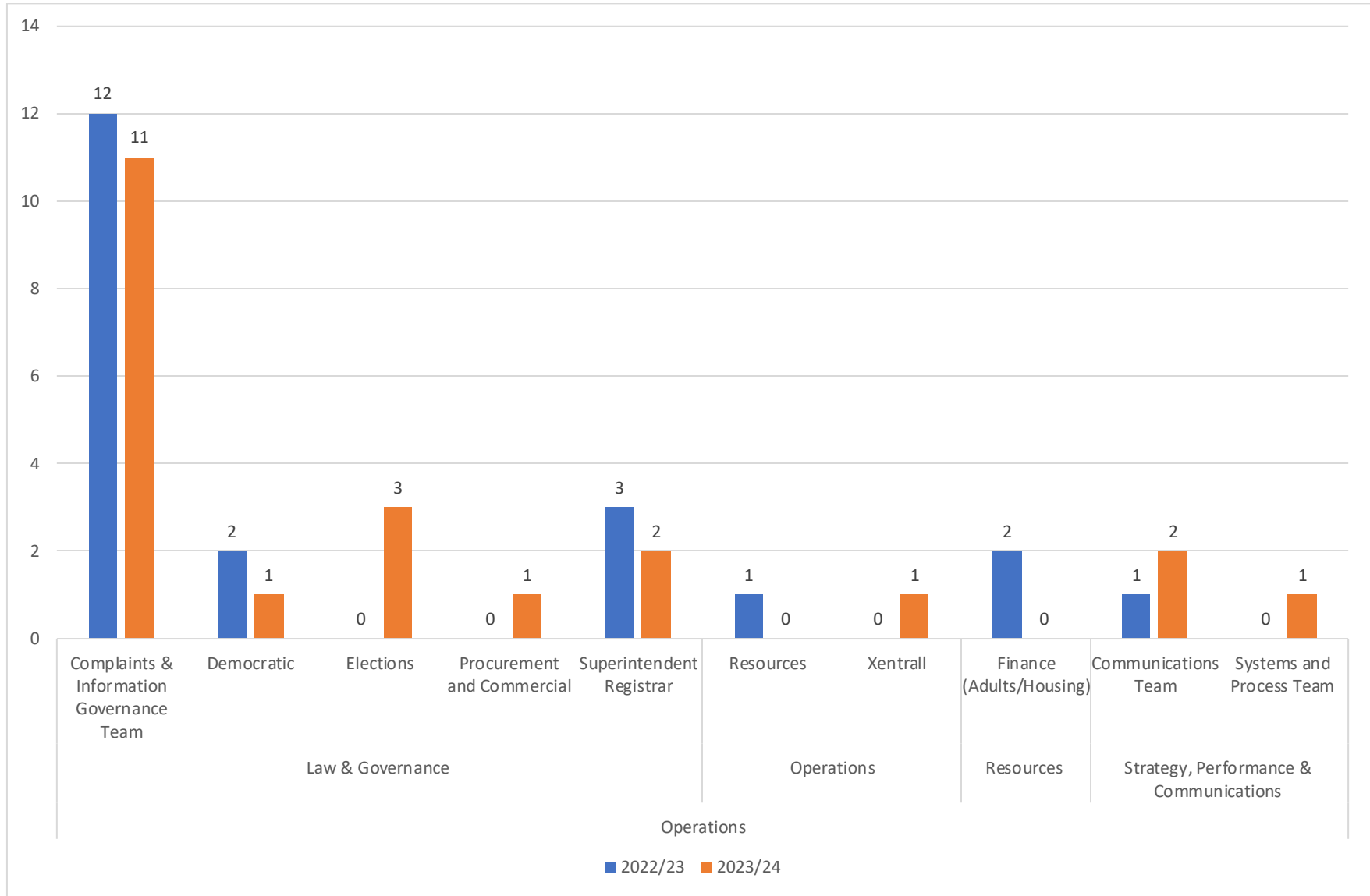
### Complaints by Service Area/Team

32. Operations received 96 corporate complaints during 2023/24.



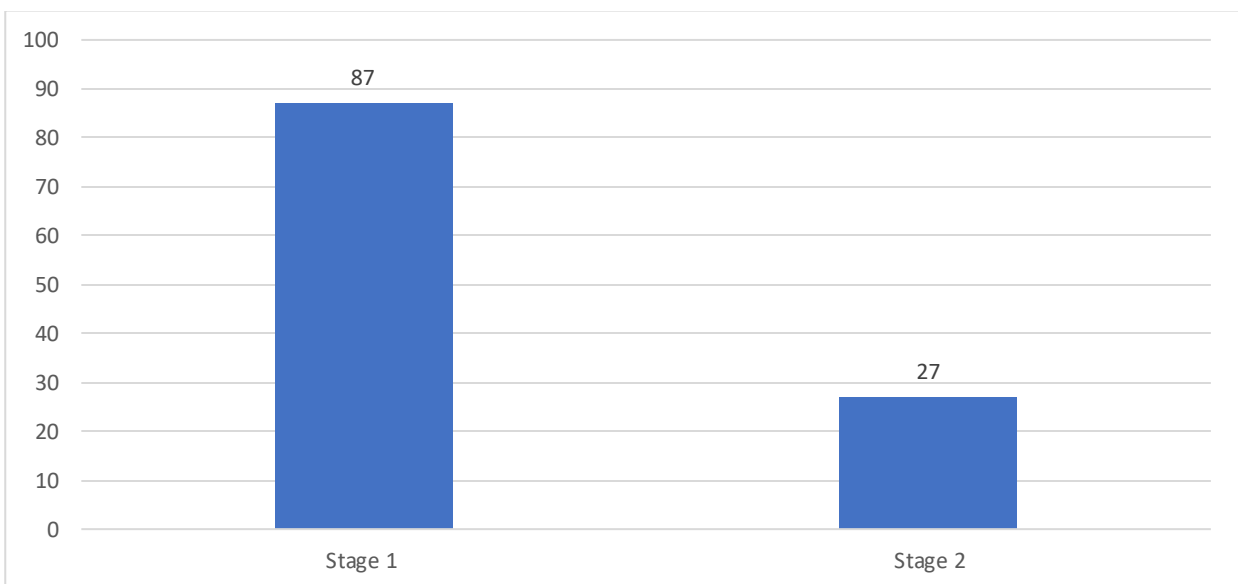
33. Customer Services received nine corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from seven in 2022/23. Seven complaints concerned the application process for Blue Badges.
34. Housing Management received nine corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from seven in 2022/23. Complaints concerned various issues including delays in moving into properties, the service provided by officers, a delay in replacing a fence, and lack of action in relation to an overgrown hedge, lack of action in relation to a neighbour nuisance issue and not being advised the housing application process had changed. There were no identifiable themes.
35. Tenancy Enforcement received three corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from two in 2022/23. Two complaints concerned a lack of action in relation to neighbour nuisance issues.
36. Housing Options received 33 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a significant increase from 19 in 2022/23. The most common cause of complaint was level of support provided in progressing housing applications/finding suitable accommodation and dissatisfaction with the band applicants were placed in.
37. Lifeline receive one corporate complaint during 2023/24, a decrease from three in 2022/23.
38. Building Surveying received two corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
39. General Trades received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
40. Council Tax received 15 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a significant decrease from 33 in 2022/23. The most common theme was communication, followed by dissatisfaction with the administration of Council Tax matters.
41. Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, a decrease from six in 2022/23.

Operations continued...



- 42. Complaints and Information Governance Team received 11 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from 12 in 2022/23. The most common theme was people’s dissatisfaction with the timeliness and/or content of the response to their Subject Access Request (SAR).
- 43. Democratic received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, a decrease from two in 2022/23.
- 44. Elections received three corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
- 45. Procurement and Commercial received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
- 46. Superintendent Registrar received two corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from three in 2022/23.
- 47. Xentrall received one complaint in 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
- 48. Communications Team received two corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from one in 2022/23.
- 49. Systems and Process Team received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

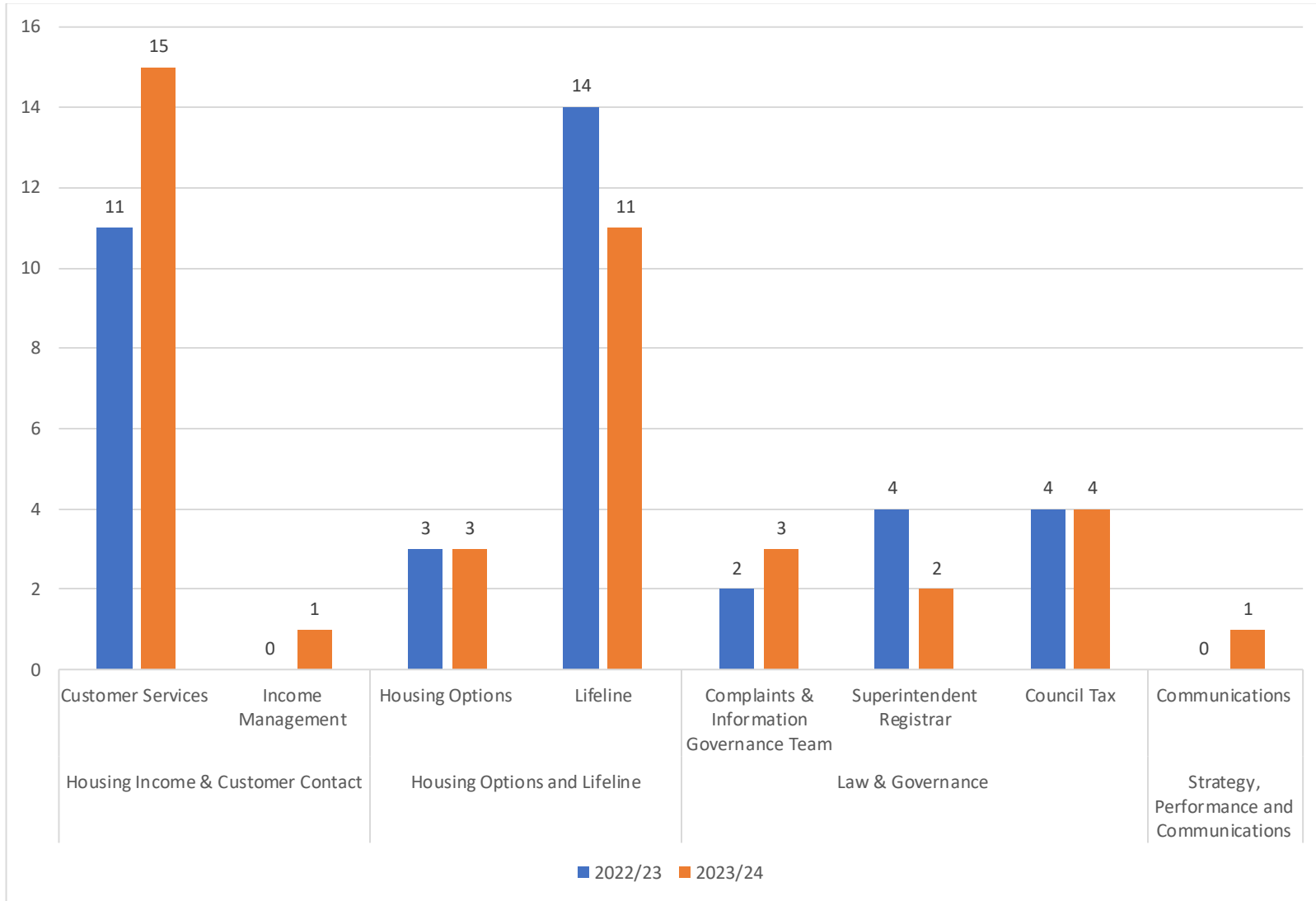
**Complaints by Stage**



*N.B. nine complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2*

### Compliments by Service Area/Team

50. Operations received 40 corporate compliments during 2023/24.

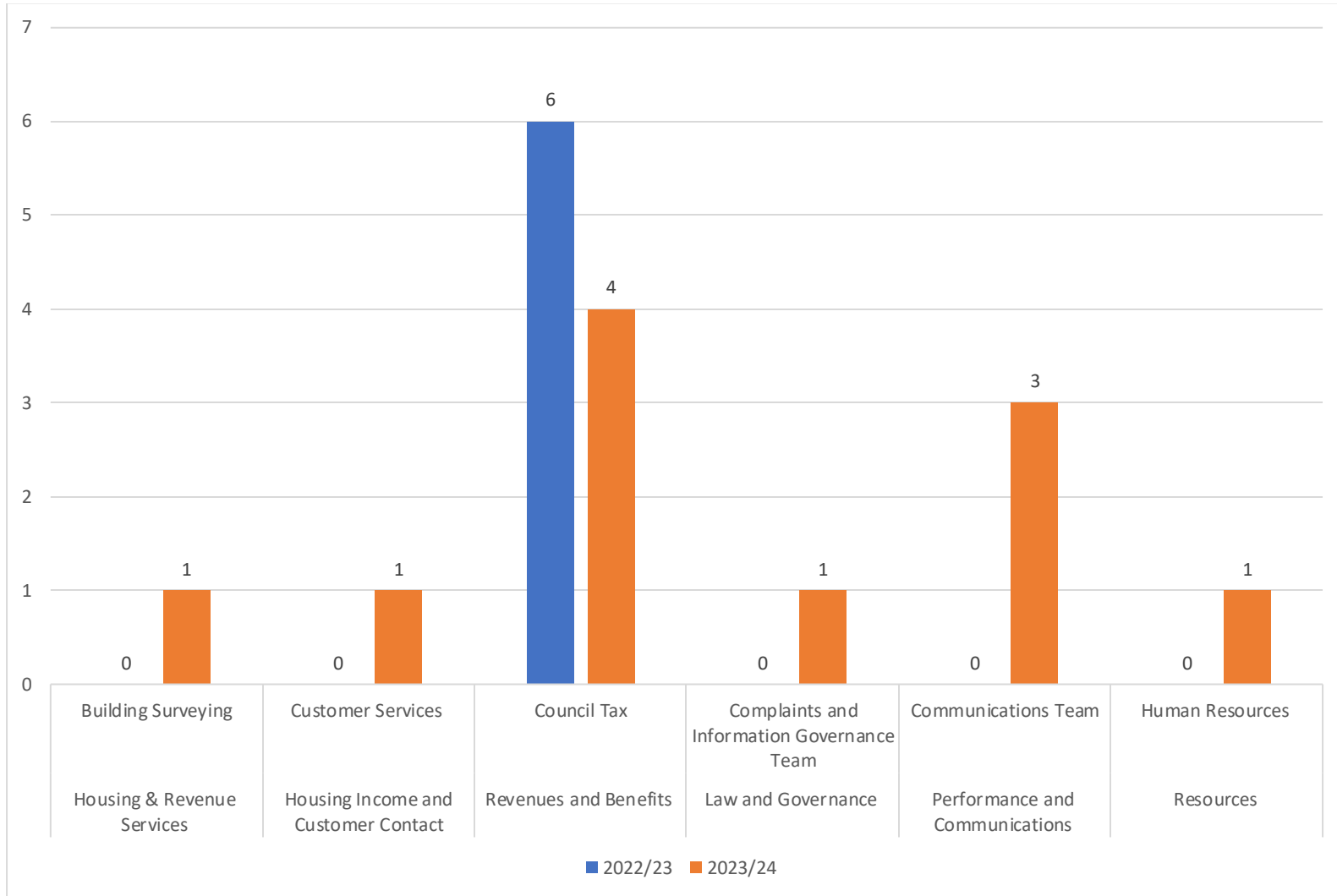




51. Customer Services received 15 corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from 11 in 2022/23. The main theme was peoples satisfaction with the service provided in relation to a range of issues, including recycling, bulky waste collection and blue badges.
52. Housing Income Management received one corporate compliment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
53. Housing Options received three corporate compliments during 2023/24, the same as in 2022/23.
54. Lifeline received 11 corporate compliments during 2023/24, a decrease from 14 in 2022/23. The main theme was peoples satisfaction with the service provided, particularly in relation to staff responding to falls and other incidents.
55. Complaints and Information Governance Team received three corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from two in 2022/23.
56. Superintendent Registrar received two corporate compliments during 2023/24, a decrease from four in 2022/23.
57. Council Tax received four corporate compliments in 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.
58. Communications received one corporate compliment in 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

### Comments by Service Area/Team

59. Operations received 11 corporate comments during 2023/24.



60. Building Surveying received one corporate comment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
61. Customer Services received one corporate comment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
62. Council Tax received four corporate comments during 2023/24, a decrease from six in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes.
63. Complaint and Information Governance Team received one corporate comment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
64. Communications Team received three corporate comments during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23. They all related to dissatisfaction with an article in the One Darlington magazine.
65. Human Resources received one corporate comment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

## Complaints by Outcome

66. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2023/24.

### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Escalated to Stage 2 no Stage 1 Response	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Systems and Process Team	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Complaints and Information Governance Team	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Democratic	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Elections	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Superintendent Registrar	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Finance (Adults/Housing)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Xentrall	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Customer Services	0	0	1	1	0	6	8
Housing Management	0	0	3	4	0	2	9
Tenancy Enforcement	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Housing Options	0	0	23	4	0	5	32
Lifeline	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Council Tax	0	0	5	2	5	5	17
General trades	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Building Surveying	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>83</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Complaints and Information Governance Team	2	0	8	0	10
Housing Management	2	0	0	0	2
Tenancy Enforcement	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Options	4	3	1	1	9
Lifeline	0	1	0	0	1
Business Rates	1	0	0	0	1
Council Tax	4	0	0	0	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>

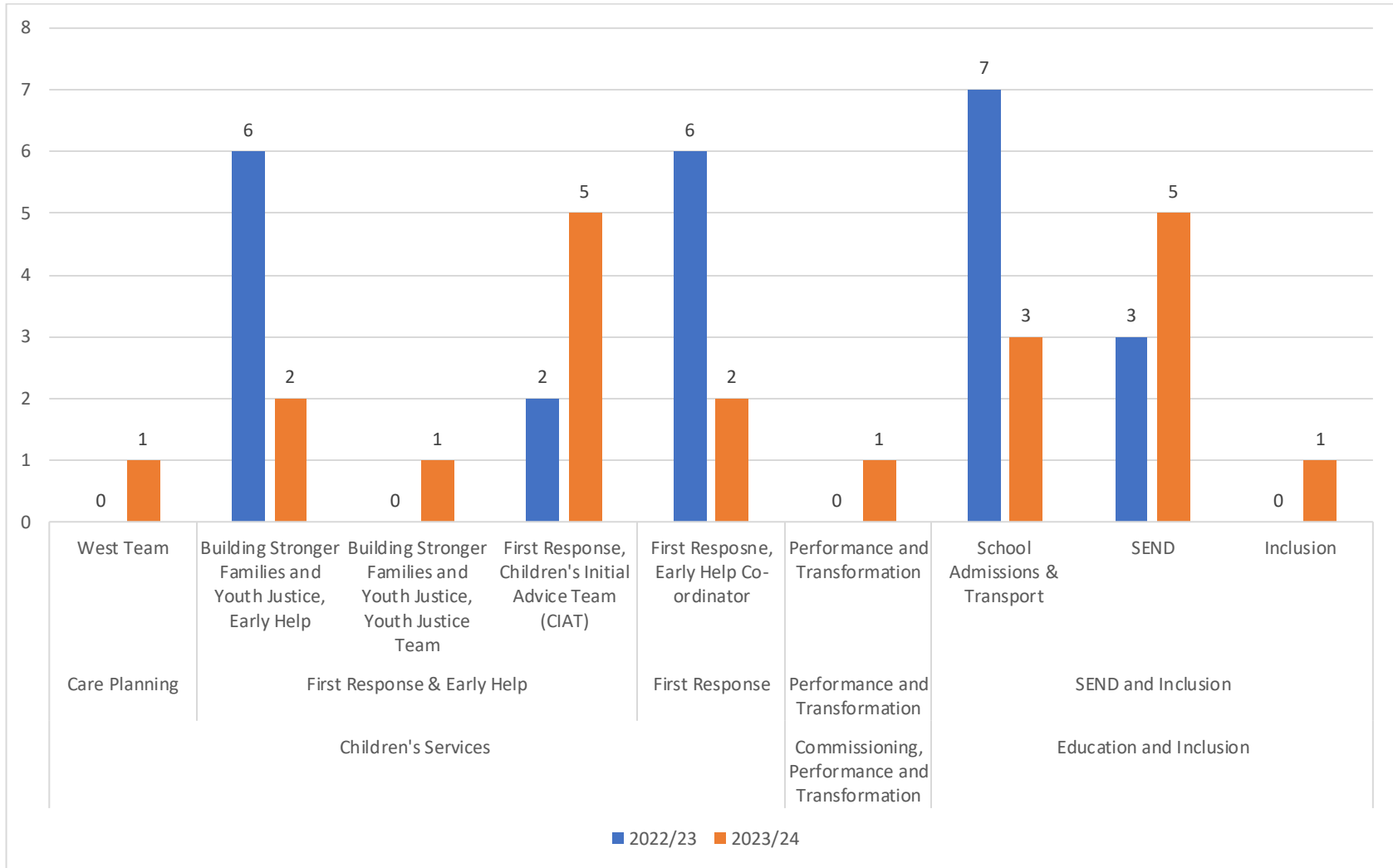
## Organisational learning

67. 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, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2023/24.
68. Following a complaint for the Complaints and Information Governance Team about the Council's response to a Subject Access Request (SAR), Children's Services were reminded of the importance of undertaking thorough searches to ensure all information held is provided and of the importance of providing records in a timely manner.
69. Following a complaint for Housing Options, officers were advised that during investigations around someone's suitability for a tenancy or when issues are raised about unacceptable behaviours, they should update the applicant/tenant every 20 working days with progress, and they should inform an applicant/tenant in writing of any decision made within 5 working days, including setting out clearly what procedures have been considered, how and why the decision was reached, any actions the applicant/tenant can consider and next steps.
70. Following another complaint for Housing Options, the officer who made the decision was given further training regarding supporting evidence provided with applications and appropriate banding.
71. Following a further complaint for Housing Options, training was provided to ensure the team advise people applying for housing they will be carrying out a home visit to anyone who is awarded a priority banding.

72. Following a complaint for Lifeline, it was agreed Lifeline would review the telecare agreement and include that there are limitations to care provided when personal equipment (such as hoists) are required.

### People Group Complaints by Service Area/Team

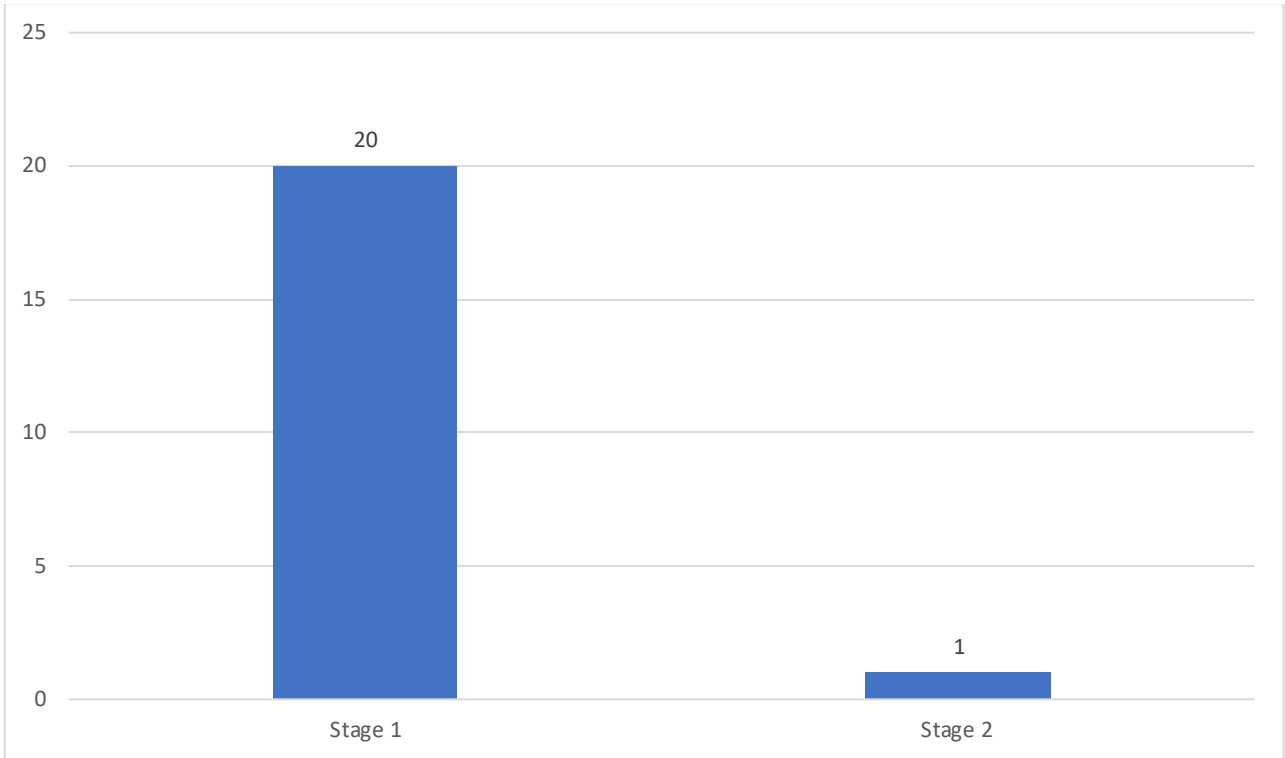
73. People received 21 corporate complaints during 2023/24.



74. West Team received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
75. Early Help received two complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from six in 2022/23.
76. Youth Justice Team received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
77. Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) received five corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from two in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes in the complaints received.
78. Early Help Co-ordinator received two corporate complaints in 2023/24, a decrease from six during 2022/23.
79. Performance and Transformation received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
80. School Admissions and Transport received three corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from seven in 2022/23.
81. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) received five corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from three in 2022/23. Complaints primarily concerned dissatisfaction with the service provided, delays in issuing Education, health and Care (EHC) Plans and delays in securing the provision outlined in EHC Plans.
82. Inclusion received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.



### Complaints by Stage



*N.B. One complaints was escalated directly to Stage 2*

**Compliments by Service Area/Team**

83. Adult Contact Team received one compliment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

**Comments by Service Area/Team**

84. People did not receive any corporate comments during 2023/24, as was the case in 2022/23.

### Complaints by Outcome

85. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2023/24.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team	0	0	0	1	0	1
Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door	0	0	0	1	0	1
Early Help	1	0	0	3	0	4
Early Help Co-ordinator	0	1	0	0	1	2
Children's Initial Advice Team	0	1	0	0	0	1
Youth Justice Team	0	0	1	0	0	1
West Team	0	1	0	0	0	1
Performance and Transformation	0	0	0	1	0	1
SEND	0	2	3	0	0	5
School Admissions & Transport	0	2	2	1	0	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Early Help	0	0	1	0	0	1
Children's Initial Advice Team	0	0	0	0	1	1
West Team	0	1	0	0	0	1
SEND	0	1	1	0	0	2
School Admissions & Transport	0	0	1	1	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

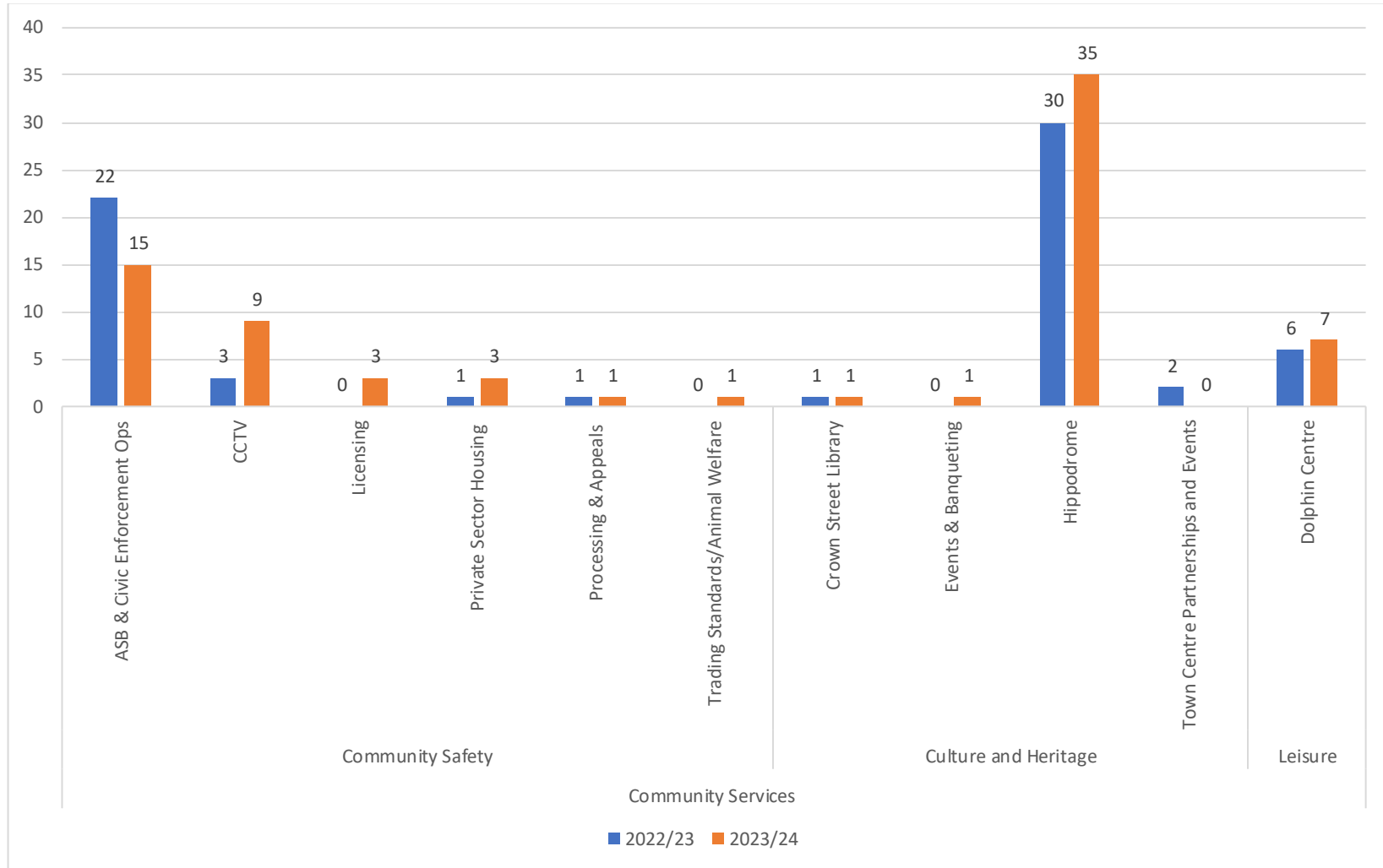
## Organisational learning

86. 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, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2023/24.
87. Following a complaint for Early Help, the Building Stronger Families Service agreed to review their response process when concerns are raised and investigated further. Officers were also reminded of the importance of adhering to the timescales in the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.
88. Following a complaint for School Admissions and Transport the team decided to review how sensitive information is shared with PA's, how sharing is documented/measured and if the use of IT equipment would improve service delivery.
89. Following a complaint for SEND, officers were reminded of the need to keep accurate records in relation to the discharge of the Council's statutory duties.
90. Following another complaint for SEND, officers were reminded of the need to take into account the parents disabilities when communicating with them.

## Services Group

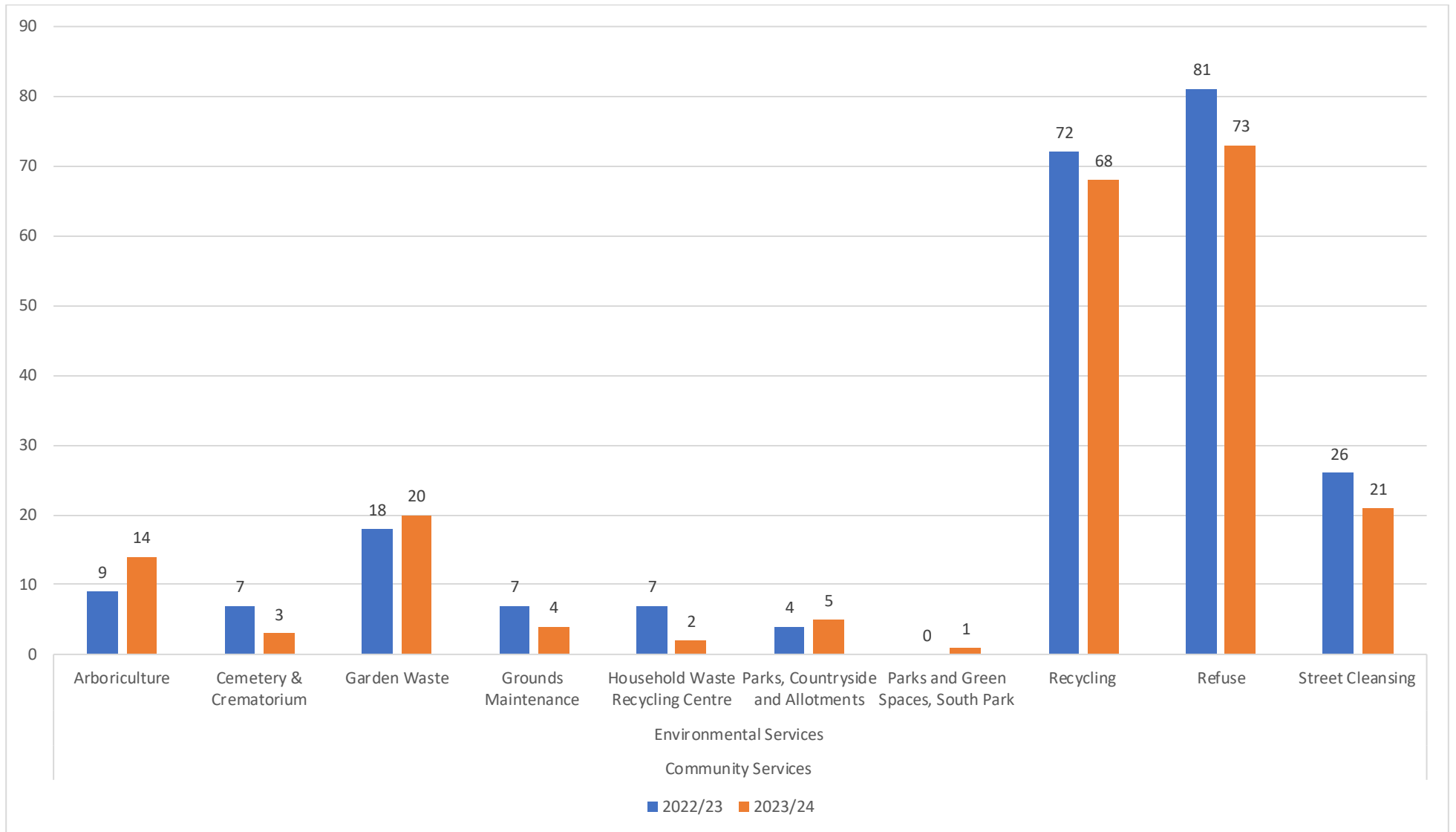
### Complaints by Service Area/Team - Community Services

91. Services received 334 corporate complaints during 2023/24.



92. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received 15 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from 22 in 2022/23. The most common themes were dissatisfaction with a perceived lack of action in relation to requests for enforcement and dissatisfaction with the attitude and actions of enforcement officers.
93. CCTV received nine corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from three in 2022/23. The most common theme was staff attitude when contacting CCTV.
94. Licensing received three corporate complaints 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23. Two of the complaints concerned staff attitude/behaviour.
95. Private Sector Housing received three corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from one in 2022/23. Two of the complaints concerned a lack of communication.
96. Processing & Appeals received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.
97. Trading Standards/Animal Welfare received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
98. Crown Street Library received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.
99. Events and Banqueting received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
100. Hippodrome received 35 corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from 30 in 2022/23. The main cause of complaints was that Hippodrome staff did not address inappropriate behaviour by other audience members during shows. Other issues concerned the venue including, restricted visibility and the toilets.
101. Dolphin Centre received seven corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from six in 2022/23. Three complaints concerned swimming and two related to bowling.

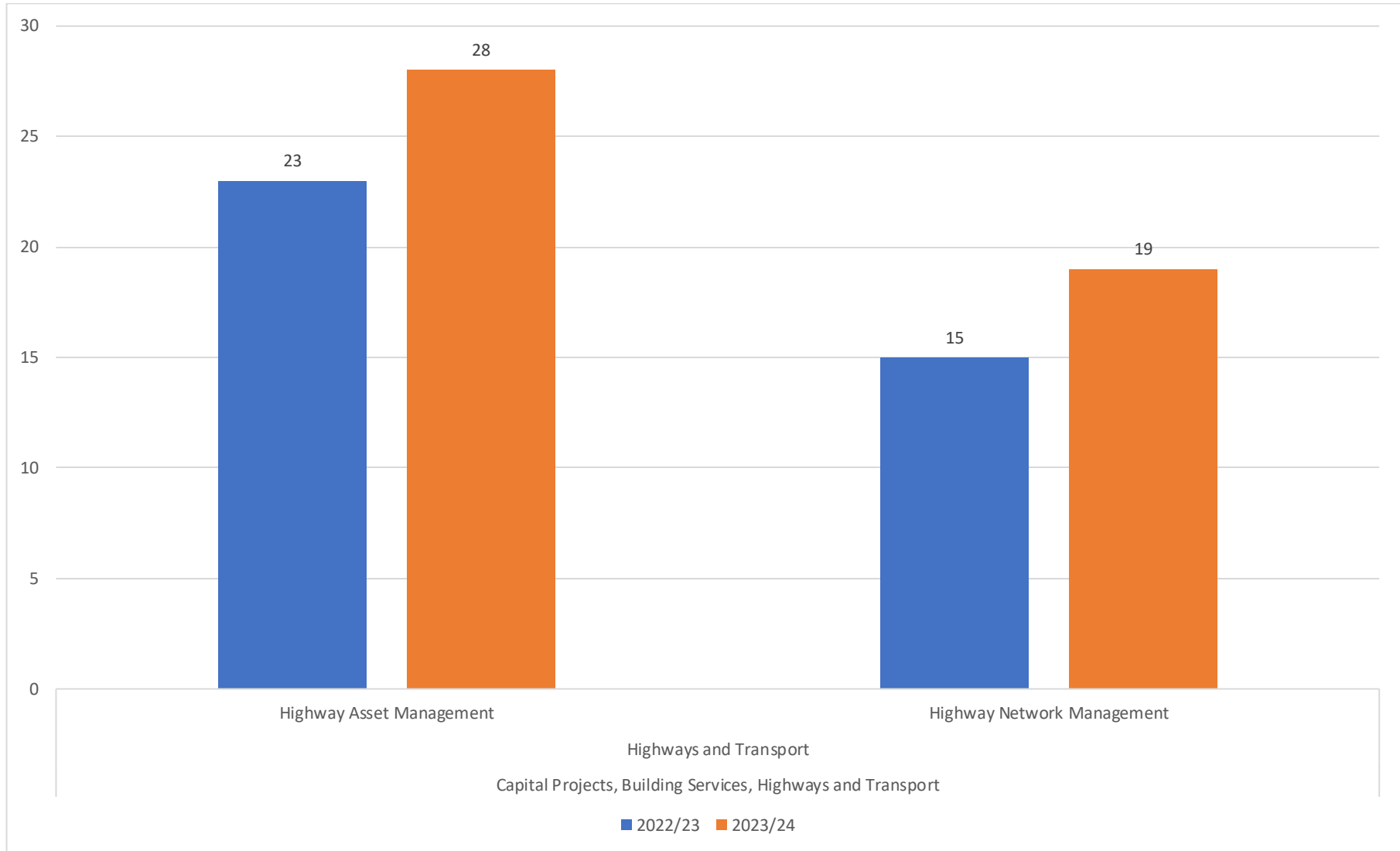
### Community Services continued...



102. Arboriculture received 14 corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from nine in 2022/23. 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.
103. Cemetery & Crematorium received three corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from seven in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes.
104. Garden Waste received 20 corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from 18 in 2022/23. Complaints primarily concerned missed collections.
105. Grounds Maintenance received four corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from seven in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes.
106. Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) received two corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from seven in 2022/23.
107. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received five corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from four in 2022/23. Poor communication was the most common cause of complaint.
108. South Park received one corporate complaint during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
109. Recycling received 68 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from 72 in 2022/23. The most common cause of complaint was recycling not being collected and bins and boxes either being broken or not returned to the position they were put out for collection.
110. Refuse received 73 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from 81 in 2022/23. Complaints primarily related to refuse collections, including assisted collections being missed on one or more occasion. Other complaints concerned bulky waste collections and bins not being returned to the position they were put out for collection.
111. Street Cleansing received 21 corporate complaints during 2023/24, a decrease from 26 in 2022/23. Complaints primarily related to the lack of response to requests for service.

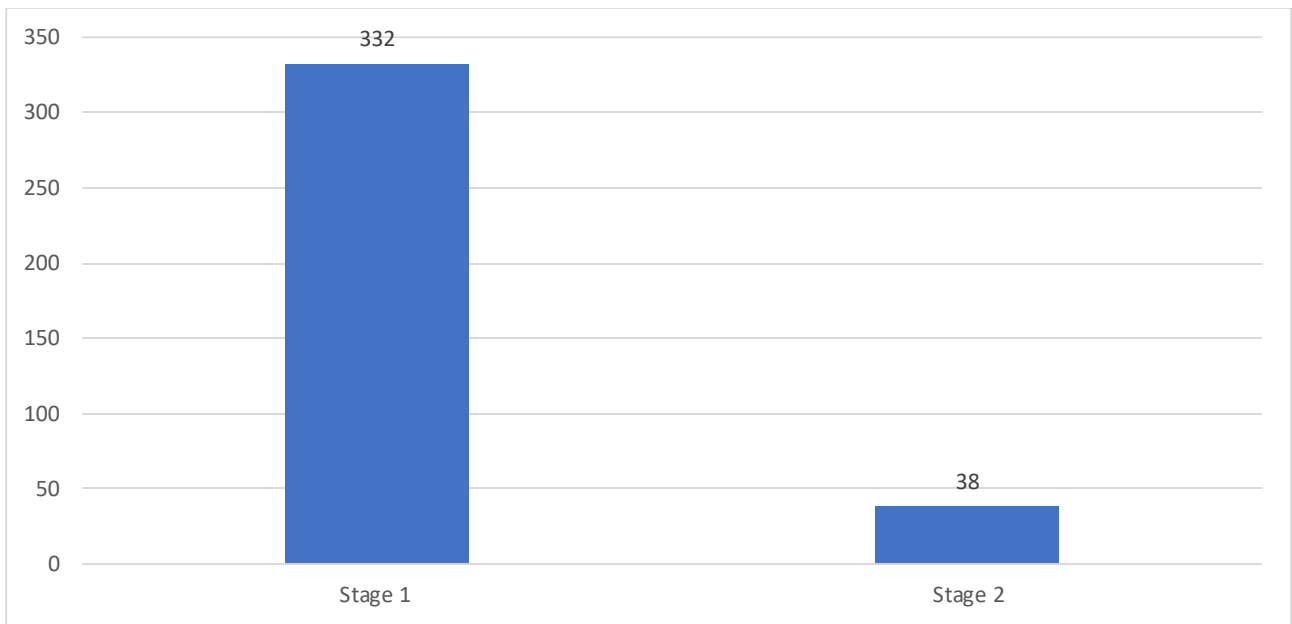


### Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport



- 112. Highway Asset Management received 28 corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from 23 in 2022/23. Themes included delays in responding to requests for service and dissatisfaction with the impact of highway works on individuals and their property.
- 113. Highway Network Management received 19 corporate complaints during 2023/24, an increase from 15 in 2022/23. Themes included delays in responding to requests for service and dissatisfaction with decisions in relation to variety of highways issues.

### Complaints by Stage

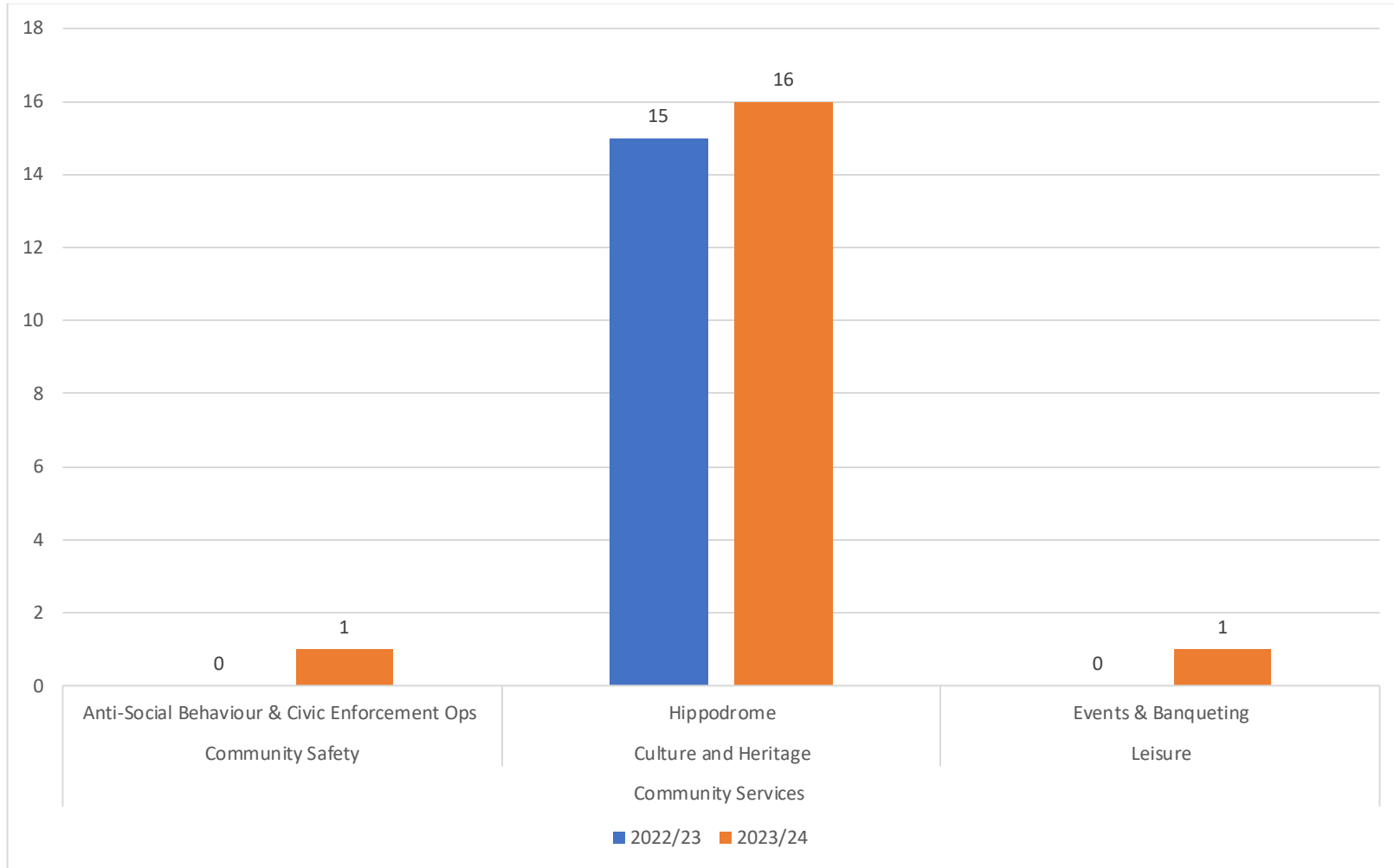


*N.B. Two complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2*

### Compliments by Service Area/Team

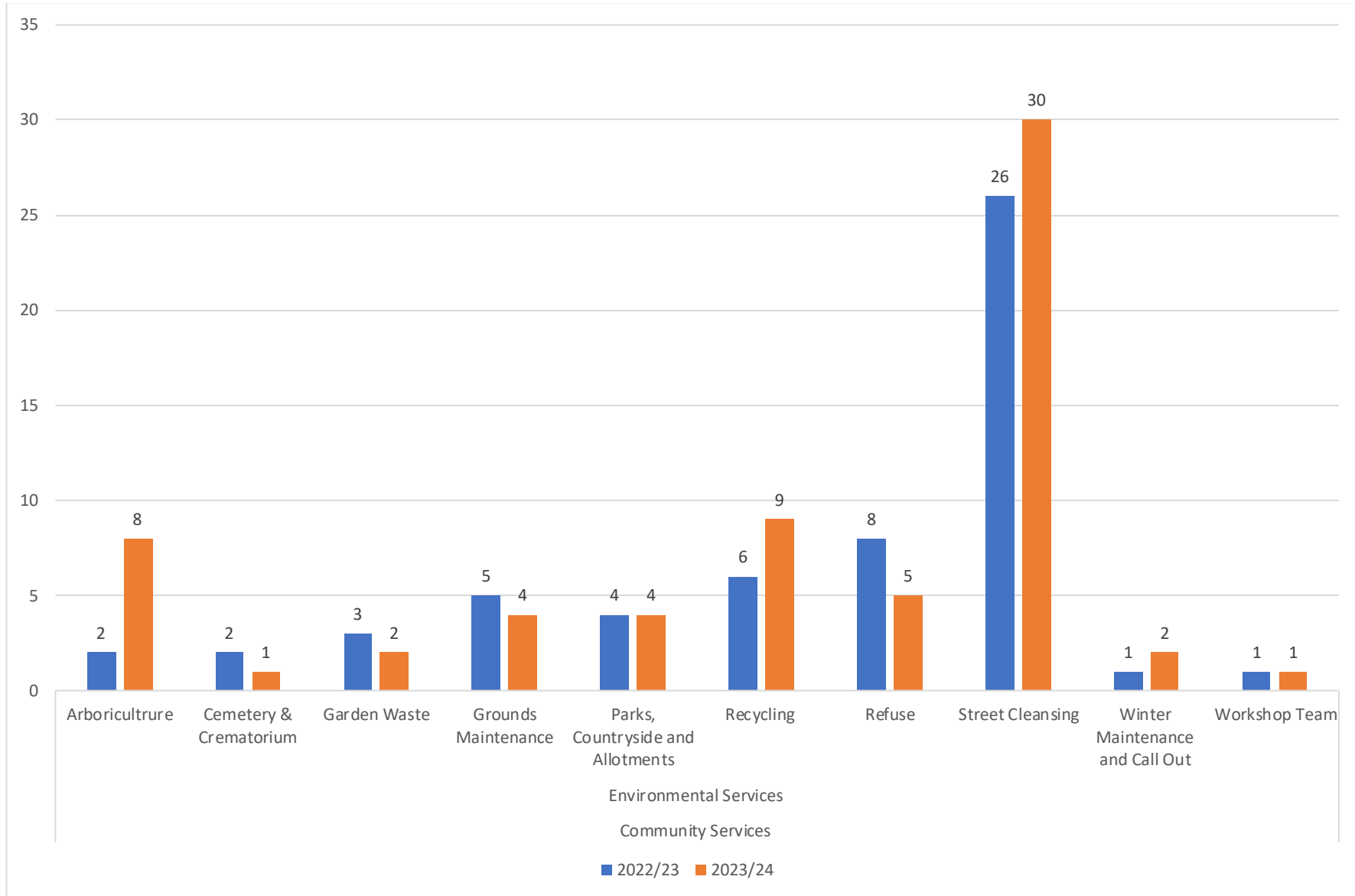
#### Community Services

114. Services received 88 corporate compliments during 2023/24.



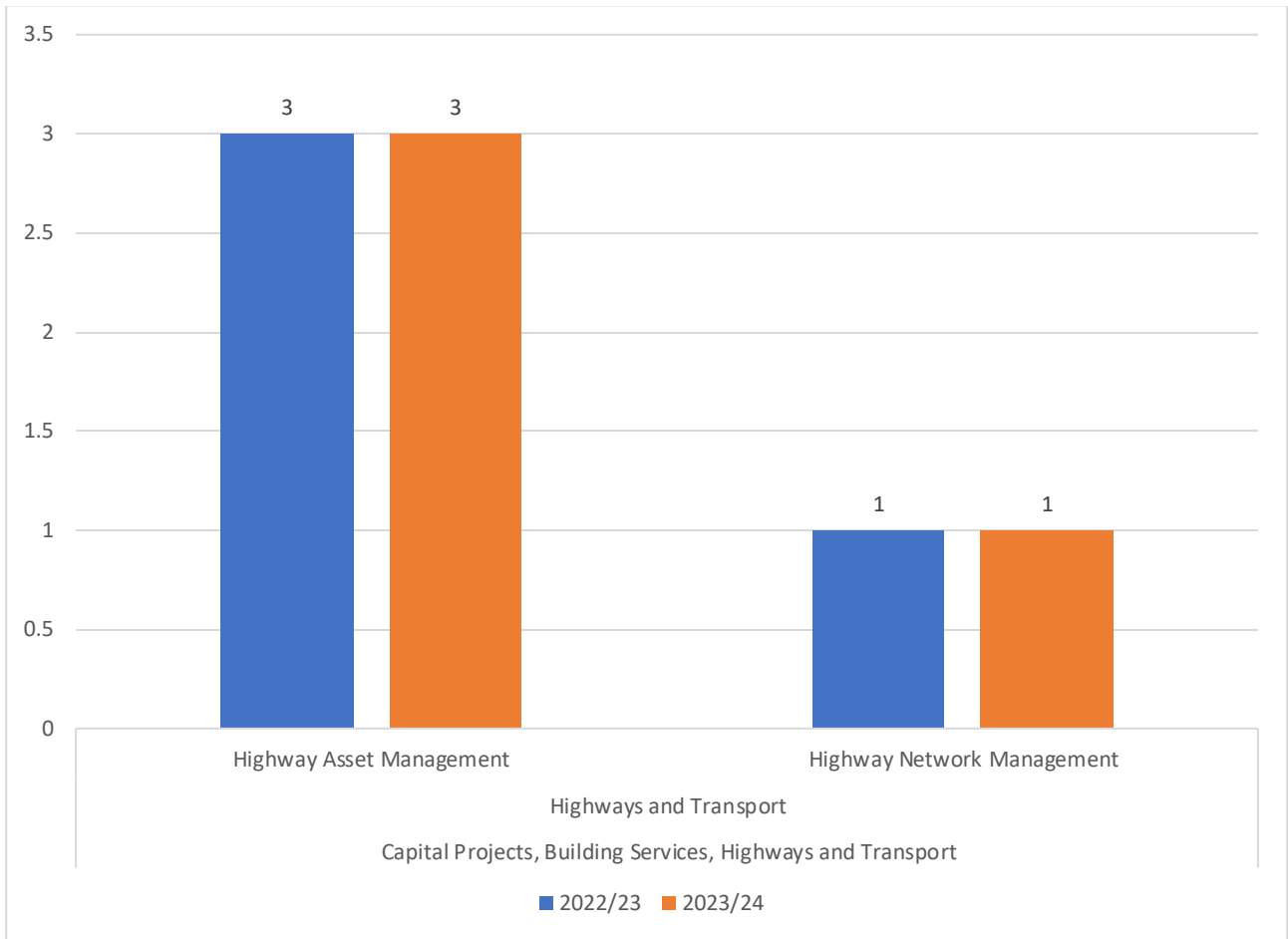
115. Anti-Social Behaviour and Civic Enforcement Ops received one corporate compliment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
116. Hippodrome received 16 corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from 15 in 2022/23. The most common themes were satisfaction with the level of customer service and support from staff and the quality of performances.
117. Events and Banqueting received one corporate compliment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

### Community Services continued...



118. Arboriculture received eight corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from two in 2022/23. The most common theme was satisfaction with tree works.
119. Cemetery & Crematorium received one corporate compliment during 2023/24, a decrease from two in 2022/23.
120. Garden Waste received two corporate compliments during 2023/24, a decrease from three in 2022/23.
121. Grounds Maintenance received four corporate compliments during 2023/24, a decrease from five in 2022/23.
122. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received four corporate compliments during 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.
123. Recycling received nine corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from six in 2022/23. Themes included satisfaction with the service provided and the attitude of staff.
124. Refuse received five corporate compliments during 2023/24, a decrease from eight in 2022/23. They all concerned the excellent service provided, including two in relation to assisted collections.
125. Street Cleansing received 30 corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from 26 in 2022/23. Themes included general satisfaction with the cleanliness of streets and satisfaction with the team's response to specific requests for service.
126. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received two corporate compliments during 2023/24, an increase from one in 2022/23.
127. Workshop Team received one corporate compliment during 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.

### Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport



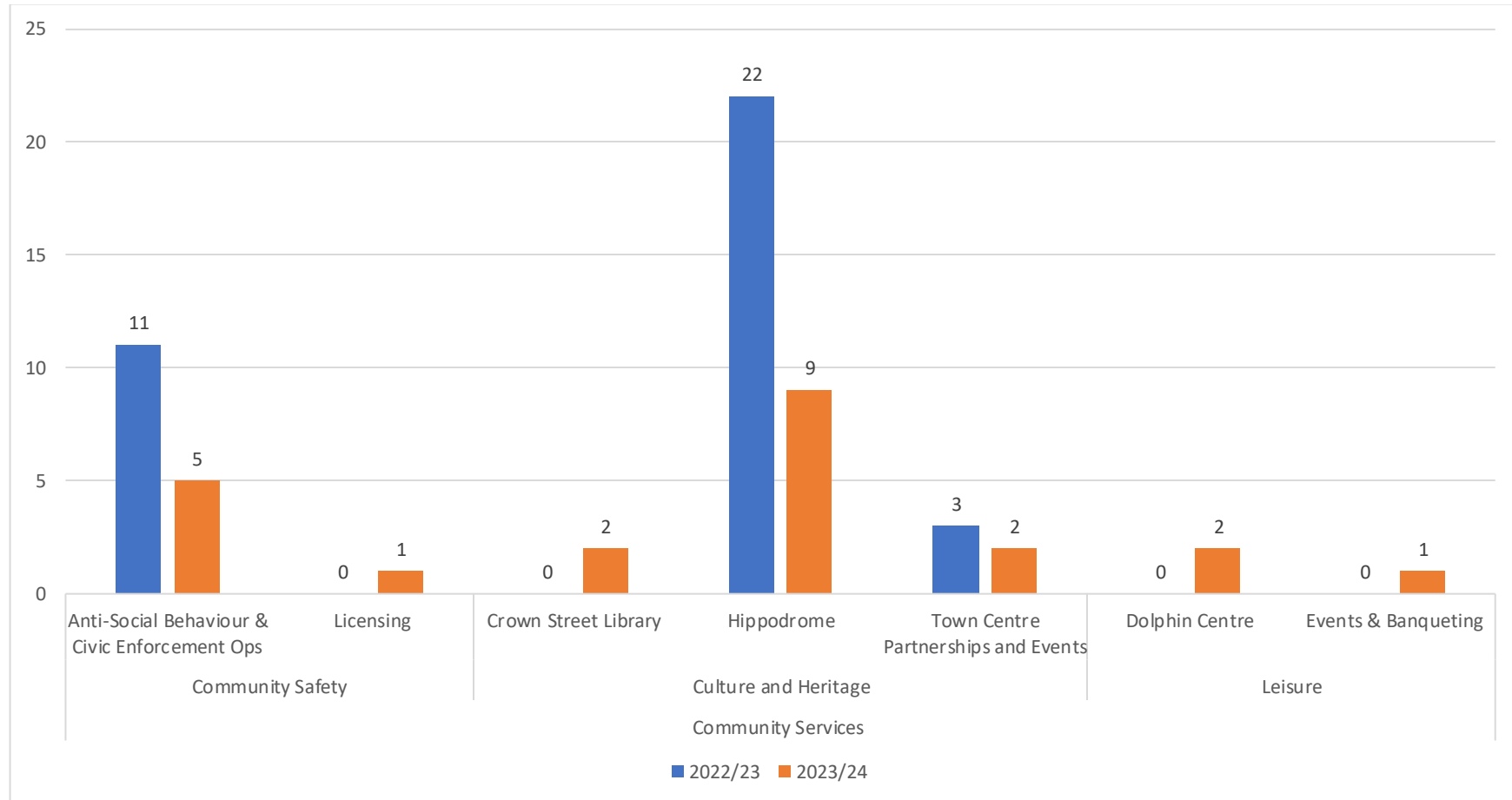
128. Highway Asset Management received three corporate compliments during 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.

129. Highway Network Management received one corporate compliment during 2023/24, the same number as in 2022/23.

### Comments by Service Area/Team

#### Community Services

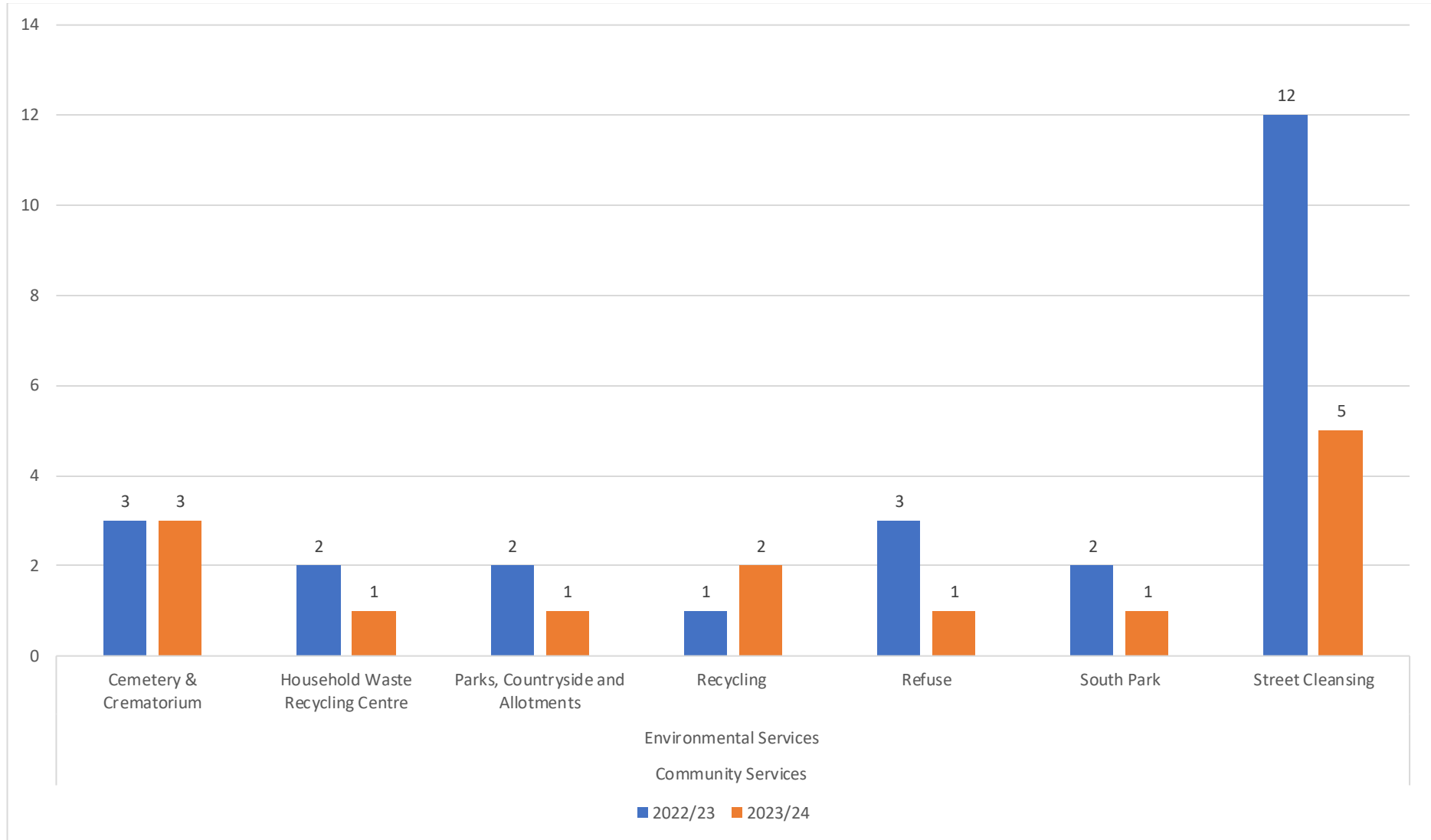
130. Services received 63 corporate comments during 2023/24.





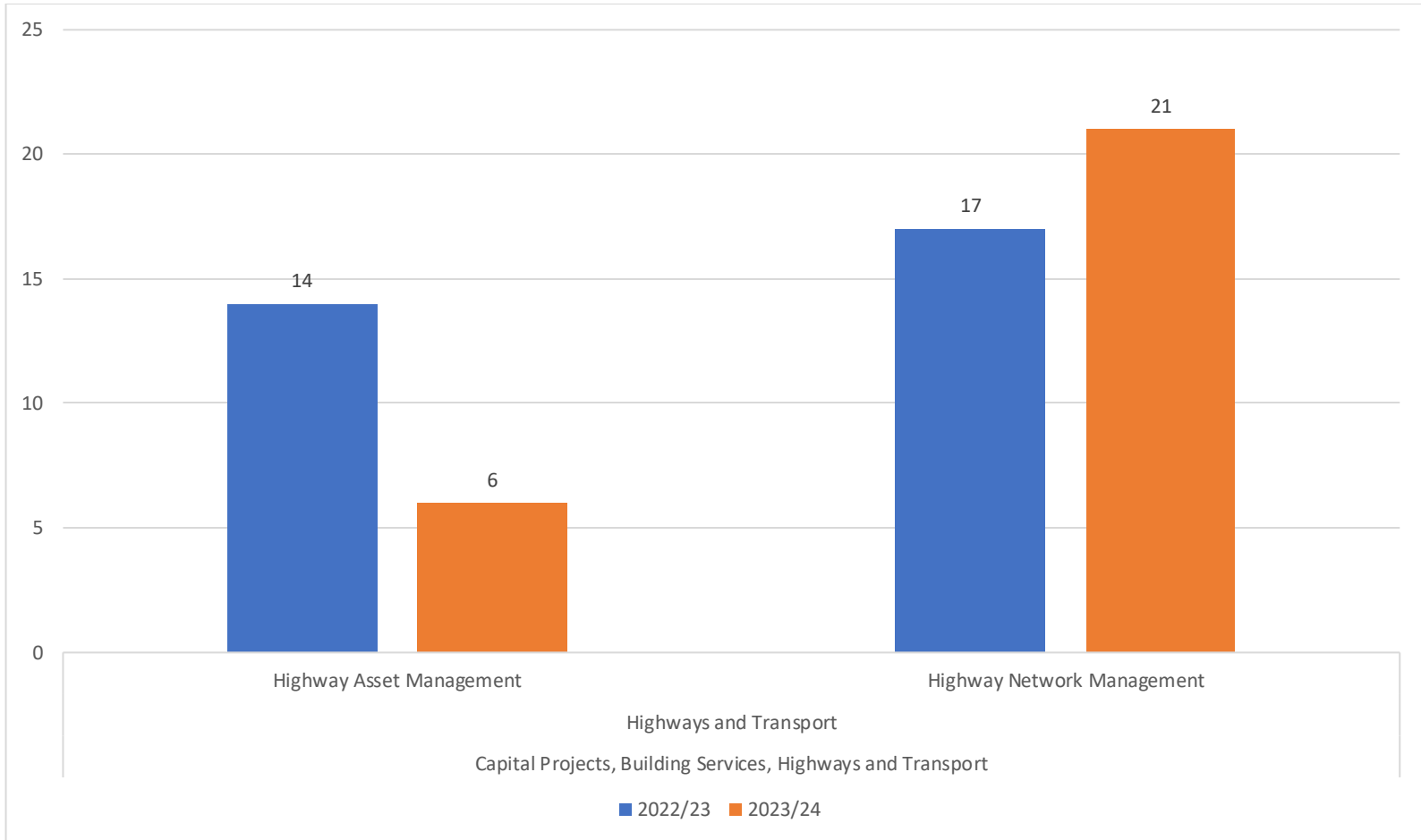
131. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received five corporate comments during 2023/24, a decrease from 11 in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes.
132. Licensing received one corporate comment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
133. Crown Street Library received two corporate comments during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
134. Hippodrome received nine corporate comments during 2023/24, a significant decrease from 22 in 2022/23. Dissatisfaction with quality of shows was the most common theme.
135. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received two corporate comments during 2023/24, a decrease from three in 2022/23.
136. The Dolphin Centre two corporate comments during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.
137. Events and Banqueting received one corporate comment during 2023/24, an increase from zero in 2022/23.

### Community Services continued...



138. Cemetery & Crematorium received three corporate comments during 2022/23, the same number as in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes.
139. HWRC received one corporate comment during 2023/24, a decrease from two in 2023/24.
140. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received one corporate comment during 2023/24, a decrease from two in 2023/24.
141. Recycling received two corporate comments during 2023/24, an increase from one in 2022/23.
142. Refuse received one corporate comment during 2023/24, a decrease from three in 2023/24.
143. South Park received one corporate comment during 2023/24, a decrease from two in 2023/24.
144. Street Cleansing received five corporate comments during 2023/24, a decrease from 12 in 2022/23. There were no identifiable themes.

### Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport



32. Highway Asset Management received six corporate comments during 2023/24, a decrease from 14 in 2022/23. The most common theme was people's dissatisfaction with road works.
33. Highway Network Management received 21 corporate comments during 2023/24, an increase from 17 in 2022/23. Common themes included people's dissatisfaction with the removal of the two hours free parking and changes to bus services.

### Complaints by Outcome

34. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2023/24.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
CCTV	0	1	4	3	0	1	9
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	4	2	0	0	6
Licensing	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Private Sector Housing	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Trading Standards/Animal Welfare	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Hippodrome	0	0	17	2	18	0	37
Arboriculture	0	0	8	1	1	0	10
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Parks, Countryside and Allotments	0	0	1	1	2	0	4
South Park	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Street Cleansing	0	0	13	0	10	0	23
Garden Waste	0	2	2	0	15	1	20
Recycling	0	9	19	3	33	1	65
Refuse	0	9	24	0	29	2	64
Winter Maintenance and Call Out	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
HWRC	0	0	2	0	2	0	4
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Events & Banqueting	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Highway Asset Management	0	1	15	2	7	1	26
Highway Network Management	1	0	12	0	4	0	17
Building Surveying	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>304</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
CCTV	0	1	1	0	0	2
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	3	0	0	3
Licensing	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hippodrome	0	3	0	0	0	3
Arboriculture	0	2	1	2	0	5
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	1	0	0	0	1
Parks, Countryside and Allotments	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	0	1	0	1
Street Cleansing	0	5	1	0	1	7
Garden Waste	0	1	0	0	1	2
Recycling	0	0	0	2	0	2
Refuse	1	0	0	3	0	4
Winter Maintenance and Call Out	0	0	0	1	0	1
Events & Banqueting	1	0	0	0	0	1
Highway Asset Management	0	3	0	1	0	4
Highway Network Management	0	4	2	1	1	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>46</b>

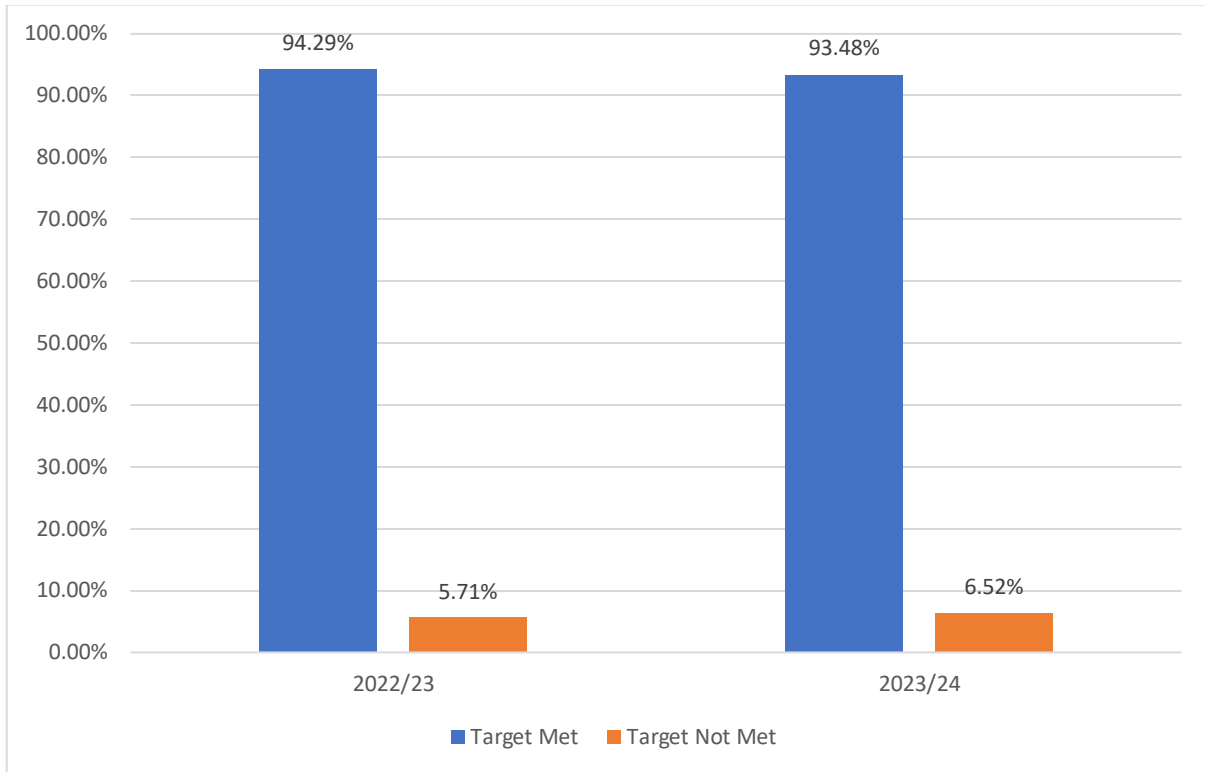
## Organisational Learning

35. 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, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2023/24.
36. Following a complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Operations, the team divert phone calls to someone who was available to answer.
37. Following a complaint for Arboriculture, officers were made aware of the fact cancer is a disability as defined by the Equalities Act 2010.
38. Following a complaint for Recycling regarding an assisted collection, both the refuse and recycling teams were reminded them of the standards expected by both the Council and the general public when carrying out there duties.
39. Following a complaint for Refuse the crews were reminded to return bins to the location they were placed out for collection.

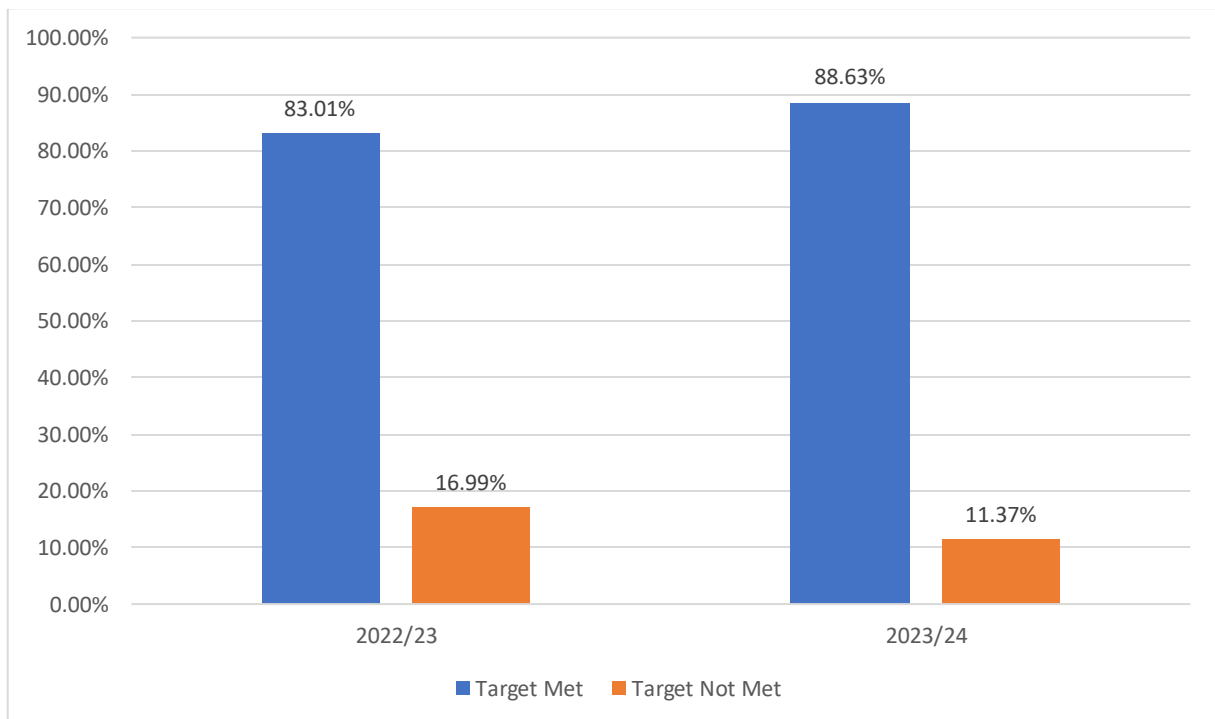
## Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

### Stage 1

#### Performance against Stage 1 complaint acknowledgement target (3 working days)



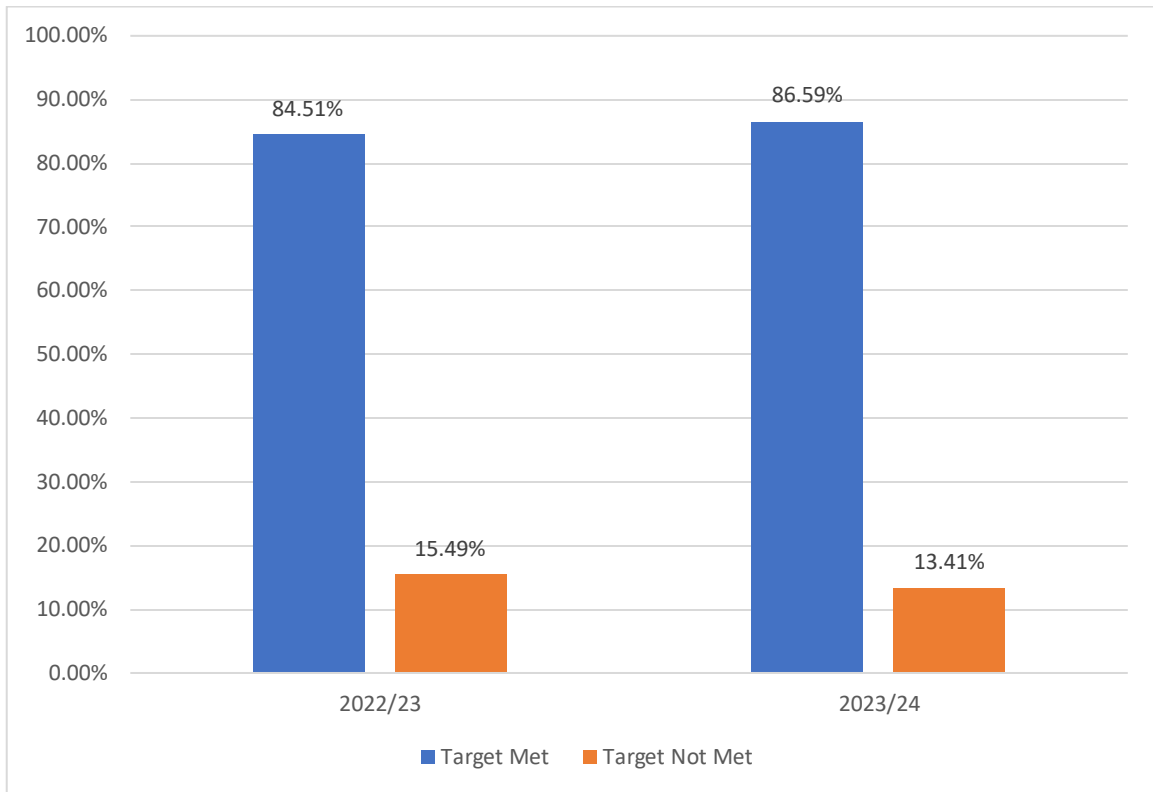
#### Performance against Stage 1 complaint response target (25 working days)



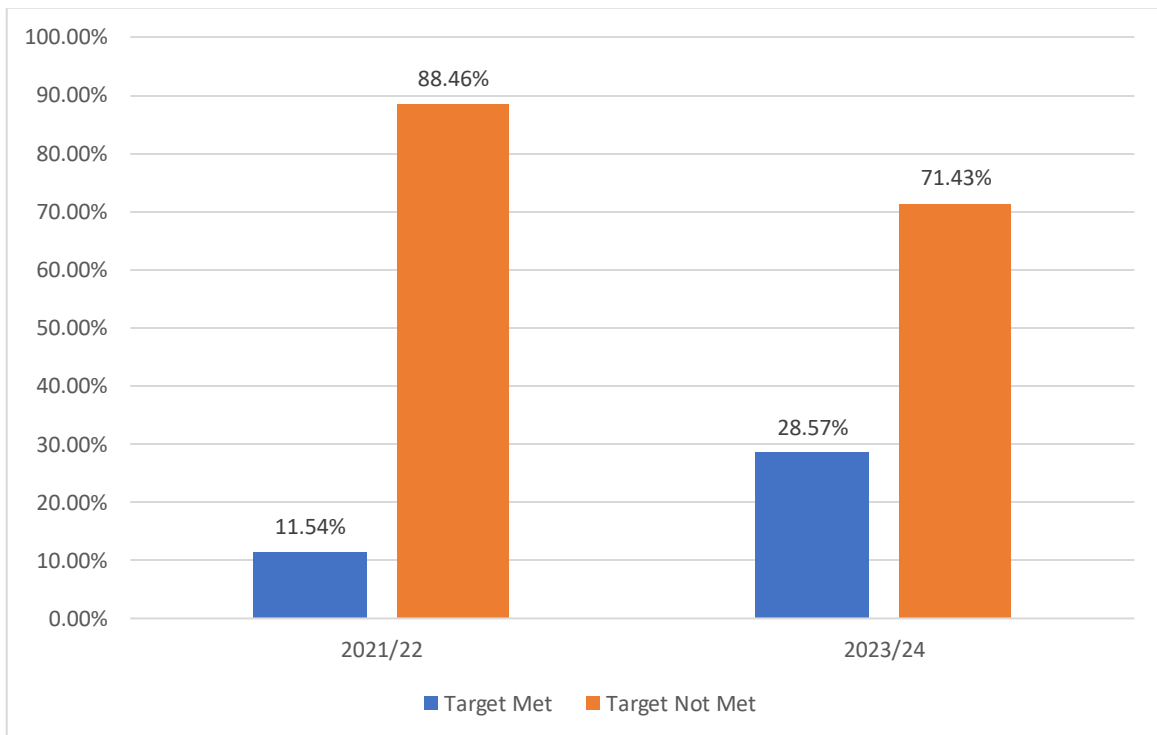


## Stage 2

### Performance against Stage 2 complaint acknowledgement target (3 working days)



### Performance against Stage 2 complaint response target (30 working days)



### **Further Recommendations**

40. Stage 1 Responding Officers should familiarise themselves with the new Stage 1 timescales in the complaints procedure (introduced by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code on 1 April 2024), and ensure they are complying with them prior to the Council's performance against them being monitored by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman from 1 April 2026.
41. The Complaints & Information Governance Team should ensure they are complying with the new Stage 2 timescales (introduced by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code on 1 April 2024), prior to the Council's performance against them being monitored by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman from 1 April 2026.

### **Performance against Local Performance Indicators**

42. In relation to corporate complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of upheld decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received two upheld decisions during 2023/24, and increase from one in 2022/23.
43. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 5 December 2023 and 10 September 2024 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).