

## COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor Norman Williams  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Jane Salt, Head of Customer Services  
**REPORT AUTHOR:** Alison Walton, Customer Relations Officer

### Summary and Recommendation:

In the first quarter of 2008/2009, 23 complaints were investigated through the Councils Comments, compliments and complaints procedure.

The total number of complaints investigated for the whole of 2007/08 was 121.  
56 of which were received in the corresponding 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.

Recommendations are:

1. Members to note the report and
2. Managers to be encouraged/reminded to record and feedback details of complaints and compliments received to the Customer Relations Officer for monitoring and reporting purposes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has had a written procedure for the resolution of customers' formal complaints since 1992 and has been revised several times since then. The procedure has very recently been revised to reflect the new arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct by Councillors, which took effect on 8 May 2008. The procedure is based on the Local Government Ombudsman's published recommendations for best practice on Local Authority complaints procedures.
- 1.2 In the first quarter of 2008/09 the Customer Relations Officers recorded 23 complaints, summary attached.
- 1.3 The report to this Committee for 2007/08 mentioned several ongoing Planning complaints under investigation by The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). We are still awaiting the outcomes of these investigations which will be reported to the department and this Committee in due course.

## 2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 Please note these figures do not include anonymous complaints, complaints about Councillors, complaints about a Policy and initial requests for a service.

2.2 Neither do they include complaints dealt with by the department which have not subsequently been reported to the Customer Relations Officer for monitoring and recording purposes.

2.2.1 Complaints relating to the Waste Prosecution are reported separately in order not to distort the figures. (Appendix B)

### **3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

3.1 To refine the process to ensure that all complaints are logged by the relevant department to enable thorough monitoring and accurate reporting.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 In order to achieve this we will be investigating the functionality within the new Customer Relations Management system to ensure that we can automatically record and monitor all comments, compliments and complaints received via e-mail and letter. The intention is that each department will then be able to record incoming correspondence and the system will automatically confirm receipt of e-mails and issue reminders when responses are due. The Customer Relations Officers will have access to this information for monitoring and recording purposes.

### **5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)**

5.1 Interim award of £400.00 recommended by Ombudsman re ongoing planning complaint..

### **6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 None

### **7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN**

7.1 The lessons learnt from comments, compliments and complaints should help CBC deliver the 2.5 objective in the Corporate Plan.

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Summary Report of April 08 – June 08 (1st quarter) Complaints Register  
Appendix B: Summary of Waste Prosecution Complaints

**List of Background Documents: None**  
**List of Consultees: Cllr N Williams**

### **CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES**

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Ensure complaints are properly dealt with
Impact on Sustainability	Ensure complaints are properly dealt with
Impact on Rural Proofing	Ensure that the whole borough is dealt with equally
Health and Safety Implications	Ensure complaints are properly dealt with
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Ensure complaints are dealt with equally and sensitively
Children and Young Persons Implications	Ensure complaints are properly dealt with
Human Rights Act Implications	Ensure complaints are properly dealt with

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision    NO

### SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED April- June 2008

<b>Dept</b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>	<b>Amount of Compensation Awarded £</b>	<b>Resolved at Stage 1</b>	<b>Resolved at Stage 2</b>	<b>Still ongoing</b>	<b>Within timescale/</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
Leisure and Env Services	<b>14</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>
Finance/ Concessionary Travel	<b>2</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Customer Services	<b>5</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Other	<b>1</b>	<b>Nil</b>					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>£195.00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>

Details of individual complaints are available upon request from Marissa Joyce or Alison Walton, Customer Relations Officers, The Copeland Centre, Catherine St, Whitehaven. tel 598525.

**Compliments received:** Beacon/TIC - services are excellent and numerous compliments about the Beacon redevelopment.  
Customer Services - thanks to the Customer Services Officers for going the extra mile to help/advise  
Open Spaces - how well Public Areas are maintained  
Customer Relations - thanks for the prompt and efficient service

Dept	Complaint	Amount of Compensation Awarded	Lessons learnt	Resolved at Stage 1	Resolved at Stage 2	Resolved at Stage 3	Within timescale	Satisfied
Enforcement	Aggressive attitude of Enforcement staff re Dog Fouling	FPN Cancelled £50.00	CSO attended Team meeting re Customer Service Commitment		√		Yes	Yes
Enforcement	Abusive officer		As above	√			No Enforcement Officer on Holiday	No
Enforcement	Attitude of Enforcement Officer	PCN Cancelled £70.00	As above		√		No Enforcement Officer on Holiday	No
Enforcement	Attitude of Enforcement Officer		As above	√			No Enforcement Officer on Holiday	No
Enforcement	Non enforcement of PCN re illegally parked bus on Scotch St.		As above					Ongoing
Open Spaces Crem	Ashes strewn in error without family present	Apology given fees of £55 waived.	PIT Team reviewing processes	√		.	Yes	No
Waste	Bulk collection paid for only half bags collected	Full refund £20	Improved system coming on line	√			Yes	Yes
Waste	Bins not always collected hit & miss service		Supervisor to monitor situation	√				Ongoing

Dept	Complaint	Amount of Compensation Awarded	Lessons learnt	Resolved at Stage 1	Resolved at Stage 2	Resolved at Stage 3	Within timescale	Satisfied
Waste	Waited over 4 weeks for a replacement lid			√			Yes	Yes
Waste	Didn't collect boxes when she tried to flag them down they slowed and when she got near the vehicle they sped away		Supervisor visited	√			Yes	Yes
Waste	Bin bag that was left today is not actually a bag as it has no sides		Millom Office sent new bags	√			Yes	Yes
Waste	Failure to supply Wheelie bins		Shortage from supplier	√			Yes	Yes
Waste	Failure to provide waste services through strike period		Apologised beyond our control	√			Yes	No
Env Health	Not happy how we dealt with his noise complaint							E-mailed back to say he's happy to leave it for now
Env Health	Sewage disposal at The Hill		J Cain liaising with developer					Ongoing
Revs & Bens	Incorrect calculation of Benefit on council tax			√			Yes	Yes

Dept	Complaint	Amount of Compensation Awarded	Lessons learnt	Resolved at Stage 1	Resolved at Stage 2	Resolved at Stage 3	Within timescale	Satisfied
Revs & Bens	Summoned for £14.00 during period when father died, No compassion		No case to answer as no alternative mail address	√			Yes	Probably not
Revs and Bens	Lost his pay slips and returned someone else's to him		CSO visited to apologise	√			Yes	No
Revs and Bens NNDR	Small Business Rate Withdrawn without consultation. Feels he is being victimised		Need to improve communication channels with Business community					On going
Revs and Bens NNDR	Requests not actioned, changes not explained		Need to improve communication channels with Business community		Explained the situation in full during interview 23/06		Yes	Yes
Finance/Insurance	Flooded in previous property forwarded from LGO		Multi agency investigation				Yes	Responsibility of Copeland Homes
Concessionary Travel	Requested Travel tokens unaware of Bus Pass option wants to swap		Improve quality of information to public	√			Yes	Probably not
Open Spaces	State of footpath between Wath Brow & Parkside		Forwarded to Capita for action	√				Ongoing



### Summary of Waste Prosecution Complaints

Method of contact	Number received	Answered	Anonymous
Email	261	258	3
Letter	27	12	15
Total	288	270	18