

COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

EXECUTIVE Councillor George Clements
MEMBER:
LEAD OFFICER: Jane Salt, Head of Customer Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Alison Walton Customer Relations Officers

Summary and Recommendation:

During July-September 2009, 23 complaints were investigated through the Councils Comments, compliments and complaints procedure, compared to 24 in the second quarter of 2008/2009, taking the total number from April to September to 47.

12 compliments were recorded during this period. However this does not include compliments received by the Beacon, as the Beacon actively invites visitors to make comments they are recorded outside the Covalent system.

Recommendations are:

- 1 Members to note the report
2. Officers to be advised and encouraged to continue using the Covalent Complaints module to record all comments, compliments and complaints received by their department as well as identifying root causes and lessons learnt , thus giving them the capability to see where there are any weaknesses that need to be addressed as well as building on the strengths.

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 is based on the Local Government Ombudsman's published recommendations for best practice on Local Authority complaints procedures.
The Council introduced the computerised complaints reporting module of Covalent in April 2009 which has improved the monitoring and reporting of all complaints including the informal stage (recorded as Stage 0).
- 1.2 During the period July- September 2009 there were 23 complaints recorded on Covalent, summary attached.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 Please note these figures do not include complaints about Councillors, complaints about a Policy and initial requests for a service. However they may now include anonymous complaints or comments from which we can learn something even if we can't progress it through our complaints procedure.
- 2.2 Neither do they include complaints dealt with by the department which have not subsequently been recorded on Covalent.

3. COMPLAINTS RECORDING PROCESS

- 3.1 Each manager nominated an administrator for their service and both received training on how to use the system to respond to comments, compliments and complaints relating to their department
- 3.2 Managers should be using the Covalent Complaints module as a tool to assist them with their Service plans identifying areas of improvement and potential training programs required for staff.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The system will continue to be updated with enhancements and new releases as they become available.
- 4.2 Reports training to enable Managers and Officers to produce reports from all the modules used in the Covalent system, not just Complaints, has been completed and will help to deliver 3.2.
- 4.3 The Customer Relations Officers are monitoring the system on a daily basis, providing on-going training, support and advice to Officers upon request.

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

- 5.1 Currently the only HR implication is the time spent recording, reporting and monitoring the Covalent system.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Evaluate the selected program against our requirements.

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 of complaints received July-September 09

List of Background Documents: None

List of Consultees: Cllr G Clements

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

OSC 2nd Quarter Report (July- Sept 2009)

Comments, Compliments & Complaints


Author: Alison Walton, Customer Relations Officer

Report Type: Complaints Report


Generated on: 30 September 2009

Complaint Type	2 nd Quarter	1 st Quarter	Total to date
Comments		6	6
Complaint	23	25	48
Compliment	14	12	26


Beacon and Tourism Complaint

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Complained that Moresby Hall leaflets not stocked at The Beacon. Complained that TIC staff did not direct visitors to Moresby Hall.	Stage 0		Letter to advise TIC stocks accommodation leaflets not Beacon. Letter also requests specific information relating to TIC staff accusation.	


Communications Complaint

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Officer conduct	Stage 0	Cllr **** has already spoken to Ian Curwen as Service Manager who had undertaken an initial investigation. Cllr **** said that his wife was still upset and wanted to make an official complaint. The letter of complaint from Mrs *** arrived on 24 September. I have acknowledged it. Because I am on holiday from 26 September-9 October, I am unable to meet the officer concerned until I get back.		

Customer Services Complaint





Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Complaining about the admin of setting Council tax and recovery action on new properties at Hollins Close Mirehouse.	Stage 1	STAGE 1 RESPONSE SENT 16/09/09		

Customer Services Compliment





Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Customer called to say that his mum had died last week and he is more than sure he	Stage 0			

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	had shredded his rent cheque. Cyndra dealt with the call from beginning to end, taking control of the whole query. He wanted Copeland to know that he had a pleasant experience in dealing with Customer Service, especially with the bad press we had received lately				

Development Control Compliment




Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Compliment letter from Lewis Francis Blackburn Solicitors re TPO at Byre House, Lamplugh, scanned letter attached	Stage 0			
	Compliment letter to Rachel Carrol re 36 Rottington Road, Millom	Stage 0			
	Compliment letter from Paul Browne Solicitors to various departments in the Council re Lakeland View, Nethertown	Stage 0			
	Whitehaven Marina letter thanking Nick Hayhurst & Tony Pomfret for their help	Stage 0			

Legal Services Complaint





Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Complaint about PCN received during the Food Festival, no one available from CBC over the weekend to discuss, Wardens attitude, lack of communication etc.	Stage 1	14/08 Miss *** e-mail a number of Officers requesting some info under a FOI, e-mail not acknowledged until 01/09 when Marissa provided the info. 01/09 she asked for further info which Marlene gave Marissa and she e-mailed Ms Rowley on 03/09.		
	--Following a request for information from the Council about ownership of land in Seascale and an indication the Council would serve a notice under s.215 TCPA 1990 because of the state of the land Mr ***replied by letter dated 14th July 2009 and raised various questions in his letter. Mr *** has now received the s.215 notice but not replies to his queries.	Stage 0	-- Receipt acknowledged 12/8/09 --		
	Complaint by Mr **** about noise and disturbance from an event held at the above Hotel on the 22nd and 23rd August 2009 and stating that the Council did not adequately deal with the event.	Stage 0		The Council could only have stopped the event from being held had the Police objected. The Police did not object. There may have been a breach of the temporary event notices if evidence exists that the event was held outside the hours of the temporary event notice.	The Police may object in the future to a similar event at the Hotel. The Licensing Authority will provide a copy of any TEN received from the Hotel so that they can liaise with the Police and possibly monitor the event as it happens to ensure that there is no noise which could disturb residents and if it does to consider taking immediate action under the Noise Act 1996.
	A complaint by Mr **** that the Council did not deal	Stage 0		Time limit for appealing against the	Where there is a delay in following up a matter in


Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	with his comments raised in a letter of the 14th July 2008 prior to serving formal notice on him, on the 3rd July 2009, under section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring him to cut overgrown grass on various amenity land at Seascale.			notice had already expired on the 03 August 2009. The time limit for complying with the notice however was extended from the 03 September 2009 until the 31 October 2009 to enable Mr *** to reconsider his position and undertake the work	excess of 3 months that the likely recipient of a statutory notice is given a further letter advising of the Council's intention to serve a notice.

Open Spaces Complaint




Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	complaint about enforcement removing his vehicle from Haig Enterprise park, alleging we didn't carry out sufficient investigations to determine ownership before taking the vehicle and returning it to wrong place.	Stage 3	Sent email and Spoke to T Capper to ask for update on arrangements for Appeal Panel, He has assured me he will sort it early next week		
	Customer came in to Catherine St reception 28/07 to make a formal complaint to Marissa, who had dealt with previous complaints he has made. He said he had a complaint about the attitude of the warden full details in notes and history.	Stage 1	Letter sent to customer, informing that officer is currently on annual leave and on the officer return on the 12/08 I shall investigate and respond		
	Installation of security cameras on property and parking problems over the Festival	Stage 0	Customer came into the office on Thursday 17th September and asked what progress there has been. I said I would update this record with the fact he had been in and email the department concerned.		




Open Spaces Compliment

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Dean of the University of Cumbria Dr Eunice A Simmons wrote on the 12 June 09 to tank the Parks department for its wonderful and kind support and assistance by the parks trainees with the garden project at the Chelsea Flower show this year, the garden achieving an RHS silver award. Appreciation to the department was also received from the venerable Peter J Ballard, Chair of Directors	Stage 0			
	Email (30/6/09) Compliment from cllr P Sharkey - appreciation for the work undertaken by the parks department " I know the Parks are very busy, the work that your team are doing is quite visible around Copeland Well Done to you all" Also " We weren't aware that RNEC had requested bulbs from the Parks Dept when we asked for freebies of bulbs. Thank you for responding so kindly with the offer which we accepted. I had in mind that we would plant at the gateways"	Stage 0			
	Moresby WI wish to thank the Parks Team for there work, in particular for Toni Magean attending and given a presentation of the parks department works and an opportunity to visit Beckgreen Nursery	Stage 0			
	Egremont Town Council would like	Stage 0			


Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	<p>to congratulate everyone in the Nursery & those involved in producing the hanging baskets which are on display around our town, the blooms are fantastic and great credit must go to you all for the planning, planting and careful nurturing of these plants to be able to produce the beautiful floral display throughout Copeland. < Well done</p> <p>Email dated 24/7/09</p>				
	<p>Thank you for your reply to my letter and for reacting to my concerns re. grass cutting by contacting the Highways Agency and Cumbria County Council. Improvement in coordinating litter picking and grass cutting can only have a beneficial effect for the appearance of roadsides in West Cumbria. Many thanks, Will Sellar.</p> <p>Email 24/7/09</p>	Stage 0			

Revenues and Benefits Complaint



Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	We wrote to Customer explaining we had paid 2 HB cheques direct to his tenant. He would like the money reimbursed to him as she is in rent arrears and us to recover it from her.	Stage 1	reply issued 23 July 09	have written to landlord explaining why HB cannot be paid again under the legislation, and that he can pursue rent from tenant via the courts	Reminder to staff to ensure all periods on academy are updated so that this does not occur again
	Customer wanted to appeal refusal of backdate request on the basis that he had been informed we would have lost the previous claim forms he submitted. a search has identified that we did receive the claims and decisions were made. Information we now have shows that the customer would be entitled to benefit so we can revise the decisions on those two claims and pay benefit.	Stage 0		Letter issued explaining that claims were received and decided, but that new evidence means decision can be revised and benefit awarded	Claims must be indexed to the reference as soon as decided. Copeland Direct need to be made aware of alternate searches using property references
	Customer would like to complain about recovery he has been getting visits from the bailiffs looking for the previous owner of his property he feels that as he is paying his council tax we should have informed the bailiffs that the previous owner is no longer at that address instructions: customer would like a call back today reported to customer service officer: lorna richardson	Stage 0	Alison, Pam has spoken to Customer (note went on account 13:50) has this been received afterwards? Does he still want someone to call him back? Basically he had opened mail not addressed to him! Theresa (E-mail) AW rang Customer 2.45pm 6/9/09 he is very unhappy and stressed with the situation he has found himself in, and as he suffers from stress induced Epilepsy he is not feeling very well. He spoke to a Recovery Officer and did not "appreciate being spoken down to and in a patronising manner" He wants to know why the Bailiffs were dispatched to his property when we were fully aware the debtor was not residing there. He feels its passed the Apology	Looking at the process for sending Bailiffs	





Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
			stage and wants someone to investigate the matter. AW apologised several times but he is insistent that we look at our processes as he feels we are putting innocent persons under unnecessary stress as well as wasting public money.		
	Disputing the calculations used in establishing entitlement to Council Tax Benefit	Stage 0	Complaint letter drafted and will be issued with CTB letter and revised bills on 19th August	Ben claim has been reassessed and the Investment Bond disregarded. The 2 ISA balances have been amended to the correct amounts. Customer still does not qualify prior to June 08, but a further credit of £1500 has been credited to CT account. No evidence on file that Mr's ISA had been declared, which customer disputes, so may be further response re that.	Advice to staff re disregard of Investment Bonds with element of Life insurance
	Customer has complained about the attitude of a staff member towards his wife, when she rang up to discuss their outstanding account, His manner was not acceptable and has upset his wife who has recently been in Hospital.	Stage 0	Customer has subsequently spoken to the Recovery section and arranged payments.		
	Customer is unhappy with the way his claim has been dealt with	Stage 0			



Revenues and Benefits Compliment

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Letter received on 12.8.09. Customer was happy with the help given by Denise Lewthwaite	Stage 0			


Waste Services Complaint

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Seascale beach has had a clean up. but why oh why is the rubbish still waiting to be collected off the beach come on get it cleared away????? we have found a lot of nests on the beach with eggs in, so why are vehicles allowed on the beach while the birds are nesting, i am wondering how many nests have been destroyed by these vehicles going up and down. the birds don't stand a chance	Stage 0	e-mail to Janice to arrange for update to be done		
	Customer rang on 6 July to ask Marissa Joyce who she should complain to about the introduction of wheelie bins in rural areas. She said its "another hair brained Council scheme which won't work as it hasn't been thought out or the views of the people affected taken into consideration. Marissa told her Janice Carrol she said she's had previous dealings with her and wanted someone at the top so Marissa told her Keith Parker. She asked if her call would be logged and Marissa told her it would	Stage 0	Customer rang and spoke to Marissa who e-mailed all concerned with details (see attached document for full details)		

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	even if she didn't go ahead and make the complaint to Keith.				
	Customer was granted a larger bin almost 1 month ago and still has not received it. she has made numerous phone calls to customer service to no avail even though she has been promised on numerous occasions. See attached email Jess resolved, when she spoke to the crew	Stage 0	complaint closed but email sent to Janice Carrol and Joanne Fisher for information		
	Rubbish has not been collected for over two and half weeks and it's becoming a problem on the site. See email attached	Stage 0		customer has had their collection pick up (Sandra arranged for it to be collected) Someone from Waste was going to call out and see the owner of the site	
	Bins missed continuous (Wednesday collection) This weeks black bin not collected. Geoff says crew have been 3 time since Wednesday and can only try again on Monday	Stage 0			
	New rubbish collection arrangements for Corney Area	Stage 0	<p>Reply sent 31 July 09</p> <p>I am aware we have had a number of delivery problems and are currently concentrating on getting the additional bins not delivered out rather than collecting in the unwanted brown bins, please bear with us we will collect those when we can. The Council's GIS (geographical information system) or electronic property mapping system was used in planning the bin delivery and it appears to be missing vital details where a property is divided into several units such as barn conversions. This missing information has led to fewer bins than properties being delivered at a number of locations and we are working to rectify this situation as quickly as possible.</p>	E-mail reply sent.	Communication problem already acknowledged by the Waste team.

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Contemporary menswear called to say that county had cleaned the drains on king street and left a slimy, mucky mess	Stage 0			
	Customer is complaining that the refuse crew reversed into his private driveway to collect refuse from his and another 3 properties and in doing so the vehicle is causing damage to the driveway. His initial contact was regarded as a routine service query but due to there being a delay in responding has escalated to a formal complaint.	Stage 0		Crew instructed to collect from outside property and not use driveway. Complainant advised of claims procedure should he wish to claim for damage caused to property.	Communications between team to be reviewed. Nominated supervisors for service areas to be agreed.

Waste Services Compliment

Current Status Graphic	Description	Complaint Current Stage	Latest Note	Remedy	Lessons Learnt
	Compliment the refuse collection team on the Midgey route this week. They collected the "wheelie bins" from the properties and returned them all to the places they had been collected from; this is not the usual routine. It was noticeable that the crew took pride in their work and I would like this to be acknowledged	Stage 0			