



Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Monday 25 November 2013
Time 9.30 am
Venue Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham

Business

Part A

Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend. Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's agreement.

1. Apologies.
2. Substitute Members.
3. Minutes of the meeting held 14 October 2013. (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any.
5. Report on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Quarter 2 2013/14 (Pages 7 - 10)
Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
6. Review of Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), Council Plan and Service Plans (Pages 11 - 24)
Report of the Assistant Chief Executive.
7. Quarter 2 2013/14 Performance Management Report (Pages 25 - 40)
Report of the Assistant Chief Executive.
8. Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions - Quarter 2 Report 2013/14 (Pages 41 - 62)
Report of the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services.
9. Children and Adults Services Annual Representations Report 2012/13 (Pages 63 - 106)
Report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services.

10. Quarter 2 Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2013/14
(Pages 107 - 120)
 - (i) Report of the Assistant Chief Executive.
 - (ii) Report of the Corporate Director Resources.
11. Customer First Strategy - Proposed Corporate Issues OSC Task and Finish Group (Pages 121 - 130)
Joint Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services.
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
15 November 2013

To: **The Members of the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor J Lethbridge (Chairman)
Councillor K Henig (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors J Alvey, J Armstrong, L Armstrong, G Bleasdale, J Buckham, P Crathorne, J Hillary, E Huntington, N Martin, P McCourt, E Murphy, A Shield, T Smith, P Stradling, L Taylor, A Turner, M Wilkes, S Wilson and R Young

Contact: Lucy Stephenson

Tel: 03000 269712

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE ISSUES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 14 October 2013 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Lethbridge (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Alvey, J Armstrong, L Armstrong, P Crathorne, K Henig (Vice-Chairman), E Huntington, N Martin, P McCourt, A Shield, T Smith, L Taylor, M Wilkes, S Wilson and R Young

Also Present:

Councillors J Blakey, J Shuttleworth and R Todd

1 Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Buckham and P Stradling.

2 Substitute Members.

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held 19 September 2013.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record with the amendment to paragraph 10 of page 2 so that it reads:

Councillor Wilkes commented that he did not feel that this option gave sufficient time for members to go back to their parties to discuss in more depth.

Matters Arising

- (i) Members were advised that a meeting had been scheduled to take place on 15 October to discuss the Budget Consultation. Nominations were invited.
- (ii) Information as requested at the last meeting relating to appraisals and sickness absence would be picked up in the Quarter 2 Performance Report at the next meeting.
- (iii) The terms of reference for a task and finish group focussing on Customer Services would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.
- (iv) Complaints Feedback - to be brought to the next meeting.
- (v) Information as requested by Councillor Wilkes at the previous meeting regarding the capital programme had been provided.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any.

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

5 Medium Term Financial Plan (4), Council Plan and Service Plans 2014/15 - 2016/17

The committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Resources which provided an update on the 2014/15 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan focussing upon the impact of the 2015/16 Spending Round and 2014/15 and 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) in referring to the Executive Summary of the report advised that following the last report the level of savings the Council needs to deliver had increased significantly. It was noted that in MTFP1 the council had forecast that £123m of savings would be required over a four year period. Savings of £222m were now expected to be required for the 2011-2017 period, £20m higher than the sum previously reported to Cabinet in July,

Further details were reported in relation to employee post reductions and the impact upon the MTFP Redundancy and Early Retirement Reserve.

Moving on the report further provided detail on the 2015/16 Spending Round published on 26 June 2013 and subsequent 2014/15 and 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation. This consultation detailed average real term funding reductions of 15% in 2015/16 rather than 10% as had been initially anticipated.

Paragraph 14 onwards detailed the key areas that would be impacted upon including Revenue Support Grant, Education Services Grant, New Homes Bonus and Social Care Funding. The report further detailed information as to how the settlement would impact upon future years spending.

The Head of Finance then went on to detail the MTFP4 impact and adjustments which had been made following the Finance Settlement Consultation and Spending Round including adjustments to Town and Parish Council RSG, Business Rate/Top Up Grant RPI increases and the New Homes Bonus. In conclusion he advised that following adjustments and including the £15m savings target, the shortfall across the MTFP4 timeframe totalled £63.068m.

He further advised that having taken into account the new savings targets as identified, the total level of savings required by the council for the six year period 2011/2017 was £222M, 51% of which being achieved by the end of 2013/14.

The Head of Planning and Performance then went on to advise on the forthcoming budget consultation and provided detail regarding the review and refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Council Plan and Service Plans, and preparation of equality impact assessments in relation to MTFP savings.

Councillor Wilkes then raised a query regarding Town and Parish Councils and whether anything could be done to encourage transparency within parish councils in advertising their accounts and providing justification for any increases in their precept. He therefore suggested that parish councils should be asked to provide copies of their accounts to Cabinet.

The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) advised that legislation was currently being worked upon which would in future, if passed, prevent parish and town councils from imposing high increases, however this would only apply to those with a budget over a certain amount. It was suggested that further discussions regarding this matter should take place with the Durham Association Parish and Town Council Executive Officer.

Councillor Martin asked for some clarification regarding education services grants and whether the money would be given back to schools. In response the Head of Finance advised that funding would be partially split between the council and academies. In response Councillor Martin added that it was therefore important that the council provided attractive services to schools.

Further discussion ensued regarding the New Homes Bonus and how this would be administered by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The Head of Finance advised that the council would do everything possible to ensure that money from the LEP was brought back in to the council. He did however report that at this stage there were a number of unknowns regarding this funding and how it could be utilised.

Councillor Wilkes with reference to the New Homes Bonus queried why the council factored no new house builds in the MTFP, as new properties would increase the council's tax base and generate more income for the council. In response the Head of Finance advised that the council brought in £176M per year through council tax. However it was reported that the council did not build in any assumptions in to the MTFP, due to issues such as land banking and slow moving land sales.

Further discussion ensued regarding the amount of money which had been generated through new homes and deducted from savings in previous years. Councillor Wilkes asked whether details could be provided as to how much additional council tax income had been collected from the increased number of homes excluding any government deductions.

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the report be noted.

6 Overview of Building and Facilities Maintenance, Direct Services:

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services which provided an overview of Buildings and Facilities Maintenance (BFM): its budget, functions, achieved savings and value for money activities to date (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

The presentation further detailed key areas are of business, examples of work, performance and benchmarking. Particular reference was made to a independent report for Durham Housing commissioned by Savills, which confirmed that the service was a 'high

performing maintenance service' and furthermore that they believed that the DLO offered value for money.

The Corporate Director Neighbourhoods further went on to discuss external contracts and income. In addition he advised that building services had returned an average of £1.5M to the Council in each of the last 2 years which was utilised to support other council services across the MTFP period.

Moving on the presentation went into further detail regarding the workforce and the work that had been undertaken to ensure flexibility within the service alongside demonstrating value for money. He further advised that there were strong links to other departments within Neighbourhoods Services and across the council and these were crucial to business.

In conclusion the Corporate Director provided a summary which highlighted the following:

- Building services return a surplus for the Council which is reinvested in other activity.
- Operates under a mixed economy, where 57% of suppliers and services were external in 2012/13.
- Benchmarking data showed that service was operating well, however continued to look for cost reductions.

Discussion then ensued regarding sickness absence and it was noted that there was an error within the slides. The absences due to accidents had been reduced by 78% not 445% as stated. The Head of Direct Services advised that in 2010/11, 1415 days had been lost in comparison to 318 days in 2011/12.

Councillor L Armstrong commented that the service may be able to look at further income generation from securing external contract works for other authorities who had faced cuts in their services. In response the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services advised the service were currently talking to other authorities to assess need, if any, including Gateshead Council. Further assessment of any income opportunities would be made.

Moving on to discuss benchmarking and apprenticeships Councillor Smith asked why benchmarking was being done against Gateshead. In addition, queried how many apprentices were employed by the service. In response the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services advised that the service benchmarked against those authorities within the same family group across the Country and not just against Gateshead. In addition he advised that there were approximately 8-12 apprentices going forward within the service.

Councillor Martin then raised a query with regard to the profit margins of the service and asked how much of the income generated was from outside of the council. In response the Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services advised that he could not provide details at the meeting but could however confirm that there were some significant contracts held. In addition he advised that a lot of the work carried out by the service was in relation to capital works which generated significant revenue in turn producing genuine surpluses. Councillor Martin therefore requested that detail on these figures be provided to members as he felt that this was important in determining the MTFP and what support could be offered to services in the council, from the income generated.

Councillor Wilkes queried whether there were any plans to outsource and further services in the future. The Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services advised that the service was operating within a mixed economy and goalposts were frequently changing, however the service would be continually reviewed to ensure value for money was being achieved.

With reference to building assets, Councillor Wilkes commented that the council was anticipating to make £300k savings from their 705 buildings. However he did not feel that this target was high enough and further rationalisation of the council's property portfolio should be made, to maximise savings in these areas.

The Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services advised that the council remained absolutely focused upon achieving savings and assured that the council were committed to achieving those savings identified.

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the report be noted.

7 Update on the Recommendations of the Light Touch Review of Telephone Calls:

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which updated Members on the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress made against the recommendations from the Light Touch Review of Telephone Calls carried out in 2012 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Projects and Business Services referred to Appendix 3 of the report and provided an update in respect of recommendations and actions. He advised that in relation to recommendation (h) call centres had now been rationalised and were now operating out of two sites. In addition the service were looking at the call centres outside of the contact centres, as many services advertised numbers to the public. He therefore advised that this would be reviewed across the Council.

He further provided an update in respect of the introduction of a workforce management system and the shutdown of legacy switchboard numbers. In addition further work was being undertaken in respect of improving council correspondence in respect of Debtors, Revenue and Benefits to ensure that they are simplified for the customer.

Councillor Armstrong commented that it was appreciated that this issue was ongoing and that the move to dealing with customers at first point of contact had impacted upon the service and its waiting times.

Councillor Smith queried whether any consideration had been given to extending the opening hours of the call centre to allow more flexibility to customers who worked. In response the Head of Projects and Business Services advised that this had been considered when it was forecast that there would be a need, however he did refer to the Out of Hours telephone service to which calls were directed to after 5.00 p.m. for emergencies.

Councillor Wilkes commented that he had encountered a problem with a level 2 complaint he had lodged in July 2013 and the time taken to process. He commented that the complaint had still not as yet been addressed and asked that an explanation be provided as to why there was a delay in dealing with level 2 complaints. The Head of Projects and Business Services advised that there was a significant complaints backlog, however the situation was improving. He further advised that staff had been interviewed last week and was confident that experienced staff had been sourced.

Councillor Lethbridge commented that an overview of complaints performance was on the agenda for the following meeting.

Moving on to discuss call volume Councillor L Armstrong made reference to Rotherham Council and their contract with BT for managing their call centre. In response the Head of Projects and Business Services advised that he was not fully aware of the details of the Rotherham contract with BT. He did however comment that it was very difficult for the service to measure performance and benchmark against other authorities due to the varying nature of how calls were managed.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

**Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

25 November 2013

**Report on the Council's use of powers
under the Regulation of Investigatory
Powers Act 2000 – Quarter 2 2013/14**



**Report of Colette Longbottom, Head of Legal and Democratic
Services**

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform members about the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA') during the period 1 July 2013 until 30 September 2013 to ensure that it is being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

Background

2. As members are aware, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) enables local authorities to carry out certain types of surveillance activity provided that specified procedures are followed. The Local Authority is able to rely upon the information obtained from those surveillance activities within court proceedings.
3. This report gives details of RIPA applications that have been authorised during the period 1 July 2013 to 30 September 2013.

Quarter 2 Activity

4. During the reporting quarter there have been 2 new RIPA directed surveillance authorisations. One authorisation related to a Fraud and Error Team investigation regarding Council Tax/Housing Benefit fraud and the other authorisation related to an operation conducted by Trading Standards into underage sales of alcohol.

5. The authorisations were approved the Magistrate on 19 July 2013 and 2 August 2013 respectively and there were no difficulties or issues raised by the Magistrate in approving the applications.
6. The Council's Senior Responsible Officer is satisfied that the Council's use of its powers under RIPA during the quarter is consistent with the Council's policy and the policy remains fit for purpose.

Recommendations and Reasons

7. It is recommended that members receive the quarterly report on the Council's use of RIPA for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 September 2013 and resolve that it is being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

Background Papers

None

Contact: Clare Burrows

Tel: 03000 260548

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance: None

Staffing: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Accommodation: None

Crime and Disorder: The appropriate use of an oversight of RIPA powers will enable the Council to provide evidence to support appropriate prosecutions and tackle crime.

Human Rights: None

Consultation: None

Procurement: None

Disability Discrimination Act: None

Legal Implications: None

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**Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

25 November 2013

Cabinet

20 November 2013

**Review of Sustainable Community
Strategy (SCS), Council Plan and Service
Plans**



**Report of Corporate Management Team
Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
Councillor Simon Henig, Leader**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Council Plan and agree the draft objectives and outcomes for each priority theme. The report also includes feedback from the County Durham Partnership (CDP) Away Day and Members seminars and next steps.

Background

2. The SCS is the single strategic plan for the county that takes account of the needs, views and aspirations of people living and working in the county. It is produced by the Council with partners sets out the most important issues that we need to come together to address. Our last SCS was developed in 2010. It is reviewed every three to four years to ensure that it remains relevant, fresh and a valuable source of information and guidance for everyone working to improve outcomes for people in County Durham.
3. Outcomes contained within the 2010 SCS have been amended over the last three years in line with changes in Government policy through the annual Council Plan process. For instance, the move away from the Every Child Matters outcomes and the requirement for local authorities and partners to develop Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies.
4. The Council Plan details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the SCS, together with its own improvement agenda. It has been amended this year to cover a three year timeframe in line with the council's Medium-Term Financial Plan and sets out how we will deliver our corporate priorities and the key actions we will take to support of the longer term goals set out in the SCS.
5. Over the past month key groups and partnerships have been asked for their views on:

- a. The draft objectives and outcomes for each priority theme;
- b. How partners will work together on issues which cut across a number of our priority themes;
- c. The proposed future partnership approach.

Draft objectives and outcomes

6. Overall it is recommended that the 5 key altogether better themes remain unchanged in line with the review of the Altogether Better Durham vision of the County Durham Partnership. It is also recommended that the altogether better council theme is retained for the Council Plan giving 6 key themes.
 - I. Altogether Wealthier
 - II. Altogether better for children and young people
 - III. Altogether healthier
 - IV. Altogether safer
 - V. Altogether greener
 - VI. Altogether better council
7. At the CDP Board Away Day on 3 September 2013 the objectives of each thematic partnership were considered. It was agreed that these are a key element of our shared plans for the future and as such need to be sufficiently forward looking to stand the test of time (it is expected that, once agreed, these will not be changed over the next 3 – 5 years). The Board agreed that the draft objectives address key issues and endorsed these for further consultation and ratification by thematic partnerships. The proposed changes to the SCS and Council Plan objectives are set out in **Appendix 2**.
8. The Council Plan objectives and outcomes framework was considered at a Member seminar on 22 October linked to an initial briefing on the MTFP approach this year. Feedback from both the CDP and Member seminars contained within **Appendix 3** will form part of the considerations for the next stage of SCS and Council Plan development. Work on individual service plans will begin during the autumn based on the proposed Council Plan framework contained within this report. The final draft SCS and Council Plan will be presented to Cabinet and Council in early 2014. (See **Next Steps** below).

Next steps

9. Following agreement of the objectives and outcomes framework, the key milestones for completion of the SCS and Council and service plans will run in parallel and are:

Cabinet agree objectives and outcomes framework	20 November 2013
Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the 20 November Cabinet report	25 November 2013
Cabinet considers Sustainable Community Strategy, Council Plan and service plans	19 March 2014
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considers the 19 th March Cabinet reports	24 March 2014
Council approves Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Plan	2 April 2014

Recommendations and reasons

10. Members of the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the following:

- I. the updated position on the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2014-2030 and the Council Plan 2014-17
- II. the draft objectives and outcomes framework set out in **Appendix 2** and approved by Cabinet as the basis for the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Plan.

Contact: Jenny Haworth, Head of Planning and Performance, 03000 268071

Appendix 1: Implications (in line with the cabinet report of 20 November 2013)

Finance

The Council Plan sets out the corporate priorities of the Council for the next 3 years. The Medium Term Financial Plan aligns revenue and capital investment to priorities within the Council Plan.

Staffing

The Council's strategies are aligned to achievement of the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

Risk

Consideration of risk is a key element in the corporate and service planning framework with both the Council Plan and service plans containing sections on risk.

Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

The SCS and Council Plan have been influenced by consultation and monitoring to include equality issues. There is no evidence of negative impact for particular groups. One of the outcomes within the proposed framework is that people are treated fairly and differences are respected. Actions contained within the Council Plan include specific issues relating to equality. A full impact assessment will be produced for the Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Plan.

Accommodation

The Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan is aligned to the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

Crime and disorder

The Altogether Safer section of the SCS and Council Plan sets out the Council's and partner's contributions to tackling crime and disorder.

Human rights

None

Consultation

Council and partnership priorities have been developed following an analysis of available consultation data including an extensive consultation programme carried out as part of the development of the reviewed Sustainable Community Strategy. Results have been taken into account in developing our resourcing decisions.

Procurement

None

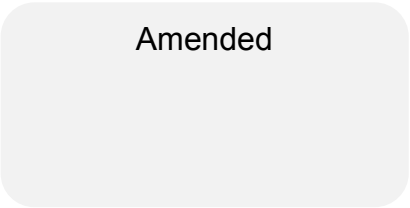
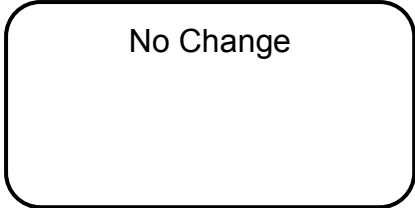
Disability Issues

See equality impacts above.

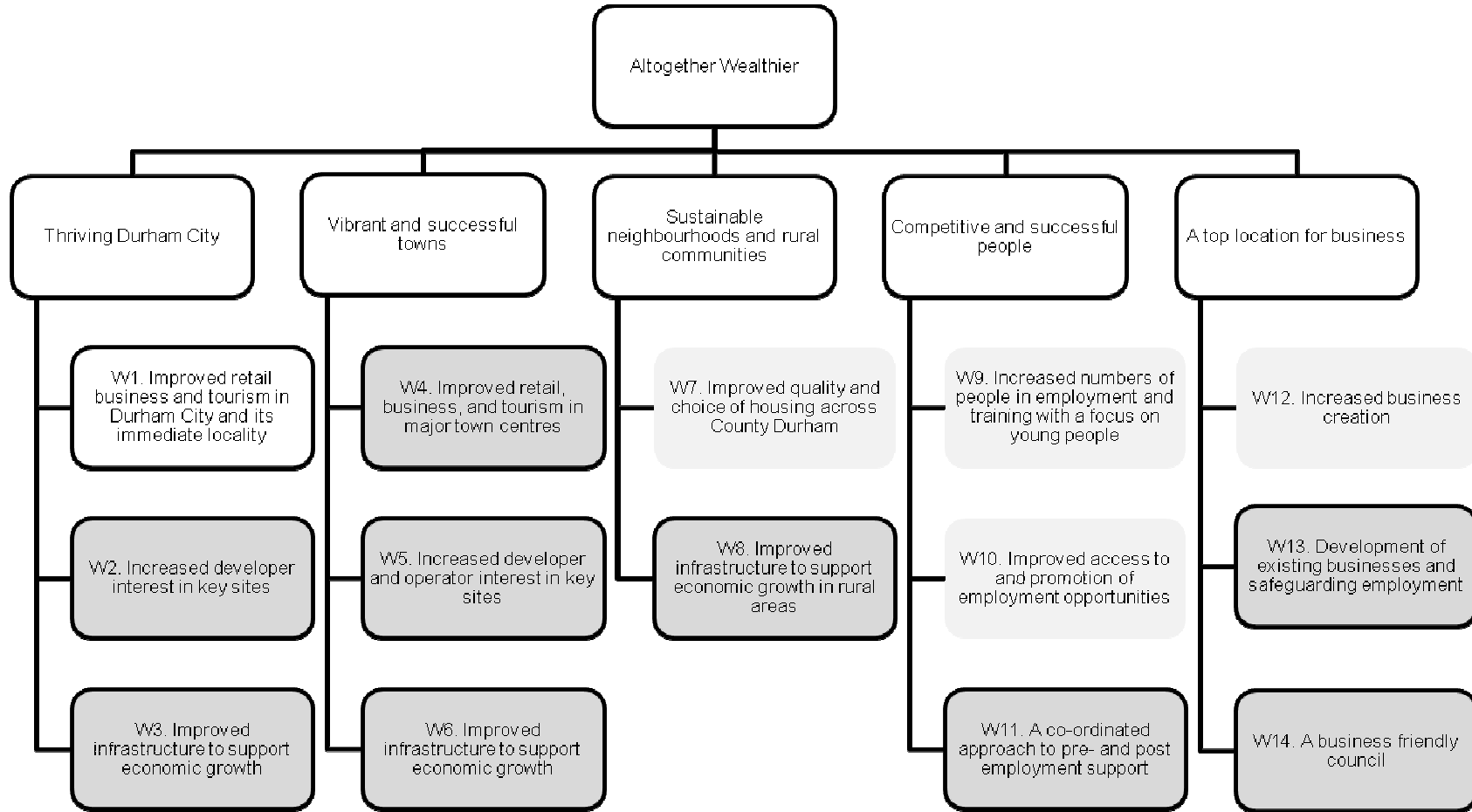
Legal Implications

None

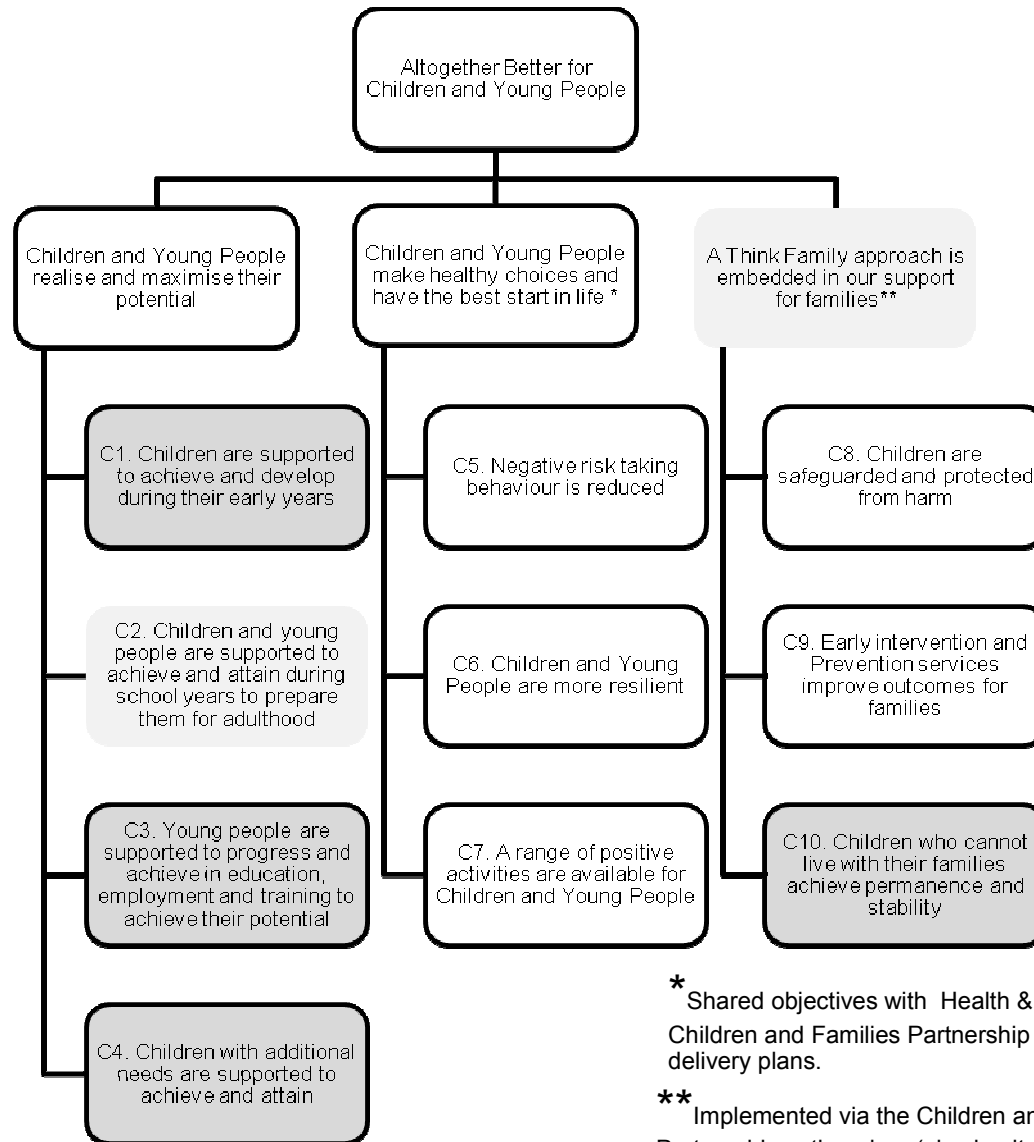
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Appendix 2: Partnership and Council Draft Objectives and Outcomes Framework



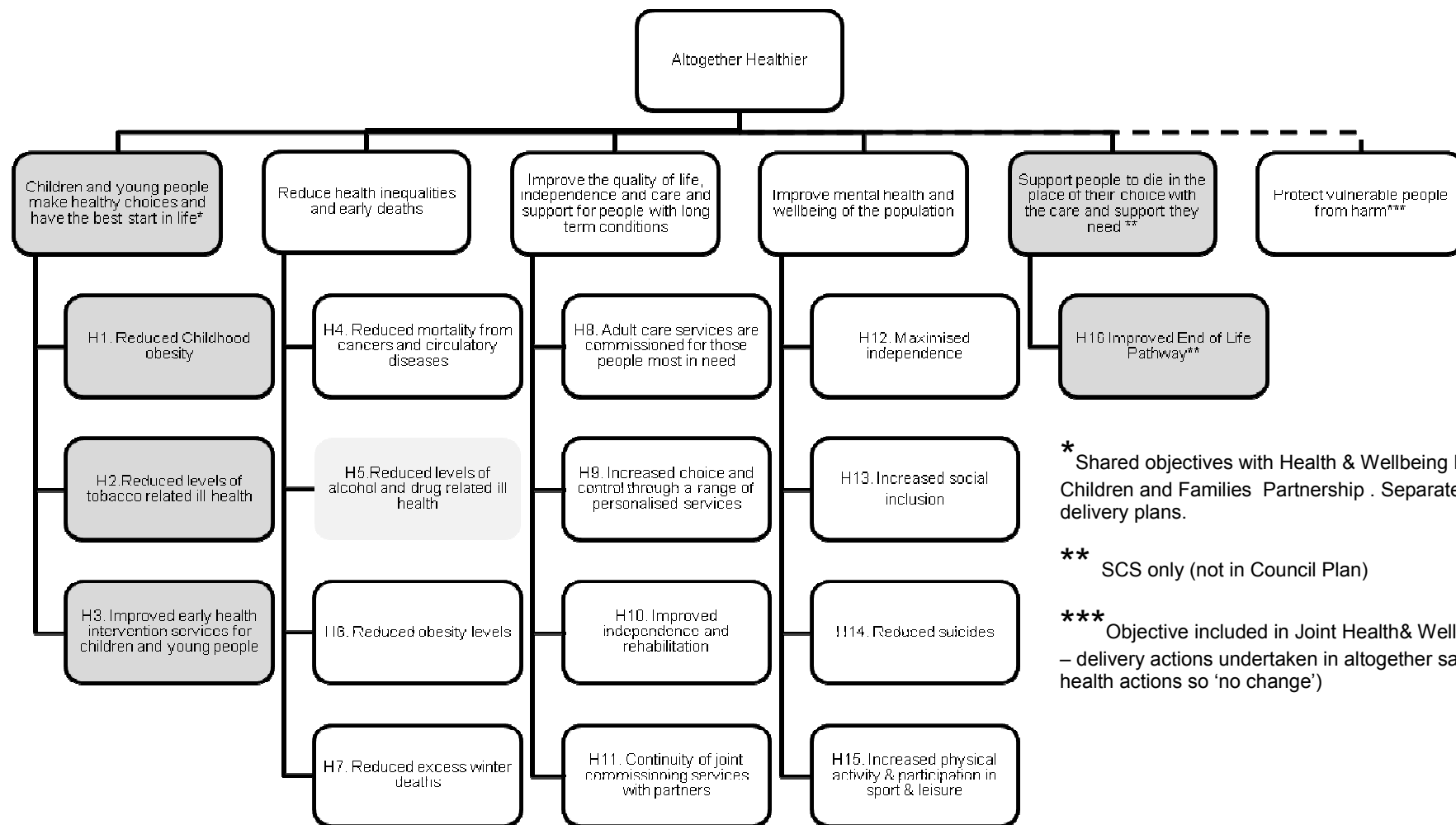
Appendix 2: Partnership and Council Draft Objectives and Outcomes Framework



* Shared objectives with Health & WellBeing Board/ Children and Families Partnership . Separate actions reflect delivery plans.

** Implemented via the Children and Families Partnership action plan. (also in altogether safer) . Think Family means considering the whole family's needs when trying to solve problems eg social, health based, economic

Appendix 2: Partnership and Council Draft Objectives and Outcomes Framework

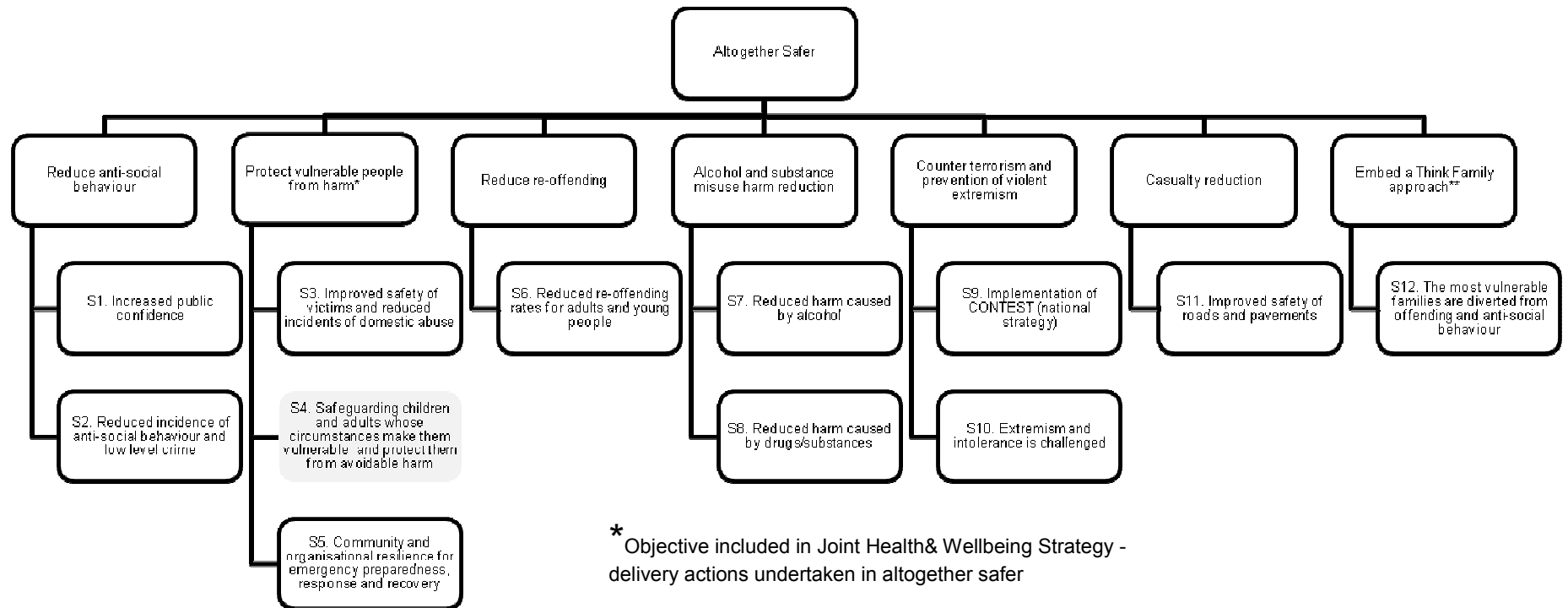


* Shared objectives with Health & Wellbeing Board/ Children and Families Partnership . Separate actions reflect delivery plans.

** SCS only (not in Council Plan)

*** Objective included in Joint Health& Wellbeing Strategy – delivery actions undertaken in altogether safer (no specific health actions so 'no change')

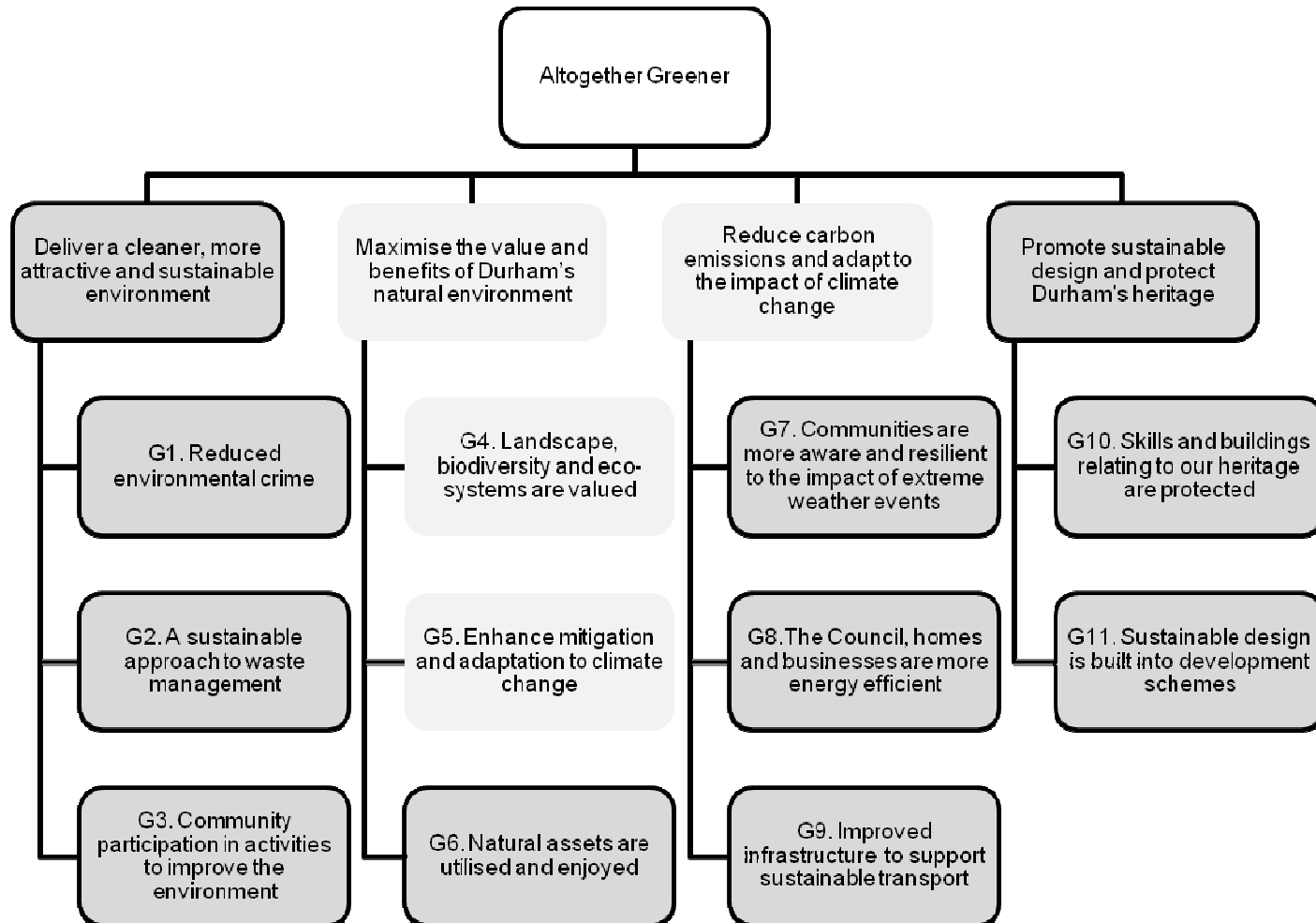
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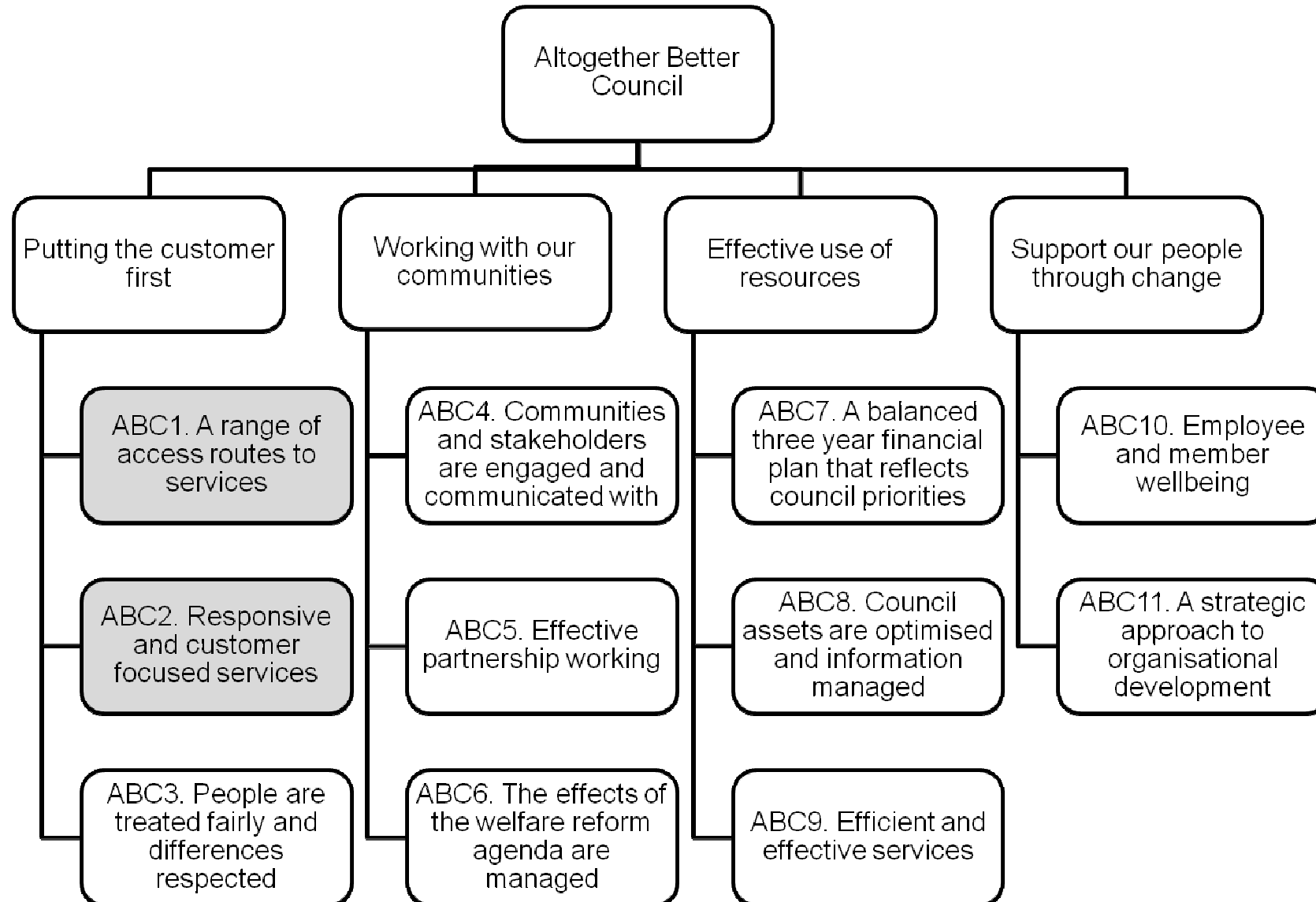
* Objective included in Joint Health& Wellbeing Strategy - delivery actions undertaken in altogether safer

** Implemented via the Safe Durham Partnership action plan (also in ABCYP). Think Family means considering the whole family's needs when trying to solve problems eg Anti-social behaviour

Appendix 2: Partnership and Council Draft Objectives and Outcomes Framework



Appendix 2: Partnership and Council Draft Objectives and Outcomes Framework



Appendix 3: County Durham Partnership and Member seminar Feedback

Altogether Wealthier
<p>One member expressed concern that there was no strong focus around rural communities and did not feel that rural issues fitted with the ‘Sustainable neighbourhoods’ objective.</p> <p>Members also suggested that ‘Thriving Durham City’ should not be an objective on its own, but rather an outcome. Members thought that the new outcome of improved retail, business, tourism, employment, leisure, education and health covers too many issues and cuts across numerous priority themes.</p> <p>CDP suggested that the objective for a ‘Thriving Durham City’ should be balanced. E.g. That by developing the night time economy – this does not encourage some at the expense of others to visit the city.</p> <p>In addition CDP commented that there was a need to move to a low carbon economy and that this should be reflected within wealthier.</p> <p>CDP also suggested that more consideration be given to youth unemployment, especially NEETs and the impact upon worklessness and that this should form a separate objective rather than an outcome in wealthier, along with greater reference to the role of the VCS in relation to employment.</p>
Altogether Better for Children and Young People
<p>CDP stressed the importance of the Think Family approach and suggested that a key focus should be areas of risk or harm to local communities.</p>
Altogether Healthier
<p>Members thought that older people, carers and people with learning difficulties should feature specifically. Noted that care should be taken with regard to end of life pathway as this could be viewed as categorising people.</p> <p>Members also enquired if Quality Improvement Programme funding was available for some of the objectives and why children and adults issues are presented separately.</p>
Altogether Safer
<p>Members commented that in relation to ‘protecting people from harm’ that the definition of ‘vulnerable’ should be right and also enquired what was being done to support asset transfer?</p>

Appendix 3: County Durham Partnership and Member seminar Feedback

Altogether Greener
Members asked, given the scale of change from last year under this theme whether they were sustainable in the long-term.
Altogether Better Council
With regard to the outcome 'Delivery of excellent customer services', debate took place regarding as to whether this was possible and it was queried whether it needed to be caveated or an alternative term used. In response new outcomes have been developed that align to the reviewed Customer First Strategy.

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**Corporate Issues
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



25 November 2013

**Quarter 2 2013/14
Performance Management Report**

**Report of Corporate Management Team
Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
Councillor Simon Henig, Leader**

Purpose of the Report

1. To present progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators (PIs) for the Altogether Better Council theme and report other significant performance issues for the first quarter of 2013/14.

Background

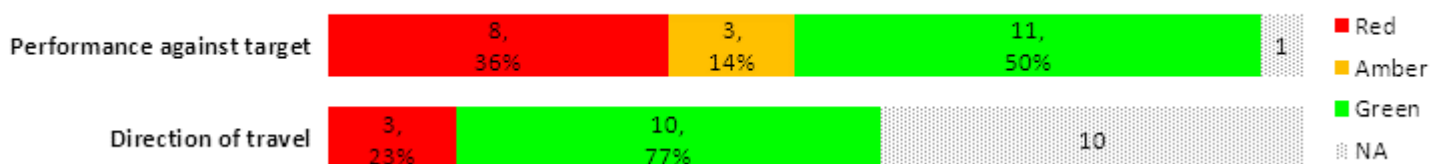
2. This is the second quarterly corporate performance report of 2013/14 for the council highlighting performance for the period July to September 2013. The report contains information on key performance indicators, risks and Council Plan progress.
3. The report sets out an overview of performance and progress for the Altogether Better Council theme. Key performance indicator progress is reported against two indicator types which comprise of:
 - a. Key target indicators – targets are set for indicators where improvements can be measured regularly and where improvement can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
 - b. Key tracker indicators – performance will be tracked but no targets are set for indicators which are long-term and/or which the council and its partners only partially influence.
4. A summary of key performance indicators is provided at Appendix 3. More detailed performance information and Altogether theme analyses are available on request from performance@durham.gov.uk.

Developments since last quarter

5. There is a stronger focus this year on volume measures in our performance framework. This will allow us to better quantify productivity in the forthcoming year and to monitor the effects of reductions in resources and increases in volume of activity driven by the economic situation and national policy changes such as welfare reform. Analysis of some key measures is available at Appendix 4.

Altogether Better Council: Overview

Target Performance indicators



Tracker Performance indicators



Actions



Council Performance

6. Key achievements this quarter include:

- During July to September 2013, 78.1% of sundry debt owed to the council was paid within 30 days which is above the target of 73%. The advanced collection module of the Oracle system continues to be refined to ensure that all necessary action is taken promptly and efficiently.
- The average waiting time at a customer access point is 4 minutes, which is well within the 15 minutes target. Performance has improved from the previous quarter (5 minutes 6 seconds) despite footfall increasing in our Customer Access Points (CAPs) with 10,723 more customers visiting our CAPs between July and September (93,059) compared to quarter 1 (82,336) (see Appendix 4, Chart 1).
- During quarter 2, new housing benefit (HB) claims were processed in 20.23 days on average and the target of 23 days has been achieved. The year to date figure is 23.57 days and is under the annual target of 25 days. New council tax support (CTS) claims were processed in 22.11 days on average which was better than the period target of 23 days. The year to date figure is 26.54 days and this remains just outside of the annual target of 25 days. The volume of new CTS claims has fallen from 3,822 in quarter 1 to 3,389 this quarter. The volume of HB claims has fallen from 3,334 in quarter 1 to 2,962 this quarter (see Appendix 4, Chart 3).

Processing rates for changes of circumstance were affected by year end processes but have improved significantly during quarter 2. The average time taken to process change of circumstances was on average 11.74 days for HB claims and 12.68 days for CTS claims. Performance remained outside the period target of 10.7 days. A number of technological and process developments are planned and their impact upon processing will be closely monitored over the coming months. The volume of change of circumstances for CTS claims has fallen from 30,326 in quarter 1 to 27,215 this quarter. The volume of change of circumstances for HB claims has fallen from 32,574 in quarter 1 to 25,152 this quarter (see Appendix 4, Chart 4).

- Tenant rent arrears have fallen for Durham City Homes from 2.51% in quarter 2 last year to 2.24% this quarter and the target of 2.5% has been met. Arrears currently stand at £542,400. Dale and Valley Homes performance of 1.64% is well within target of 3% and it has improved from 2.03% reported last year. Arrears currently stand at £264,902. Arrears

for East Durham Homes have fallen slightly from 2.94% in quarter 2 last year to 2.89% this quarter and the target of 3% has been achieved. Arrears currently stand at £831,695.

- e. Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days was 85% this quarter, which met the national standard of 85% for the first time. Performance has improved from 73.4% last quarter and from 80% reported at quarter 2 last year. The volume of FOI requests was 249 this quarter and was higher than 227 reported in the previous quarter and 221 reported 12 months earlier (see Appendix 4, Chart 5).
 - f. There is an action in the Resources Service Plan to increase the availability of technology across the county by developing the Digital Durham programme. In September 2013, Cabinet agreed the Digital Durham Programme's high level superfast broadband deployment plan, due to commence in April 2014 and designed to maximise geographic coverage in the most cost effective manner. Positive feedback for the Digital Durham Team and Programme resulted from MP Ed Vaizey's (Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries) visit in September.
7. Key performance improvement issues for this theme are:

- a. During quarter 2, 91.3% of undisputed supplier invoices were paid within 30 days. This is slightly below the target of 92% but represents an improvement from 84.3% reported in the same quarter last year. A number of developments have been introduced or are underway to improve invoice payment processing.
- b. Carrying out and recording employee appraisals in accordance with the council's agreed policy and procedure is an ongoing area for improvement. The percentage of performance appraisals completed and recorded this quarter was 75.3%. This represents a significant increase over the quarter 1 rate of 56.53%, but is well short of the 80% corporate target. Management action is being taken to deliver improvements.
- c. Sickness levels remain too high and require improvement. The number of days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) in the rolling year period has decreased from 9.35 days as at quarter 1 2013/14 to 9.31 days as at the end of quarter 2 2013/14. The number of days lost per FTE is an improvement on the 9.57 average as at the end of quarter 2 2012/13. The figure of 9.31 days is above the target of 9.05 days lost per FTE. The percentage of posts with no sickness absence recorded (excluding schools) for the period July to September 2013 was 78.31%, an improvement from quarter 1 (77.64%) and 12 months earlier (75.18%).
- d. The 2013/14 recovery cycles for the collection of council tax and business rates have been adjusted to ensure that late payers are picked up more quickly this year and that recovery action is taken in a more timely manner.

The collection rate for council tax of 55.18% during quarter 2 was 0.03 percentage points above last year's figure and 1.35 percentage points above the 2011/12 performance but is below the challenging profiled year to date target of 57%. Factoring in the increase in council tax collectable for 2013/14, the collection figure is an early indication that the changes to the recovery cycles are having a positive impact. The overall collection rate for council tax, excluding the current year, was 99% at the end of September 2013, which was above the target of 98.5%.

The collection rate for national non domestic rates (NNDR) of 60.71% during quarter 2 was 0.46 percentage points above the same point last year but was below the challenging profiled year to date target of 62%. The increased collection figure is an early indication that the changes to the recovery cycles are having a positive impact and is welcomed in light of the funding changes in 2013/14. The overall collection for NNDR, excluding the current year, was 99.2% at the end of September, which was above the target of 98.5%.

- e. Between July and September, 226,204 telephone calls were answered (88% of all calls received), this is 6,203 more than same period in quarter 1 (219,974); this is an

improvement of the abandoned call rate which was reported as 18% for the last quarter. During quarter 2, 78% of telephone calls were answered within 3 minutes and although this is slightly below the target of 80%, it is a significant improvement on quarter 1, when 62% of calls were answered within 3 minutes. The volume of telephone calls show 3.6% fewer calls received this quarter (258,047) when compared with quarter 1 (267,752) (see Appendix 4, Chart 2). 2,826 more emails (an increase of 27%) were received during quarter 2 (13,186) compared to quarter 1 (10,360).

- f. Key Council Plan actions behind target in this theme include:
- i. To develop a robust performance framework to capture the effectiveness of Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) by September 2013. This has been delayed until February 2014.
 - ii. To produce a Regeneration Investment Plan to maximise external funding for the council and its partners by September 2013. This has been delayed until December 2013. Initial work has been undertaken on identifying a list of projects in RED but in order to produce an Investment Plan further work is required by heads of service to refine and prioritise this schedule of projects further.
 - iii. To revise the council's Organisational Development Strategy to strengthen the approach towards workforce planning and development by September 2013. This has been delayed until January 2014 due to focus on other priorities. A revised draft Strategy is being developed.

8. The key risks to successfully delivering the objectives of this theme are:

- a. *Government ongoing funding cuts which now extend to at least 2017/18 will continue to have an increasing major impact on all Council services.* Management consider it highly probable that this risk could occur. These forecasts have been included as far as possible in the new financial model for the MTFP. This risk will be managed and mitigated to best effect through early engagement with Cabinet, a timetable of key milestone dates, and sound financial forecasting, based on a thorough examination of the Government's red book plans.
- b. *If there was to be slippage in delivery of the agreed MTFP savings projects, this will require further savings to be made from other areas, which may result in further service reductions and job losses.* Management consider it possible that this risk could occur, which will result in a funding shortfall, damaged reputation and reduced levels of service delivery. To mitigate the risk, the implementation of the delivery plan by the Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) is closely monitored by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet as described above. It should be recognised that this will be a significant risk for at least the next 4 years.
- c. *If we were to fail to comply with Central Government's Public Services Network (PSN) Code of Connection criteria, this would put some of our core business processes, such as revenues and benefits, at risk.* Management consider it probable that this risk will occur. In May 2013, an ICT health check was carried out and a number of recommendations were made to bring the council to a position of compliance. Failure to be compliant can result in the council being disconnected from the PSN, resulting in loss of access to key systems and services.
- d. *Potential restitution of search fee income going back to 2005.* Management consider it highly probable that the risk will occur as a firm of solicitors has taken action against all councils across England and Wales to recover the alleged land charge fees overpayment. The mitigation of this risk is dependent upon the outcome of the negotiations and litigation currently being defended by lawyers instructed in group litigation.

- e. *If local authority schools and other local authority services choose not to take council services, together with the loss of community buildings both technical and building services could see a loss of business.* Management consider it probable that this risk will occur, and a draft booklet will be produced to promote Building Services ready for distribution throughout council services by the end of 2013.

Recommendations and reasons

9. That the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the report and consider any performance issues arising there from.

Contact: Jenny Haworth, Head of Planning and Performance
Tel: 03000 268071 E-Mail jenny.haworth@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Latest performance information is being used to inform corporate, service and financial planning.

Staffing

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health PIs has been included to monitor staffing levels and absence rates.

Risk

Reporting of significant risks and their interaction with performance is integrated into the quarterly monitoring report.

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

Corporate health PIs and key actions relating to equality and diversity issues are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Accommodation

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

A number of PIs and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

Human Rights

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

Disability Issues

Corporate health PIs and key actions relating to accessibility issues and employees with a disability are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Appendix 2: Key to symbols used within the report

Where icons appear in this report, they have been applied to the most recently available information.

Performance Indicators:

Direction of travel

Latest reported data have improved from comparable period

GREEN

Latest reported data remain in line with comparable period

AMBER

Latest reported data have deteriorated from comparable period

RED

Performance against target

Performance better than target

Getting there - performance approaching target (within 2%)

Performance >2% behind target

Actions:

WHITE

Complete. (Action achieved by deadline/achieved ahead of deadline)

GREEN

Action on track to be achieved by the deadline

RED

Action not achieved by the deadline/unlikely to be achieved by the deadline

Benchmarking:

GREEN

Performance better than other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

AMBER

Performance in line with other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

RED

Performance worse than other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

Appendix 3: Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Table 1: Key Target Indicators

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
Altogether Better Council										
75	Percentage of calls answered within 3 minutes	78	Jul - Sept 2013	80	RED	New Indicator	NA			
76	Average waiting time at a customer access point (mins:secs)	04:00	Jul - Sept 2013	15:00	GREEN	06:40	GREEN			
77	Percentage all ICT Service Desk incidents resolved on time	90	Jul -Sept 2013	90	GREEN	95	RED			
78	Average time taken to process new housing benefit claims (days)	20.23	Jul - Sept 2013	23.0	GREEN	New Indicator	NA	32 GREEN	25 GREEN	Jan - Mar 2013
79	Average time taken to process new council tax support claims (days)	22.11	Jul - Sept 2013	23.0	GREEN	New Indicator	NA	33 GREEN	27 GREEN	Jan - Mar 2013
80	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for housing benefit support claims (days)	11.74	Jul - Sept 2013	10.7	RED	New Indicator	NA	14 GREEN	9 RED	Jan - Mar 2013
81	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for council tax support claims (days)	12.68	Jul - Sept 2013	10.7	RED	New Indicator	NA	16 GREEN	12 RED	Jan - Dec 13
82	Percentage of council tax recovered for all years excluding the current year	99	As at Sept 2013	98.5	GREEN	NA	NA			
83	Percentage of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) recovered for all years excluding the current year	99.2	As at Sept 2013	98.5	GREEN	NA	NA			

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
84	Savings delivered against the MTFP (£m)	15.7	As at Sept 2013	20.9	Not comparable [1]	NA	NA	1000 RED		
85	Percentage of council tax collected in-year	55.18	Apr-Sept 2013	57.0	RED	55.15	RED	97.4 Not comparable	96.7* Not comparable	2012/13
86	Percentage of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected in-year	60.71	Apr-Sept 2013	62.0	RED	60.25	GREEN	97.7 Not comparable	96.7* Not comparable	2012/13
87	Percentage of accounts paid to the council within 30 days (debtors)	78.1	Jul-Sept 2013	73.0	GREEN	73.21	GREEN			
88	Income generated from council owned business space (£)	1,270,980	Apr - Sept 2013	1,295,000	AMBER	1,439,000	RED			
89	Percentage of local authority tenants satisfied with landlord services (all three providers)	86	As at Apr 2013	87	AMBER	New indicator	NA			
90	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit - Dale & Valley Homes	1.64	As at Sept 2013	3.0	GREEN	2.03	GREEN			
91	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit - Durham City Homes	2.24	as at Sept 2013	2.5	GREEN	2.51	GREEN			
92	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit - East Durham Homes	2.89	As at Sept 2013	3	GREEN	2.94	GREEN			
93	Average asset rating of Display Energy Certificates (DECs) in county council buildings	98.9	As at Sept 2013	96.0	RED	98.4	RED			

Page 34	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
94	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within statutory deadlines	85	Jul - Sept 2013	85	GREEN	80	GREEN			
95	Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days to our suppliers	91.3	Jul - Sept 2013	92	AMBER	84.3	GREEN			
96	Percentage of performance appraisals completed	75.3	Oct 12 - Sept 13	80.0	RED	Not available	NA			
97	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence – all services including school staff	9.31	Oct 12 - Sept 13	9.05	RED	9.57	GREEN			

[\[1\] Annual target](#)

Table 2: Key Tracker Indicators

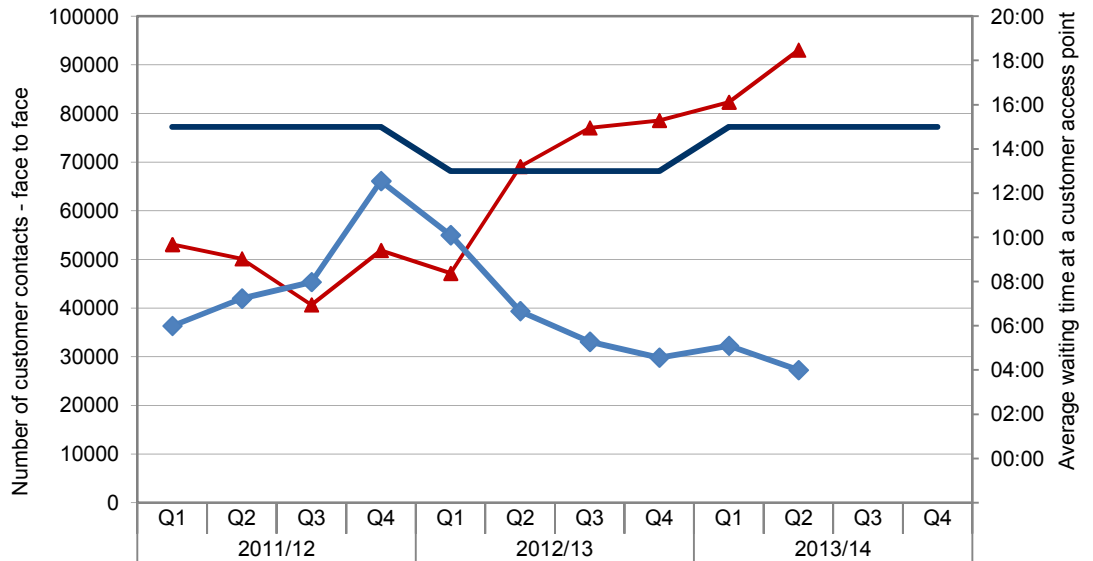
Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Previous period data	Performance compared to previous period	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
Altogether Better Council										
169	Staff aged under 25 as percentage of headcount	5.55	As at Sept 2013	5.47	NA	4.55	NA			
170	Staff aged over 50 as a percentage of headcount	36.84	As at Sept 2013	36.41	NA	36.86	NA			
171	Women in the top 5 per cent of earners	51.53	As at Sept 2013	51.60	NA	50.49	NA			
172	BME as a percentage of headcount	1.4	As at Sept 2013	1.41	NA	0.96	NA			
173	Staff with disability (DDA definition) as a percentage of headcount	2.93	As at Sept 2013	2.94	NA	3.07	NA			
174	Percentage of abandoned calls	12	Jul - Sept 2013	18	GREEN	9	RED			
175	Percentage of calls answered within 1 minute	60	Jul - Sept 2013	46	GREEN	77	RED			
176	Staff - total headcount (ONS return)	17,533	As at Sept 2013	17,546	NA	18,159	NA			
177	Staff - total full time equivalent (FTE) (ONS return)	14,198	As at Sept 2013	14,164	NA	14,682	NA			
178	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	27	Apr - Sept 2013	15	Not comparable [2]	36	GREEN			

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Previous period data	Performance compared to previous period	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
179	Percentage of posts with no absence (excluding SCHOOLS)	78.31	Jul - Sept 2013	77.64	GREEN	75.18	GREEN			

[\[2\] This data is cumulative and the figure is based on 12 months data for the year end so comparisons are not applicable.](#)

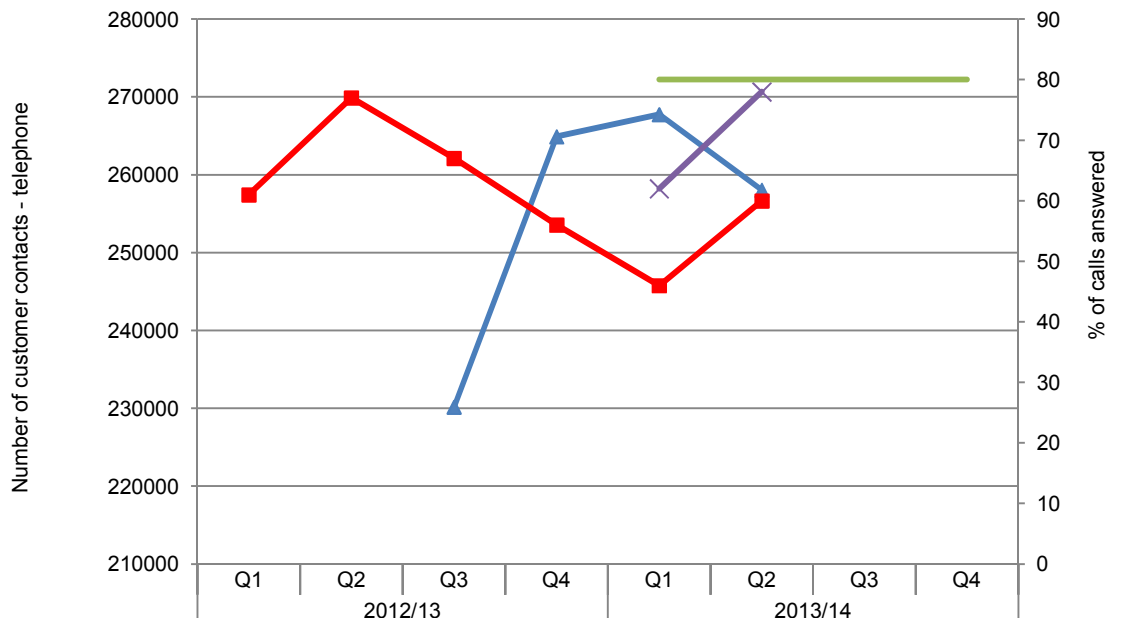
Appendix 4: Volume measures

Chart 1 – Face to face contacts



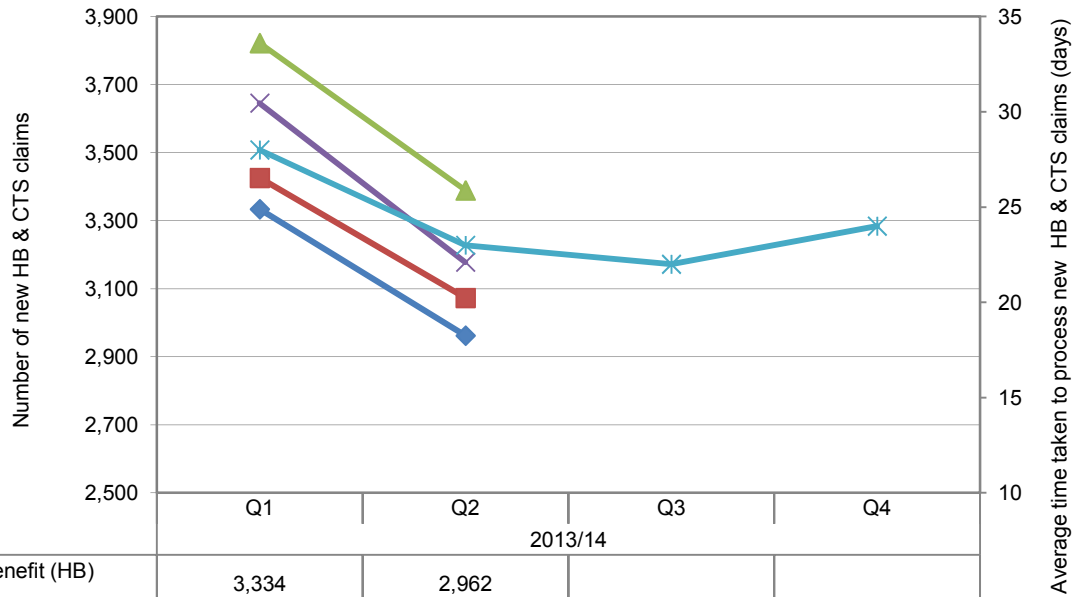
▲ Number of customer contacts - face to face	53,076	50,142	40,666	51,850	47,155	69,119	77,056	78,597	82,336	93,059		
◆ Average waiting time at a customer access point (mins:secs)	06:00	07:14	07:59	12:33	10:06	06:40	05:17	04:34	05:06	04:00		
— Target (mins:secs)	15:00	15:00	15:00	15:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	15:00	15:00	15:00	15:00

Chart 2 – Telephone calls



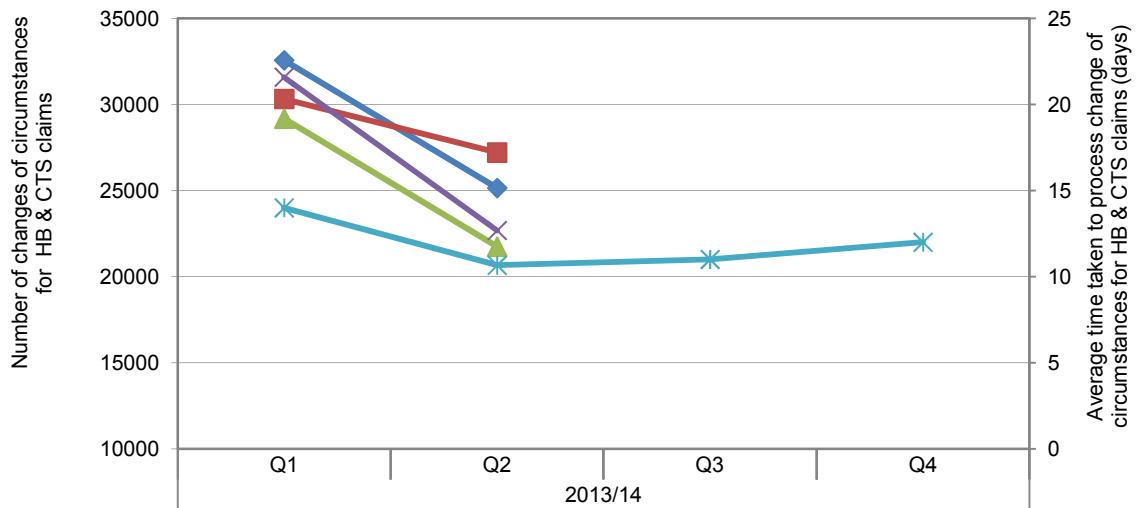
◆ Number of customer contacts - telephone			230,170	264,908	267,752	258,047		
■ Percentage of calls answered within 1 minute	61	77	67	56	46	60		
✕ Percentage of calls answered within 3 minutes					62	78		
— Target - 3 minutes (%)					80	80	80	80

Chart 3 – Benefits – new claims



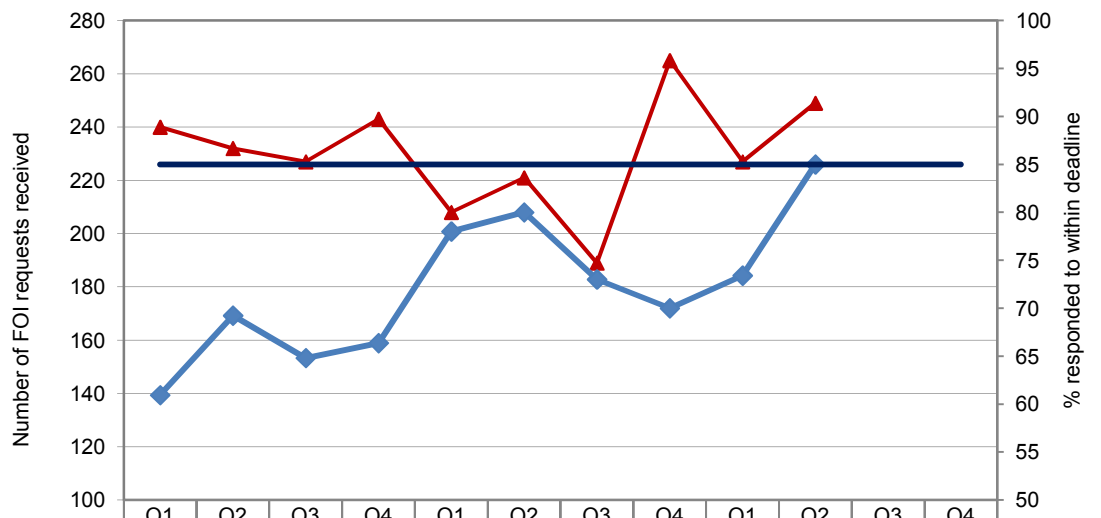
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of new Housing Benefit (HB) claims	3,334	2,962		
Number of new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims	3,822	3,389		
Average time taken to process new HB claims (days)	26.53	20.23		
Average time taken to process new CTS claims (days)	30.46	22.11		
Target - discrete quarter (days)	28	23	22	24

Chart 4 – Benefits – changes of circumstances



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit (HB) claims	32,574	25,152		
Number of Changes of Circumstances for Council Tax Support (CTS) claims	30,326	27,215		
Average time taken to process change of circumstances for HB claims (days)	19.18	11.74		
Average time taken to process change of circumstances for CTS claims (days)	21.59	12.68		
Target - discrete quarter (days)	14	10.66	11	12

Chart 5 – Freedom of Information (FOI) requests



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2011/12				2012/13				2013/14			
Number of FOI requests received	240	232	227	243	208	221	189	265	227	249		
% of FOI requests responded to within statutory deadlines	61	69	65	66	78	80	73	70	73	85		
Target (%)	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

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**Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

25 November 2013

**Customer Feedback: Complaints,
Compliments and Suggestions
Quarter 2 Report 2013/14**



**Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director for Neighbourhood
Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present to Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CIOSC) the Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Quarter 2 Report 2013/14 (full report attached at Appendix 2).

Background

- 2 The report in relation to the council's performance and key issues regarding complaints, compliments and suggestions is aligned to the performance reporting mechanisms, so the implications of this customer feedback can inform scrutiny of council performance.

Quarter 2 Report 2013/14

- 3 The full report at Appendix 2 provides details for each service grouping in relation to both statutory and non-statutory complaints compliments and suggestions received in quarter 2 2013/14

Review of the complaints process

- 4 The Council's Customer First Strategy is in the process of being refreshed and includes a review of the current Corporate Complaints Policy and a revised mechanism for capturing learning outcomes. This work cuts across all service areas of the council and is aimed at both streamlining the processes currently in place and implementing an approach to working much more closely with service areas to use customer feedback, and in particular customer demand instigated by service failure, to ensure that improvement actions are implemented.

Recommendation

- 5 Members are asked to note the information in the report.

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Email: mary.readman@durham.gov.uk**

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Customer Feedback: Complaints, compliments and suggestions Quarter 2 report 2013/14



Altogether better



Overview

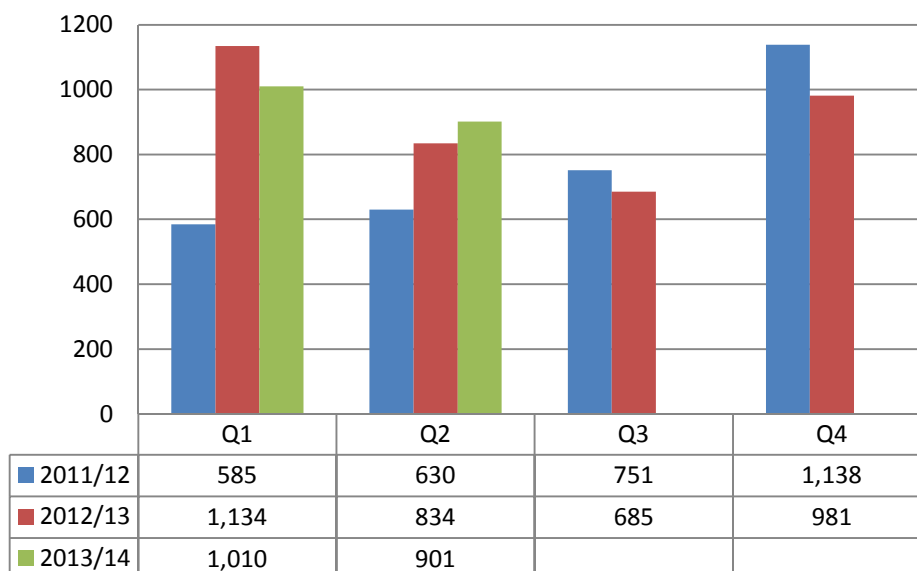
1. This report provides the Quarter 2, 2013/14 performance information and learning outcomes in relation to complaints, compliments and suggestions across the Council.

PART ONE: Summary of Complaints, compliments and suggestions received across the Council during Quarter 2, 2013/14

2. Between 1 July 2013 and 30 September 2013, Durham County Council received 901 non-statutory complaints, 222 compliments and 71 suggestions.

Complaints

3. The graph below shows the total numbers of complaints received across the Council since April 2011 by quarter. The graph shows that, despite an 11% reduction in the number of non-statutory complaints received during quarter 2, compared to those received during quarter 1 this year, there has been an 8% increase in complaints received in quarter 2 compared to the same period last year.



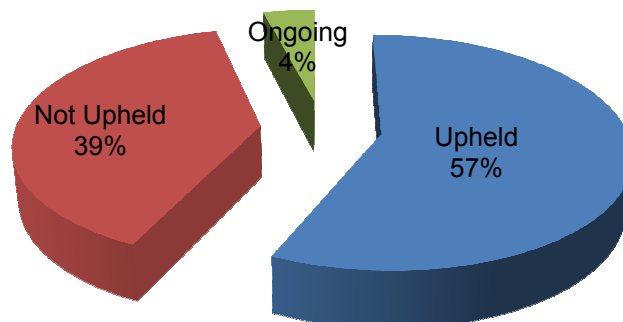
4. The table below shows a breakdown of complaints received across Service Groupings since 2011/12:

Service Grouping	2011-12 Total	2012 - 2013					2013 - 2014				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
ACE	10	0	2	0	5	7	3	3			6
CAS	83	4	15	4	10	33	10	15			25
NS	1,589	737	537	431	693	2,398	724	614			1338
RED	327	94	95	93	105	387	93	128			221
RES	1,095	299	185	157	168	809	180	141			321
TOTAL	3,104	1,134	834	685	981	3,634	1,010	901			1911

5. Further analysis of the data for this quarter shows that the highest numbers of complaints received overall were due to:
- Refuse and Recycling Service:
 - 129 complaints were received regarding missed bins. This is a 22% decrease when compared with quarter 2 2012/13.
 - Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs):
 - We received 76 complaints regarding HWRCs, which is a 12% increase when compared with quarter 1 2013/14. This rise in complaints is due to ongoing issues relating to change in management at the sites, change in operating hours and staff attitude.
 - Revenues and Benefits Service:
 - The Benefits service received 66 complaints, 7 of which (10%) were received from landlords or their agents, either about speed of processing or disputing payments paid directly to tenants. Detailed analysis indicates that 18 (27%) complaints related to claims processing issues during the summer period.
 - The Revenues Service received 58 complaints, a reduction of 37% on the previous quarter. Analysis indicates that 24% of complaints related to aspects of recovery action. While 10% of quarter 2's complaints related to delays in processing changes or responding to correspondence, this represents a 50% reduction compared to quarter 1.

There was also an increase in complaints in relation to Durham City Homes compared to the previous quarter.

6. Further investigation of the complaints received shows that during quarter 2, 2013/14 there were 353 occasions (39% of complaints processed) where the complaint was not upheld, indicating that although service users were dissatisfied with the service received, the service had in fact acted properly and followed the correct procedures.



7. If we remove those not upheld and those that are ongoing, DCC is left with 512 (57%) upheld complaints, from which there is possibility of learning.

Compliments and Suggestions

8. The following table shows the numbers of compliments and suggestions received across service groupings during quarter 2:

Service Grouping	Compliments	Suggestions
ACE	9	3
CAS	42	0
NS	134	57
RED	27	6
RES	10	5
TOTAL	222	71

9. A large proportion of compliments are for staff in recognition of their support and help in resolving the customer's concerns and issues. On each of these occasions, the individual officer is notified of the compliment and thanked by their line manager. Many of these relate to the professionalism, politeness and general helpfulness of staff.

PART TWO: Detailed report for each service grouping for quarter 2, 2013/14

10. The following sections provide details for each Service Grouping in relation to complaints compliments and suggestions received in quarter 2 2013/14

Assistant Chief Executive's Office (ACE)

Overview

11. The ACE service grouping received 3 complaints, 9 compliments and 3 suggestions between 1 July 2013 and 30 September 2013

Service Grouping ACE	Number Received										%* Change	
	11/12 Total	12/13				12/13 Total	13/14					13/14 Total
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Complaints	6	0	2	0	5	7	3	3	-	-	6	NA
Compliments	24	3	3	7	12	25	3	9	-	-	12	NA
Suggestions	14	0	1	1	7	9	3	3	-	-	6	NA

*percentage comparisons not applicable due to small numbers

Feedback areas and learning

12. All three complaints received in quarter 2 relate to feedback received from residents in relation to the website and council publications; all three were upheld and have been addressed.

Compliments and Suggestions

13. 3 compliments were received by Partnerships and Community Engagement for the Trimdon Village Pond Improvement Project. 6 compliments were received by the County Records Office; thanking them for family information included in the CRO catalogue, and for going an 'extra mile' for providing help with information.
14. 3 suggestions received related to the involvement of council dignitaries in the design of the county Durham flag; the promotion of Lifestyle gyms, Wolsingham in council publications and the appropriateness of some venues included in the 'What's On in County Durham 2013' magazine. The Culture and Sport Service are considering the latter 2.

Children and Adults Services (CAS)

15. During quarter 2 (1 July to 30 September 2013), 15 complaints, 42 compliments and 0 suggestions were received in relation to CAS Corporate representations.
16. The table below shows that the overall number of corporate representations received by CAS has decreased from the previous quarter (from 98 in quarter 1 to 57 in quarter 2). There has also been a 65% reduction in the number of corporate representations received when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2012/13.
17. Complaints have increased by 5 from quarter 1, although the number of complaints received in quarter 2 is equal to the number received in the corresponding period in 2012/13. The majority of complaints received in quarter 2 (80%) were in relation to Children's Services. Complaints were received in the following Service Areas:
- Children's care received 4 complaints
 - Education received 2 complaints
 - Early Intervention and Involvement received 6 complains (4 regarding One Point and 2 regarding County Durham Youth Offending Service)
 - Planning and Service Strategy received 3 complaints

Service Grouping	Number Received												
	CAS	11/12 Total	12/13 split by quarter				12/13 Total	13/14 split by quarter				13/14	% Change*
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Complaints	83	4	15	4	10	33	10	15	-	-	25	0	
Compliments	158	149	150	145	103	547	88	42	-	-	130	-72	
Suggestions	24	15	0	0	11	26	0	0	-	-	0	0	

*Q2 figure 2013/14 compared with Q2 figure 2012/13

18. Of the 15 complaints received, 100% were acknowledged within 2 working days and 9 were responded to within 10 working days. Of the 15 complaints received, 4 were still

ongoing at the quarter end. Of the remaining 11, those Not Upheld were 9, Partially Upheld 2 and 0 were found to be upheld.

Feedback areas and learning

19. There was limited learning for the service due to only 2 complaints in the quarter being upheld in part. However, the following actions will be taken:
- Use of suitable rooms to speak to clients to ensure confidentiality and privacy;
 - All staff to be reminded that they should introduce themselves to clients and explain their role in the process; and
 - Verification process to be strengthened in relation to accuracy of reports.

Compliments and Suggestions

20. During the quarter, 42 compliments were received which represents a reduction of 72% in comparison to the corresponding period in 2012/13. Early Intervention and Involvement received 39 compliments (37 for the Welfare Rights Service and 2 for One Point), Planning and Service Strategy received 2 and 1 compliment was received for Education. Work is in hand to raise the profile of recording compliments with Service Areas.

Summary of Statutory Representations


21. As set out in the table overleaf, the total number of representations has decreased from 292 in the second quarter 2012/13 to 175 in the second quarter of 2012/13. This represents a 40% decrease. The number of statutory complaints has increased and the number of compliments has decreased in quarter 2 in comparison to the corresponding period in 2012/13. The rise in complaints is attributable to Children's Services (38 total complaints in quarter 1 to 54 in quarter 2).

Service Grouping CAS	Number Received											% Change*
	2011/12 Total	12/13 split by quarter				12/13 Total	13/14 split by quarter				13/14 Total	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Complaints	251	72	66	84	54	276	64	75	-	-	139	+14
Compliments	399	152	226	181	199	758	155	100	-	-	255	-56
Suggestions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0

*Q2 figure 2013/14 compared with Q2 figure 2012/13

Statutory complaints, compliments and suggestions/comments – Children's

22. During the quarter, 54 complaints were received in relation to children's social care services. There were 32 complaints managed informally, 20 managed at Stage 1 of the statutory procedure and 2 managed at Stage 2 of the statutory procedure.
23. Of the 20 formal complaints at Stage 1, a particular service was cited in 13 of these and this information has been raised as a theme with the Strategic Manager for Safeguarding to identify actions to improve. The majority of the complaints received relate to 'Poor Service'.

Comparison of formal Complaints received by quarter					
Service Area	Q3 12/13	Q4 12/13	Q1 13/14	Q2 13/14	Direction of Travel from previous quarter
Children's Care	10	5	10	20	

24. Of the 20 formal complaints received, 17 (85%) were acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt. Of the 20 complaints received, 6 were resolved within the prescribed timescales (40%) and 9 outside of the timescales. The remaining 5 complaints are still on-going at the quarter end.
25. Maximum efforts are made to resolve complaints informally and at Stage 1. This may include meetings with complainants and can result in final responses taking longer than 20 days. Complainants are kept aware of progress throughout the process. There are continued efforts to improve performance in this area.
26. Complaints by team are broken down as follows:

Complaints received by Teams in the quarter		
Teams	Current Q2	Previous Q1
Aycliffe Secure Services	1	0
Disabled Children and Families Team	1	1
Looked After Children - Aycliffe	0	1
Looked After Children - Durham	1	1
Safeguarding Children Bishop Auckland	4	2
Safeguarding Children Crook	4	0
Safeguarding Children Chester-Le-Street	5	2
Safeguarding Children Easington	0	1
Safeguarding Children Seaham	0	2
Safeguarding Children Spennymoor	1	0
Safeguarding Children Stanley 2	1	0
Young People's Service - South	2	0
Total	20	10

Declined Complaints

27. Two complaints were declined in the quarter; 1 because the issues complained about occurred more than 20 years ago and was therefore out of the timescale to make a complaint and 1 complaint because the complainant did not meet the criteria for making a complaint about a Social Worker.

Category of Complaint

28. 'Poor Service' constituted 12 of the Stage 1 complaints received. The categories with the next highest number of complaints were 'Professional Conduct of Staff' which was an element in 9 complaints and 'Disputed Decision' which formed all or part of the reason behind 8 complaints. This is concurrent with themes in the previous quarter.

Outcome of complaints

29. The table below shows the outcome of the 15 complaints completed in the quarter:

Outcome of Complaints received in the Quarter				
Team	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Total
Aycliffe Secure services	1	0	0	1
Disabled Children and Families Team	1	0	0	1
Looked after Children - Durham	1	0	0	1
Safeguarding Children Bishop Auckland	1	1	0	2
Safeguarding Children Chester-Le-Street	3	1	0	4
Safeguarding Children Crook	2	0	1	3
Safeguarding Children Spennymoor	1	0	0	1
Safeguarding Children Stanley 2	1	0	0	1
Young People's Service - South	1	0	0	1
Total	12	2	1	15

Actions as a result of statutory complaints

30. As a result of all complaints received and concluded during the period the following actions have resulted:

- Residents of Aycliffe Secure Services have been reminded of the need to clean down showers after use, to avoid residues of soap etc. which could result in slips.
- Young People's Services staff have been reminded that non-commissioned placements outside of the County should not be used. A list of approved properties has been set up for future use.
- Children's Care staff have been reminded of the importance of fully reading the case file on commencement of the assessment process.

Compliments

31. There were 17 compliments received in quarter 2 which represents a reduction in comparison to the previous quarter. This decrease is largely attributable to changes in the way compliments are gathered in from the service areas and subsequently reported. This is being looked into for quarter 3 with the aim of increasing the number received.

Teams	Compliments Received	
	Current Q2	Previous Q1
Community Support Team	9	0
Disabled Children and Families Team	1	0
Looked After Children	2	15
Initial Response and Prevention	0	11
Specialist Services	2	2
Safeguarding Services	3	7
Total	17	35

Statutory complaints, compliments and suggestions – Adults

32. During the quarter, 21 complaints were received. This represents a decrease of 5 complaints (19%) in comparison to the previous quarter.

Comparison of Complaints received by quarter					
Service Area	Q3 12/13	Q4 12/13	Q1 13/14	Q2 13/14	Direction of Travel from previous quarter
Adult Care	28	19	26	21	↓

33. All 21 complaints received were acknowledged within 2 working days. Complaints Resolution Plans (CRPs) were completed in all 21 cases. Of the 21 complaints received, 13 were completed within the quarter and timescales set out in the CRP. The remaining 8 cases were ongoing at the quarter end but are still within their agreed completion timescales.
34. The Adult Social Work Teams (Older Persons/Mental Health Services for Older People/Physical Disability/Sensory Support Services) received the greatest number of complaints at 13, followed by 3 in the Commissioning Service Area as the table outlines overleaf:

Complaints received by Service Area in the quarter		
Service Area	Current Q2	Previous Q1
Adult Social Work Teams: Older Persons /Mental Health Services for Older Persons/Physical Disability/ Sensory Support services	13	12
Adult Social Work Teams: Learning Disabilities, Mental Health, Substance Misuse services	2	2
Commissioning	3	11
County Durham Care and Support	1	1
Safeguarding and Practice Development	2	0
Total	21	26

Declined Complaints

35. No complaints were declined in the quarter.

Category of Complaint

36. *'Lack of Service – Communications/Information'* constituted the category with the highest number of complaints recorded at 7. The categories with the next highest number of complaints were *'Professional Conduct of Staff'* and *'Disputed Decision'* which both had 3 complaints recorded in this category.

Outcome of Complaints

37. Of the 21 complaints received, 13 were completed in the quarter as shown below:

Outcome of Complaints received and completed in the quarter				
	Not upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Total
Social Work Teams: Older Persons /Mental Health Services for Older Persons/Physical Disability/ Sensory Support services	5	0	4	9
Safeguarding and Practice Development Team	1	1	0	2
Commissioning	2	0	0	2
Total	8	1	4	13

Actions as a result of statutory complaints

38. During the period the following actions resulted from concluded complaints:

- The County-Wide Occupational Therapy Services Manager is reviewing the codes of conduct with a view to issuing further advice to staff on what does or does not constitute a conflict of interest.
- The Operations Manager OP/MHSOP/PDSI/SS has issued a reminder to staff to ensure that the assessment/re-assessment process, especially related to hospital discharge, must include a review of the history of a case so that a fullest picture can be obtained and all relevant information informs the process to establish whether a client meets the criteria for intermediate care services.
- The Operations Manager OP/MHSOP/PDSI/SS issued an instruction to all social work staff that the content of medical records should not be discussed with clients or relatives without first checking with the relevant medical personnel the meaning of the medical record, the current health status and whether or not this information has been shared with the patient and/or their relatives.

Compliments

39. There were 83 compliments received in the quarter. This represents an increase of 16 (24%) in comparison to the previous quarter.

Service Area	Compliments Received	
	Current Q2	Previous Q1
County Durham Care and Support	54	52
Social Work Teams: (Older Persons /Mental Health Services for Older Persons/Physical Disability/ Sensory Support services)	28	15
Social Work Teams (Learning Disabilities/Mental Health/Substance Misuse Services)	1	0
Total	83	67

Neighbourhood Services (NS)

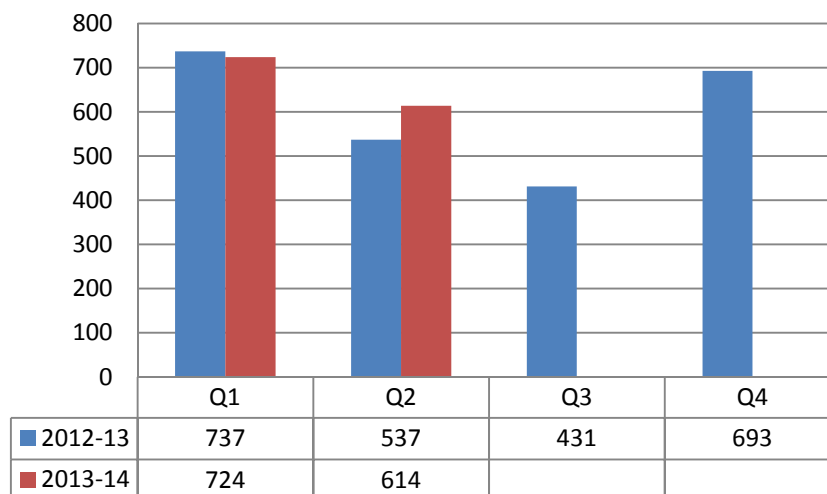
Overview

40. During quarter 2 Neighbourhood Services received 614 complaints, 134 compliments and 57 suggestions. Complaints in quarter 2 have increased by 14% when compared to the same period last year although they are below Q1 levels; compliments have increased by 100%.

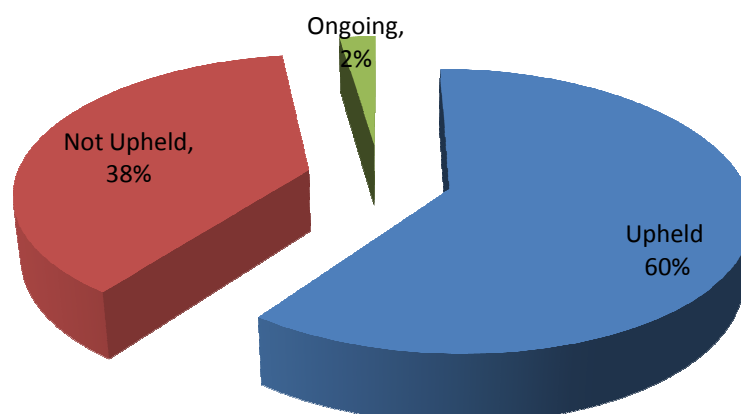
NS	Number Received											%* Change
	11/12 Total	12/13 split by quarter				12/13 Total	13/14 split by quarter				13/14	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Complaints	1,589	737	537	431	693	2,398	724	614	-	-	1338	-15
Compliments	419	75	67	108	152	402	126	134	-	-	260	45
Suggestions	415	71	55	49	40	215	62	57	-	-	114	-8

*Q2 figure 2013/14 compared with Q2 figure 2012/13

41. Analysis shows that the increase in complaints in quarter 2 compared to the same period last year is related to changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres. Further detailed information is provided under the key areas and learning section of the report. Complaints have reduced by 15% from quarter 1 2013/14. The decrease is in complaints regarding missed collections, bins not being returned to collection points, charges for replacement wheeled bins, staff attitude and telephone waiting times.



42. Further investigation of the complaints received shows that during quarter 2, 2013/14, there were 231 occasions (38%) where the complaint was not upheld, indicating that although service users were dissatisfied with the service received, the service had in fact acted properly and followed appropriate procedures.



Key Areas and Learning

43. Detailed analysis of the complaints received during quarter 2 shows that 43% of these can be attributed to the following:
- **Missed Bins:** 129 complaints were received regarding missed bins during quarter 2 2013/14. This is a 22% decrease when compared with quarter 2 2012/13.
 - **Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres:** We received 76 complaints regarding HWRCs, which is a 12% increase when compared with quarter 1 2013/14. This is due to changes in management of the HWRCs, permanent closure of some sites and the implementation of new policy for the remaining sites, resulting in reduced or amended opening hours. Complaints relate to dissatisfaction regarding HWRC closures and reduced hours, staff attitude at the sites and communication regarding materials that will be accepted.
 - **Charges for replacement wheeled bins:** 24 complaints were received from residents objecting to the £20 charge for replacement bins. Complaints of this kind have reduced by 8% since quarter 2 2012/13.
 - **Refuse staff not returning bins/containers:** 14 complaints were received from residents regarding refuse bins/containers not being returned to the correct location. This represents a 63% decrease compared to quarter 2 2012/13. Since quarter 1 2013/14, complaints regarding non-return of bins have reduced by 55%.
 - **Attitude of refuse crews:** 13 complaints were received from customers who were unhappy with the attitude of their refuse crew. This is a 24% decrease when compared with quarter 2 2012/13. Complaints of this nature have also reduced by 19% since quarter 1 2013/14.
 - **Customers being told the lines are busy / telephone waiting time:** 9 complaints were received from customers stating that they had been advised that the lines were busy or had experienced a long call waiting time. When compared with quarter 2 2012/13, this type of complaint has reduced by 31%. Complaints regarding busy telephone lines and waiting times have also reduced by 59% since quarter 1 2013/14.
44. A regular meeting, with a range of staff from Direct Services and Customer Services, named the "Customer Experience", has been set up for exchanging data, including complaints and suggestions, in order to make improvements in relation to our contact with customers. Some of the improvement actions delivered to date include:
- Re-categorisation of all complaints previously labelled as 'other'. This will improve our ability to analyse customer feedback and address improvement.
 - Establishment of a Missing Address Data Process in the CRM to enable customer requests to be processed consistently whilst the address file is updated.
 - Development of a booking system on the CRM to enable customer appointments at the first point of contact.

- Streamlining of Refuse and Recycling Service Requests
- Updated staff training and guidance manuals for Refuse and Recycling.

45. Further improvement work is continuing in relation to the work outlined below:

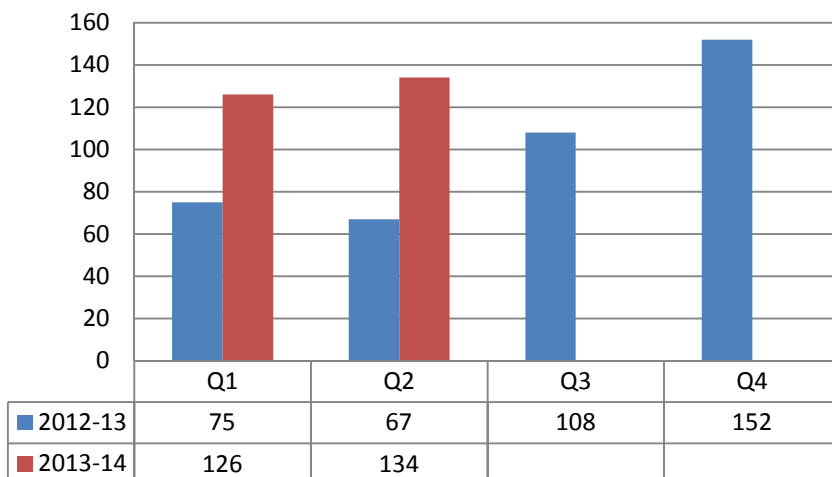
- Integration of the CRM Booking Engine and Web Payment Facility for replacement Bin Requests to enable customers to access this service online.
- Implementation of a strengthened “Repeat Missed Container” Monitoring Process, to reduce repeat missed bin complaints.
- Development of web forms for all Street Scene Service Requests, to allow customer to access services online.
- Review of Contact Logging and Monitoring, to reduce avoidable contact.
- Implementation of the Bartec system and realigned operational procedures that will improve our information systems, in relation to the refuse and recycling collection service.

46. As a part of the learning from complaints received in relation to HWRCs, a number of improvement actions were completed:

- Customers have been informed of the extensive consultation regarding the future of the sites and a revised leaflet on the changes has been distributed to customers.
- Improved signage at sites.
- Complaints regarding staff attitude have been addressed by engagement with the contractor and agreement for their staff to undertake Customer Care training

Compliments and Suggestions

47. Compliments received by NS in quarter 2 2013/14 compared to quarter 2 2012/13 have increased by 50% as illustrated in the graph below



48. The majority of compliments relate to staff from the Refuse and Recycling, Clean and Green and Customer Service teams in recognition of their support and help in resolving customer enquiries. There were a number of compliments regarding helpfulness of staff at HWRCs, despite a significant number of complaints regarding the sites. On each of these occasions, the individual officer is notified of the compliment and thanked by their line manager. Many of these relate to the professionalism, politeness and swift responses from staff.
49. The remaining compliments relate to service provision, including
- Standard of work, e.g. keeping local areas clean and tidy, carrying out remedial work, road improvements
 - Speed of work, e.g. repair to street lights, filling in pot holes.
50. A significant portion of the suggestions received relate to aspects of the refuse and recycling service, such as refuse schedules and charges for replacement containers.

Regeneration and Economic Development (RED)

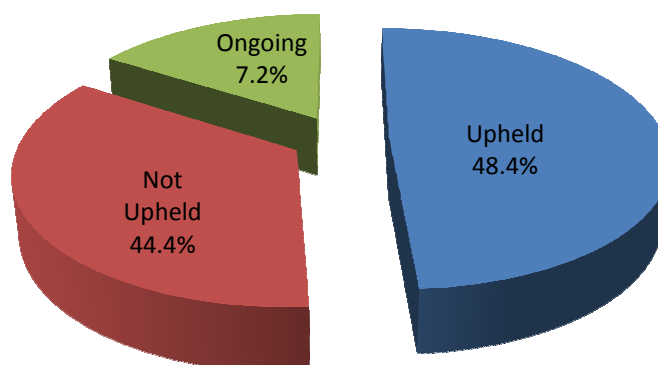
Overview

51. Between 1 July and 30 September, 128 complaints, 27 compliments and 6 suggestions were received
52. As can be seen in the table below, the level of compliments and suggestions received by RED has remained consistent. However, there has been an increase in the number of complaints received in Q2 compared to the same period last year, although below Q1 levels.

Service Grouping RED	Number Received											%* Change
	11/12 Total	12/13 split by quarter				12/13 Total	13/14 split by quarter				13/14 Total	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Complaints	336	94	95	93	105	387	93	128	-	-	221	+33
Compliments	122	38	39	37	11	125	34	27	-	-	61	-12
Suggestions	48	9	11	10	3	33	11	6	-	-	17	-45

*Q2 figure 2013/14 compared with Q2 figure 2012/13

53. During quarter 1, 44.4% of complaints were not upheld. This indicates that, although service users were dissatisfied with the service received, the service had in fact acted properly and followed appropriate procedures.



Key Areas and Learning

54. Detailed analysis of the complaints received during quarter 2 shows that 81% of these can be attributed to the following:
- Durham City Homes (DCH): 48 complaints were received, with 34 relating to the handling of repairs and maintenance issues and the associated contractors. Of the 34 Repairs and & Maintenance related complaints received, 80% of these were from tenants who had been in touch with the service previously and the complaint was for a missed appointment, work not completed or dissatisfaction with the quality of the work.
 - DCH have in place a suite of performance measures that include repairs and maintenance. During the Q2 period 4,079 responsive repairs appointments were made of which 4,046 were kept, giving a response rate of 99.2%. The average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs was 10 days and the proportion of responsive repairs completed right first time was 99.6% (5,914 right first time from 5,697 jobs completed). Further analysis and monitoring will be undertaken to identify any ongoing issues.
 - Planning and Building Control: 34 were in relation to Planning Development mainly in connection with planning decisions and building control.
 - Strategic Traffic: 22 were received by Strategic Traffic, the majority are parking and road works related.

Compliments and Suggestions

55. The service grouping received 27 compliments in quarter 2. There are generally related to staff for the service they have provided. All compliments have been passed to the relevant staff and teams and have also been raised during team meetings highlighting the importance of a positive customer focus.
56. RED received 6 suggestions during quarter 2 related to the homelessness service, parking and improvements to Durham City.

Resources (RES)

Overview

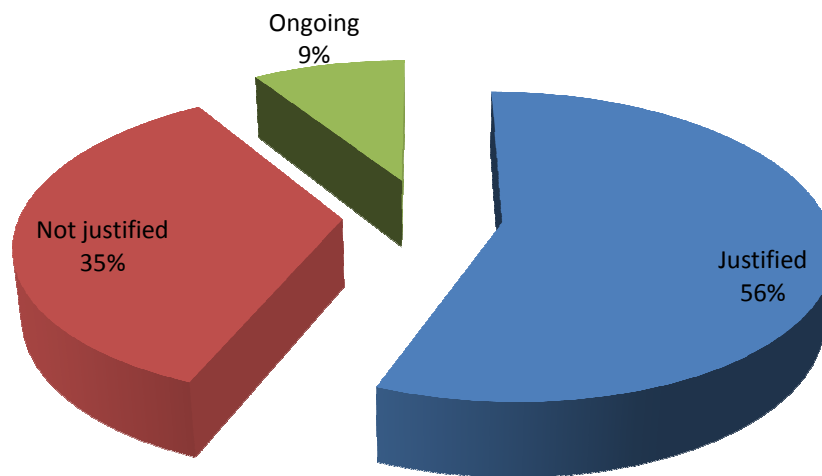
57. In the second quarter of 2013/14, Resources received 141 complaints; this represents a 22% reduction since quarter 1, and a 24% reduction compared to quarter 2 2012/13.

RES	Number Received											%* Change
	11/12 Total	12/13 split by quarter				12/13 Total	13/14 split by quarter				13/14	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Complaints	327	299	185	157	168	809	180	141	-	-	321	-24
Compliments	69	16	21	15	17	69	14	10	-	-	24	-52

Suggestions	24	11	7	0	6	24	3	5	-	-	8	-29
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*Q2 figure 2013/14 compared with Q2 figure 2012/13

58. The majority of quarter 2 complaints (124) related to the Revenues & Benefits Service and were received in August, a traditionally heavy period for staff taking annual leave
59. The proportion of complaints responded to within the 10 days standard deteriorated from 64% in Q1 to 54% in Q2 2013/14.
60. Of the 141 complaints received in Q2 for Resources, 56% were either justified or part justified (60% in Q1), 35% were not justified (24% in Q1) and 9% were unresolved at the point of reporting (16% in Q1).



Key Areas and Learning

61. Detailed analysis of the complaints received during quarter 2 shows that 94% of these can be attributed to the following:
 - **Benefits Service:** The Benefits service received 66 complaints, 7 of which (10%) were received from landlords or their agents, either about speed of processing or disputing payments paid directly to tenants. Detailed analysis indicates that 18 (27%) complaints related to claims processing issues during the summer period. Workloads are very closely monitored to minimise customer disruption wherever possible. The service continues to engage with both internal and external stakeholders including Customer Services, landlords, Department of Work and Pensions, Welfare Rights, other welfare agencies and local authority benchmarking groups.
 - **Revenues Service:** The Revenues Service received 58 complaints, a reduction of 37% on the previous quarter. Analysis indicates that 24% of complaints related to aspects of recovery action, with 10% to delays in processing changes or responding to correspondence, representing a 50% reduction compared to quarter 1.
 - **Contacting the Registration Service:** Five complaints related to difficulties making contact with staff at Registration Offices. It is anticipated that customer service for Registration Service customers will improve significantly when currently vacant

posts are filled by permanent staff; in the meantime, temporary part-time staff are providing cover. Three complaints related to Committee Services, 2 related to proceedings at committee meetings and one to minutes of a committee meeting.

Compliments and Suggestions

62. There were 10 compliments received into the Resources service grouping in quarter 2 2013/14.
63. The majority of compliments related to the Registration Service for conducting wedding ceremonies and to the excellent service provided by individual members of staff in Revenues and Benefits.
64. Five suggestions were received for Revenues and Benefits regarding a review of Benefit notification letters and the use of stamped addressed envelopes. The service is always looking at opportunities to improve systems and the range of services on offer to customers. Due to legislative requirements Benefits notification letters can be confusing; work has already started to review all notification letters and make amendments where legislation allows.
65. The Revenues and Benefits Service is committed to service improvement and is continually reviewing processes and procedures as well as working with software suppliers to ensure that the service functions as efficiently as possible.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO): current activity

66. During the quarter the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) made initial enquiries / initiated investigations into 22 matters relating to a range of complaints concerning:
 - 6 x Benefits/Council Tax issues – Two of the investigations remain ongoing and one was discontinued as it was outside of the Ombudsman jurisdiction. The Ombudsman found no fault by the Council in respect of the other 3 complaints and as such discontinued their involvement.
 - 3 x Adult Social Care issues – One complaint was determined to be outside of the Ombudsman jurisdiction. Investigations into the other 2 complaints were also discontinued.
 - 2 x Children's Services issues – One case was discontinued as it was outside of Ombudsman jurisdiction. The Ombudsman has made initial enquiries on the other case, the outcome of which are awaited.
 - 2 x School Admissions Appeals issues – Enquiries have been made by the Ombudsman on both cases, the outcomes of which are awaited.
 - 1 x Education issue – Enquiries have been made by the Ombudsman, the outcome of which is awaited.
 - 2 x Highways & Transport issues – The Ombudsman has made enquiries in relation to both cases, the outcomes of which are awaited.
 - 1 x Fixed Penalty Notice issue – The Ombudsman has made enquiries, the outcome of which is awaited.
 - 2 x Planning & Development issues – One case closed as it was outside of the Ombudsman jurisdiction, the other case remains ongoing.

- 1 x Noise Nuisance/Anti-Social Behaviour issue – The Ombudsman has made enquiries and the case is ongoing.
 - 1 x Environmental issue (tree removal) - The Ombudsman decided not to initiate a full investigation and as such discontinued their involvement.
 - 1 x Refuse Bin issue – The Ombudsman decided not to initiate a full investigation and as such discontinued their involvement.
67. The Ombudsman delivered decisions on 11 matters which had been subject to investigations that had been initiated prior to the beginning of the quarter. These matters can be summarised as follows:
- 2 x School Admission Appeals issues – All three investigations were concluded, the Ombudsman found there was no fault by the Council.
 - 1 x Highways (Rights of Way) issue – The investigation was completed and found no fault by the Council.
 - 3 x Education & Children’s Services issues – the Ombudsman found no fault by the Council in respect of one complaint. The other 2 investigations concluded that there was identifiable fault by the Council and financial remedies were subsequently actioned.
 - 4 x Planning issues – 3 investigations were completed and the Ombudsman concluded that there was no fault by the Council in those cases. The Ombudsman discontinued the investigation in the fourth case.
 - 1 Benefits & Tax issue - The investigation was completed and found no fault by the Council.
68. During the quarter the Ombudsman also notified the Council of the outcome in relation to a range of matters which were not subject to full investigation. The Ombudsman’s investigators reached their decisions on the basis of the details supplied by complainants, supplemented in some instances with contextual information from Council officers. These matters can be summarised as follows:
- 1 x Highways (pothole) issue – The matter was determined to be outside of the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.
 - 1 x Fly tipping issue – The matter had been reported to the Ombudsman prematurely and was therefore referred back to the Council to deal with under the complaints procedure.
 - 1 x Planning issue – Investigation not initiated.
 - 1 x Environmental (Garden Waste) issue – Investigation not initiated.
 - 1 x Environmental (Flooding) issue – Investigation not initiated.
 - 2 x Environmental (Refuse Bins) issues – Investigations were not initiated.
 - 1 x Council Tax issue – Investigation not initiated.
 - 1 x Welfare Rights issue – Investigation not initiated.
 - 1 x Education & Children’s Services issue - The matter was determined to be outside of the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.
 - 1 x Enforcement issue - The matter had been reported to the Ombudsman prematurely and was therefore referred back to the Council to deal with under the complaints procedure.

Learning Outcomes

69. In respect of one of the Planning complaints which was closed during the period, the Planning department did report on learning outcomes/actions taken, despite the Ombudsman finding of no evidence of maladministration. Comments made were as follows:-

Whilst the Ombudsman did not find any fault the underlying issue related to an engineering drawing which should site levels, the quality of the drawing made it difficult to accurately determine proposed site levels. Officers have been requested to ensure that where drawings showing site levels are submitted with applications that they are closely vetted to ensure that they accurately depict existing and proposed levels.

Review of the complaints process

70. The Council's Customer First Strategy is in the process of being refreshed and includes a review of the current Corporate Complaints Policy and a revised mechanism for capturing learning outcomes. This work cuts across all service areas of the council and is aimed at both streamlining the processes currently in place and implementing an approach to working much more closely with service areas to use customer feedback, and in particular customer demand instigated by service failure, to ensure that improvement actions are implemented. Work is also currently underway to review the way in which complaints are captured on the CRM system to enable the system to capture more detailed information and improve the work flow which should result in better reporting.

Recommendations and Reasons

71. CMT to note the report

Contact:

Mary Readman

Customer Relations, Policy and Performance Manager

Tel: 03000 268161

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**Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

25 November 2013



**Children and Adults Services Annual
Representations Report 2012/13**

Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director for Children and Adults Services

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CIOSC) of the key messages in relation to the management and handling of Representations of Children and Adults Social Care Services during the period 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013.
2. Following changes to the reporting path for Representations within Durham County Council (DCC), the Children and Adults Services (CAS) Annual Representations Report 2012/13 will now be considered by the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background

3. This Annual Report on statutory complaints is the first combined report for CAS; previously Children's and Adult Services Annual Representations Reports were reported separately. The report is published under the provisions and requirements of the '*Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*' and the '*Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*'. The reporting format reflects the requirements detailed in the Regulations.
4. Non-Statutory (Corporate) Complaints and Compliments are reported to and approved by CMT on a quarterly basis. Neighbourhood Services lead on the production of the quarterly and annual corporate complaints, compliments and suggestions report and the extract relating to CAS is outlined in Appendix 2 for information.

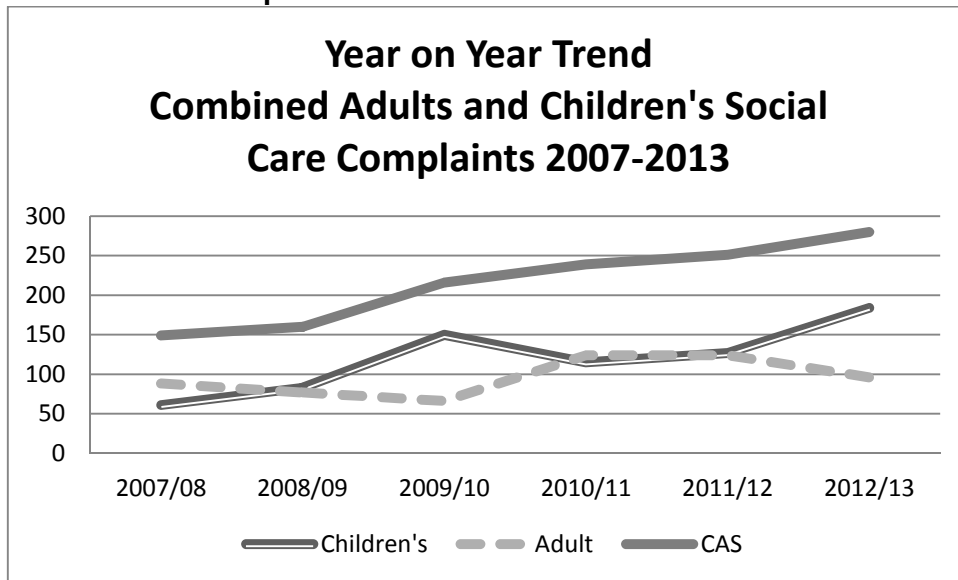
Content

5. The CAS Annual Representations Report 2012/13 (Appendix 3) brings together information previously reported to CAS Management Team (CASMT) on a quarterly basis on the management of statutory representations from service users, their families and carers and includes details of complaints as well as compliments.

Key Messages – Statutory Complaints

6. In 2012/13, a total of 276 statutory complaints were received by CAS.
- 184 complaints related to children’s social care services.
 - 145 of the 184 children’s social care complaints were managed on an informal basis and 39 children’s social care complaints were managed formally.
 - Within children’s social care complaints, a complaint is noted as informal where it is resolved directly by the team involved, quickly and locally and in collaboration with the complainant. If an informal complaint cannot be resolved within 10 working days, it then is managed as a formal complaint at Stage 1 in alignment with the statutory procedure.
 - 92 complaints related to adult social care services.
 - Children’s social care complaints have increased by 25.2% when compared to the previous reporting year whilst complaints about adult social care services have decreased by 25.8% over the same period. When evaluating the reasons for this increase, there are no immediate causes. The number of complaints received varied across a wide range of themes although poor service and staff conduct were cited in a number of cases.
 - The graph overleaf illustrates a steady overall increase in the number of statutory complaints received over the preceding 7 years. Complaints across CAS as a whole are increasing; however, the increase is attributable to complaints in relation to children’s social care services. Whilst complaints about adult care services are approximately at the same level in 2013 as they were in 2007, there are 3 times as many complaints in 2013 as there were in 2007 in relation to complaints about children’s services.
 - The increase that can be seen from 2009/10 to 2011/12 in relation to adult social care complaints is largely as a result of changes to financial charging for social care services linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan. These changes were unpopular for some service users which led to the increase in complaints over this period. Complaints have decreased in the last reporting year and Durham has the third lowest rate of complaints in comparison to benchmarking neighbours.
 - The increase in complaints about children’s social care over the period 2007/08 to 2009/10 is largely attributable to improvements in the way in which complaints were recorded, reported and monitored by the Complaints Officer within a central team. Complaints decreased between 2009/10 and 2010/11, levelled over the period 2009/10 to 2011/12 and have increased by 25% in the last year. Despite this, Durham continues to have the lowest number of formal complaints in comparison to benchmarking neighbours in the region and one of the lowest numbers of stage 1 complaints that progress to stages 2 and 3 of the statutory complaints procedure.

Graph 1: Year on Year Trend 2007-2013



- Of the CAS formal complaints, 99.2% were acknowledged within the timescale of 2 working days. This represents an improvement from 2011/12 where 98.7% of formal complaints across Children's and Adult's services were acknowledged within timescale.
- Of the 184 complaints received in relation to children's social care, 145 were concluded informally and within 10 working days of receipt and 39 children's social care complaints were managed formally. Of these 39 complaints, 2 were received and subsequently withdrawn. Of the remaining complaints 33 were addressed at Stage 1, 14 (39.4%) were resolved within the 20 working day timescale for Stage 1 complaints with 19 complaints (57.6%) resolved outside of the timescale. There were 4 Stage 2 complaints, 1 was resolved within timescale (25%) with 3 exceeding the timescale (75%).
- For complaints relating to adult social care, 88 complaints were concluded at the year end, with 4 ongoing. Of the 88 completed complaints, 100% were completed within the individual timescales agreed in the Complaints Resolution Plan.
- Over half of all complaints concluded at the end of the reporting year in CAS were not upheld (52.8%). A further 26.9% complaints were partially upheld and 20.3% were upheld. In comparison to previous years, the number of complaints not upheld is increasing; in 2011/12 the figure for CAS was 46.7% of all complaints not upheld and in 2010/11 the figure was 44.5% of all complaints not upheld.
- *'Professional Conduct of Staff'* constituted the category with the highest number of complaints in relation to children's social care, being recorded in 17 (43.6%) of the formal complaints received. In relation to adult social care

complaints, *'Disputed Decisions'* constituted the category with the highest number of complaints relating to 23 complaints (25%).

- *Parents* constituted the largest cohort of complainants in complaints about children's services (60%). In complaints about adult social care, *Relatives (non-parent)* constituted the highest cohort of complainants at 48.9%. These complainant types have consistently constituted the largest cohorts over previous reporting years.
- Based on age profiles 16 (41%) of the 39 formal children's complaints were made on behalf of boys aged 2-18, and 23 (59%) were made on behalf of girls aged 1-15. In relation to adult's complaints, twice as many complaints were made on behalf of males aged 18-64 than females (66% as opposed to 33%).
- Four complaints were received during the year that involved both adult social care and health services. One case involved the Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and three cases involved the former NHS County Durham and Darlington – Commissioning Support.
- During the year, CAS declined to consider 8 complaints – 1 involving children's social care services and 7 involving adults social care services. The children's case and 5 of the adult cases were declined on the grounds that they were significantly outside of the time limitation period of 12 months. In the remaining 2 cases the complaints were declined on the grounds that they did not fall within the jurisdiction of DCC.

Key Messages – Benchmarking Comparisons for Statutory Complaints

7. A benchmarking exercise was undertaken with other Local Authorities (LAs) in the North East region and the tables below summarise the information received.

Complaints relating to Children's Social Care Services

Local Authority	Total Number of Formal Complaints	Rate of complaints per 1000 0-19 population	% of Stage 1 complaints progressed to Stage 2 and 3 of the complaints procedure
Durham	37	0.32	10.8%
A	87	2.39	16%
B	37	0.83	0%
C	21	0.92	16.6%
D	17	0.55	29.4%
E	129	2.09	9.3%
F	36	0.79	12.8%

The benchmarking information shows that:

- Durham has the lowest rate of formal complaints per 1000 0-19 population.
- Durham has the 3rd lowest percentage of Stage 1 complaints progressing to Stages 2 and 3 of the formal complaints procedure.

Complaints relating to Adult Social Care Services

Local Authority	Total Number of Complaints	Rate of complaints per 1000 18+ population
Durham	92	0.22
A	31	0.29
B	30	0.19
C	14	0.19
D	33	0.30
E	176	0.79
F	69	0.43
G	32	0.27
H	71	0.28

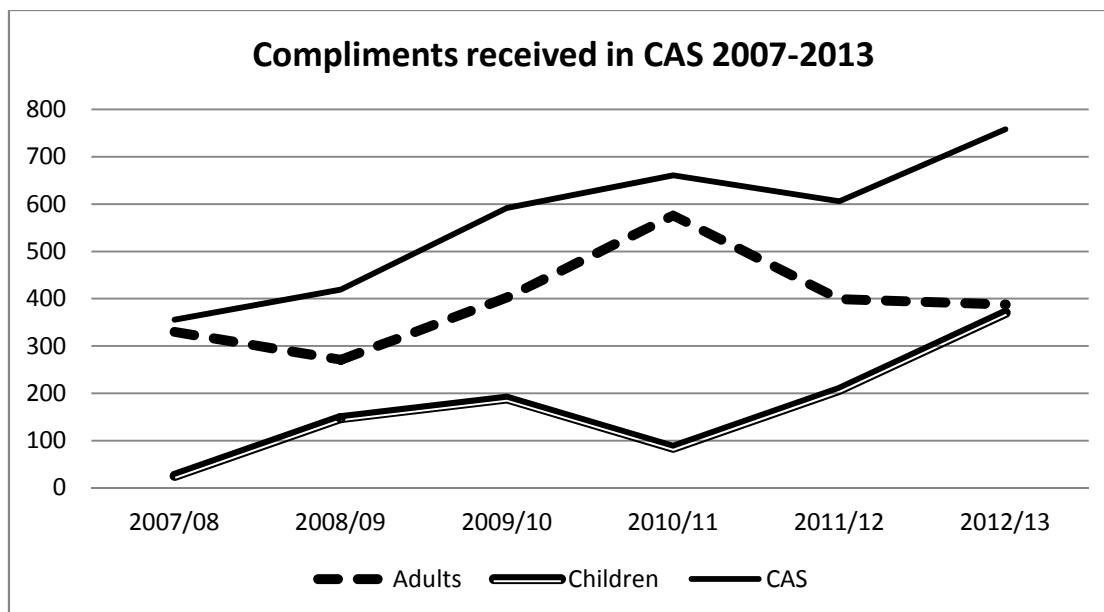
The benchmarking information shows that:

- County Durham has the 3rd lowest rate of complaints per 1000 18+ years population.

Key Messages – Compliments in Statutory Services

8. In the reporting year a total of 758 compliments were received by CAS.
 - Of the 758 compliments about statutory services, 370 related to children’s social care and 388 to adult social care.
 - Overall, there has been an increase in compliments of 25.1% in comparison to the previous year (when 606 compliments were received across children’s and adult services).
 - CAS has seen a steady increase in compliments in the preceding 7 years with compliments regarding children’s social care and compliments regarding adult social care reaching similar levels for the first time as the graph overleaf shows. Partly attributable for this increase is due to improvements in the way compliments are captured and recorded in Children’s services and the awareness of sending compliments to the Complaints Officer for reporting.

Graph 2: Compliments received in CAS 2007-2013



- In CAS, the ratio of compliments to all complaints received is 2.8:1. This represents an increase on the previous year when the ratio of compliments to complaints was 2.2:1.
- For compliments relating to children’s social care services, the intervention service- Copelaw Activities received 96 (25.9%) of the total compliments, followed by the Community Support Team (13.2%) and Aycliffe Secure Services (10.8%).
- For compliments relating to adult social care services, County Durham Care and Support (CDCS) received 245 (63%) of the total number of compliments, with Older People’s/Older People’s Mental Health/Physical Disabilities/Sensory Support service receiving 135 (34.8%) compliments.
- Examples of compliments and themes are contained within the report under Parts Three and Four.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

9. During 2012/13 the LGO issued 8 Final Decisions in adult social care cases and 4 in children’s social care cases.
 - In 5 of the 8 adult cases the LGO declined to have further involvement on the grounds that public expense could not be justified as maladministration had not occurred. In the remaining 3 cases the complainants were significantly outside of the limitation period of 12 months and the LGO discontinued their involvement on those grounds.
 - In 3 of the 4 children’s cases the LGO declined to fully investigate on the grounds that public expense could not be justified as maladministration had not occurred. In the 4th case the complaint was not progressed as the

Ombudsman determined the complaint to be outside of their jurisdiction and discontinued involvement on those grounds.

Remedies and Learning Outcomes

10. Learning outcomes extracted and acted upon in the reporting year have been broken down into 4 main categories: Policies and Procedures, Communications, Reports and Social Work Practice. These are detailed within the report in Part Five.
11. Examples include staff being reminded that they must ensure:
 - a. that standards within policies and procedures are adhered to;
 - b. that consistent and accurate terminology is used within communications;
 - c. that reports and case records are accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive.

Conclusions

12. Over the preceding 7 years, there has been a general upward trend for complaints and compliments. It is reassuring to note that for every complaint received, nearly 3 times as many compliments are received; however, the service must continue to learn from the complaints received and take action to improve.
13. The rate of complaints received in comparison to population size also shows positive performance. In comparison to other Local Authorities in the region, County Durham has the lowest number of children's social care complaints and one of the lowest for Adult Care complaints. County Durham also has one of the lowest numbers of Stage 1 complaints progressing to Stages 2 and 3 of the statutory children's social care complaints procedure.
14. The greatest number of complaints received relates to disputed decisions and poor service. This is an area that must continue to be monitored as financial constraints on the Local Authority continue to tighten.
15. A collaborative approach with the complainant to reach complaint resolution continues to develop. An approach based on local resolution and one where the complainant is central to the discussion and resolution of the complaint is proactively encouraged.
16. It is positive to note that over half of the complaints received were not upheld.

Next Steps

17. The key messages from the Representations Annual Report 2012/13 contribute to the CAS approach to quality and improvement. A strategic action plan will be developed in quarter 4 and key messages from the Representations Annual Report will assist in shaping the content of this. The actions taken as a result of learning outcomes from complaints demonstrate that CAS is continuously striving to learn from clients' experiences and avoid

recurrences of situations that have given rise to complaint and to ensure continuous professional and service improvements.

Recommendations

18. It is recommended that Members:

- Note the key messages of the CAS Representations Annual Report 2012/13.

Contact: Peter Appleton, Head of Planning and Service Strategy
Tel: 03000 267 381

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance	Complaints can lead to financial claims for compensation in extreme cases.
Staffing	None.
Risk	Upheld complaints can lead to reputational risk for the local authority.
Equality and diversity/ /Public Sector Equality Duty	Consistent with national and local requirements. Representations Procedure takes into account equality and diversity and ensures accessibility. The profile of complainants in relation to equality and diversity is consistent with the equality and diversity profile of County Durham.
Accommodation	None
Crime and disorder	Any complaint made in relation to hate crime will be redirected to the appropriate officer to progress under the relevant policy and procedure.
Human rights	Compatible with Human Rights Act – able to record and respond to complaints about alleged breaches.
Consultation	None.
Procurement	None.
Disability Issues	Taken into consideration within the procedure.
Legal Implications	Complaints Team work closely with Legal Services when appropriate.

Appendix 2: Summary of CAS Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions 2012/13

1. From 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, a total of 33 corporate complaints were received in CAS; 4 in quarter one, 15 in quarter two, 4 in quarter three and 10 in quarter four. See the table below.

Q1 12/13 Total	Q2 12/13 Total	Q3 12/13 Total	Q4 12/13 Total	Total of Corporate Complaints Received in 2012-2013
4	15	4	10	33

Acknowledgement within 2 working days 2012/13

2. Of these complaints 100% were acknowledged within 2 working days during the period 2012/13.

Corporate Complaints responded to within 10 working days 2012/13

3. Of the 33 corporate complaints received in 2012/13, 73% (24) were responded to within 10 working days. The 9 (27%) not responded to within timescale were complex cases, 1 of which progressed to Stage 2.

Service Breakdown of Corporate Complaints received 2012/13

4. The breakdown of the 33 corporate complaints is as shown in the table below.

Service Area	Q1 12/13	Q2 12/13	Q3 12/13	Q4 12/13	Total
Commissioning	1	0	0	6	7
Adult Care	0	2	0	0	2
Planning & Service Strategy	0	0	0	2	2
Early Intervention & Involvement	2**	5	2	1	8
Education	0	5	1	1*	7
Children's Care	1	3	1	0	4
Totals	4	15	4	10	33

* This complaint also involved Commissioning

** This includes Social Inclusion which was previously part of the former AW&H Service and no longer exists

Outcome of Corporate Complaints Completed 2012/13

5. The following table shows the outcome of complaints completed during 2012/13 by Service Area:

Service Area	Justified	Partly Justified	Not justified	Resolved at first point of contact	Ongoing	Total
Commissioning	0	1	6	0	0	7
Adult Care	1	0	1	0	0	2
Planning & Service Strategy	0	0	2	0	0	2
Early Intervention & Involvement	2**	2	7	0	0	10
Education	3	1	2*	0	0	6
Children's Care	0	2	4	0	0	6
Total	5	6	22	0	0	33

* This complaint also involved Commissioning

** This includes Social Inclusion which was previously part of the former AW&H Service and no longer exists

6. Issues raised in corporate complaints have been reported in quarterly reports throughout 2012/13.

Compliments and Suggestions 2012/13

7. Between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013, a total of 398 compliments and 11 suggestions were received by CAS.

Learning Outcomes

8. There were no learning outcomes identified.

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Children and Adults Services

ANNUAL STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS REPORT CHILDREN AND ADULTS SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2012/13

**ANNUAL REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
CHILDREN AND ADULTS SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2012/13**

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Part One - Introduction

Welcome to Durham County Council's (DCC) Children and Adults Services (CAS) Annual Report detailing representations made in relation to Children and Adults Social Care Services. The report covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

The report presents children and adults statutory representations in a combined report for the first time to reflect the new CAS service grouping.

The report is published under the provisions and requirements of the relevant regulations: *The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*, and the *Local Authority Social Services and the National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*. The reporting format reflects the requirements detailed in the Regulations. The Regulations for children and young people's complaints are different to those for adults complaints and for this reason the data and analysis is presented in individual sections within the report.

Complaints are valued as an important source of feedback from service users on the quality of services provided by CAS. Each complaint is investigated and findings are fed back to the complainant and various remedies provided. Complaints also provide opportunities to learn lessons and continually improve services to prevent a repeat of any failures. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to publish data on compliments it is important that the fullest picture is obtained about what service users, their carers and families, and other representatives think about the services and the professionalism of staff they experience. Compliments equally provide the opportunity to learn lessons about what works best.

The report is broken down into six parts and provides an overview of the following areas in the reporting period:

- the numbers and composition of complaints and compliments received;
- information in relation to the complainant;
- performance data in relation to the handling of complaints; and
- lessons learnt and actions taken to improve service delivery.

Part Two - Key Messages for CAS

Number of Complaints Received

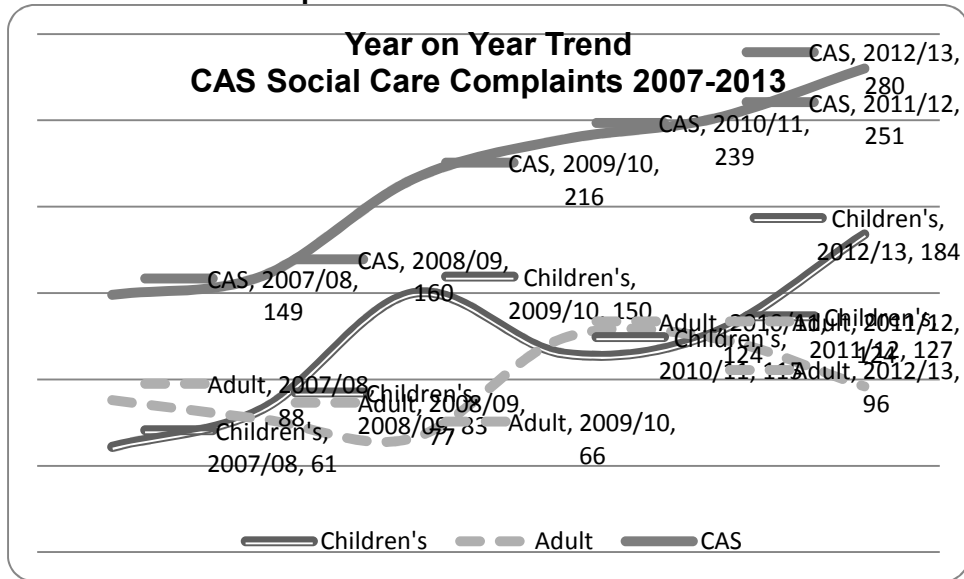
In 2012/13, a total of 276 complaints were received by CAS; 184 related to children's social care services and 92 related to adults social care services. There has been a 1.9% increase in CAS complaints when comparing with the number of complaints received in the previous year (271). Children's social care complaints have increased by 25.2% in comparison to the previous reporting year whilst complaints about adult services have decreased by 25.8% over the same period.

The graph overleaf illustrates a steady overall increase in the number of statutory complaints received over the preceding 7 years. Complaints across CAS as a whole are increasing, however, the increase is attributable to complaints in relation to children's social care services. Whilst complaints about adult care services are approximately at the same level in 2013 as they were in 2007, there are 3 times as many complaints in 2013 as there were in 2007 in relation to complaints about children's services.

The spike that can be seen from 2009/10 to 2011/12 in relation to adult social care complaints is largely as a result of changes to financial charging for social care services linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan. These changes were unpopular and unwelcome for some service users which led to the increase in complaints over this period. Complaints have decreased in the last reporting year and Durham has the third lowest rate of complaints in comparison to benchmarking neighbours.

The increase in complaints about children's social care services over the period 2007/08 to 2009/10 is largely attributable to improvements in the way in which complaints were captured, reported and monitored by the Complaints Officer within a central team. Complaints decreased between 2009/10 and 2010/11, levelled over the period 2009/10 to 2011/12 and have increased by 25% in the last year. Despite this, Durham continues to have the lowest number of formal complaints in comparison to benchmarking neighbours in the region and one of the lowest numbers of stage 1 complaints that progress to stages 2 and 3 of the statutory complaints procedure.

Graph 1: Year on Year Trend 2007-2013



Composition of Complaints Received

Of the 184 complaints received in relation to children’s social care, 145 were handled informally and within 10 working days of receipt and 39 were managed formally. Of these 39 complaints, 2 were received and subsequently withdrawn. Of the remaining complaints, 33 were addressed at Stage 1, 14 (39.4%) were resolved within the 20 working day timescale for Stage 1 complaints with 19 complaints (57.6%) resolved outside of the timescale. There were 4 Stage 2 complaints, 1 was resolved within timescale (25%) with 3 exceeding the timescale (75%).

A complaint is noted as informal where it is resolved directly by the team involved, quickly and locally and in collaboration with the complainant. If an informal complaint cannot be resolved within 10 working days, it then is managed as a formal complaint at Stage 1 of the procedure.

For complaints related to adult social care, all complaints must be resolved within 6 months of receipt within timescales agreed with the complainant (see Part Four for more details). There is one stage to this procedure.

Benchmarking Comparisons

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken with other Local Authorities (LAs) in the North East region and the tables overleaf summarise the information received.

Complaints Relating to Children's Social Care Services

Local Authority	Total Number of Formal Complaints	0-19 Population*	Rate of Complaints per 1000 0-19 Population	% of Stage 1 Complaints Progressed to Stage 2 and 3 of the Complaints Procedure
Durham	37	115, 500	0.32	10.8%
A	87	36, 300	2.39	16%
B	37	44, 800	0.83	0%
C	21	22, 900	0.92	16.6%
D	17	31, 200	0.55	29.4%
E	129	62, 600	2.09	9.3%
F	36	45, 300	0.79	12.8%

* 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

The benchmarking information shows that:

- Durham has the lowest rate of formal complaints per 1000 0-19 population.
- Durham has the 3rd lowest percentage of Stage 1 complaints progressing to stages 2 and 3 of the formal complaints procedure.

Complaints relating to Adult Social Care Services

Local Authority	Total Number of Complaints	18+ Population**	Rate of Complaints per 1000 18+ Population
Durham	92	414, 109	0.22
A	31	107, 107	0.29
B	30	161, 113	0.19
C	14	71, 946	0.19
D	33	107, 475	0.30
E	176	221, 054	0.79
F	69	159, 783	0.43
G	32	118, 928	0.27
H	71	255, 103	0.28

** ONS Mid year population estimates 2013, Health and Social Care Information Centre

The benchmarking information shows that:

- County Durham has the 3rd lowest rate of complaints per 1000 18+ years population.

Number of Complaints Upheld

Over half of all complaints complete at the year end were not upheld (52.8%). 26.8% of complaints were partially upheld and 20.3% were upheld. In comparison to previous years, the number of complaints not upheld is

increasing; in 2011/12 the figure for CAS was 46.7% of all complaints not upheld and in 2010/11 the figure was 44.5% of all complaints not upheld.

In children's social care complaints, of the 32 Stage 1 complaints completed by the end of the reporting year, 6 (18.8%) were upheld in full and 15 (46.9%) were partially upheld. There were 11 (34.3%) complaints that were not upheld. Of the 3 Stage 2 complaints completed by the end of the reporting year, 2 complaints were upheld (66.6%) and one complaint was partially upheld (33.3%).

In adult social care complaints, of the 88 complaints completed by the end of the reporting year, 17 (19.3%) were upheld in full and 17 (19.3%) were partially upheld. There were 54 (61.4%) complaints that were not upheld.

Percentage of Complaint Acknowledgements within 2 Timescale

Of CAS formal complaints, 99.2% were acknowledged within the timescale of 2 working days. This represents an improvement from 2011/12 where 98.7% of formal complaints were acknowledged within timescale.

Complaints Completed within Timescale

Of the 33 children's social care complaints addressed at Stage 1, 14 (39.4%) were resolved within the 20 working day timescale for Stage 1 complaints with 19 complaints (57.6%) resolved outside of the timescale. There were 4 Stage 2 complaints, 1 was resolved within timescale (25%) with 3 exceeding the timescale (75%).

For complaints relating to adult social care, 88 complaints were concluded at the year end with 4 ongoing. Of the 88 completed complaints, 100% were completed within the individual timescales agreed in the Complaints Resolution Plan (CRP).

Subject Matter of Complaints

'Professional Conduct of Staff' constituted the category with the highest number of complaints in relation to children being recorded in 17 (43.6%) out of the 39 formal complaints received. In relation to adult social care complaints, *'Disputed Decisions'* constituted the category with the highest number of complaints relating to 23 complaints (25%).

Complaints Referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

During the reporting year, the LGO issued 4 Final Decisions in children's social care complaints. In 3 of the cases the LGO declined to fully investigate on the grounds that public expense could not be upheld as maladministration had not occurred. In the other cases the complaint was not progressed as the Ombudsman determined the complaint to be outside of their jurisdiction.

The LGO received 2 further statutory complaints which were still open at the year end. One of these cases has subsequently been investigated by the Ombudsman; the other case remained open at the year end pending further investigation by the local authority.

During the reporting year, the LGO issued 8 Final Decisions in adult social care complaints. In 5 cases the LGO declined to have further involvement on the grounds that public expense could not be upheld as no maladministration had occurred. In 3 cases the complainants were significantly outside of the limitation period of 12 months and the LGO discontinued their involvement on those grounds.

Complaints by Complainant Type

In formal complaints received about children's social care services, '*Parents*' constituted the largest cohort of complainants (60%). In complaints about adult social care services, '*Relatives (non-parent)*' constituted the highest cohort of complainant at 48.9%. These complainant types have consistently constituted the largest cohorts over previous reporting years.

Age Profiles of Service Users Making Complaints

Using information based on the eldest child in a family, 16 (41%) of the 39 formal children's social care services complaints were made on behalf of boys aged 2-18 years, and 23 (59%) were made on behalf of girls aged 1-15 years. In relation to adult's complaints, twice as many complaints were made in respect of males aged 18-64 years than females aged 18-64 years (66% as opposed to 33%).

Duty to Co-operate – Joint Adult Social Care Services and NHS Complaints

Four complaints were received during the year that involved both adult social care and health services. One case involved the Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and three cases involved the former NHS County Durham and Darlington – Commissioning Support.

Declined Complaints

During the year, CAS declined to consider 8 complaints – 1 involving children's social care and 7 involving adult's social care. The children's case and 5 of the adult cases were declined on the grounds that they were significantly outside of the time limitation period of 12 months. In the remaining 2 cases the complaints were declined on the grounds that they did not fall within the jurisdiction of DCC.

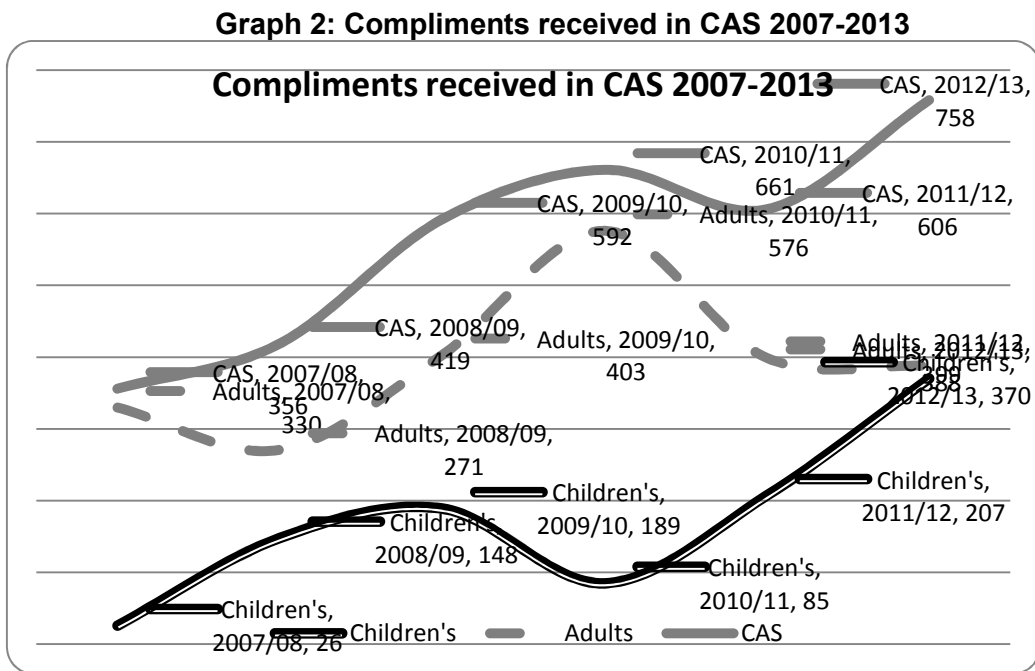
Remedies and Learning Outcomes

Examples of the remedies used to achieve resolution and the learning and practice developments that have accrued from complaints are provided in Part Five (pages 27-30) of the report.

Number of Compliments Received

In the reporting year a total of 758 compliments were received by CAS; 370 in relation to children's social care and 388 in relation to adult social care. This represents an increase of 25.1% in comparison to the previous year (606 compliments).

As outlined in graph 2 below, CAS has seen a steady increase in compliments in the preceding 7 years with compliments regarding children's social care and compliments regarding adult social care being equal for the first time. Partly attributable for this increase is due to improvements in the way compliments were captured and recorded in children's services and the awareness of sending compliments to the Complaints Officer for reporting.



Ratio of Compliments to Complaints

The ratio of compliments to all complaints received is 2.8:1. This represents an increase on the previous year when the ratio of compliments to complaints was 2.2:1 and is positive.

Compliments by Service Area

For compliments relating to children's social care, Copelaw Activities received 96 (25.9%) of the total compliments, followed by the Community Support Team (13.2%) and Aycliffe Secure Services (10.8%).

For compliments relating to adult social care, County Durham Care and Support (CDCS) received 245 (63%) of the total number of compliments, with Older People's/Older People's Mental Health/Physical Disabilities/Sensory Support service receiving 135 (34.8%) compliments.

Examples of compliments received and themes are contained within the report in Parts Three and Four.

Part Three - Representations relating to Children's Social Care Services

Context

This part of the report presents the data for representations relating to children's social care services received during the reporting year 2012/13. It reflects the publication requirements of *The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*. Locally-agreed reporting information is also provided.

The Regulations for children's social care complaints detail that complaints should be managed and resolved in 3 Stages:

- Stage 1 (local resolution) which has a target timescale of 10 working days and up to 20 days if requested;
- Stage 2 (independent investigation) which has a timescale of 25-65 working days from the complaint details being agreed; and
- Stage 3 (Review Panel) which has a timescale of up to 50 working days.

When a complaint is received it is risk-assessed to ensure that there are no safeguarding or other procedural issues that might supersede the complaints procedure; dates checked to ensure that it is within the 12 month limitation period (which may be waived in certain circumstances at the discretion of the local authority); and necessary consents obtained if the person making the complaint is doing so on someone else's behalf.

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint heard under the regulations, they can refer outstanding issues to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) who will determine their course of action dependant on the issues presented within the complaint.

Number of Complaints Received

In 2012/13 a total of 184 complaints were received and progressed under the Children's Social Care Complaints Regulations. This represents an increase of 25.2% on the 147 complaints received in 2011/2012.

Of the 184 complaints received:

- 145 were resolved at an informal level;
- 35 were formal Stage 1 complaints; and
- 4 were formal Stage 2 complaints.

This report contains performance information in relation to the 39 formal complaints received, of which 37 (94.9%) were concluded by the year end (34 at Stage 1 and 3 at Stage 2).

Number of Complaints Upheld

Of the 34 Stage 1 complaints concluded by the end of the reporting year, 6 (17.6%) were upheld in full and 15 (44.1%) were partially upheld. There were 11 (32.4%) complaints that were not upheld, and 2 (5.9%) were withdrawn.

Of the 3 Stage 2 complaints completed:

- Complaint 1 contained 2 statutory elements, 1 of which was partially upheld and 1 of which was not upheld. Overall this is noted on the table below as *Partially Upheld*.
- Complaint 2 contained 4 statutory elements, all of which were upheld and is noted on the table below as *Upheld*.
- Complaint 3 contained 19 statutory elements, 16 of which were upheld, 3 were partially upheld and 1 was not substantiated. Overall this is noted on the table below as *Upheld*.

Table 1: Outcome of Complaints for Children’s Social Care Services 2012/13

Outcome of Complaints 2012/13 Children’s Social Care					
Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	TBC/Withdrawn	Total
Disabled Children and Families Team	1	5	0	0	6
Fostering and Adoption	1	0	1	0	2
Initial Response/Emergency Duty	2	1	2	0	5
Safeguarding Children	3	9	8	4	24
Young People’s Service	1	1	0	0	2
Total	8	16	11	4	39

Percentage of Complaint Acknowledgements within Timescale

The statutory timescale for acknowledging a children’s social care complaint is 2 working days. Of the 39 formal complaints received, 100% were acknowledged within the 2 day timescale.

Complaints Completed within Timescale

Of the 184 complaints received regarding children’s social care, 145 were resolved informally and within 10 working days of receipt.

Of the 35 Stage 1 complaints received, 2 were withdrawn. Of the remaining 33, 13 (39.4%) were resolved within the 20 working day timescale for Stage 1 complaints. One complaint was ongoing at the end of the reporting year and the other 19 complaints (57.6%) were resolved outside the timescale.

Of the 4 Stage 2 complaints received, 1 was resolved within timescale (25%) and 2 outside of the timescales of 65 working days. One complaint was ongoing at the end of the reporting year. Durham County Council (DCC) uses a regionally approved list of independent investigating officers (IIO’s), and where Stage 2 investigations go over timescale, it is the responsibility of the IIO to keep the complainant informed. DCC work closely with IIOs to ensure

that any delays are kept to a minimum and that swift action can be taken by the local authority to address any delays.

Table 2: Percentage of Formal Complaints Completed within Timescale

	Total	Percentage of total formal complaints
Formal complaints resolved within 20 working days	14	37.8%
Formal complaints to be completed	2	5.4%
Formal complaints resolved outside timescale	21	56.8 %
Total	37*	100%

* Note that 2 complaints were withdrawn

Subject Matter of Complaints

Of the 39 formal complaints received, 17 (43.6%) cited '*Professional Conduct of Staff*' and constituted the category with the highest number of complaints. The category with 14 complaints (35.9%) was '*Lack of Communication/Information*' followed by 7 complaints (18.0%) about a '*Disputed Decision*'.

In the majority of cases citing failures in communication and information there is a direct link with '*Professional Conduct of Staff*'.

Table 3: Subject Matter of Complaints Received 2012/13

Complaint Classification / Issue	Number of Complaints
Disputed Decision	7
Lack Of Service - Communications/Information	14
Professional Conduct Of Staff	17
Finance - Assessment	2
Provision Of Service - Equipment	1
Quality Of Service - Missed/Late Calls or Service	3
Safeguarding	4
Finance - Direct Payment	1
Provision Of Service - Assessment	3
Quality Of Service – Report Writing	3
Quality Of Service - Personal Financial Issues	2
Provision Of Service - Placement Provision	2
Staff Attitude	6
Confidentiality	4
Lack Of Service - Contact/Visits	5
Provision Of Service - Reviews/Conferences	1
Total	75*

*Note: a complaint can have more than one classification recorded within it

Complaints by Service Type

The Service Area receiving the greatest number of complaints was Safeguarding Children (formerly called Children in Need), followed by the Disabled Children and Families Team. This is consistent with previous years.

Table 4: Number of Complaints received by Service Type 2012/13

Service	Complaint	Percentage
Disabled Children and Families Team	6	15.4%
Fostering and Adoption	2	5.1%
Initial Response/Emergency Duty	5	12.8%
Safeguarding Children	24	61.5%
Young People's Service	2	5.1%
Total	39	100%

Complaints Referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

During 2012/13 the LGO issued 4 Final Decisions in cases that had been referred to them. In 3 of the cases the LGO declined to fully investigate on the grounds that public expense could not be upheld as maladministration had not occurred. One of these cases had been considered at Stage 2 of the statutory procedure during the previous reporting year.

In the other case the complaint was not progressed as the Ombudsman determined the complaint to be outside of their jurisdiction and discontinued involvement on those grounds.

The LGO received 3 further statutory complaints which were still open at the year end. One of these cases has subsequently been investigated by the Ombudsman following the receipt of information from the local authority; as the case also involved Health services, the Ombudsman is working in partnership with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) before a joint decision is issued. The other case remains open pending further investigation by the local authority.

Complaints by Complainant Type

As has been the trend over previous reporting years, 'Parents' constituted the highest number of complainants, representing 23 of the 39 formal complaints (23.1%); Carers represented 3 complaints (7.7%), other relatives represented 2 complaints (in both cases, an aunt); 1 complaint was made by the client (child) via an Advocate* and 1 by a mother's partner.

**DCC has a contract with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to provide free advocacy services to children and young people who are looked after.*

Age Profiles of Service Users Making Complaints

Complaints made about services to children or young people may be submitted on behalf of one or more children in the family. If a complaint is made on behalf of more than one child, it is logged on the record of the eldest child. The 39 formal complaints were made on behalf of a total of 60 children and young people. Using the eldest child's information, it can be reported that 16 of the 39 complaints were made on behalf of boys aged 2-18 years, and 23 were made on behalf of girls aged 1-15 years.

Ethnicity and Diversity

All complainants were White British.

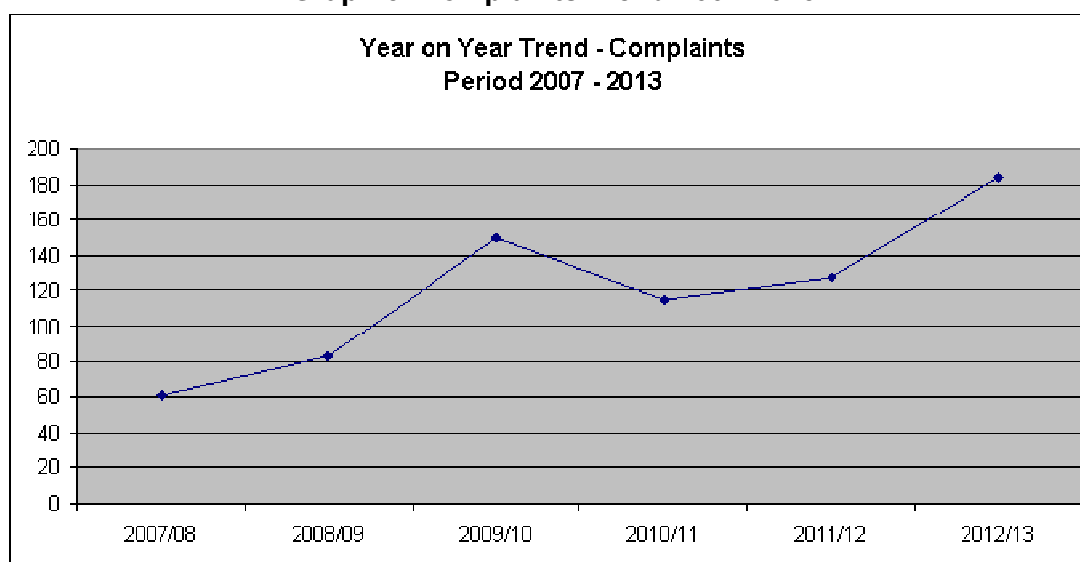
Declined Complaints

During the reporting year, one complaint was declined, due to it being out of timescale by 8 years, and not meeting the criteria for making a complaint. Declined Complaints are *not* included in the figure total of 184 complaints received.

Year on Year Trend 2007-2013

In order to obtain an overview of overall performance from previous annual reports the graph below shows year on year comparisons of the total numbers of complaints received.

Graph 3: Complaints Trend 2007-2013

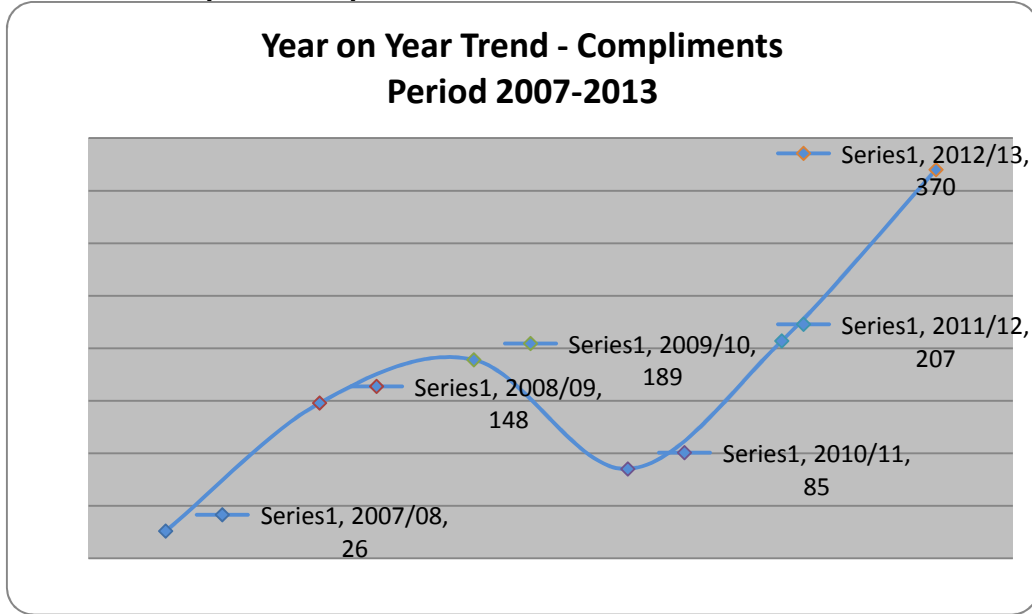


2012/13 saw a 25.2% increase in the total number of children's social care complaints received; 145 compared to 127 complaints received in 2011/2012. Over the previous 6 years, the graph shows that the general trend has seen an increase in the number of complaints received and 2012/13 represents the largest number of complaints received in any of the preceding years. There is no single reason why complaints are increasing and this therefore makes it very difficult to explain the rise. Generally, there are more unsatisfied customers and the majority of the complaints are relating to conduct of staff and disputed decisions.

Number of Compliments Received

In the reporting year a total of 370 compliments were received. This represents a significant increase of 78.7% from the 207 received during 2011/12, and continues the upward trend which has been seen over preceding years, as illustrated in the graph overleaf:

Graph 4: Compliments Year on Year Trend 2007-2013



Ratio of Compliments to Complaints

The increase in the number of compliments is reflected by the ratio of compliments to complaints received which is 2.0:1 compared to 1.6:1 in 2011/12.

Compliments by Service Area

The intervention service Copelaw Activities, Community Support Team and 4Real each received high percentages of total compliments as shown in the table below.

The Family Pathfinder service also received a relatively high percentage of total compliments, as well as a high number from young people and their families in regard to Aycliffe Secure Services.

Table 5: Number of compliments received by service area 2012/13

Service	Number	Percentage of total
Aycliffe Secure Services	40	10.8%
Copelaw Activities	96	25.9%
Children's Homes	25	6.8%
Community Support Team	49	13.2%
Countywide Admin teams	13	3.5%
Disabled Children and Families Team	2	0.5%
Family Pathfinder	34	9.2%
Fostering and Adoption	20	5.4%
Full Circle	5	1.4%
Initial Response/Emergency Duty	5	1.4%
Looked After Children – Aycliffe/Durham	11	3.0%
Safeguarding Children	31	8.4%
Young People's Service	5	1.4%
4Real	34	9.2%
Total	370	100%

Key Areas Highlighted within Compliments Received

Compliments highlight that service users have appreciated the following:

- feeling respected, listened to and supported;
- having decisions explained to them;
- being kept informed;
- staff explaining issues in a way the client understood;
- professionalism, care and commitment of staff; and
- being able to contact staff easily

Examples of Compliments Received

Some examples of compliments received include:

- *[He] has listened to all I have had to say. He's patient, gentle and kind. He's very good at explaining thoughts and ideas and suggestions. Very comfortable in his company. A true asset. Cannot fault him or your services, 10 out of 10. **Think Family***
- *Research tells us that one of the key areas used to judge effectiveness of an organisation is the response provided by the reception staff. Therefore this **Children's Team** must rate very highly given the first class service – and kindness – shown by [her] on reception.*
- *We have lived, as a family with my wife's illness for several years but only now, thanks to [her and her], are we able to start looking to the future... both these women are truly astonishing people and their efforts deserve recognition. **One Point***
- *Without you and the amazing work you do we would not have the most precious little girl in our lives. We will never forget you or stop thanking you everyday. You will always be in our hearts. **Looked after Children's Team***
- *Since working with Pathfinder I feel more confident as a mother and ready to face what's ahead. **Family Pathfinder***

Part Four - Representations Relating to Adult Social Care Services

Context

This Part of the report presents the data for representations regarding adult social care received during the year 2012/13 and reflects the statutory requirements of *The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*. The reporting format reflects the requirements detailed in the Regulations but also includes locally-agreed reporting information.

The Regulations for adult social care complaints promoted new ways of managing and seeking to resolve complaints. There are no fixed timescales with the exception of 3 working days to acknowledge the complaint although the local performance target has been fixed at 2 working days to align with the Children's Regulations and a 6 month completion target. A complaint made verbally, if capable of being resolved within one working day, does not constitute a complaint for recording purposes under the Regulations.

As with children's social care complaints, when a complaint is received it is risk-assessed to ensure that there are no safeguarding or other procedural issues that might supersede the complaints procedure and that it is within the 12 month limitation period; consent has to be obtained to confirm that someone making a complaint on another's behalf has been given the authority to do so.

Once the above determinations have been made complainants are invited to be fully involved in planning how their complaint is to be addressed, within what timescale and their expectations on the desired outcome and from this a Complaints Resolution Plan letter is produced.

Different resolution methods are utilised depending on the issues being addressed and individual preferences and circumstances.

Where all proportionate resolution mechanisms have been exhausted and if the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant can refer outstanding issues to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Number of Complaints Received

In 2012/13 a total of 92 complaints were received and progressed through the Statutory Adult Social Care Complaints Procedure. This represents a decrease of 25.8% on the 124 complaints received in 2011/12.

Of the 92 complaints received 88 were concluded by the end of the reporting year with 4 complaints ongoing.

Number of Complaints Upheld

Of the 88 complaints completed by the end of the reporting year, 17 (19.3%) were upheld in full and 17 (19.3%) were partially upheld. There were 54 (61.4%) complaints that were not upheld. The reasons for many of the cases not being upheld within the reporting year related to the correct application to financial assessment and charging policies. Table 6 below shows the number of complaints received by each service and the outcome of the complaint.

Table 6: Outcome of Complaints 2012/13

Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	TBC	Total
Adult Care - LD/MH/Carers	1	2	12	2	17
Adult Care - OP/MHSOP/PDSI/SS	7	9	23	2	41
Adult Care - Safeguarding	0	1	1	0	2
Commissioning	9	2	13	0	24
County Durham Care And Support	0	3	5	0	8
Total	17	17	54	4	92

Percentage of Complaint Acknowledgements within Timescale

The statutory timescale for acknowledging an adult social care complaint is 3 working days. The CAS performance target for adult social care complaints is 2 working days. Of the 92 complaints received, 91 (98.9%) were acknowledged within the 2 day timescale.

Complaints Completed within Timescale

Complaints Resolution Plans (CRPs) were completed in all of the 92 complaints received in the year. The CRPs included timescales for response and are calculated based upon the potential complexity of the case. Of the 92 complaints received, 88 were completed at the end of the reporting year and 100% of these were completed within the agreed timescale of the CRP. Of the 4 complaints not completed at the end of the reporting year they remained within the timescale agreed in the CRP.

Table 7: Completion of Complaints within CRP Timescale 2012/13

CRP Response Date Target	Total	Percentage
Completed Complaints Response Timescale Met	88	100%
To be completed	4	n/a
Total	92	100%

Of the 88 complaints concluded over the year 27 (30.6%) were completed in less than ten working days; 30 (34.2%) were concluded between 10 and 20 working days; 18 (20.4%) were concluded between 21 and 30 working days; 13 (14.8%) of the completed complaints took more than 30 days to complete due to their complexity.

Subject Matter of Complaints

Of the 88 complaints received, 23 (26.1%) related to the category of '*Disputed Decisions*'. Many of these complaints arose in Finance where the complainant disputed the outcome of a financial assessment or disputed an invoice for charges. A small number involved disputes about needs assessments and care packages. The next highest number of complaints was in the category '*Lack of Communication/Information*' with 19 complaints, followed by 17 complaints involving '*Professional Conduct of Staff*'.

In the majority of cases citing failures in communication and information there is a direct link with 'Professional Conduct of Staff'.

Table 8: Subject Matter of Complaints Received 2012/13

Complaint Classification / Issue	Number of Complaints
Disputed Decision	23
Lack Of Service - Communications/Information	19
Professional Conduct Of Staff	17
Finance - Charging Policy	13
Application Of Service Guidance/Procedures	6
Finance - Assessment	5
Provision Of Service - Equipment	5
Lack Of Service - Denied Service	4
Quality Of Service - Missed/Late Dom Care Calls	4
Safeguarding	5
Standard Of Care	4
Finance - Direct Payment	3
Provision Of Service - Assessment	3
Quality Of Service - Personal Care	3
Quality Of Service - Personal Financial Issues	3
Quality Of Service - Work Of Other Agencies	3
Provision Of Service - Placement Provision	2
Quality Of Service - Privacy	2
Staff Attitude	3
Confidentiality	1
Lack Of Service - Contact/Visits	1
Lack Of Service - Restricted Choices Of Current Services	1
Provision Of Service - Reviews/Conferences	1
Refusal Of A Service	1
Service Withdrawal	1
Total	133*

*A complaint can have more than one classification recorded within it.

Complaints Received by Service Type

The service receiving the greatest number of complaints was Older People/Older People's Mental Health/Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment/Sensory Support, followed by the Learning Disabilities/Mental Health/Carers/Substance Misuse Service Area. This is consistent with previous years.

Table 9: Number of complaints received by service type 2012/13

Service	No of Complaints	Percentage
Older People/Mental Health Services for Older People/ Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment/ Sensory Support	41	44.5%
Learning Disabilities/Mental Health/Carers	17	18.5%
Commissioning	24	26.1%
County Durham Care And Support	8	8.7%
Adult Care - Safeguarding	2	2.2%
Total	92	100%

Complaints Referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

During 2012/13 the LGO issued 8 Final Decisions in cases that had been referred to them. In 5 cases the LGO declined to have further involvement on the grounds that public expense could not be justified as maladministration had not occurred. In 3 cases the complainants were significantly outside of the limitation period of 12 months and the LGO discontinued their involvement on those grounds.

The LGO received 2 complaints which they determined were premature as the complaints had not been made to the local authority. These were subsequently referred to DCC and were investigated and responded to.

Complaints by Complainant Type

As has been the trend over previous reporting years, relatives (non-parent) constituted the highest category of complainant at 45 complaints (48.9%). In almost all cases an adult child made the complaint on behalf of their parent. The number of people who raised complaints on their own behalf was 27 (29.4%). The number of parents making a complaint relating to adult children was 18 (19.5%). This data is consistent with trends in previous reporting years.

Complaints by Client Group

Complaints about services for older people constituted the highest proportion of complaints at 55.4%, with services for learning disabilities clients at 23.9%.

Table 10: Complaints by Client Group 2012/13

Service Area	Learning Disabilities	Mental Health	Older People	Physical Disabilities	Total
Adult Care - LD/MH/Carers	16	2	1	0	19
Adult Care - OP/MHSOP/PDSI/SS	1	1	32	9	43
Adult Care - Safeguarding	0	0	2	0	2
Commissioning	3	2	13	2	20
County Durham Care And Support	2	1	3	2	8
Total	22	6	51	13	92
Percentage	23.9%	6.5%	55.4%	14.1%	100%

Age Profiles of Service Users Making Complaints

The greatest number of complaints – 31 (33%) – were made in respect of females aged 18-64 years, followed by females over the age of 85 with 17 complaints (18.4%) and males aged 18-64 years with 16 complaints (17.3%). This data represents an increase in the number of complaints made in previous years by females aged 18-64 and a decrease by males in the same age category.

Ethnicity and Diversity

Complaints analysed by ethnicity represented 98.02% White British with 1.98% of complainants describing themselves as Asian British.

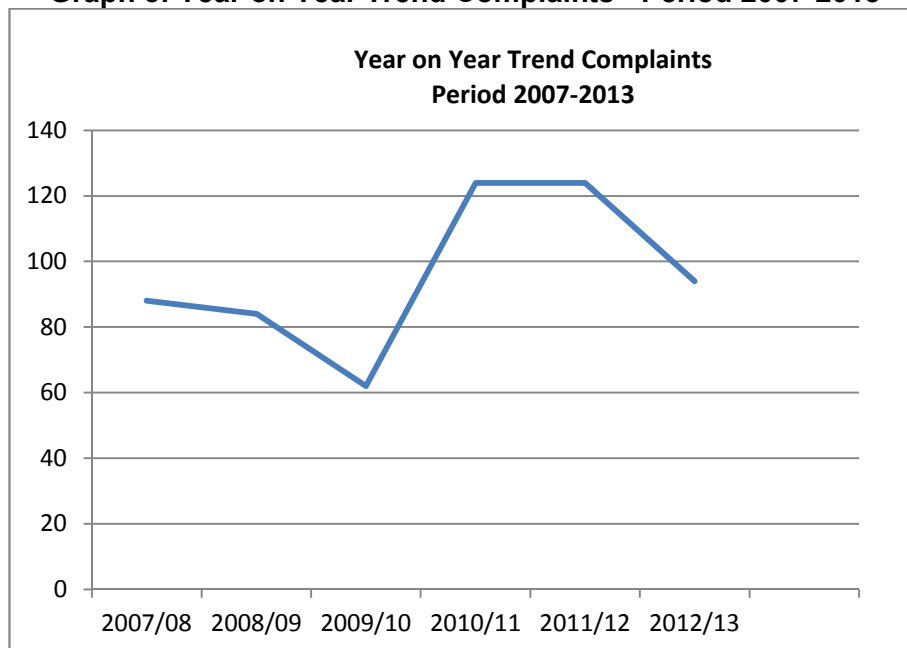
Declined Complaints

During the year, 7 complaints were declined. 5 were declined on the grounds that they were significantly outside of the time limitation period of 12 months and 2 complaints were declined on the grounds that they did not fall within the jurisdiction of DCC. Declined Complaints are *not* included in the figure total of 92 complaints received.

Year on Year Trend 2007-2013

The graph below shows year on year comparison of the numbers of complaints received.

Graph 5: Year on Year Trend Complaints - Period 2007-2013



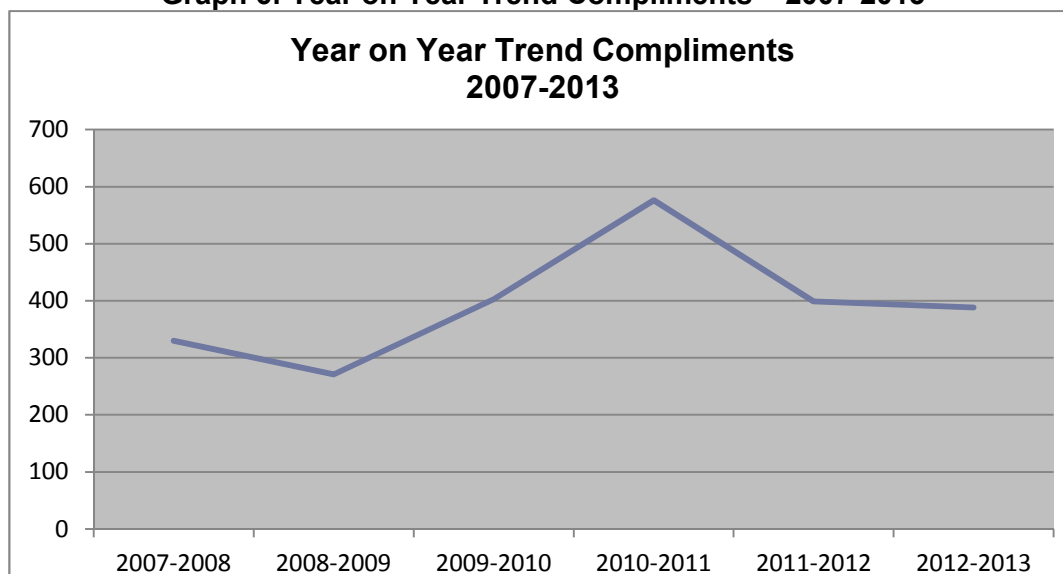
2012/13 saw a 25.8% decrease on the number of complaints received; 92 compared to 124 complaints received in 2011/2012, reversing the upward trend in that and the preceding reporting year of 2010/11. It is felt that the

spike in 2010/11 was a result of unwelcome changes to charging policies which led to a greater number of complaints being made.

Numbers of Compliments Received

In the reporting year a total of 388 compliments were received. This represents a decrease of 2.8% from the 399 received during 2011/12 but overall the number of compliments received has remained relatively stable. The graph below shows year on year comparison of the numbers of compliments received.

Graph 6: Year on Year Trend Compliments – 2007-2013



Ratio of Compliments to Complaints

Despite the slight decrease in the number of compliments received the ratio of compliments to complaints received is 4.2:1 compared to 3.2:1 in 2011/12 due to the decrease in the number of complaints.

Compliments by Service Area

County Durham Care and Support (CDCS), the in-house provider received 245 (63%) of the total number of compliments. The Older People's/Older People's Mental Health/Physical Disabilities/Sensory Support Service area received 135 (34.8%) compliments.

Table 11: Total Number of Compliments by service 2012/13

Service	Learning Disabilities	Older People	Physical Disabilities	Sensory Impairment	Total	Percentage
Adult Care - LD/MH/Carers	1	2	0	0	3	0.8%
Adult Care - OP/MHSOP/PDSI/SS	0	110	4	21	135	34.8%
County Durham Care And Support	4	236	5	0	245	63.1%
Planning And Service Strategy	0	4	1	0	5	1.3%
Total	5	352	10	21	388	100%

Key Areas Highlighted within Compliments Received

Compliments highlight that Service Users have appreciated the following:

- help with maintaining dignity;
- the independence derived from the provision of aids and equipment;
- appreciation of the quality of care and support provided to individuals by staff in residential and domiciliary care services expressed by both the clients and families;
- the support, care and kindness given by staff, to carers and service users, before and following family bereavement;
- staff explaining issues in a way the client understood;
- the regaining and maintaining of independence due to the rehabilitative environment in intermediate care settings; and
- responding quickly to requests for assistance.

Examples of Compliments Received

Some examples of compliments received include:

- *Thank you for all your help and kindness. You went above and beyond the call of duty in helping me to sort out things for my Mam. It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know you – thank you so much. **Review Team***
- *Thank you for enabling our mum to have her last wishes carried out and spend her last two days with two of her life-long friends. It meant so much to her and to us. **Residential Home, County Durham Care & Support***
- *C social worker, has been working on behalf of my mother. It is very difficult to put into words the excellent performance that C has conducted during my mother's case where she has been ultra professional mixed with compassion and the optimum level of customer care. In these times of pointing the finger of blame and waving a big stick particularly at Social Services, I would like to compliment C as a credit to your organisation, Her attitude is first class and her motivation is obvious for the well-being of her clients as well as her employer. **Locality Team***
- *This Day Care Centre has the best staff in the world – they never remind us of our disabilities or their causes. I can forget about my disabilities because of the good care from the staff. **Day Care Centre, CDCS***
- *I would like to thank you for the service received during my mobility training. I have been treated with respect and listened to and without your approach, I would have declined services. **Sensory Support Team***
- *Thank you so much for the care package you have put in place for Mam – she is now able to enjoy a more independent lifestyle. You do a great job. Thank You. **Locality Team***

Part Five - Remedies and Learning Outcomes 2012/13

Remedies in Children's and Adult Complaints

Providing remedies to issues that have arisen in a complaint are essential if trust and confidence are to be restored between the local authority and its service users. Even where complaints are not upheld, full explanations, further information and often apologies are given.

Remedies can be varied and examples of some provided in this reporting year are as follows:

Children's Complaints:

- Social Workers were changed in some cases, even where complaints were not upheld, in order to improve working relationships with parents.
- Addendums were added to reports to ensure that discrepancies were recorded in line with parent's wishes.
- Full explanations were given or repeated in terms that the complainant was able to understand more clearly.
- Managers met with complainants, which was appreciated in terms of complainants feeling listened to and that their concerns had been taken seriously.
- Placement moves were put on hold so that young people's views could be more fully considered prior to decisions being reconsidered by placement panels.

Adult Complaints:

- When a review in a care package is completed and changes are made, then staff must ensure a re-assessment of need is also undertaken.
- Explanations were provided or reiterated where communication had been poor.
- Occupational Therapy re-assessments were conducted where disputes arose following the original assessments for adaptations.
- Reimbursement action was taken where the client believed that they were in receipt of intermediate care and where there was no indication in the case notes that charging and financial assessment processes had been discussed with them.
- Meetings with Managers within the Service have proved extremely effective in satisfactorily concluding complaints. Complainants appreciate the time that Managers give to addressing their concerns in an open and informal way.

In all of the concluded complaints in CAS, full explanations and apologies where appropriate were provided in each case. It should be noted that compensatory redress was only considered where there was strong evidence

of shortcomings that may be construed within the Local Government Ombudsman's definition of maladministration. It is recognised however, that where CAS is responsible for service failures that have caused losses and significant emotional distress, there is clearly the duty to acknowledge that and avoid further distress to the complainant.

Learning Outcomes

Complaints provide invaluable information from which the Service learns how to improve. Complaints also act as a prompt to ensure all staff work consistently to policies and procedures. Some of the learning outcomes extracted and acted upon in the reporting year have included:

Children's Complaints:

Policies and Procedures

- A reminder was issued to staff regarding the necessity to ensure the timeliness and standards associated with the assessments of disabled young people are followed and if there are delays; the family be informed. This was also covered in a service-wide "Learning Lessons" workshop.
- Staff were reminded of the standards required with regard to the communication of Initial Assessment Reports and the necessity to maintain these standards if colleagues are away from work.
- A new procedure has been introduced regarding preliminary assessments for temporary approval of friends and family as foster carers.
- The introduction of procedures to improve working together arrangements where a parent of a child is having problems with alcohol or drug misuse.

Communications

- Staff were reminded of standards required in accuracy of personal information in the completion of Initial Assessment Reports.
- The paperwork associated with new referrals and checking if an individual wishes to remain anonymous, has been reviewed within the Initial Response Team.
- Staff were reminded of standards in Practitioner Briefings, regarding confidentiality and data security in relation to the sharing of adopter's addresses.

Reports

- Staff have been reminded of the requirements that Core Assessment reports are inclusive of all parties views. Work is on-going to develop an improved single assessment process.

Social Work Practice

- Work is being undertaken with social work staff on how parents should be consulted/informed regarding any health matters regarding looked after disabled children.
- Work is planned to review and improve the transitions process for disabled young people.
- A placements panel has been introduced which oversees all requests for foster and residential placements.
- A new court planning process has been introduced to ensure clear case management preparation arrangements are in place.
- The Young People's Service (YPS) are reviewing current arrangements relating to out of county Looked After Children who have a disability, to ensure the child will be provided with the correct and relevant services.
- Recently commissioned services, such as the Holistic Temporary Accommodation Support Service (HTASS) have been designed to ensure transitional barriers are removed for young people, who are now provided with a seamless service regardless of age.
- The Young People's Service is currently in liaison with the National Probation Service, County Durham Youth Offending Service (CDYOS) and the Community Drug / Alcohol Service Commissioners to explore transitions and better ways of working.

Adult Complaints:

Policies and Procedures

- Staff were reminded of the standards associated with the assessment of clients' needs to ensure services are commissioned consistently and according to policies and procedures. This was also raised in a Practice Development session with staff.
- A domiciliary care agency has implemented a new system in relation to sickness/absence recording to avoid missed/late calls.
- Practice guidance has been developed to support the work required within a Best Interest Meeting associated with decisions relating to an individuals capacity.
- Staff within the Finance Team were reminded of the necessity for robust checking of calculations and client's bank account details before issuing charges.

Communications

- Staff were reminded of the necessity to ensure clear notes are taken at meetings relating to assessment, detailing key issues and decisions taken and that this information is circulated to all parties. This advice was also raised in a Practice Development session with staff.

- Staff were reminded of the necessity to ensure that consistent and accurate terminology was used within communications relating to safeguarding episodes, to avoid causing confusion for clients and families.
- A domiciliary care agency were reminded of the need to advise the social worker if they are unable to complete their contact with a client, to ensure appropriate follow up actions are taken in a timely manner.

Social Work Practice

- Learning Disabilities staff received a reminder of the need to look holistically at clients' behavioural issues and the implications for the physical environment when conducting risk assessments.
- All social work and Occupational Therapists were reminded of standards relating to case recording and care plan documentation at a Practice Development session.
- Staff were reminded of the need to check the written documentation when a client is discharged from hospital rather than verbal information provided by ward staff.
- Staff were reminded of the necessity to wear their ID badges at all times and to ensure the client understood the reason for their visit.

Part Six – Conclusion

Complaints and compliments are a valuable source of feedback to inform service improvement. This Annual Report indicates positive achievements in performance in the handling and consideration of complaints and compliments but also recognises the need to strive for continuous improvement. The implementation of learning outcomes arising from complaints provides the opportunity to change practice and improve service delivery with transparency and accountability.

Over the preceding 7 years, there has been a general upward trend for complaints and compliments. It is reassuring to note that for every complaint received, nearly 3 times as many compliments are received; however, the service must continue to learn from the complaints received and take action to improve. As the complaints function embeds into the quality and development service, it plays a vital role and contributes to shaping our knowledge and management of quality and assurance across the service.

The highest number of complaints received relates to disputed decisions and poor service/conduct of staff. This is an area that must be monitored in future areas as financial constraints on the Local Authority continue to tighten.

A collaborative approach with the complainant to reach complaint resolution continues to develop. An approach based on local resolution and one where the complainant is central to the discussion and resolution of the complaint is proactively encouraged.

Details about the CAS Complaints procedures are available on Durham County Council's website (www.durham.gov.uk) and public information is in key locations throughout the County.

Contact the CAS Complaints Team in writing at Room 3:48, CAS, Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL or by phone on 03000 265762 (children's social care complaints) and 01388 527956 (adults social care complaints) or email CASComplaints@durham.gov.uk .

Glossary of Abbreviations

CAS	Children and Adult's Services
CDC	County Durham Care
CDYOS	County Durham Youth Offending Service
CRP	Complaints Resolution Plan
DCC	Durham County Council
DCFT	Disabled Children and Families Team
HTASS	Holistic Temporary Accommodation Support Service
IIO	Independent Investigating Officer
LA	Local Authority
LD	Learning Disabilities
LGO	Local Government Ombudsman
MH	Mental Health
MHSOP	Mental Health Services for Older people
NHS	National Health Service
NYAS	National Youth Advocacy Service
OP	Older People
PD	Physical Disability
SI/SS	Sensory Impairment/Sensory Support
SSID	Social Services Information Database
YPS	Young People's Service

Children and Adults Services

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Children and Adults Services 2013

Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 November 2013



Assistant Chief Executives: Quarter 2 Revenue and Capital Forecast Outturn 2013/14

Joint Report of Corporate Director Resources and Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide details of the forecast outturn budget position for the Assistant Chief Executive's (ACE) service grouping highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of September 2013.

Background

2. County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2013/14 at its meeting on 20 February 2013. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers between service groupings and budget reprofiling between years. This report covers the financial position for the following major accounts maintained by the ACE service grouping:

- ACE Revenue Budget - £11.391m (original £11.178m)
- ACE Capital Programme – £2.545m (original £3.959m)

3. The original ACE General Fund budget has been revised to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as follows:

- Job evaluation adjustment and appeals +£13k
- Luncheon Club Transport -£3k
- Purchase of annual leave adjustment -£12k
- Transfer of Web Development Team +£84k
- Adjustment for staff not in pension fund -£22k
- Reduction in stationery budget -£3k
- Use of Strategic reserve to meet redundancy costs +76K
- Increase in Pay Budget for 1% Pay Award +£47k
- Central Support Recharge adjustment +£35k
- Transfer of budget for Durham Managers Programme -£2k

The revised General Fund Budget now stands at £11.391m.

4. The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2013/14 and show:-

- The approved annual budget;
- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
- The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- For the ACE revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

Revenue - General Fund Services

5. The service is reporting a cash limit underspend of **£0.366m** against a revised budget of **£11.391m**. The previous Quarter 1 forecast was an underspend of £0.229m which represents an improvement of £0.137m. There has been further tight control of spending across all three areas within the ACE service grouping.
6. The tables below compare the actual expenditure with the budget. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense), and the second by Head of Service.

Subjective Analysis

£'000	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Cash Limit Variance
Employees	6,952	3,675	6,827	(125)	36	(161)
Premises	276	176	278	2	-	2
Transport	75	29	78	3	-	3
Supplies and Services	2,560	1,092	2,561	1	4	(3)
Agency and Contracted	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer Payments	2,154	974	2,154	-	-	-
Central Costs	2,398	152	2,398	-	-	-
GROSS EXPENDITURE	14,415	6,098	14,296	(119)	40	(159)
INCOME	(3,024)	(716)	(3,231)	(207)	0	(207)
NET EXPENDITURE	11,391	5,382	11,065	(326)	40	(366)

Analysis by Head of Service

Head of Service Grouping	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Cash Limit Variance
Partnership & Community Engagement	8,056	3,559	8,073	17	-	17
Planning and Performance	1,916	815	1,625	(291)	-	(291)
Policy and Communications	2,264	1,008	2,212	(52)	40	(92)
Central Managed Costs	(845)	-	(845)	-	-	0
NET EXPENDITURE	11,391	5,382	11,065	(326)	40	(366)

7. Attached in the table below is a brief commentary of the variances with the revised budget analysed into Head of Service groupings. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. central repairs and maintenance) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend
Partnership and Community Engagement (PACE)	PACE	Minor variance	(3)	17
	Area Action Partnerships	£22k overspend on employees (fully staffed) £6k overspend on car allowances £8k underspend on supplies	20	
	Community Buildings	No major variances	0	
Planning and Performance	Planning, Performance, Improvement	£43k underspend on employees through management of staff vacancies £95k managed underspend on supplies and services including residents place survey £15k over recovery of income	(153)	(291)
	Overview and Scrutiny	£104k underspend on employees as a result of restructure and vacancies £34k over recovery of PCP Grant income against budget	(138)	
Policy and Communications	Policy, Communications, Public Relations	£15k overspend on employees (fully staffed) £39k managed underspend against supplies and services £27k additional income from advertising	(51)	(92)
	Civil Contingencies Unit and Programme Office	£37k underspend on employees as a result of vacancies £7k underspend on staff training £21k underspend on supplies £24k under recovery of income	(41)	
Central Managed Costs	Central Costs	No major variances		0
TOTAL				(366)

8. In summary, the service grouping is on track to maintain spending within its cash limit. It should also be noted that the estimated outturn position incorporates the MTFP savings required in 2013/14 which amount to £0.653m.

Members Neighbourhoods Revenue Budget

9. Each elected member receives an annual allocation of £20,000; £10,000 revenue and £10,000 capital. The revenue budget allocation for the current year is £1.260m. Previous years unspent allocations totalling £0.886m are held in an earmarked reserve as all spending has been committed to specific projects. The previous year's unspent allocations have all been committed with the exception of £7k. At present £0.230m of the current year's budget allocation has been committed and it is expected that the remaining budget will be allocated during the 2013/14 financial year.

10. The members Initiative Fund Element of this budget equates to £252k based on £2k per elected member. At this stage of the year it is expected that this will be fully expended.

AAP Area Budgets

11. Each of the 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAP) has an annual allocation of £120k to develop projects to meet the agreed AAP priorities. Combined with revenue budgets carried forward from previous years (relating to committed expenditure on agreed projects) the total revenue budget available is £2.636m. At this stage in the year a total of £1.612m has either been committed or spent and it is expected that the remaining £1.024m will be committed later in the year.

Capital Programme

12. The ACE capital programme comprises three schemes, Assets in the Community, Members Neighbourhoods Capital and Community Facilities in Crook.
13. The Assistant Chief Executive capital programme was revised at Outturn for budget rephased from 2012/13. This increased the 2013/14 budget to £3.959m. Further reports to the MOWG in May, June, July, September and October detailed further revisions, for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers and budget reprofiling into later years. The revised budget now stands at **£2.545m**.
14. Summary financial performance to the end of September is shown below.

Service	Original Annual Budget 2013/14 £000	Revised Annual Budget 2013/14 £000	Actual Spend to 30 September £000	Remaining Budget £000
Assets in the Community	2,130	323	28	295
Members Neighbourhoods	1,260	2,154	321	1,833
Community Facilities Crook	569	68	50	18
Total	3,959	2,545	399	2,146

15. Officers continue to carefully monitor capital expenditure on a monthly basis, and £399k of actual expenditure has been incurred to date. This is 16% of the total estimated spend in the year. At this stage it is anticipated that the full budget will be committed in 2013/14.
16. At year end the actual outturn performance will be compared against the revised budgets and service and project managers will need to account for any budget variance.

Recommendations:

17. The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital projected outturn position for 2013/14.

Staffing

None.

Risk

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Accommodation

None.

Crime and disorder

None.

Human rights

None.

Consultation

None.

Procurement

None.

Disability Issues

None.

Legal Implications

None.

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Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 November 2013



Resources: Quarter 2 Revenue and Capital Forecast Outturn 2013/14

Report of Corporate Director – Resources

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide details of the forecast outturn budget position for the Resources service grouping highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of September 2013.

Background

2. County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2013/14 at its meeting on 20 February 2013. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers between service groupings and budget reprofiling between years. This report covers the financial position for the following major accounts maintained by the RES service grouping:
 - *RES Revenue Budget - £22.266m (original £22.326m)*
 - *RES Capital Programme – £6.105m (original £17.606m)*
3. The original Resources General Fund budget has been revised to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as follows:
 - Contribution to corporate budget for electrical equipment testing -£5k
 - Job Evaluation Appeals +£61K
 - Contributions received for Durham Managers Programme +£17K
 - Increase in Procurement Rebate income budget -£250K
 - Reduction in staffing budget to reflect Purchase of Annual Leave -£75K
 - Transfer of Web Development Team to ACE -£84K
 - Reduction in budget to reflect employees not in pension scheme -£164K
 - Use of Local Elections Reserve for May 2013 Elections +£650k
 - Corporate saving for reduction in stationery budget -£23k
 - Central Support Recharge adjustment -£35k
 - Sure Start budget target for Financial Services team +£82k
 - Transfer of Direct Debit admin from CAS+ £5k
 - Durham Manager Programme from ACE +£2k
 - Welfare Rights transfer from CAS +£994k
 - 1% Pay Award for 2013/14 +£291k
 - Cash Limit – adjustments relating to Rate Relief, Council Tax Support Scheme and Welfare Reform New Burdens Grant - £1,538k

- Cash Limit-Reserve contribution for Strategic Pay and Conditions +£12k

The revised General Fund Budget now stands at **£22.266m**.

4. The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2013/14 and show: -
- The approved annual budget;
 - The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
 - The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
 - For the Resources revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

Revenue - General Fund Services

5. The service is reporting a cash limit underspend of **£1.682** (excluding Centrally Administered Costs) against a revised budget of **£22.266m**.
6. The tables below compare the actual expenditure with the budget. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense), and the second by Head of Service.

Subjective Analysis (in £'000s)

£'000	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Cash Limit Variance
Employees	41,225	21,071	40,049	(1,176)	(270)	(1,446)
Premises	349	202	336	(13)	-	(13)
Transport	1,300	387	1,077	(223)	-	(223)
Supplies and Services	18,082	9,873	18,393	311	-	311
Agency and Contracted	4,399	2,843	4,399	-	-	-
Central Costs	29,473	26	29,519	46	-	46
Gross Expenditure Exc HB	94,828	34,402	93,773	(1,055)	(270)	(1,325)
Income	(72,304)	(16,292)	(72,657)	(353)	24	(329)
Net Expenditure Exc HB	22,524	18,110	21,116	(1,408)	(246)	(1,654)
HB Transfer Payments	188,244	96,557	188,772	528	-	528
HB Central Costs	300	179	300	-	-	-
HB Income	(188,802)	(1,052)	(189,330)	(528)	-	(528)
Housing Benefit Net Expenditure	(258)	95,684	(258)	-	-	-
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	22,266	113,794	20,858	(1,408)	(218)	(1,654)
				Excluding Centrally Administered Costs		(1,682)

Analysis by Head of Service (in £'000s)

Head of Service Grouping	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Cash Limit Variance
Centrally Administered Costs	3,018	508	3,046	28	-	28
Central Establishment Recharges	(17,479)	-	(17,479)	-	-	-
Corporate Finance	3,154	2,132	2,998	(156)	-	(156)
Financial Services	7,232	4,096	6,448	(784)	24	(760)
Human Resources	6,254	2,842	5,960	(294)	(25)	(319)
ICT Services	12,035	4,474	12,267	232	(217)	15
Internal Audit and Insurance	1,175	526	1,025	(150)	-	(150)
Legal & Democratic Services	6,727	3,332	6,430	(297)	(28)	(325)
Service Management	408	199	421	13	-	13
Net Expenditure Excl HB	22,524	18,109	21,116	(1,408)	(246)	(1,654)
Housing Benefit	(258)	95,685	(258)	-	-	-
NET EXPENDITURE	22,266	113,794	20,858	(1,408)	(246)	(1,654)
Excluding Centrally Administered Costs						(1,682)

7. Attached in the table below is a brief commentary of the variances with the revised budget analysed into Head of Service groupings. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. concessionary fares) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend
Centrally Administered Costs (C.A.C.)	C.A.C.	£22k underspend against Audit Fees £50k under recovery of income against Teesdale VAT shelter receipts	28	28
Corporate Finance	Management	£65k managed underspend against employees reflecting early achievement of 14/15 savings £20k underspend on supplies and services available for 14/15 savings	(85)	(156)
	Financial Systems	£27k underspend on pay as a result of holding a vacancy	(27)	
	Procurement	£7k underspend on employees £42k additional income from SLAs and Community Right to Challenge Grant	(49)	
	Strategic Finance	£35k overspend on employees(fully staffed) £15k overspend against a range of supplies and services £45k over recovery of income for VAT work	5	
Financial Services	Management	£217k managed underspend against employees reflecting early achievement of 14/15 savings £107k underspend on supplies and services available for 14/15 savings	(324)	(78)
	Financial Management	£19k underspend on employees £35k managed underspend against supplies	(78)	

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend
		and services £24k over recovery of SLA income		
	Revenues and Benefits	£299k underspend on employees due to close management and control of vacancies pending restructure £84k underspend on staff travel budget £305k managed overspend on work packages £280k over recovery of income including £10k DWP grant and £270k on court fee income	(358)	(760)
Human Resources	Occupational Health	Minor variance	(6)	
	Health and Safety	£235k underspend on employees arising from service restructure and vacancies monitoring. Minor variance of £5k	(240)	
	Payroll and Pensions	£58k underspend on employees from vacant post being held open to meet future MTFP savings £22k over recovery of schools SLA income	(80)	
	Human Resources	Minor variance	7	(319)
ICT	Design and Print	£8k underspend on employees £5k overspend on staff travel £8k overspend on debt written off £30k under recovery on services to schools £143 underspend on printing costs, including £129k on outside work	(108)	
	ICT Services	£199k overall underspend on employees through close management and control of vacancies pending future restructure to meet 14/15 MTFP savings. £69k underspend on staff travel budget £11k overspend on a vehicle purchased through revenue financing £7k overspend on debt written off £337k overspend on supplies and services, mainly due to £226k overspend on computer hardware £32k under recovery of income £4k overspend on premises costs	123	15
Internal Audit and Risk	Insurance and Risk	£9k overspend on employees (fully staffed)	9	
	Internal Audit	£193k underspend on employees through close management and control of vacancies and secondments pending restructure £34k overspend on supplies and services attributable to external audit work	(159)	(150)
Legal and Democratic Services	Corporate and Democratic	£25k overspend on computer hardware £9k minor underspend	16	
	Legal Services	£341k savings relating to early achievement of 14/15 MTFP savings	(341)	(325)
Service Management	Service Management	£6k overspend on employees (fully staffed) £7k overspend due to bad debt written off	13	13
Benefits Payments and Subsidy	Benefits	£528k forecast overspend on benefits payments £528k forecast over recovery of subsidy to meet increased benefits payments	-	-

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend	Forecast Year End (Under) / overspend
Central Establishment Recharges	Central Establishment Recharges	No major variances	-	-
TOTAL				(1,654)
Excluding Centrally Administered Costs				(1,682)

8. In summary, the service grouping is on track to maintain spending within its cash limit. It should also be noted that the estimated outturn position incorporates the MTFP savings required in 2013/14 which amount to £2.137m.

Capital Programme

9. The Resources capital programme comprises 26 schemes managed within ICT with the exception of one scheme managed in Finance.
10. The Resources capital programme was revised at Outturn for budget rephased from 2012/13 which increased the 2013/14 budget. Further reports to the MOWG during the year have detailed further revisions, for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers and budget reprofiling into later years. The revised budget now stands at **£6.105m**.
11. Summary financial performance to the end of September 2013 is shown below.

Service	Original Annual Budget 2013/14 £000	Revised Annual Budget 2013/14 £000	Actual Spend to 30 September £000	Remaining Budget £000
Finance	-	300	236	64
ICT	17,606	5,805	998	4,807
Total	17,606	6,105	1,234	4,871

12. The revised Resources capital budget is £6.105m with a total expenditure to date of £1.234m (20%). A full breakdown of schemes and actual expenditure to September 2013 is given in Appendix 2.
13. At year end the actual outturn performance will be compared against the revised budgets and service and project managers will need to account for any budget variance.

Recommendations:

14. The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Contact: Azhar Rafiq – Finance Manager

Tel: 03000 263 480

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital projected outturn position.

Staffing

None.

Risk

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Accommodation

None.

Crime and disorder

None.

Human rights

None.

Consultation

None.

Procurement

None.

Disability Issues

None.

Legal Implications

None.

APPENDIX 2 – Resources 2013/14 Scheme breakdown

Resources Capital Budgets	Revised 2013/14 Budget Total	Profiled Budget	Actuals to 30/09/13	Remaining Budget
Oracle Development	300,000	150,000	235,567	64,433
Finance Total	300,000	150,000	235,567	64,433
.NET Application Development Architecture	50,000	25,000	-	50,000
Digital Durham	11,109	5,555	-	11,109
CIP Project - ICT	27,571	13,786	(38)	27,609
Code of Connection Compliance	79,598	39,799	25,504	54,094
Corporate Mail Fulfilment	10,650	5,325	(5,290)	15,940
Dark Fibre Networking	283,328	141,664	57,386	225,942
GIS Architecture	60,000	30,000		60,000
Homeworking	196,004	98,002	4,937	191,067
Infrastructure Environment Monitoring	216,000	108,000		216,000
Learning Gateway	18,223	9,112	3,169	15,054
NHS Data Centre	106,752	53,376	162,699	(55,947)
Replacement Desktop	1,363,295	681,648	334,459	1,028,836
Sharepoint Architecture	58,804	29,402	6,167	52,637
Tanfield Power Upgrade	250,000	125,000	-	250,000
Telephony Replacement	21,994	10,997	20,325	1,669
Archiving of Obsolete Systems on Unsupported Hardware	250,000	125,000	61,098	188,902
Councillor Replacement of ICT Equipment	150,000	75,000	130,781	19,219
Dark Fibre installations and Circuit/Microwave Upgrades	395,000	197,500	-	395,000
Fibre Channel Network for Storage	60,000	30,000	53,879	6,121
Public Internet Access Portal	37,000	18,500	-	37,000
Ongoing Server replacement	110,000	55,000	57,620	52,380
Tanfield Datacentre Core Switching Replacement	175,000	87,500	40,847	134,153
Tanfield Datacentre LAN Switching Replacement	650,000	325,000	-	650,000
Voice Recording for Mitel Telephone System	80,000	40,000	45,116	34,884
ICT Business Continuity	1,119,300	559,650	-	1,119,300
Vehicle Fleet	24,881	0	-	24,881
ICT Total	5,804,509	2,889,816	998,659	4,805,850
Grand Total	6,104,509	3,039,816	1,234,226	4,870,283

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**Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

25 November 2013



**Customer First Strategy – Proposed
Corporate Issues OSC Task and Finish
Group**

**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and
Terry Collins, Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the establishment of a Corporate Issues Task and Finish Group to review the development of a revised Customer First Strategy and agree proposed Terms of Reference for the review.

Background

- 2 At the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 September 2013, during consideration of the Quarter 1 Performance report, reference was made to performance in respect of Customer Services including telephone call answering and e-mail transactions. At that time, reference was made to on-going work that was being undertaken to refresh the Council's Customer First Strategy.
- 3 The Committee resolved that draft terms of reference of a task and finish group to examine customer services be developed and brought back to a future meeting of the committee.

Proposed terms of Reference

- 4 Draft terms of reference have been produced and are attached to this report (Appendix 2). The review proposes a series of meetings and site visits culminating in a report being considered by Corporate Issues OSC on 27 March 2014.

Recommendations and reasons

- 5 The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:-
 - (i) consider the proposed terms of reference for the Corporate Issues Customer First Task and Finish Group and, subject to comment from members agree to the proposed review:
 - (ii) appoint up to ten representatives to serve on the task and finish group.

Background papers

Corporate Issues OSC – Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2013

Contact: Stephen Gwilym Tel: 03000 268140
E-Mail: stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – The task and finish group review report and associated findings will be submitted as part of the proposed consultation process for the refreshed Customer First Strategy.

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications - None

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Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Customer First Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly considers customer services performance as part of quarterly performance reports. In 2012, the committee carried out a light touch review of telephony, but has remained interested in performance in relation to customer services. At the September 2013 meeting, the Chair of the Committee proposed that a task and finish group is set up to provide policy development support to the refresh of the Council's Customer First Strategy. These terms of reference set out the proposed objectives and focus for a Customer First Task and Finish Group.
2. The existing Customer First Strategy was developed and adopted in 2010. Its aim was to transform the way that customers access our services and the services themselves so that they are modern, efficient, effective and customer focussed.
3. The associated plan focussed on identifying and understanding the needs of our customers, measuring levels of customer satisfaction, creating a customer focussed culture within the council, making services accessible to all and to provide high quality services to our customers. The strategy was linked to the Accommodation Strategy and envisaged the expansion of face to face service provision through increased numbers of customer access points as well as harmonised and improved telephony.
4. The strategy has been partially successful and much improvement has been made including:
 - New Customer Access Points in Consett, Durham, Seaham and Crook
 - A single resilient customer services telephone system
 - Development and publication of the golden phone numbers
 - Additional mechanisms for access channels including 'Looking Local' & Durham Talk units.
 - The roll out of a council wide Customer First – Customer Care training package to ensure that our customers receive the highest level of customer care.
5. Along with these successes there have been other challenges, pressures and drivers impacting on the strategy that make it timely to review and update the direction of travel. These include the changing economic climate and the need for new service delivery models.

The Revised Customer First Strategy

6. The draft revised Customer First Strategy has an overarching vision to:

‘deliver customer services that provide value for money, flexibility and choice whilst placing our customers at the heart of everything we do’

7. Three overarching outcomes have been identified:

- Efficient and effective access channels
- Responsive and customer focussed services
- Using customer insight to improve services.

8. Achieving these key outcomes will require the council to undertake a transformation programme requiring commitment and resource from all council services. It is a transformation programme which will take some time to deliver and it is therefore important, that we set out the key projects and timescales which will need to be delivered as fundamental building blocks to the future success of the strategy.

9. It is also essential that the revised Customer First Strategy is adopted as a Council wide approach.

The Customer First Programme

10. The requirement for a programme to effectively manage the delivery of strategy has emerged from its development, recognising that it:

- is large and complex with many projects and interdependencies;
- is cross cutting across the entire Authority and will involve drawing on the skills, efforts and enterprise of a number of project teams, some of which are already engaged in improvement project work.
- requires strong engagement and leadership;
- requires significant transformational and cultural change across the business;

11. Additionally there are a number of concurrent projects that already exist that are working towards the same aims and that require effective coordination to deliver the changes and desired benefits.

12. Developing the strategy and combining projects into a programme provides a better chance of success by focussing effort, reducing duplication and providing the mechanisms and structures to ensure the effective resolution of conflict.

13. The projects will require strong governance and programme management arrangements to enable them to be delivered and to provide effective communications.

14. The Customer first programme is overseen by the Customer Focus Board, chaired by the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and comprising members of each service grouping at Head of Service level. The Customer Focus Board has the responsibility to identify and initiate projects to deliver the Customer First

Strategy which are managed through the Senior Responsible Officer and the Customer Focus Working Group.

Objectives for the Customer First Task and Finish Group

15. The objectives for the customer first task and finish group will align to the Customer First Strategy and work programme:

1. Customer First Strategy

To consider and respond to the consultation on the draft revised customer first strategy on behalf of the Council's scrutiny function.

2. Efficient and effective access channels

To consider the ways in which customers can contact the Council and how these can be changed to increase both the efficiency of transaction and customer satisfaction. How can the effectiveness of these be measured internally and externally.

3. Customer standards

To review corporate customer standards in comparison to standards set in other local authorities/ organisations. What is good practice, and what can we learn from others?

4. Learning from customer feedback

To look at how the council collects and analyses customer feedback, and how this feedback is used to improve service delivery.

Membership

16. The Customer First Task and Finish Group will comprise of up to 10 councillors from the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Focus of the work

17. The Review should seek to identify outcomes and make recommendations in respect of:-

- (i) The proposed revisions to the Council's Customer First Strategy;
- (ii) The effectiveness of the Council's access channels for customers in terms of speed of transaction; ease of access and availability to customers and how the Council can measure this effectiveness both internally and externally;
- (iii) The development of customer service standards that improve the Council's ability to benchmark against high performing customer service organisations in both the public and private sector and how lessons can be learned to ensure continuous improvement in Customer services and the customer experience, and
- (iv) Demonstrating how the Council can collect and analyse customer feedback and the methods by which learning from this can be transformed into enhanced services.

18. A Project Plan is attached in Appendix 2 to identify how the Review Group will gather its evidence to support this Review.

Timescale

19. The task and finish group's review is to complete and report not later than April 2014.

WHEN Times/Dates/ Locations	DESIGNATED LEAD Member/ Officer	WHO Key Witness	WHAT Evidence/Information	HOW Meeting/Visit/ Correspondence/ Briefing Paper/ Research	OUTCOMES	WHY
Session 1 December 2013 CR TBC	Cllrs Lethbridge and Henig Stephen Gwilym	Alan Patrickson Mary Readman	To consider the refreshed Customer First Strategy document To assess the proposed changes to the strategy set against previous Telephone Answering Review learning	Working Group Meeting Briefing Paper	A refreshed Customer First Strategy that is customer focussed and builds upon previous learning from review activity.	To consider how the Customer First Strategy meets Councillor and customer aspirations.
Session 2 January 2014 CR TBC	Cllrs Lethbridge and Henig Stephen Gwilym	Alan Patrickson Mary Readman	To consider all available customer access channels including Telephone, Face to Face, Website based and those services that are deliverable across these channels How does the Council monitor the functionality and effectiveness of its access channels?	Working Group Meeting Briefing Paper	A list of those services that have the functionality to be accessible to Customers across a wide range of channels. Where the gaps in service accessibility are and the reasons for these gaps.	To assess the effectiveness of these access channels and how this is reported within the Council and to our customers
Session 3 January 2014 CR TBC	Cllrs Lethbridge and Henig Stephen Gwilym	Alan Patrickson Mary Readman Tom Gorman	What are the Council's service standards? How does the Council engage with Customers to develop service standards? Examples of high performing "Industry standards" from Public and Private sector and how the Council benchmarks performance in this area.	Working Group Meeting Briefing Paper	Service standards are SMART and understood by the customer. Service standards allow for performance to be benchmarked	To ensure responsive and customer focused services are delivered.
Session 4 February 2014 CR TBC	Cllrs Lethbridge and Henig Stephen Gwilym	Alan Patrickson Mary Readman	How the Council obtains Customer Feedback in respect of Customer services. How does feedback shape service improvements?	Working Group Meeting Briefing Paper	Customer services are systematically improved where customer feedback highlights outstanding issues.	To demonstrate how the Council learns from Customer feedback and develops its customer service to reflect that

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			Examples of service developments and improvements that have been implemented following customer feedback.			feedback where possible.
Session 5 February 2014 CR TBC	Cllrs Lethbridge and Henig Stephen Gwilym	Alan Patrickson Mary Readman	Site Visits – Council customer access points Contact centres/customer access points from high performing councils/ Private sector.	Working Group visits	Examples of best practice	To further develop customer services based upon examples of best practice.
Session 6 March 2014 CR TBC	Cllrs Lethbridge and Henig Stephen Gwilym	Stephen Gwilym	CIOSC – Presentation of Draft Report , key findings and Recommendations	CIOSC	Draft Report and Recommendations	Improve performance in these areas