

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: HALF YEAR UPDATE ON COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS (3CS)

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER
EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR MRS LYNDA NEEDHAM

1. SUMMARY

This information note is to update members of the Committee on the half year position in regards to the Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3Cs) for the Council and the Contractors that provide services on our behalf. This briefing note accompanies the 3Cs dashboard at Appendix B.

2. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3Cs have continued to reduce over recent years, which includes 3Cs reported to NHDC directly and to the contractors providing services on our behalf. The table below provides a summary of the half year comparisons since 2014;

| | Comments | Compliments | Complaints | Total |
|---------------------|----------|-------------|------------|-------|
| Apr 2016 - Sep 2016 | 114 | 214 | 373 | 701 |
| Apr 2015 - Sep 2015 | 133 | 287 | 326 | 746 |
| Apr 2014 - Sep 2014 | 132 | 293 | 588 | 1013 |

At NHDC we strive to deliver high quality services to our customers, however, we recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and the 3Cs procedure enables us to learn from our customer feedback, both in terms of what is going well and where improvements or changes can be made. The continued reduction in complaints in recent years shows that we are listening to our customers feedback and where we can, we are putting things right as well as taking action to avoid repeat issues.

The contractors that provide key services on our behalf, including waste and recycling, grass cutting and leisure facilities have very high levels of customer interactions and deliver services that all North Hertfordshire residents will experience, therefore it is not surprising that these areas receive the highest levels of customer feedback. It is important that through contract management arrangements we are ensuring that these services meet the standards we expect for our residents.

The summary dashboard at appendix B shows the key 3Cs data for the contractors alongside the numbers of bin collections Veolia carry out and the number of visitors the leisure facilities received in this reporting period.

Although complaints have been declining each year, we had a slight increase during this six month period when compared to the same time last year; there are some specific reasons for that as detailed below;

- Planning received several complaints regarding the same matters, including; the expansion of Highfield School (5) The revised planning application South of Bendish Lane (5) and the introduction of parking restrictions in Hitchin Zone J (5)
- John O’Conner’s saw an increase in complaints due to the phenomenal growing season and rapid grass growth this year. A six to eight week period in June and July of growth beyond the seasonal expectations impacted on John O’Conner’s performance, additional resources were temporarily brought in through contract monitoring to get performance back on track. Contract monitoring by NHDC ensured that performance was back on track in as short a time as possible. John O’Conner’s plan to start recording compliments once their IT system has been updated to include this functionality.

Careline continues to be an area that receives high numbers of compliments typically from users of the service who have had a need to activate their alarm for assistance, as well as the Active Communities team who receive high levels of compliments from parents who have used the holiday play schemes.

The LGO received three complaints during this period, two of which have been closed with no further action and one is still at the initial consideration stage. Included at Appendix C is an extract from a report by the LGO published earlier in the year to update on key trends.

3. NEXT STEPS

3Cs performance will continue to be monitored and reported to SMT quarterly and Overview and Scrutiny six monthly.

4. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Departmental breakdown of 3Cs

Appendix B - Dashboard

Appendix C – extract of LGO report

5. CONTACT OFFICERS

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDIX A – BREAKDOWN OF 3CS

| Chief Executive Directorate | Comments | Compliments | Complaints | Service Totals | Area |
|--|------------|-------------|------------|----------------|------|
| Chief Executive | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| Electoral Services | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | |
| Directorate Totals | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| Customer Service Directorate | | | | | |
| Communication | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| Customer Service Centre | 0 | 7 | 1 | 8 | |
| Grounds Maintenance | 3 | 11 | 11 | 25 | |
| Human Resources | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Leisure | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | |
| Parking Services | 2 | 1 | 7 | 10 | |
| Parks & Open Spaces | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| Waste Management | 27 | 9 | 47 | 83 | |
| Directorate Totals | 35 | 31 | 68 | 134 | |
| Finance Policy & Governance | | | | | |
| Benefits | 0 | 3 | 8 | 11 | |
| Active Communities | 1 | 12 | 0 | 13 | |
| Information Unit | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| Post & Administration | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | |
| Property Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| Revenue Technical | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| Revenues Billing & Recovery | 0 | 4 | 9 | 13 | |
| Directorate Totals | 4 | 22 | 19 | 45 | |
| Planning Housing & Enterprise | | | | | |
| Building Control | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| Careline | 0 | 36 | 1 | 37 | |
| Enforcement | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| Environmental Health - Commercial | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | |
| Environmental Health - Protection | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Housing Needs | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | |
| Licensing & Enviro Crime | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| Planning Control & Conservation | 1 | 1 | 24 | 26 | |
| Planning Policy | 2 | 1 | 5 | 8 | |
| Directorate Totals | 3 | 48 | 36 | 87 | |
| NHDC totals | | | | | |
| | 42 | 101 | 126 | 269 | |
| John O'Conner | 0 | 0 | 40 | 40 | |
| Veolia | 0 | 24 | 144 | 168 | |
| North Herts Leisure Centre | 23 | 34 | 36 | 93 | |
| Hitchin Leisure and Swim Centre | 29 | 19 | 12 | 60 | |
| Royston Leisure Centre | 20 | 36 | 15 | 71 | |
| Contractor Totals | 72 | 113 | 247 | 432 | |
| COMBINED TOTALS | 114 | 214 | 373 | 701 | |

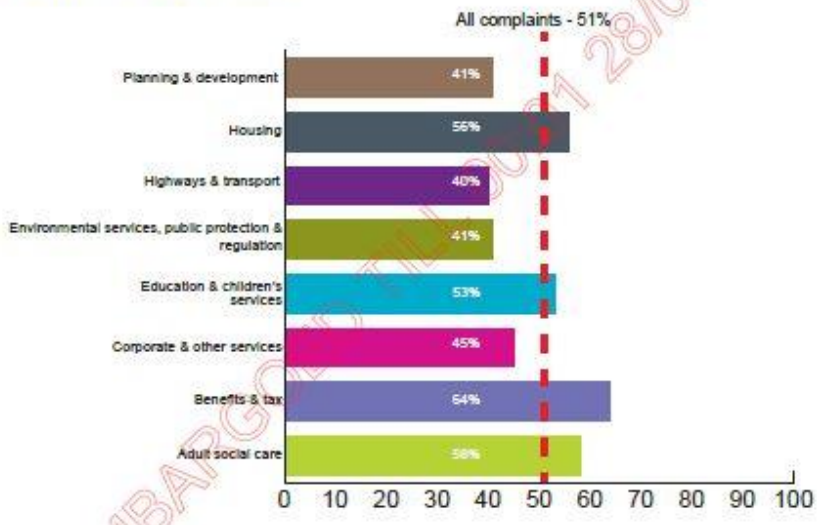
APPENDIX C – SUMMARY OF KEY DATA FROM LGO REPORT ON TRENDS

The LGO received 19,702 complaints and enquiries about local authorities for the year ending 31 March 2016, which is a similar level to the previous year; it upheld 51% of detailed investigations in 2015/16 – up from 46% the previous year.



The Annual Review publishes a new dataset about LGO's recommendations to put things right, which demonstrate the impact of LGO investigations. It made 3,529 recommendations to remedy injustice in total. These include 633 recommendations to prevent injustice for the wider public, such as through procedural changes and local authority staff training. There were also 255 investigations where the LGO agreed the local authority had satisfactorily remedied the injustice before the LGO became involved in the complaint.

Detailed investigations upheld



The report shows a 13% increase in complaints and enquiries about education and children's services. It was most likely to find fault in complaints about benefits and tax (64%), and least likely to find fault in complaints about highways and transport (40%).

