

2017/18 Complaints that took 50 days or more to respond to

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents Performance Management Scrutiny Committee with additional information requested on complaints that took longer than 50 days to complete in 2017/18. Complaints formed 51% of all cases of customer feedback during 2017/18, followed by compliments at 25%. 20% of all customer feedback were comments.
- 1.2 Customer feedback provides the Council with the opportunity to improve services following concerns and recognise where customers have had a good experience. The learning and actions that are identified through the complaint investigations are used to improve service provision.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members consider the content of the report and make any necessary recommendations for action

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Effective monitoring and follow-up of customer feedback provides the opportunity to manage risks and identify any trends and common issues being raised through customer feedback.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report presents information to support decision making and does not itself carry any direct financial implications. Accountable officers and senior managers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for improving service performance and the prioritisation and use of resources.

5. Report

- 5.1 During the 2017/18 financial year there were 1,119 formal complaints made to Shropshire Council. These complaints constituted 51% of all customer feedback received during that time. Of these there were 34 complaints which were not closed within 50 working days. These account for 3% of the formal complaints for that year.
- 5.3 Seventeen of the 34 complaints that were open for longer than 50 working days concerned adult or children's services complaints. These complaints are often complex. Some cases can require detailed investigations, and others can see complainants add more information to their complaint as the complaint progresses, extending the time it takes to investigate. In addition factors outside of the council's control can delay closing down the complaint even after the council has completed its investigation. The council records the cause of any delay to ensure that, should cases progress to the Local Government Ombudsman, the council is able to explain the reasons for the delay.
- 5.4 The remaining 17 complaints were corporate complaints. Eight of these concerned Highways and Streetscene, equating to 2.7% of the total complaints they received in the 2017/18, three concerned Parking or Transport, equating to 3.2% of the total complaints they received, and two concerned Waste and Recycling, equating to 1.3% of the complaints they received.
- 5.5 As these figures show Shropshire Council's performance in responding to complaints in these service areas is good, however a there were a number of complaints that required very detailed investigations. In addition some complaints related to services provided by other organisations on behalf of the Council rather than those delivered directly by Shropshire Council employees, which can have an impact on the completion of any investigation. Finally, in some cases the council had responded to the complaint, but had failed to update the customer feedback system which resulted in the longer timescale.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 There are no patterns relating to the complaints which took longer to close. Each case was unique, and more complex cases took longer to investigate.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

2015/16 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report
2016/17 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report
2017/18 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Steve Charmley - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Local Member

All

Appendices