

**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Customers and Libraries  
Service Manager, Workforce Development

**Report Author:** Corporate Complaints Officer

**Title:** Your Voice report – Q1 2016/17

## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of compliments, suggestions and complaints received by Denbighshire County Council under the council's customer feedback policy 'Your Voice' during Q1 2016/17.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1 To enable the Committee to fulfil its scrutiny role in relation to the council's performance in dealing with customer feedback.
- 2.2 To provide the Committee with information regarding specific examples where council services have been learning from complaints (appendix 2).

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 That the Committee note the content of this report and, if appropriate, identify any areas that require further scrutiny.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 Headlines for Q1 (please see appendix 1 for further detail):

- The council received 145 complaints during Q1 (20% more than the previous quarter's 121). As discussed at the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the number of complaints per quarter tends to fall within the range between 80 and 150, and officers agreed that it would be worth doing some additional analysis if we see numbers outside of that range (particularly if the numbers are ever significantly higher than 150).
- The council received 145 compliments during Q1 (21% more than the previous quarter).
- The council received 29 suggestions during Q1 (one fewer than the previous quarter).

#### 4.2 Complaints regarding commissioned services (please see appendix 1 for further detail):

- During Q1: 6 *stage one* complaints were received regarding services provided by Civica  
24 *stage one* complaints were received regarding services provided by Kingdom Security  
2 *stage two* complaints were received regarding services provided by Civica  
3 *stage two* complaints were received regarding services provided by Kingdom Security

#### 4.3 Performance for Q1

- 88% (121/137) of stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 'Your Voice' timescale (10 working days). This does not meet the corporate target of 95%.
- Chart 1 in appendix 1 provides a four year trend of performance in relation to responding to stage 1 complaints. Of the seventeen quarters highlighted, the target was only met four times. However, as previously discussed with the committee, the corporate targets are purposely very ambitious, and to meet the targets would represent a position of "excellence".
- 93% (14/15) of stage 2 complaints were responded to within the 'Your Voice' timescale (20 working days). This does not meet the corporate target of 95%.
- Chart 2 in appendix 1 provides a four year trend of performance in relation to responding to stage 2 complaints. Of the seventeen quarters highlighted, the target was met six times.
- 95% (130/137) of complaints were successfully dealt with at stage 1, e.g. they did not escalate to stage 2 of the procedure.
- Four service areas are highlighted as having RED status for stage 1 complaints (table 1, appendix 1). RED status means less than 90% of stage 1 complaints were dealt with within the timescale of 10 working days. Further detail regarding the complaints where timescales were exceeded for those services are provided below:

##### **Customers, Communication and Marketing**

1. One complaint was late. The delay was due to the complex relationship between the customer and the council, which required a considerable degree of consideration and sensitivity, coupled with an unexpected absence of the investigating manager.

##### **Planning and Public Protection**

1. This was a complex complaint in relation to an easement for drainage on land relating to Glan Clwyd School. The drawings for the new building at Glan Clwyd School, requested from Building Control, had been released by DCC Education Dept.

2. During the three days leading up to the target for this complaint, the investigating officer was diverted to deal with a serious anti-social behaviour issue, which was a higher priority and caused the delay.
3. Many failed attempts were made to contact the complainant, during the investigation, which delayed the process. The content of some complaints, when received, is often difficult to understand hence the need to speak with the complainants to ensure proper investigation.
4. Many complaints were received and being investigated at the same time, by the same investigating officer (relates to three late complaints).
5. There was a delay in responding due to having to speak with various individuals, as well as the complainant, and investigate the 'history' behind parking at the Pavilion car park, before a response could be generated.
6. Complex area covering many issues that needed investigating.

### **Revenues and Benefits (services provided by Civica)**

1. Three complaints exceeded timescale. All were received in April when there is a high level of correspondence after council tax demand notices and business rates bills are sent out.

### **Children and Family Services**

1. Confusion between staff regarding who would respond and time pressures delayed written response.
2. Service manager felt it was not appropriate to respond until ongoing child protection investigation was completed, then it was felt a full response could be given.

- One service area is highlighted as having Amber status for stage 1 complaints (table 1, appendix 1). AMBER status means more than 90% but less than 95% of stage 1 complaints were dealt with within the timescale of 10 working days. Further detail regarding the complaints where timescales were exceeded are provided below:

### **Highways and Environmental Services**

1. Unfair system for payment of green bins. The slow response to this complaint was due to a number of similar enquiries and complaints being made around the same time (the height of the renewal period for garden waste subscriptions) resulting in the responsible officer losing track of the complaint.
2. Condition of the road on the approach to Crown Crossroads in Llandegla. Unfortunately there was some confusion as to the location which caused the delay in replying.

- One service area is highlighted as having RED status for stage 2 complaints (table 2, appendix 1). Further detail regarding the complaints where timescales were exceeded for those services are provided below:

### **Planning and Public Protection**

1. Several correspondence received from the complainant during investigation, which related to various issues including Highways. It was a complex matter to

investigate which resulted more around health and safety matters rather than planning and highways issues.

4.4 Learning from complaints – appendix 2 provides a summary of the learning gleaned from complaints during Q1.

4.5 Attached at Appendix 3 for members' information is the Customer Feedback Annual Report 2015/16 relating to the Social Services Department.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The Your Voice scheme directly contributes to the corporate priority of: *Modernising the Council.*

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

All costs relating to customer feedback are absorbed within existing budgets.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

This is a performance report and no decision is being sought to make any changes that would impact on staff or the community. Therefore an EqIA is not required for this report.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Monthly reporting to the Senior Leadership Team.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

There are no obvious financial implications arising from the report.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

By not dealing with complaints effectively, the reputation of the Council may suffer.

## **11. Power to make the Decision**

Section 7 of the Council's Constitution outlines the Committee's powers with respect to performance and the achievement of objectives.

### **Contact Officer:**

Corporate Complaints Officer

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