

Report To: Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 29 November 2012
Lead Member/Officer: Head of Customers and Education Support
Report Author: Corporate Complaints Officer
Title: Performance Standards Revealed Through the Complaints Process

1 What is the report about?

To present analysis of the feedback received via Denbighshire County Council's customer feedback policy 'Your Voice' for Quarter 2 of 2012/13.

2 What is the reason for making this report?

To provide information regarding any performance issues identified by 'Your Voice', and to make recommendations to address these accordingly.

3 What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 notes and comments on the performance of services; and
- 3.2 determines whether any service(s) performance in dealing with complaints warrants further detailed scrutiny or support at present.

4 Report details

Highlights

The Council responded to **87%** of complaints within the 'Your Voice' timescales in Quarter 2. This is down from 91% in the previous quarter and continues to be short of the corporate target which is 95%.

The authority received 86 compliments during quarter 2, though this figure does not include Social Services.

Complaint response times

Although the overall performance of the council has dropped, there are a number of points to note.

- There were a number of complaints incorrectly allocated to services. Some of these have been reallocated to 'Other' – and because they were dealt with outside of target, they have impacted on the overall performance figures. This category will not be used in future reports.
- Housing Services have 'stabilised' their performance after two poor quarters at the end of 2011/12 following the restructure.

- Environmental Services continue to perform well given they have the highest volume of complaints. The performance did not suffer significantly despite a 69% increase in their complaints during the quarter.
- Complaint volumes for Highways increased by 38% in the quarter, yet the performance only slipped slightly.
- Stage 1 complaints appear to be where the issue is in terms of failing to respond within the timescales – with 87% being responded to within timescale.

Improving performance

The corporate aim is to respond to at least 95% of complaints within the stated timescales. At present we are some way off this, with the main area of concern being responding to stage 1 complaints outside the 10 working day timescale.

A presentation was delivered to Middle Managers at their quarterly conference on 17 October 2012. There was a particular emphasis on complaint handling and responding to complaints.

A meeting is scheduled with service complaints and performance officers in November to further reinforce this aspect of performance to those officers who deal with and manage complaints. One aim of the meeting will be to try to understand why complaints are not responded to within timescale. The findings will help to formulate an action plan to improve this aspect of complaint handling with the results fed back to the Committee at the next meeting.

A monthly report was introduced in September for the Senior Leadership Team highlighting performance in regards responding to complaints.

5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

An excellent Council, close to its community.

6 What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

None – existing role of Corporate Complaints Officer.

7 What consultations have been carried out?

Monthly reporting to Senior Executive Team.

8 Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not applicable.

9 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.

10 Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3.4 of the Council's Constitution

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