

POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 January 2014

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2012-13 – INFORMATION REPORT

Reason for the Report

1. When the Committee approved its annual work programme for 2013/14, it decided to receive a number of reports, including the Council's Annual Complaints Report, for information, in order to inform future scrutiny items.
2. The Annual Complaints Report, attached at **Appendix A**, was presented to the Cabinet on 16 December 2013. It covers complaints received between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. Members may also note that headline complaints figures are also set out in the Performance quarterly report at agenda Item 7 of this Committee meeting.

Background

3. Complaints provide valuable information about how the Council is performing and what customers think about service delivery. The Cabinet receives a report annually, detailing complaints received across all directorates. In November 2012, this Committee considered revisions to the Council's Complaints Policy. The revised Policy emphasised:
 - the need to resolve complaints at local service area level at the earliest opportunity avoiding the need for lengthy investigation where possible;
 - clearer guidance for officers in terms of complaints records keeping;
 - information regarding the Council's relationship with Public Service Ombudsman for Wales; and
 - set out how the Complaints Policy would be publicised.

4. The Policy reduced the timescale for acknowledging a complaint from ten to five days, and removed the Independent Complaints Review process. These changes were implemented from May 2013, so were not in place during the reporting period of this Annual Complaints Report.

Issues

5. Members will note from the attached report that there was a significant decrease in customer complaints in the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, as compared to the previous financial year. This is largely attributed to a decrease in complaints about waste collections. Members may recall that considerable changes to the city's waste collections were implemented in September 2011, so an increase in complaints as these changes bedded in had been anticipated. The 2012/13 results do show some variations across different service areas, however. Further details can be found from paragraph 30 of the attached report.
6. The report also sets out the number of Independent Reviews carried out in 2012/13 and the number of Ombudsman complaints.
7. When the Committee considered the Complaints Policy in November 2012, Members were keen to stress that customers should also be made more aware of how to make compliments or comments to the Council. The attached report sets out just over two thousand compliments, broken down by service area.

Way Forward

8. This item is for information only.

Legal Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council

must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers of behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to note the attached report and consider whether it wishes to use information contained in the report to inform future scrutiny items.

MARIE ROSENTHAL

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer
30 December 2013

CABINET MEETING: 16 DECEMBER 2013

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2012-2013

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES, HOUSING &
CUSTOMER SERVICES**

AGENDA ITEM:7

PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Reason for this Report

1. To report to the Cabinet on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. This report highlights the key outcomes. The statistics for corporate complaints are set out by service area.

Background

2. Complaints provide valuable information about how we are performing and what our customers think about our services. Most people who complain tell us what we have done wrong and how we can do better; we use this information to improve our services, strengthen our relationships with customers and make better use of our resources. Publishing this annual report demonstrates the council's commitment to transparency and a positive approach to dealing with and learning from complaints.
3. The Corporate Complaints Team collects information about complaints every month and produces quarterly and annual reports. We use this information to ensure that the complaints policy is working and our regular staff training brings improvements in complaints management. Meanwhile, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales collects detailed information about complaints against the Council and includes this in his annual report. We have a great deal of information at our disposal.
4. This annual report is based on the information we have gathered about complaints made by Cardiff Council customers between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013.

Issues between April 2012 and March 2013

5. There were **2671** complaints received during 2012/13. This represents a 40% decrease from the previous year when 4474 complaints were recorded.

Year	Number of complaints
2012/13	2,671
2011/12	4,474
2010/11	2,080
2009/10	1,069
2008/09	931
2007/08	1,188
2006/07	1,110
2005/06	1,173

6. We are pleased that there has been a significant decrease in the number of complaints. This can largely be attributed to a considerable decrease in Waste Management complaints from last year's report. In September 2011, Cardiff residents experienced the biggest change in waste collection services for 10 years and an increase in enquiries and complaints were fully anticipated and planned for.
7. Though this report is primarily about complaints, we also get many positive comments about our staff and the services that we provide. Knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important as knowing where things are not working. Across the year 1st April 2012 – 31st March 2013, Cardiff Council has received a total of **2092** recorded compliments.
8. The breakdown figures for each service area are as follows.

Recorded compliments between April 2012 and March 2013

Service Area	Number of compliments
Adult Services	5
Children's Services	6
City Development	67
Community Maintenance Services (CMS)	47
Community Facilities	57
Communication & Media	1
Culture, Tourism & Events	477
Central Transport Services (CTS)	3
Customer Services	337
Finance & Property	18
Harbour Authority	103
Highway Maintenance	161
Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal	162
HR People Services	5
Internal Services	3
Legal & Democratic Services	31
Network Management	16
Policy, Partnerships & Citizen Focus	1
Parks & Sports	137
Regulatory & Supporting Services	12
Waste Management	443
Total	2092

The Complaints Policy & Procedure

9. An outline of our complaints policy will help to explain how we manage complaints and how we measure our performance at the moment.
10. The Council has recently introduced changes to the Complaints Policy, reflecting guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints as well as guidance received from the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. The main changes are:
 - The acknowledgment of a complaint has reduced from 10 to 5 working days
 - The Independent Review process has been removed from the complaints process – once a complaint is answered in full by the Council, the customer has the option to contact the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales if they are dissatisfied with their response.

These changes have been implemented with effect from 1st May 2013. However, for the year 2012/13, Cardiff Council's Complaints Procedure consisted of two stages.

Stage 1. Initial complaint investigation

11. This stage can involve more than one attempt at resolving the problem and it ends when either the complaint is resolved or the department informs the complainant that it can not do anything further to help; at this stage a customer who remains dissatisfied can ask for an independent review. Most complaints are settled after the initial complaint investigation and only 44 complaints proceeded to the independent review stage in 2012/13 compared to 22 in 2011/12.
12. Complaints Managers aim to acknowledge complaints within 10 working days and they aim to provide a full response within 20 working days. Many service areas surpass these expectations and send full responses within 10 working days.
13. Each month, Complaints Managers record information about the number of complaints they have received and how quickly they acknowledged these complaints and provided full responses to complainants.¹ This information is submitted to the Corporate Complaints team every month.

Stage 2. Independent review

14. If complainants are still unhappy with the Council's response at the end of the first stage of the complaints process, they can ask for an independent review.² This would be carried out within 20 working days by an Operational Manager from a different service area from the one involved in the complaint.

¹ Multi-service complaints are recorded by all of the departments involved in the complaint.

² We accept all requests for independent reviews as long as they are made within one month of the date on the Council's final letter of response. We did not turn down any requests in 2012/2013.

15. Chief Officers are asked to nominate Operational Managers to carry out independent reviews according to a rota and the Corporate Complaints Manager is responsible for arranging the reviews.
16. Complainants receive a report at the end of the independent review process and this explains whether the complaint has been upheld and provides reasons for the decision. Many reports contain recommendations for improvements even when complaints are not upheld.³
17. This is the final stage in the Council's complaints process and complainants who have been through this process and remain dissatisfied are advised to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. It is worth noting that the Ombudsman encourages complainants to use the Council's complaints process and does not, generally, accept cases from complainants who have not exhausted this process.

Independent Reviews in 2012/2013

18. There were 44 requests for independent reviews between April 2012 and March 2013. As the table below shows, most of the complaints were not upheld at the independent review stage.

Independent review outcomes

	2011/12	2012/13
Complaints upheld	1	5
Complaints partly upheld	4	9
Complaints not upheld	16	28
Case withdrawn by customer	1	0
Ongoing investigation	0	2

19. Some of the decisions from the reviews were subsequently referred to the Ombudsman by the complainants and the Ombudsman upheld the Council's decisions in all cases.

Independent reviews by service area

20. **Corporate Services:** There were 13 independent reviews of complaints against Council Tax and Business Rates. Most of these related to the collection of Council Tax. It should be noted that 0 of the 13 reviews were upheld and just 2 were partly upheld.
21. **Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal:** 10 independent reviews involved matters relating to HANR. 1 of the 10 reviews was upheld with a further 3 reviews partly upheld and 6 not upheld.

³ The Corporate Complaints team monitors the action of departments in relation to these recommendations and, where the case has been referred to the Ombudsman, can ask for evidence of compliance or reasons for non-compliance.

22. **Planning:** 4 independent reviews involved planning matters and none of these complaints were upheld.
23. **Other service areas:** Of the 17 reviews remaining, 4 of the complaints were upheld, 4 were partly upheld and 7 were not upheld. The 17 reviews were spread across 13 different service areas. There are also 2 ongoing investigations.

Service Areas involved	Number of reviews	Outcome of review
Adult Services	1	Not upheld
Central Transport Services	1	Upheld
Community Facilities	2	1 partly upheld, 1 not upheld
Community Maintenance Services	3	1 upheld, 1 partly upheld, 1 not upheld
Education	1	Ongoing investigation
Highways / Network Management	1	Not upheld
HR People Services	2	1 partly upheld, 1 ongoing investigation
Network Management	1	Upheld
Parks	2	1 partly upheld, 1 not upheld
Regulatory & Supporting Services	1	Not upheld
Waste Management / Customer Services	1	Upheld
Waste Management	1	Not upheld

Ombudsman Complaints 2012/2013

24. Recommendations in Ombudsman reports and observations about our strengths and weaknesses help us improve our processes and build better training programmes for our staff.
25. The Ombudsman closed 93 cases involving Cardiff Council in 2012/2013 compared to 90 in 2011/12. It is particularly pleasing that only 2 of these cases led to a report. The Ombudsman received 39 premature complaints (defined as when the council has not had a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint itself). It is felt this is due to public perception that the Ombudsman can intervene and make decisions without the Council considering the complaint. A further 13 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council. The Ombudsman closed the cases for the following reasons:

Number of Cases	Reason for closing the case
39	complainants had not exhausted the Council's complaints process – they were referred back to the Council
26	cases closed after initial consideration
13	cases declined because Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by Council
12	cases out of Ombudsman's jurisdiction
2	complaints led to an Ombudsman's report
1	case withdrawn by complainant
Total = 93	

26. The table below shows the total number of complaints made to the Ombudsman regarding Cardiff Council.

Year	Number of cases
2012/13	93
2011/12	90
2010/11	81
2009/10	77
2008/09	100
2007/08	141
2006/07	103
2005/06	84

Investigations leading to Reports

27. The Ombudsman issues reports if he finds that a complainant has suffered hardship or injustice through the Council's maladministration or service failure. Under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, the Ombudsman can issue one of two types of reports following an investigation into a complaint by a member of the public: Section 16 and Section 21.

Section 16 Report

28. The first type of report is known as a Section 16 report. This is issued when the Ombudsman believes that the investigation report contains matters of public interest. The Council is then obliged to publicise the report at its own expense. The Ombudsman issued no Section 16 reports in 2012/2013 which is an improvement on the 1 Section 16 report issued in 2011/2012.

Section 21 report

29. The Ombudsman can issue a Section 21 report if Cardiff Council has agreed to implement any recommendations he has made and if he is satisfied that the case does not raise matters of public interest. The Ombudsman issued **2** Section 21 reports during this period with both cases regarding Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal. Both complaints were upheld. This is an improvement on the 10 Section 21 reports issued in 2011/2012.

Complaints by service area - 2012/2013

Communities

a. Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal (HANR)

30. HANR received **357** complaints in 2012/2013 which is an increase of complaints compared to 2011/2012 when a total of 289 complaints were received.
31. HANR is responsible for work which directly affects the public such as; council tenants, benefit claims, anti social behaviour and as a result attract a high volume of complaints. Part of the reason for the increase can be attributed to the Anti Social Behaviour team transferring back into the service area which resulted in an additional 17 complaints.
32. It has been identified that within Benefits there was an increase in the number of complaints about payment being made to the wrong party or account. This was due to an increase in human error caused by very high volumes of work being received by the section. Rigorous checks have now been put in place to prevent this happening wherever possible.
33. There was also an increase in the number of complaints due to late payment of Housing Benefit. Generally speed of processing remains good, has improved on the previous year and is above the UK average. However, a new automated process was introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions during the year which resulted in large volumes of work. As with any new process, there were teething problems which have now been resolved.
34. The Social Lettings Unit also saw an increase in the volume of complaints (53 compared to 30 in 2011/2012), which can be attributed to the introduction of welfare reform, the economic downturn and pressure on services.

b. Community Facilities

35. There were **125** complaints for Community Facilities in 2012/2013, this is a small increase on the number received in 2011/12. Given that the number of visits to Community Facilities in 2012/13 was in excess of 5 million, the number of complaints remains relatively low.
36. Complaints are managed at operational and senior management level with the Head of Service and management team reviewing complaints every quarter at the Business Improvement Meeting.
37. An analysis of complaints about the services provided by Community Facilities in 2012/2013 identifies that complaints only occurred within Leisure and Libraries, with no complaints received regarding the services provided by Children's Play, Local Training & Enterprise, and Community Learning. An analysis of the complaints identified the following trends:

- . A poor quality of service
- . Dissatisfied with policy
- . The attitude of staff
- . Hygiene and the state of facilities including changing rooms

38. Leisure Centre & Library Managers and staff take all customer feedback seriously. They actively monitor the performance of their buildings and services and initiate improvements in order to ensure that they can provide high quality services. The service area also received **57** compliments during 2012/13.

c. Community Maintenance Services

39. Community Maintenance Services manages a repair, maintenance and improvement service that ensures homes are of a decent standard, are safe and secure, and contributes to the development of Cardiff's estates and communities. Responsive and programmed repairs are carried out to around 13,457 Council tenants, 1,197 leaseholders and also to 2 hostels and 2 traveller sites across the city.

40. Community Maintenance Services dealt with a total of **290** complaints in 2012/13. This is an increase of 36 complaints compared to the previous year. However, Community Maintenance Services and Planned Maintenance merged in December 2012 and complaints received for Planned Maintenance since that period have been included in the total figure.

41. The exceptionally cold weather in early 2013 led to a number of complaints relating to overdue repairs, which unfortunately could not be attended to due to the adverse weather conditions. There was also an increase in complaints regarding the policy relating to central heating repairs, as the policy has different criteria for in and out of hours repairs to be followed by staff. The highest percentage of complaints received by Community Maintenance Services related to the standard of service or for the delay in service. There was also an increase in the number of complaints received in August however no trend has been identified.

42. With the implementation of service redesign (improvements to the repairs process) estimated to go live in July 2013, the improved customer focused service will mean a 100% appointment service to customers and with limited inspections being undertaken, a fix first time service will reduce delays.

d. Policy, Partnerships and Citizen Focus

43. Policy, Partnerships and Citizen Focus received **0** complaints in 2012/2013. This service area does not provide a direct service to the public, although it is involved in external events, public consultation exercises and a wide range of partnership meetings involving a diverse range of professionals and stakeholders.

e. Regulatory and Supporting Services

44. This service area received **60** complaints in 2012/13, compared to 24 in 2011/12. This increase can largely be attributed to an increase in complaints received regarding Bereavement Services. There has been no increase in the number of complaints received in the remaining Regulatory and Supporting Services areas and the number of complaints received is extremely small, given the range of customer facing services provided by Regulatory & Supporting Services. Complaints are regularly reviewed and, where appropriate, processes changed to improve the overall customer experience.
45. Bereavement Services is a 'right first time' service in which customers who are bereaved, remain a priority. Customer requests and comments via service monitor forms and questionnaires are scrutinised and service standards have been developed to inform the public. From these standards monthly performance data is monitored to ensure that the service area continues to meet it's commitments to Cardiff's citizens. Annually, the level of customer satisfaction for the service area averages 99%.
46. The service area is made up of the crematorium and 7 cemeteries and churchyards. Each of these has their own maintenance regime which depends upon the type of cemetery. All grounds maintenance is aimed at supporting the grieving process and providing visitors with the correct environment in which to meet their therapeutic need of visiting a loved one's grave or memorial.
47. The service area deals with 4000 funerals per year and have over 500,000 visitors to their cemetery and crematorium grounds. The complaints reported would equate to under 0.01% of all visitors at their sites. Visitors approach Bereavement Services, in the main, in quite a vulnerable state and at differing points in their grieving process. This can mean that small issues may become of increased importance to them and families are actively encouraged to communicate their needs with Bereavement Services via service monitor forms.
48. These needs are then monitored via monthly statistics and at operational meetings. Trends in service requirements are also considered at this point. Where an error has occurred, the service area will proactively apologise in writing to the family concerned to try and stop an issue escalating.

Corporate

a. Finance

49. The number of recorded complaints in Corporate Services has shown a positive trend with numbers reducing from 215 (2010/11) to 190 (2011/12) to **168** in 2012/13. The number of those considered justified

(where the customer's complaint was upheld in full or in part) has also reduced annually from 49 to 38 to 27 respectively.

50. 50. Most complaints were about the collection of unpaid Council Tax charges and the department has continued to take a robust stance in relation to this issue. The Council is continuing to take legal action to pursue debts more frequently and, once Liability Orders are issued by the court, the Council has been prompt in taking action to secure payment from debtors. As part of this process, the Council continues to use external bailiffs to complement the work of the in-house team. This led to some complaints about the Council's recovery action but in most instances these complaints were deemed to be unjustified when they were investigated; complainants were in arrears and objected to being pursued over unpaid bills.
51. Finance are reviewing their arrangements for 2013/14 to improve their performance with regard to sending acknowledgements as required by the new Complaints Policy.

b. Legal and Democratic Services

52. There were **11** complaints about Legal and Democratic Services in 2012/13. The main reason for the small increase in the number of complaints is as a result of the increased number of elections. There were three elections in 2012/13 and temporary staff were employed to help with these. This resulted in an increase in activity for the team with approximately 600,000 voters being supported and over 21,000 house visits during the annual canvas. All complaints have been investigated and action taken to improve. This includes improved training plans for temporary staff.

c. Scrutiny, Performance and Improvement

53. There were **0** complaints for Scrutiny, Performance & Improvement.

People

Social Services - Statutory Complaints

54. Both Adult Services and Children's Services have their own statutory complaints procedure. Although they have the occasional matter that is dealt with under the corporate procedure, the overwhelming majority will be social care complaints and dealt with under their statutory procedure. Therefore, the vast majority of complaints fall outside the Council's Complaint Policy.

a. Adult Services Complaints 2012 – 2013

55. Adult Services received **1** corporate complaint in 2012/13 while the majority of our complaints are dealt with under the statutory procedure – commonly referred to as "Listening & Learning".

56. From 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, Adult Services received 60 complaints of which 3 were withdrawn at the request of the complainant. Twenty of these complaints were wholly or partly about an independent provider (18 were about agencies providing domiciliary care and 2 about residential care).
57. Complaints are recorded according to the Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF). The table on the next page shows ACRF categories of complaints. Please note that some complainants raised more than one issue.

Access to services	20
Assessments – problems with arranging and carrying out the assessment	3
Care management and review – disagreements about council's duties and obligations	6
Range of services offered	1
Quality of the service	52
Promoting independence and social inclusion.	0

58. Of the 60 complaints, 4 were withdrawn and 2 went straight to stage 2. Both stage 2 investigations are out of time and not yet closed. Of the remaining 54, thirty eight were resolved within the statutory deadline and sixteen missed their deadline.
59. For each complaint, Adult Services decides whether to uphold the complaint in full, to uphold it partially or not to uphold it. Of the complaints that were considered at stage 1, 19 were upheld in full, 13 were partially upheld and 22 were not upheld.

Adult Services Statutory Complaints by Stage	2011/2012	2012/2013
Stage 1 complaints	57	60
Stage 2 complaints	4	2
Stage 3 complaints	2	0
Ombudsman	3	0

b. Children's Services

60. Children's Services did not receive any corporate complaints in 2012/13. The table below shows the complaints that they received under the statutory complaints process. Children's Services also received **6** compliments in 2012/13.

Children's Services Statutory Complaints by Stage	2011/2012	2012/2013
Stage 1 complaints	117	142
Stage 1 complaints from children and young people	18	35
Stage 2 formal complaints	4	5
Stage 3 review panel	1	1
Complaints to PSOW enquiry (not investigated)	1	0
Complaints from Children's Commissioner	0	0

c. Education

61. The Education Service received 69 formal complaints in 2012/13, though only **35** of these were for Education to investigate leaving 34 complaints which were the responsibility of Cardiff schools to investigate and resolve in line with their own complaints policies.
62. The Education Service had sole responsibility for 28 of the 35 complaint received and a further 7 complaints concerned both the Education Service and Cardiff schools. The complaints for the Education Service predominately concerned statutory functions; School Reorganisation (4), School Admissions (10) and Statements of Special Educational Needs (9).
63. Even though there has been an increase in the number of complaints for the Education Service (there were 23 complaints last year compared to 35 this year), it is still a very low number given the size of the service area and the diversity of its activities. The Education Service Area Complaints Manager is of the view that the increase reflects the continued improvement and awareness in the way complaints are recorded and monitored in the department. However, the department will continue to monitor complaints and look for ways of reducing the number of complaints.
64. The remaining 34 complaints received were the sole responsibility of Cardiff schools, both maintained and voluntary aided and were therefore referred on to the relevant schools to investigate and resolve in line with their own internal complaints policies.
65. It is important to note that Cardiff schools will have received other complaints directly and that the Education Service will have no awareness of the numbers involved. This is because the Council does not have a statutory role in resolving complaints about schools. The statutory responsibility for resolving school complaints rests with each school's governing body. The Council's involvement in a school complaint would only be for the purpose of reviewing the procedure the governing body used to make any decision, not to review the decision itself or to act as an appeal mechanism. This review can only take place when all stages of each school's internal complaints procedure have been exhausted.

Place

City Development – (Planning, Economic Development, and Major Projects and Transport Strategy and Projects)

66. During 2012/13 City Development received **50** complaints, 2 fewer than the previous year. The two key areas complained about were transport improvement schemes and planning applications.
67. 27 complaints related to various issues regarding the implementation of Transportation Improvement Schemes such as road works, diversion

routes; and road closures for the Cardiff Half Marathon route. 22 complaints were related to Planning applications, the planning consultation process, planning decisions and compliance with Building Regulations. This figure is relatively small given that Development Management receives on average just under 2,500 planning applications per year, and many will require negotiating with many parties to discuss contentious issues and securing decisions using either delegated powers or by reporting through the Planning Committee. Planners also deal with developments where planning permission has not been granted and illegal developments that have been completed. 1 complaint related to vehicle access to the train station entrance.

68. 46 complaints were acknowledged within 10 working days and 47 were responded to within 20 working days. 4 acknowledgements were not sent within the required timescale and this was mainly due to delays in complaints being sent to City Development by other service areas. 3 responses were not sent within the required timescale and this was because they required a technical response co-ordinated across the Planning teams.
69. The Service Area received 1 Welsh Language complaint regarding English only road signage. In response to this complaint the Service Area confirmed that all new road signs are installed using bilingual format and whilst there are English only signs still on the adopted highway these are being replaced with bilingual equivalents as part of an ongoing maintenance programme. As additional finance becomes available we will seek to install additional Variable Message Signs working on the same principle as the Welsh Government of having the signs in pairs with reasonable distances between them.
70. To achieve a bilingual approach to neighbourhood consultation Planning Services completed a comprehensive review of their processes. Enhancements have been made to the Planning software and as a result all initial neighbour consultation letters are now sent out bilingually.

City Management

a. Harbour Authority

71. The Harbour Authority received **20** complaints and responded to all of these within the required time. This is an improvement on the previous year when the Harbour Authority had 21 complaints.
72. All complaints were resolved satisfactorily at a very early stage and there was no particular theme to the complaints. All complaints were acknowledged and responded to within time limits. The Authority was pleased to receive over 100 compliments from customers from all sections of the organisation, from statutory bodies, to local business and water users. There were significant increases in compliments in October due to Llanishen Sailing Centre forwarding all of their compliments for the Summer season in one batch. There were also significant increases in

compliments in December following an event in Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre.

b. Culture, Tourism and Events

73. Culture, Tourism & Events includes The New Theatre, St David's Hall, Mansion House, Tourism and City events. There were **275** complaints for this service area in 2012/2013, compared to 277 complaints in 2011/2012.
74. It is pleasing to note that 98% of complainants received an acknowledgment within 10 working days and 99% of complainants received a full response within 20 working days. **477** compliments were also recorded for this area.
75. As a result of improvements to the Council's online services, customers now have a quick, convenient and cost free way to complain or comment on our services. Whilst this has led to better quality feedback, it is important to note that the majority of complaints for this service area relate to customer preference rather than service failure for example, the department receives complaints about shows not being to the customer's personal taste, the quality of plays and the audience.

c. Parks and Sport

76. Complaints for Parks and Sports have reduced from 130 in 2011/12 to **87** 2012/13 which is a 33% reduction. Parks and Sports have produced a FAQ document with specific answers to common customer queries. This document has contributed to this reduction as customers can be helped at the first point of contact.
77. Monthly complaint statistics for Parks and Sports are monitored at Business and Operational Improvement Meetings and this allows managers to identify trends and if necessary take corrective action
78. It is pleasing to note that **137** compliments have been received for this area.

d. Network Management

79. Network Management received **231** complaints for 2012/13. This is an increase of 74 on the previous year.
80. The complaints received for Network Management were as follows:-

Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)	50
Civil Parking Enforcement	40
Resident Parking Scheme	26
Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)	14
Disabled Parking	14
On-Street Parking (General)	14
Pay & Display Ticket Machines	14

Park & Ride	12
Road Closures	8
Multi Service Area Complaints	6
Concessionary Fares	4
School Crossing Patrol	4
Taxi Parking	4
Traffic Signals	3
Utility Covers	3*
Bus Timetables	2
Bute Tunnel	2
Highway Enforcement	2*
Pay & Display Refunds	2
Pay & Display Scheme	2
Bailiffs	1
Car Parks	1
Electronic Road Signs	1
Skip Licences	1*
Traffic Regulation Orders	1
TOTAL	231

* The Street Works activities transferred to City Services from 1 February 2013.

81. The highest number of complaints received relate to PCNs and Civil Parking Enforcement. Parking is a very contentious and emotive subject and the Council is likely to receive a relatively high number of complaints from members of the public who believe an injustice has been carried out. Some of the complaints relate to the fact that a PCN has been issued and complaints are often received to support appeals against the notice.
82. Given the number of PCNs issued each year - on average 60,000 per annum - the number of complaints is significantly low. It is also pleasing to note that the complaints against Civil Enforcement Officers has significantly reduced this year from 26 to 14 following customer care training for staff.
83. The third highest number of complaints was in relation to the Resident Parking Permit Scheme. The new Resident Parking Policy has been in place for the whole year and many requests for permits were refused as those making the request were not eligible for the scheme. This in turn generated into complaints as applicants did not accept this decision.
84. Last year was the first full year since the Council assumed responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement and there is now an established process for recording and responding to complaints received in this service. Monthly monitoring is carried out to determine if there are any trends and any training issues that can be identified.

City Services

a. Waste Management and Street Cleansing

85. Waste Management received **735** complaints in 2012/13 and this figure has decreased considerably compared with the level of complaints in 2011/12 (2838). In September 2011, significant changes were made to the Waste Collection service with the objective of increasing recycling, increasing the amount of waste diverted from landfill and also improving the efficiency of the service. To assist in achieving these objectives, the waste collection day for approximately 75% of Cardiff's households changed. Understandably, as a result of these changes, complaints were higher than normal during 2011/12.
86. As a result of the above changes, in 2012/13 the number of collections now being undertaken per fortnight has increased from 5 to 6, (i.e. by 20%). An additional hygiene waste collection request service is now also being offered. With approximately 150,000 address points across the city, up to 450,000 waste collections are now done weekly which is equivalent to over 23 million a year. Additionally, Waste Management also provides street cleansing, education and enforcement and bulky waste collection services in addition to providing four Household Waste Recycling Centres. Considering the number of waste collections made per year, and the breadth of services provided, the number of complaints is considered to be very small.
87. Complaints and trends are robustly monitored by officers through the Operational Improvement Meetings and also through close liaison with Connect to Cardiff. As stated above, the complaints in 2012/13 have reduced from the previous years as a result of the new service changes bedding in. However, an increase in education and enforcement activity, effective supervision and monitoring and raising staff awareness of the need for excellence in service delivery have assisted with achieving this improvement. This is also reflected in the receipt of **443** compliments for this area

b. Highways

88. Highway Maintenance received **181** complaints for 2012/13. This is an increase of 116 on the previous year where 65 complaints were recorded.
89. The complaints received for Highway Maintenance were as follows:-

Carriageway / Footway Reconstruction & Resurfacing	48
Potholes / Trips / Paving	45
Highway Drainage	22
Multi Service Area Complaints	22
Winter Maintenance	21
Street Lighting	11
Other (General)	5
Drainage / Sewerage (Non-highway)	2

Highway Enforcement *	1
Highway Obstruction (Fly tipping / Dumping)	1
Lines / Signs	1
R.T.A Debris	1
Street Works *	1
TOTAL	181

* The Street Works activities transferred to City Services with effect from 1 February 2013.

90. The highest number of complaints received relate to Carriageway/Footway Reconstruction & Resurfacing and Potholes/Trips/Paving. The resurfacing programme for 2012/13 has resulted in 186 roads being resurfaced. To undertake such volumes of work a certain amount of disruption is inevitable. However, the numbers of complaints received must be considered positively in comparison to the scale and volume of works undertaken and the improvements to the roads that were treated.
91. The winter period for 2012/13 was very severe with almost double the amount of salting treatments undertaken in comparison to 2011/12. The severe weather had an adverse effect on the road condition resulting in large volumes of pothole reports. For 2012/13, highways dealt with 3996 emergency potholes of which 90% were repaired within 24 hours. Although additional resources were introduced and large numbers of pothole repairs were completed, inevitably the number of complaints did increase.
92. The third highest category related to highway drainage complaints. The year 2012 was a year of records for rainfall in Wales with exceptional levels of rainfall recorded over the principality. April was one of the wettest in over a century and this continued as Wales experienced its wettest summer since 1910. Ground became saturated and sewers were unable to cope with the level and intensity of rainfall which inevitably led to the number of complaints received. However, given the amount of rainfall and level of complaints, there was no increase in the number of properties or businesses affected by internal flooding. The vast majority of complaints related to flooding of the highway due to ground saturation and overloading of the public sewers.

Shared

a. Central Transport Services

93. The number of complaints received remains fairly low with **9** complaints in 2012/13. Although this is an increase from the previous year's figures, this is due to improved reporting which will continue to be monitored. In view of the types of customer contact related to Transport and Facilities Management this is a positive outcome.
94. The peak of complaints activity is mainly during the months of September and October which is related to school transport issues. These

complaints are dealt with swiftly and usually well within the 20 day deadline. Some issues surrounding staff behaviour have also been identified which again are dealt with quickly by the managers.

b. Communication and Media

95. This section is responsible for Corporate Communication, including the production and distribution of the Capital Times newspaper. There were **3** complaints in 2012/13, relating to the delivery of the Capital Times paper, and two related to articles in the paper. Due to the level of coverage this is a positive result.

c. Customer Services

96. Connect to Cardiff (C2C) continue to deal with a low volume of complaints about the service. There were **22** in total in 2012/13, a small increase on last year and this is comparable to the increase in call volumes. C2C handled 447,771 contacts during this period with Customer Service Representatives talking to an average of 65 customers per day.
97. C2C are able to keep complaints to a minimum due to their robust call monitoring processes which enables managers to pick up on any training issues and prevent mistakes being made. Full customer care training is given in induction training and the customer care ethos is ingrained in the C2C culture.
98. The main reason for complaints into C2C is related to customers disputing Council Tax bills and information given to them by C2C. All complaints have been fully investigated and the use of call recording means that the department are able to resolve complaints quickly and make amends if needed. In some of these cases the information has actually been correct and C2C have taken the time to make difficult information clear for the customer.
99. Customers have made complaints around Data Protection processes and C2C take these on-board and make verification processes as simple as possible for customers whilst ensuring they continue to adhere to all Date Protection requirements. C2C received 4 complaints that directly related to the level of customer service given when contacting the centre. These were all dealt by providing extra coaching and support.
100. C2C received **337** compliments about the service. The running theme of these are the standard of customer care they have received, the efficiency of the service and the genuine care and commitment the Customer Service Representatives show customers when dealing with their queries which can often be difficult to resolve.

d. HR People Services

101. There were **11** complaints about HR People Services in 2012/13, which included complaints about teachers' pensions, termination processes and

the number of vacancies available to external candidates. 2012/13 represents the first full year of reporting for HR People Services and we will continue to monitor in 2013/14.

102. HR People Services continues to adapt to changes and reviews customer feedback regularly to improve the services provided. Further improvements will be made during 2013/14 to address the challenges facing HR and the Council.

e. Internal Services

103. There were **0** complaints about Internal Services in 2012/13

Welsh Language Complaints

104. In accordance with Corporate Standards, we monitor the number of complaints in relation to the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme. In 2012/13, the Council received **13** complaints about Welsh Language issues compared to 23 in 2011/12.

105. Most complaints arose in relation to signs and letters that were only in English, thereby contravening Cardiff Council's Welsh Language Policy. Corporate Complaints communicate on a monthly basis with the Welsh Language Unit to ensure that all complaints are recorded.

Legal Implications

106. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

Financial Implications

107. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Reason for Recommendations

108. To enable the Cabinet to monitor the position regarding complaints

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of the report

SARAH McGILL

Director

3 December 2013