

CABINET MEETING: 2 NOVEMBER 2017

CARDIFF COUNCIL ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2016 - 17

**FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE
(COUNCILLOR CHRIS WEAVER)**

AGENDA ITEM: 3

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES

Reason for this Report

1. To report to the Cabinet on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017. 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 Council's complaints procedure reflects guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints. This was further supported by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Complaints Managers record information about the number of complaints they have received and how quickly they acknowledged and responded to the complaints. This information is submitted to the Corporate Complaints Team at the end of each quarter. The Corporate Complaints Team use this information to ensure that the complaints policy is being adhered to. Meanwhile, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales captures detailed information regarding complaints against the Council which is included in his annual report.

Complaints

4. A total of 1,787 complaints were recorded during 2016-17. This is a 23.5% decrease from the previous year, when 2,335 complaints were recorded.

Compliments

5. As an organization, we receive many positive comments about our staff and the services we provide. Knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important to capture as knowing where things are perhaps not working. We therefore keep a record of the compliments we receive as well as the complaints. Good practice and learning can then be circulated across the Council.
6. Across the year 2016-17, Cardiff Council received a total of 2,122 recorded compliments, which is a 43.1% increase from the previous year when 1,483 compliments were recorded.

Ombudsman Complaints

7. Recommendations in Ombudsman reports and observations about our strengths and weaknesses help us improve our processes. The Ombudsman closed 133 cases involving Cardiff Council in 2016-17 compared to 143 cases in 2015-16. 4 of these cases were accepted for further investigation of which 3 led to an Ombudsman report. The Ombudsman received 43 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 initially considering the complaint. A further 38 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council and 31 cases were out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Reason for Recommendations

8. To enable Cabinet to have corporate overview of the complaints and compliments process during 2016/17 and to note the information contained within the report.

Financial Implications

9. This report has no direct financial implications. Any financial implications of future changes made to improve processes and learn from complaints will need to be met from existing resources.

Legal Implications

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

HR Implications

11. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of the report.

SARAH MCGILL

Director of Communities, Housing & Customer Services

27 October 2017

The following appendices is attached:

Appendix 1 – Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2016-17