

Open Report on behalf of Tony Hill

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	18 July 2016
Subject:	Corporate Complaints and Compliments

Summary:

The report is in response to the request from this committee to provide an annual report reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's complaints and compliments process.

It explains that an annual report cannot be provided at this time as a new process of capturing data has been developed in response to the Corporate Complaints Review which took place last year. Lincolnshire County Council Complaints Review was presented to CMB in October 2015 CMB. One of the four objectives of the review was to look at ways to gather better data to improve intelligence and help shape services. To address the recommendations identified in the review a Working Group was set up in February 2016. The group has produced a new Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy and supporting Procedure (endorsed by CMB in May) and has developed a list of indicators to support data collection and further actions as proposed in this report.

Recommendation(s):

That Audit Committee support the proposed indicators and the follow-on actions required to be undertaken by the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Working Group.

Background

This report is in response to the request from this committee to provide an annual report reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's complaints and compliments process, including how well the Council has dealt with complaints as demonstrated by the Local Government Ombudsman's report.

The 2015 Review of the Council's approach to managing complaints (both statutory & corporate) identified that data quality is a problem due to service areas dealing with complaints and compliments locally rather than logging them centrally. It also

questioned whether customer intelligence was being used effectively to shape and improve services through reporting and discussion within service areas.

A Corporate Complaints and Compliments Working Group was set up in February 2011 to address all the recommendations made as part of the review and a new Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy and supporting Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure was approved by CMB in May of this year.

The review recommendations in relation to data collection and audit were:

All complaints to be held on one IT system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow staff to view a record of all customer feedback • To facilitate enforcement of single points of contact in certain cases • To facilitate better reporting
Workflow to be revisited rather than simply lifted from IMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the process is fit for purpose
Quarterly feedback reports to be sent to Directors – including detail of where fault has been found, trends etc.	To ensure good data is available to Directors
Customer feedback to be included as a standing item at DMTs	To ensure learning is fed back into the area, and customer intelligence is used effectively in service planning
Quarterly complaints reports to be sent to CMB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure learning is shared across the organisation To assist CMB in their strategic leadership of the system

The working group discussed the above recommendations and identified that, in order to ensure information is used effectively to improve services, the following indicators be proposed for the revised system and actions be taken forward:

1. Total number of cases
2. Percentage of complaints acknowledged within one working day
3. Percentage of responses given within agreed timescale (both LCC and Serco responsibility as not all complaint responses go through Serco)
4. Total number of repeat (same issue) complaints - discussions currently taking place between LCC and Serco around responsibility of putting together thematic trend analysis.
5. Total number of cases closed within 10 working days
 - o Total number of closed cases Upheld (stating reason)
 - o Total number of closed cases Partially Upheld (stating reason)
 - o Total number of closed cases Not Upheld (stating reason)
6. Total number of cases resolved and closed within agreed timescale

- Total number of cases resolved and closed at Stage 1
 - Total number of cases resolved and closed at Stage 2
- 7. Total number of unresolved open cases outside timescale
 - Total number of unresolved open cases at Stage 1 (stating reason)
 - Total number of unresolved open cases at Stage 2 (stating reason)
- 8. Total number of cases referred (eg Local Government Ombudsman) – we will not always be aware when this happens so, this may be difficult to capture
- 9. Main issue complained about in cases closed
- 10. Main issue complained about in cases open
- 11. Percentage of feedback/lessons learned documentation completed

Actions to be taken forward by the Corporate Complaints & Compliments Working group:

- To develop and agree a centrally maintained tracking system and process to ensure consistent capture and analysis of data (including identification of themes within and across service areas) on complaints and compliments
- To agree roles and responsibilities for service areas and Serco, in the provision and collation of data as listed above (to include whether CSC data reports go to service area for them to say what changes they have made ahead of presentation to Scrutiny or CMB)
- To agree process for presenting a quarterly complaints & compliments report (including suggested improvements) to DMTs and for DMTs to clearly identify and relay actions resulting from discussion on report to service areas
- To agree process for presenting a quarterly complaints & compliments report to CMB identifying service area themes and corporate themes, lessons learned and improvements made
- To consider the formation of a joint working group (service areas and Serco) that would meet on a quarterly basis to look at sample of complaints and track lessons learned

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance across various CSC services is undertaken against the CSC Specification; this will include sampling complaint acknowledgements and responses issued by the CSC. The quarterly working group would also undertake quality assurance of complaint responses (including complainant satisfaction) from LCC and the effectiveness of the process.

Conclusion

There is still work to be undertaken to take the proposed indicators forward and to develop the process. Advice and suggestions from Audit Committee can be presented to the Working Group to include as part of their next stage discussions.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was presented to CMB, with the new Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy and its supporting Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure. The EIA is a living document that is being revised as supporting documents, for example, leaflets are being developed.

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Lincolnshire County Council Complaints Review (confidential)	

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