

Highways and Transport Complaints Report

Quarter 1;
2021/2022

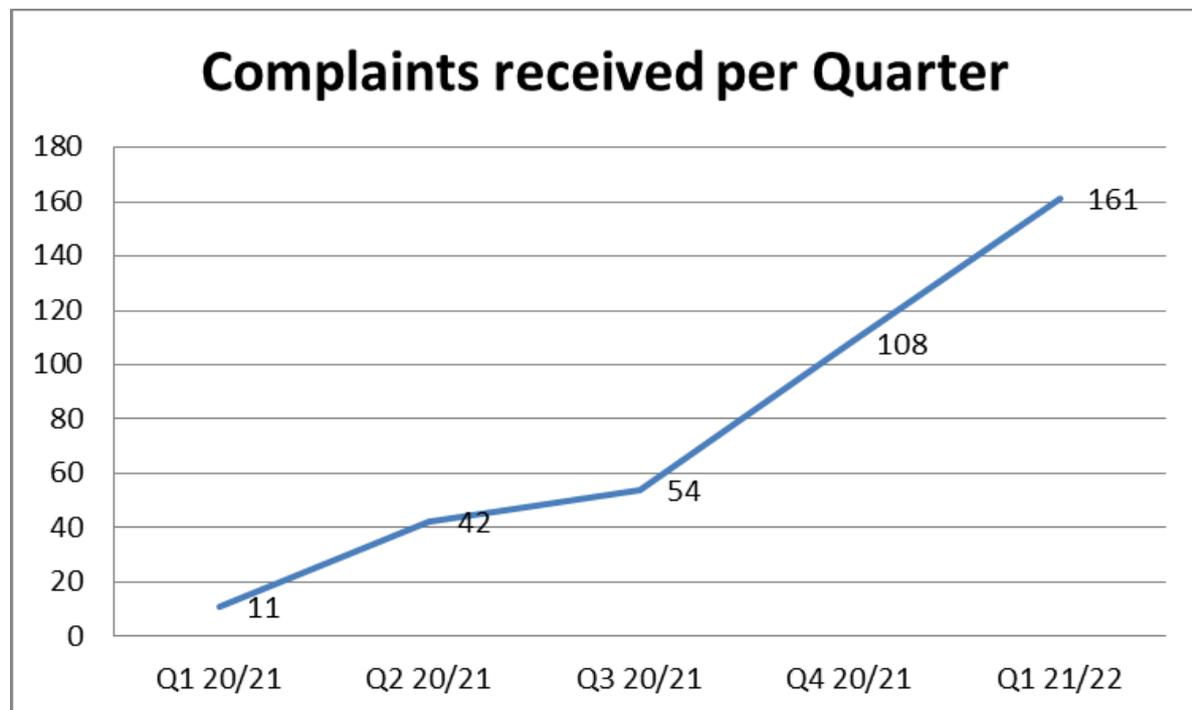
August 2021

Introduction

The following report is a summary of findings from the complaints raised in the 1st quarter of 2021/2022 for Highways and Transport. Details on any common themes within complaints and overall figures for numbers received and outcomes will be provided. This report will be incorporated into reports provided to the Audit Committee and CLT.

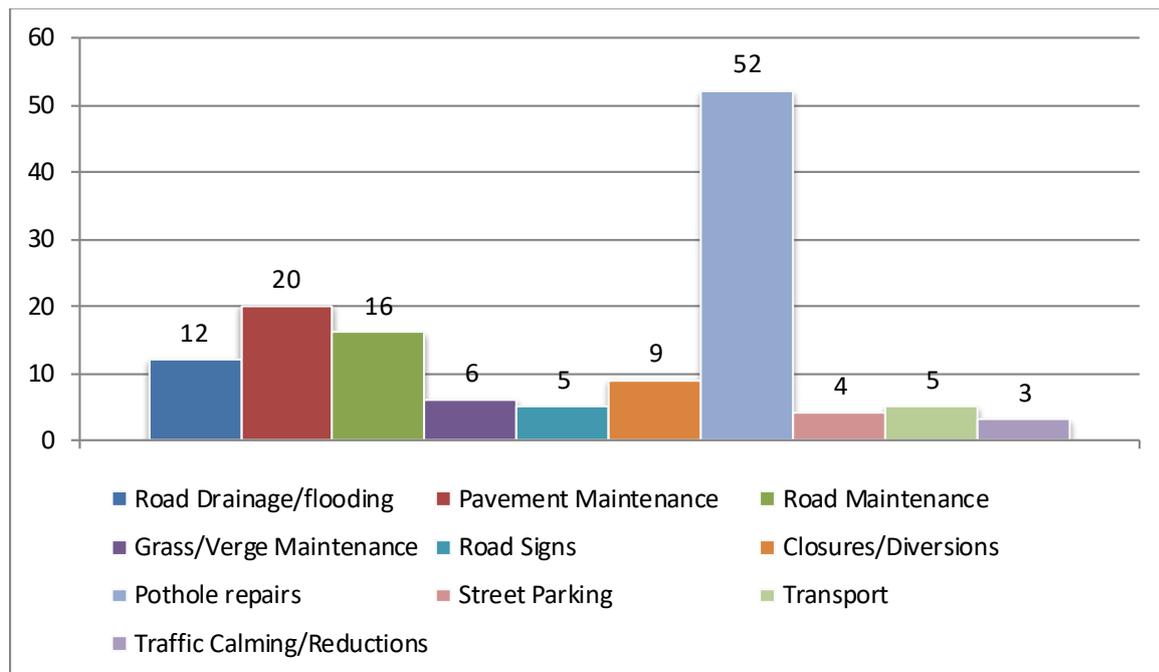
Q1 Overview

Highways and Transport received 458 contacts in the first quarter of 2021/2022, from individuals wishing to complain about various services. Out of these 458 contacts 161 entered the formal complaints process; the remaining were resolved outside of this process in Early Resolution or dealt with as enquiries by communicating with other service areas. This equates to 35% of all contacts received. The number of complaints entering the formal process has increased by 49% in comparison to the previous quarter. The outcome of complaints show that there is no significant increase in areas where fault was found, only that the numbers being received have increased. The increase of the outcomes have been relevant to the increase in the total number overall.



The 1st quarter saw no complaints escalated to the second stage of the complaints process. Given the large increase in the number of contacts received and the number of cases entering the formal process, no escalations to the next stage continues to reflect the success of the strategy in place in dealing with complaints and early resolutions.

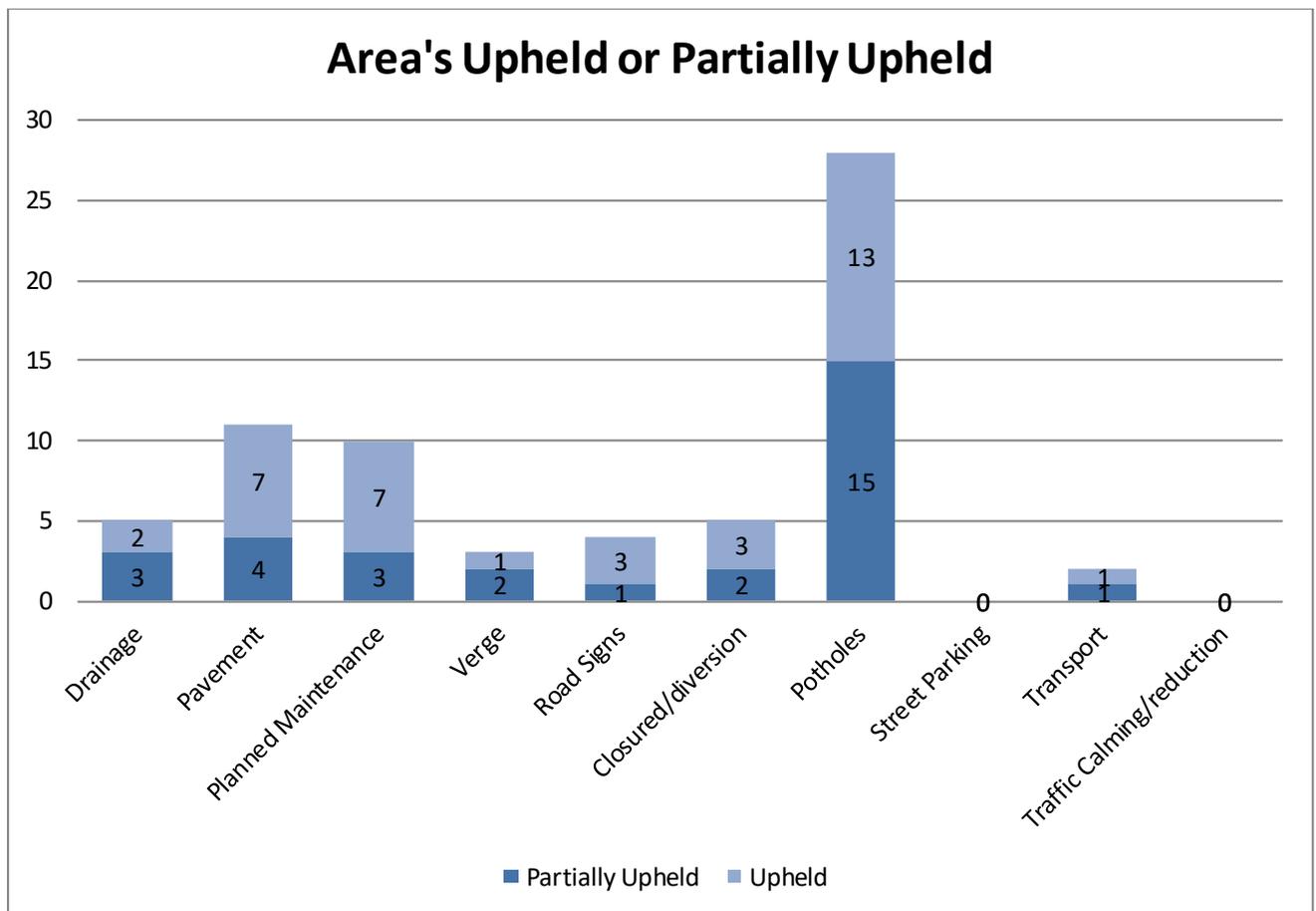
Complaints raised were in relation to the following areas;



52 complaints, the highest recorded reason for complaint, are due to pothole/ road defects. However only 13 of these complaints were upheld. A review of these found that one of the main challenges is the update of Fix My Street with the need for more detail to be included so that the public are aware of what is happening with their concerns. Timescales of jobs have also been a major factor to occasional redirection of resources to other areas. This has been addressed since the completion of complaints and accounts for many of the cases in question not escalating to the next stage.

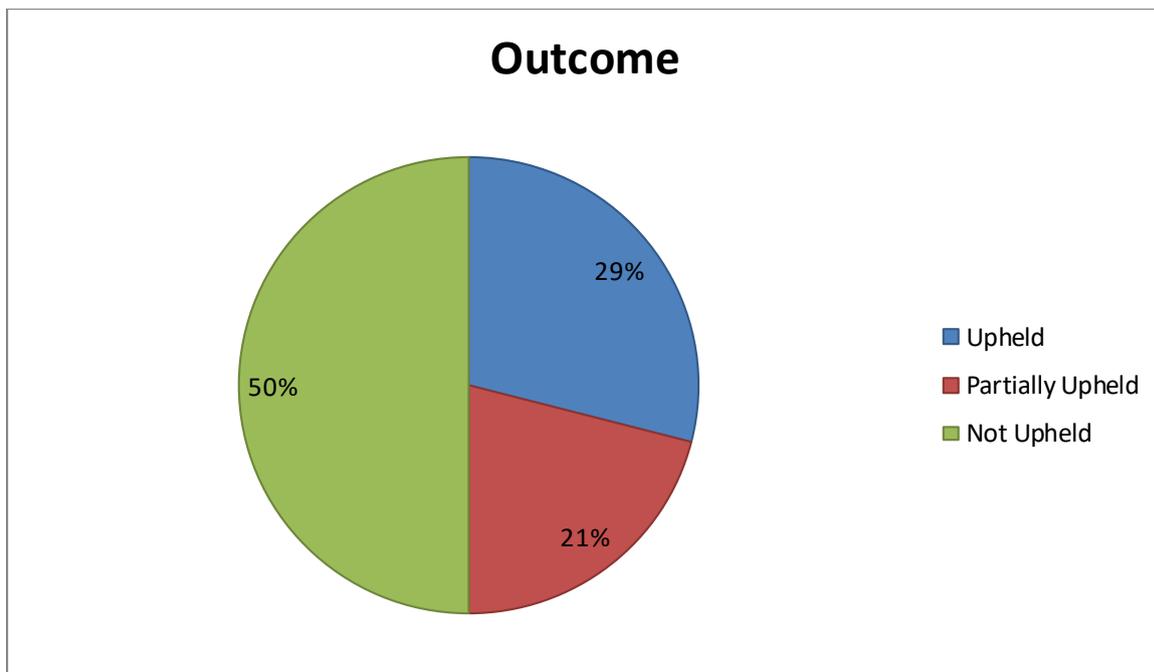
Similarly those in relation to drainage are due to certain areas not being prioritised over others – again these issues have since been resolved, evidenced by a lack of escalation to the next stage of the complaints process.

The following shows the areas in which complaints were either fully or partially upheld;



With a large increase in the number of complaints raised there has also been an increase in the number of complaints being partially or fully upheld. The positive in this is that it has allowed the service to effectively respond to concerns and rectify any issues. This can be observed in the lack of any cases being escalated to the next stage of the complaints process. 50% of all Highways complaints were not upheld and 21% were only partially upheld.

The following shows an overall breakdown of the outcome of complaints. Whilst the numbers of concerns being reported are significantly higher, the percentage breakdown of outcomes in comparison to previous quarters has not significantly changed.



Summary

Over the course of the 1st quarter it has become apparent that the national lockdowns imposed due to the pandemic have had a significant impact on the sheer volumes of complaints being received in all areas. As mentioned earlier in this report, and referenced in the annual report presented to the Audit Committee, evidence is available of comments from members of the public on social media sites as to why the numbers have increased so significantly. This increase should be viewed positively as it allows the council to address concerns and rectify any issues. These issues have clearly been addressed by this service given that not one of 161 complaints were escalated to the next stage.

In addition it is positive to note that this area has worked hard to maintain the large percentages it achieves in resolving cases informally, and teams should be commended for their work. As the county has also suffered from adverse weather conditions, resources have had to be diverted to more urgent areas, this inevitably has had an impact on some of the numbers that we are seeing. Whilst we continue to monitor the increase in contacts being received it is predicted that there will be a decline when we see easing of restrictions in the coming weeks.

It is also worth noting that the additional 297 contacts had been addressed before the need to be logged as a formal stage 1 and that all areas have assisted with providing adequate information to provide to the public so that they remain satisfied with the outcome.

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