

Compliments, complaints, MP and FOI enquiries report 2022/2023

Councillor Doug Pullen, Leader of Lichfield District Council

Date:	20 July 2023
Agenda Item:	9
Contact Officer:	Lizzie Barton, Alison Bowen and Laura Brentnall
Tel Number:	01543 308060
Email:	lizzie.barton@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key decision	No
Local Ward Members	All wards



Audit & Member Standards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Customer feedback is key to helping the council improve how we deliver services to the residents and businesses of Lichfield district. The **customer feedback annual review 2022/23** is attached as Appendix A. This year we have further developed our approach to reporting on customer feedback, with a new improved format.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the **customer feedback annual review** is published annually, both as a download and accessible web pages at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/complaints and promoted externally to encourage people to give us their feedback and to trust that feedback is taken seriously and used to improve our services.
- 1.3 The table below provides an overview for complaints received and processed by the council over the past three years:

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	Direction of travel
Stage one received	85	76	70	↓
<i>Withdrawn/not council</i>	18	7	13	↑
Stage one investigated	67	69	57	↓
Stage one upheld/partially upheld	10	14	22	↑
Stage one not upheld ¹	28	37	26	↑
Stage two received	17	9	4	↓
<i>Stage two upheld/partially upheld</i>	15	5	2	↓
<i>Stage two not upheld</i>	2	4	2	↓
Apologies issued	8	14	16	↑

- 1.4 Key complaint headlines for 2022/23 include:
- The number of stage 1 complaints investigated dropped by 17% compared to 2021/2022.
 - This is in line with the target 15% reduction set out through Being a Better Council.
 - The number of stage 1 complaints upheld or partially upheld increased compared to the previous year – 22 compared to 14.
 - Two stage 2 complaints were upheld or partially upheld, compared to 9 in the previous year.
 - 76% of complaints were either responded to within target timescales, or where they were not, customers were kept informed of progress.
 - The ombudsman investigated one stage 2 complaint and it was not upheld.

¹ At the point of writing each annual report, a number of complaints have not been finalised and are still progressing through the complaints procedure. In 2023/2024 the statistics will reflect the end position of all complaints within that period.

- 1.5 Key compliment headlines for 2022/23 include:
- The council received 45 compliments.
 - Planning was the most complimented service and complaints about planning also dropped from 36% of all complaints in 2021/2022 to 14% in 2022/2023.
- 1.6 Key freedom of information headlines for 2022/23 include:
- 248 freedom of information requests were received which did not meet the target reduction set out through Being a Better Council (230 requests target).
 - The **customer feedback annual review** sets out the team's ambitions to address this moving forwards.
- 1.7 To further strengthen our approach to customer feedback, responsibility for complaints, compliments and MP enquiries will be moving to be overseen by the customer services team during 2023/24, and a range of improvements are planned to make it easier for our residents and businesses to provide feedback and access information.
- 1.8 Given the importance of customer feedback it is proposed that the **customer feedback annual review**, moving forward, is considered by Cabinet.

2. Recommendations

- 2.2 Committee to comment on and approve the publication of the **customer feedback annual review 2022/23**, subject to any feedback by committee.
- 2.3 Committee to delegate any amends to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the assistant director for customer, resident & business services.
- 2.4 Committee to note that future **customer feedback annual reviews** will also be considered by Cabinet.

3. Background

- 3.1 Customer feedback provides important insight into how our services can be improved and transformed to provide better services to our residents and businesses. Over recent years, we have transformed the way we manage and respond to customer feedback, ensuring we have a customer centric approach.
- 3.2 Attached as Appendix A is the **customer feedback annual review 2022/23**. This year's report is presented in a different format, aimed at making it more accessible and meaningful to our residents and businesses.
- 3.4 During 2023/24, responsibility for complaints, compliments and MP enquiries will be moving to be fully overseen by the customer services team. This will help to ensure they are used to challenge service delivery and drive positive change across the organisation as part of our customer focused approach. The customer services team will also be working to help increase the number of complaints responded to on time by simplifying and streamlining internal processes.
- 3.5 The customer services and digital teams are also working to improve the ways in which customers can give their feedback easily and quickly, introducing telephone and web surveys, so that customers have a convenient way to share their views and help improve our services. See the council's complaints process and online form online at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/complaints
- 3.6 Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) will continue to be overseen by the compliance and data protection officer. During 2023/24 we will be working to publish more data sets online through www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/frequentfois, so people can access information themselves without submitting

a request, with the overall aim of speeding up the process for customers and reducing the total requests received.

- 3.7 Given the importance of customer feedback it is proposed that in future years, the **customer feedback annual review** is considered by Cabinet, either as a stand-alone report, or as part of a broader corporate performance report.

Alternative Options	N/A – this report presents a summary of the customer feedback received during 2022/23
Consultation	The report has been considered by leadership team and wider leadership team.
Financial Implications	None
Approved by Section 151 Officer	N/a
Legal Implications	None
Approved by Monitoring Officer	N/a
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	Customer feedback and ensuring customers trust we take feedback seriously and use it to adapt and improve our services is vital to the delivery of the current and all future strategic plans.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	None – the report will be published as a download as well as in a fully accessible web page format.
EIA logged by Equalities Officer	Yes
Crime & Safety Issues	None
Environmental Impact (including Climate Change and Biodiversity).	None
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	None – all complaints are anonymised in the report.

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	Members/customers may feel the report is not adequately in-depth	Likelihood: Green Impact: Yellow Score: Yellow	Encourage member feedback on the initial report, so that we can build any improvements into this year's report before issue, and encourage feedback from customers, so we can build any improvements into future years' reports.	Likelihood: Green Impact: Green Score: Green

Background documents

The previous year's report was circulated as a briefing paper and was not published online. Please email alison.bowen@lichfielddc.gov.uk if you would like to request a copy.

Relevant web links

www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/complaints