

Report of the Head of Legal Services

10. Annual Compliments, Complaints and Concerns 2014/15 Report

Purpose of report

1. To update the Committee with details of compliments, complaints and concerns made by the public about the Service over the past 12 months.
-

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes that during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015:

- i) a total of 95 compliments and donations, 20 complaints and concerns about the Service were received from the public; and***
- ii) none of the complainants appealed regarding the response provided and no complaints were sent to the Local Government Ombudsman for investigation.***

Introduction and Background

2. It is important that the Authority has good corporate governance arrangements to ensure services are run in an open and accountable manner. The role of the Committee includes the monitoring and review of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements, which includes responsibility to consider the process and review of compliments, complaints and concerns made by the public about the Service.

Complaints and Concerns Received 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015

3. The Service received a total of 34 complaints and concerns from the public, with 20 being concerned with Service activities and 14 concerning activities carried out by other organisations. Following investigation by officers, 12 of the complaints about the Service were upheld, a summary is set out overleaf.

Summary of complaints upheld

Issue	Number of complaints upheld	Outcome
Nuisance caused by Fire Service facilities	7	Remedial action undertaken (7) e.g. community contact and liaison and promotion of key training dates Apology only (1)
Poor service	2	Apology only
Inaccuracy of information	2	Remedial action (1) Apology only (1)
Driving standards	1	Issue passed issue on to insurers

4. None of the complainants appealed to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer regarding dissatisfaction with the response provided and no complaints were sent to the Local Government Ombudsman.
5. It should be noted that the complaints and concerns received regarding the responsibilities of other organisations or individuals included concerns over poor fire safety at business and residential premises and the potential lack of access to properties in an emergency.
6. All complaints and concerns are acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and all but one received a response within 10 working days. The single complaint that missed the 10 day deadline was a complex issue involving more detailed investigation and in this case a holding letter was sent to the complainant noting a later response date due to the on-going investigation.

Compliments and Donations Received 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015

7. The Service received 95 compliments and donations during this period and it should be noted that the majority (45) came following Home Fire Safety Checks or Fire Service attendance at events. There were 19 reports following attendance at fires or road traffic collisions with the remainder noting miscellaneous compliments from animal and lift rescues to ring removal.

Conclusion/Summary

8. The role of the Audit and Standards Committee includes the monitoring and review of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements. This includes responsibility for considering the process with regards to compliments, complaints and concerns made by the public. This process was last reviewed

on 16 April 2014 and was considered to be robust and fit for purpose. There have been no significant issues that have arisen since this date and it has not been necessary to make any changes in Service delivery.

9. Your officers are satisfied that there are no significant levels of recurring themes or trends in the concerns and complaints being reported to give any cause for concern.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The complaints, concerns and compliments process uses existing resources. No compensation payments have been required.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The complaints, concerns and compliments process links in with the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The Audit & Standards Committee receive an annual report to provide assurance to Members that the process is effective. Committee and Members' Services Officers monitor for any emerging trends in reported concerns and complaints on a monthly basis.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A – no policy change is recommended
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A – no policy change is recommended

Supporting Information

Background papers:
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance

Contact Officer

Alison Hughes: Committee and Members' Services Manager
Tel: 01905 368209, email: ahughes@hwfire.org.uk