

Report of the Head of Legal Services

Annual Compliments, Complaints and Concerns 2016/17 Report

Purpose of report

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes that during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017:

- i) a total of 89 compliments and donations, 37 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

1. 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 2016 to 31 March 2017

(Last years figures are shown in brackets for comparison)

2. The Service received a total of 37 (48) complaints and concerns from the public, with 15 (26) being concerned with Service activities and 22 (22) concerning activities carried out by other organisations or individuals. Concerns relating to business fire safety are passed to Community Risk for immediate action. Following investigation by officers, 3 (15) of the complaints about the Service were upheld, a summary is set out overleaf.

Summary of complaints upheld

Issue	Number of complaints upheld	Outcome
Driving Standards	1	Case passed to insurers
Interruption to water supply following routine hydrant check	1	Remedial Action taken to give notice next time via letter drop.
Staff behaviour	1	Internal investigation in progress.

3. 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.
4. 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.

All complaints and concerns were acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and all received a response within 10 working days. Due to an extended investigation a single complaint received a holding letter within 10 days and a full response was issued within 28 days.

Compliments and Donations Received 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

(Last years figures are shown in brackets for comparison)

5. The Service received 89 (98) compliments and donations during this period and it should be noted that the majority 40 (46) came following Home Fire Safety Checks or Fire Service attendance at events. There were 16 (19) following attendance at fires or road traffic collisions with the remainder noting miscellaneous compliments from animal and lift rescues to help with burst pipes. It should also be noted that any donations received are passed on to the Fire Fighters Charity who actively support fire fighters in need and exist to support the everyday heroes of the UK fire community.

Conclusion/Summary

6. 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.

7. 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.
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

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