

Report of the Head of Legal Services

8. Annual Compliments, Complaints and Concerns 2015/16 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.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes that during the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016:

- i) a total of 120 compliments and donations, 26 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 2015 to 31 March 2016

3. The Service received a total of 48 complaints and concerns from the public, with 26 being concerned with Service activities and 22 concerning activities carried out by other organisations or individuals. Following investigation by officers, 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	4	Internal investigations resulting in staff reminders and revisit of rules and expectations.
Nuisance caused by Fire Service facilities	3	Apology and remedial action taken.
Confidentiality at or post incident	2	Internal investigations resulting in revisit and reminders of confidentiality protocol at and post incident.
Property damage	2	Apology and reimbursement
Poor service	2	1 x Apology 1 x remedial action adding property to electronic mapping system.
Sharing/publishing of incident photographs	1	Remedial action taken. Review of training and policies, whole staff reminder and revisit of rules and expectations.
Staff protocol	1	Apology and remedial action taken reminders to staff about using I.D when engaging with the public.

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.

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 due to a server glitch preventing the email from sending. The deadline was missed by one day.

Compliments and Donations Received 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

6. The Service received 120 compliments and donations during this period and it should be noted that the majority (49) came following Home Fire Safety Checks or Fire Service attendance at events. There were 19 following attendance at fires or road traffic collisions with the remainder noting miscellaneous compliments from animal and lift rescues to the removal of dangerous signage.

Conclusion/Summary

7. 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.
8. 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. Compensation payments for damage to property have been required. This sum totalled £450.
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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