

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24 JUNE 2014**

**CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS**

**REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report updates members on the implementation of an electronic recording system has provided a standard approach to handling following the introduction of a new national model for complaints management.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes and considers the contents of the report; and
- (ii) remits Chief Officers to ensure that complaints are logged on the system, to analyse complaints about their service and to aim to use lessons learned from complaints to drive service improvements

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

This report supports services in the delivery of all local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016.

**3. BACKGROUND**

Reference is made to Report No 703/12 which this committee approved on 4 December 2012. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed a new model complaints handling procedure which local authorities were required to adopt.

The procedure and an electronic system to log, monitor and report on formal complaints were introduced on 1 April 2013.

During the period 1 April-2013 – 31 March 2014, 363 complaints were recorded on the system. This reflects continued encouragement to Directorates to log complaints.

Both stages of the new complaints handling procedure are recorded on the electronic system as follows:-

- Service Resolution – straight forward customer complaints that require little or no investigation.
- Investigation – complex issues that require detailed examination.

281 service complaints and 82 investigation complaints were logged.

All councils are required to report on a range of high level performance indicators which the SPSO published on 23 August.

The indicators are as follows:-

- Indicator 1** The total number of complaints received per thousand population.
- Indicator 2** Complaints closed at stage 1 and stage 2 as a percentage of all complaints closed.
- Indicator 3** Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at each stage.
- Indicator 4** The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.
- Indicator 5** The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days.
- Indicator 6** The number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to 5 or 20 working days has been authorised.
- Indicator 7** A statement to report customer satisfaction with the complaints service.
- Indicator 8** A statement outlining changes or improvements to services or procedures as a result of the consideration of complaints.

Senior management within directorates will review regularly the information gathered from complaints and consider whether our services could be improved or internal policies and procedures updated.

Standard reports have been created on the electronic system to extract the required data.

#### 4. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The following table details a breakdown of complaints received by Department, Category and Resolution during the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014.

	Council's failure to follow appropriate admin procedures	Delay in responding to enquiries and request	Disagreement with a decision where customer cannot use another procedure	Dissatisfaction with council policy	Equalities issues	Failure to provide services	Inadequate standard	Other	Treatment or attitude of a staff member	
Department	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Chief Executives	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
Communities	8	53	1	14	0	43	29	27	44	218
People	2	13	0	14	1	16	16	30	41	133
Resources	0	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	8
Total	10	68	1	31	1	59	47	57	90	363

#### 5. MONITORING COMPLAINTS INFORMATION

The SPSO requires councils to record all complaints. This information helps to provide a clear basis for identifying service failures (learning from complaints) and information on how effectively the organisation is handling complaints (complaint performance).

Complaints are an important means of receiving information about the delivery of council services and the actions of our employees. The complaints process appears to be working reasonably well although it is acknowledged that Stage 2 complaints are taking longer than they should. As the complaints process is developed it is hoped that timescales and performance will improve.

Complaints are an important means of receiving information about the delivery of council services and the actions of our employees.

Introducing an electronic recording system has provided a standard approach to handling complaints in Angus Council and aims to help us “get it right first time”.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any aspects of the complaints handling procedures which have additional or significant financial implications for the council will be subject to separate reports.

**RICHARD STIFF  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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