

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 17 JANUARY 2023

TITLE OF REPORT: COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS Q3, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2022

Report of: Corporate Services

Cabinet Portfolio: Leader and Strategic Direction and Partnerships

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Non-Exempt

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report updates Members on the number and outcome of customer complaints for Q3, October–December 2022.
2. The report looks at performance on a range of metrics and examines any learning that can be gained from the information presented.

RECOMMENDATION

3. The complaints report for October-December 2022 is noted.

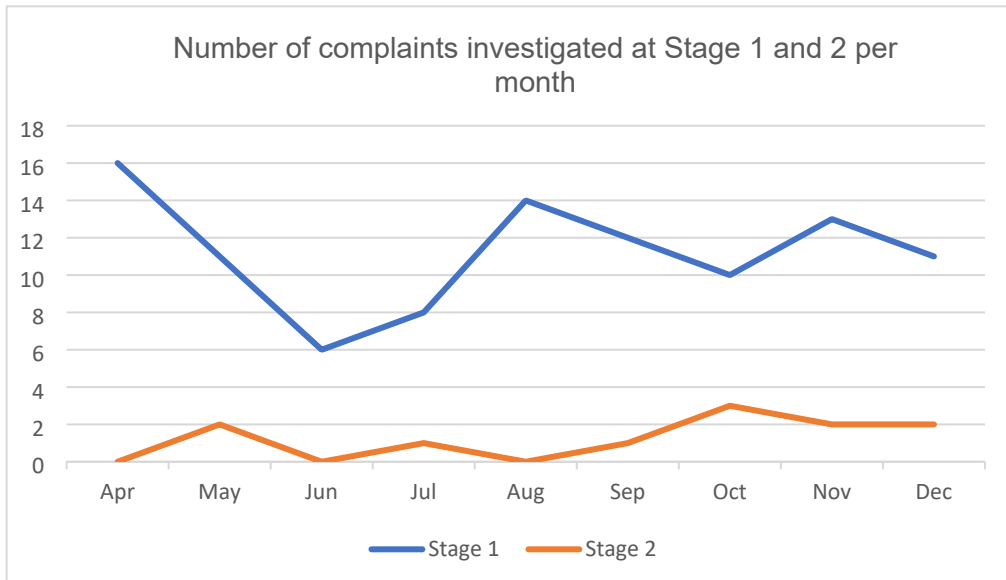
BACKGROUND

4. This is the third complaint report for this financial year. It provides details of formal complaints received during Q3, October-December 2022. The report references performance in Q1 and Q2 to provide a set of comparative data.

COMPLAINTS OVERVIEW FOR QUARTER 3, OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2022

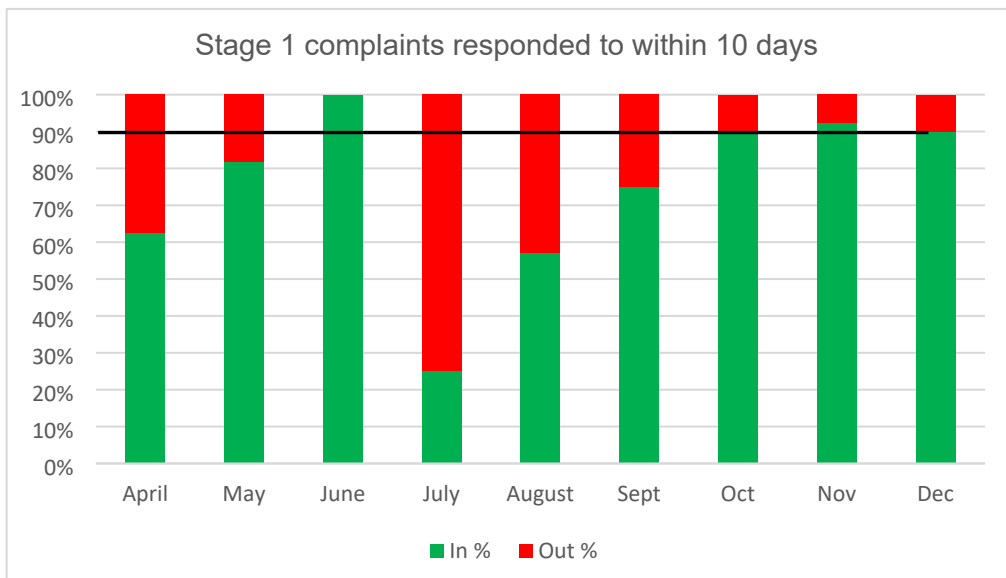
Number of complaints

5. The Council recorded a total of 41 complaints during Q3. We received 35 complaints in Q1, 36 complaints in Q2.
6. Of those complaints received in Q3, 34 were recorded at stage 1, seven recorded at stage 2.
7. Two stage 1 complaints recorded in December remain live at the creation of this report. They have been included in the number received during the quarter, but the responses and any learning has not been included.



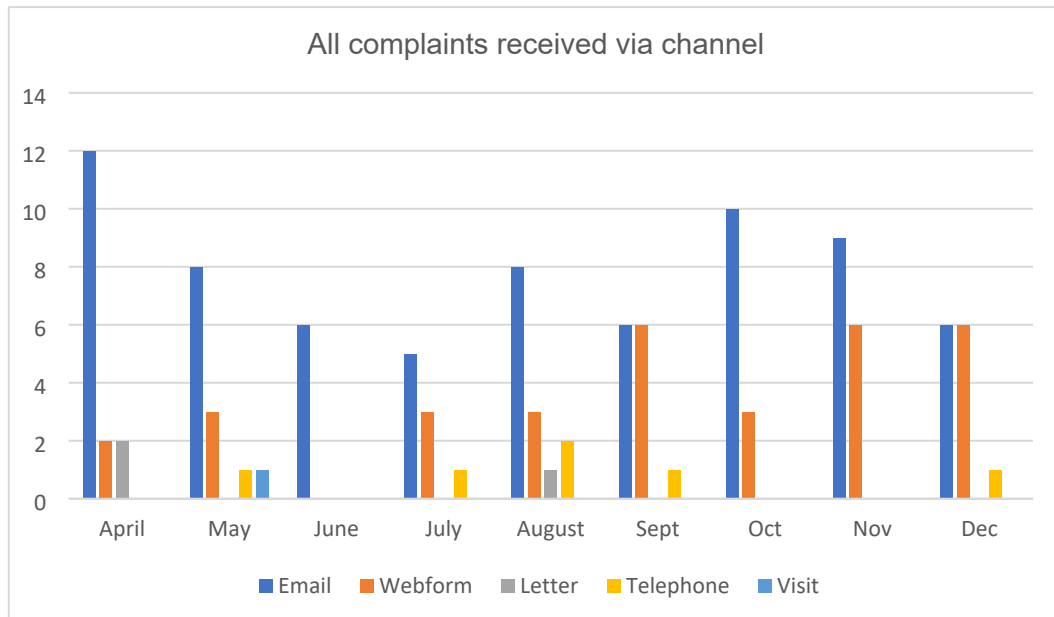
Responding to complaints in time

8. Complaints dealt with at stage one should be responded to within 10 working days. Complaints at stage two should be responded to within 20 working days. We have not committed to a target within the policy.
9. If the response time target is set at 90% of Stage 1 complaints dealt within 10 days, service areas have improved their performance in Q3. Each month in the reporting period have registered 90% or over with an average response time of six days.
10. We have received seven stage 2 complaints, of which, one was out of the 20-day SLA.



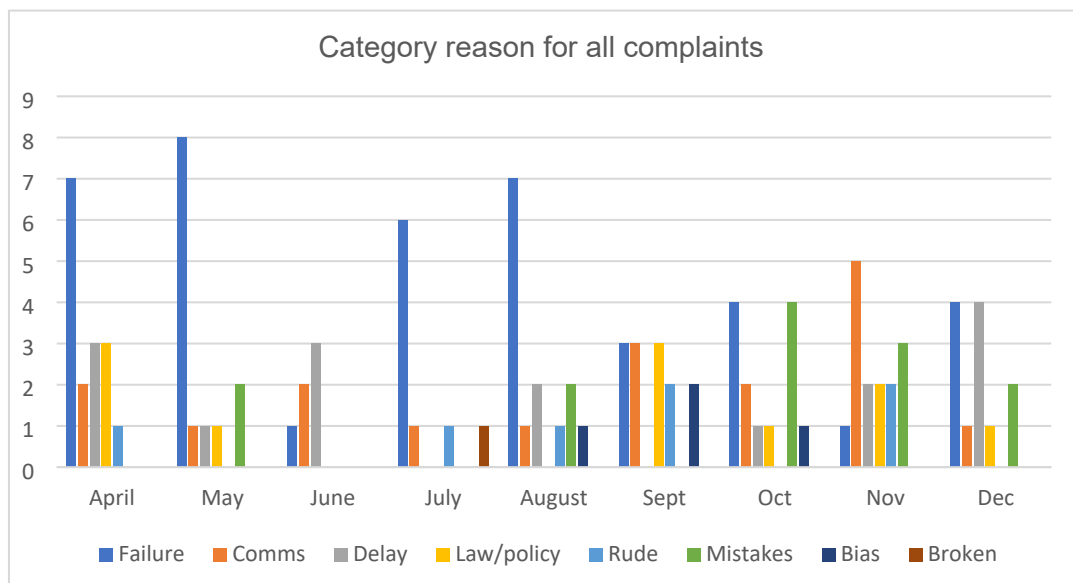
How complaints are received

11. Email is the most popular route to submit a complaint, followed by webform. These channels account for 97% of all complaints in Q3.



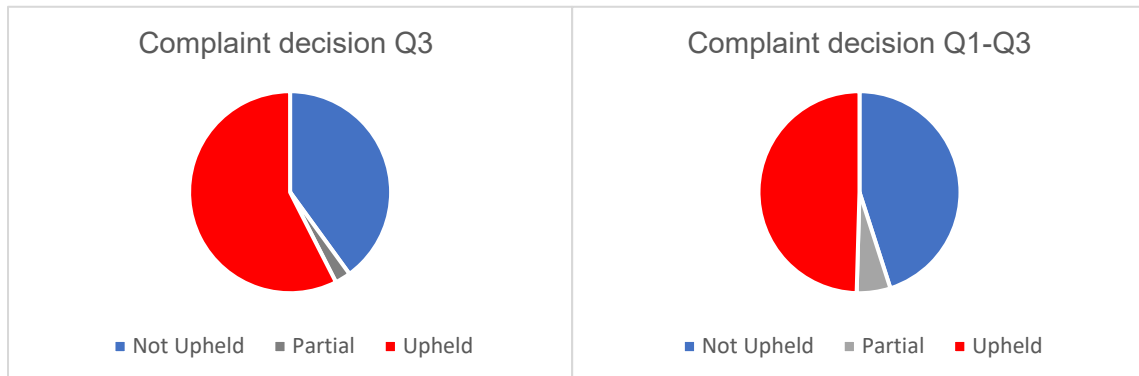
Reasons for complaints

12. We record the reasons why a complaint has been made, in line with a list of categories set out in the [policy](#).
13. Compared to Q2 when “failure to provide a service” accounted for 45% of complaints, Q3 shows a far more even distribution across the reasons. The three highest reasons are shown below:
- Failure to provide a service 10 (24%)
 - Mistakes in the way a decision has been taken 9 (22%)
 - Poor communication from staff 8 (20%)



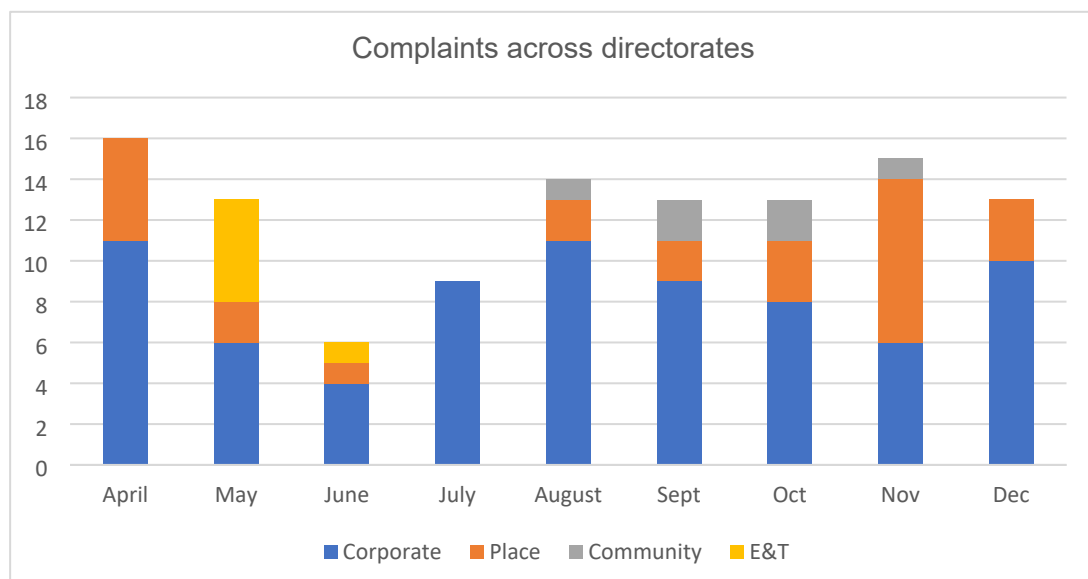
Complaint decisions

14. We have upheld/ agreed with 23 (57%) complaints in Q3 compared to 14 (40%) in Q1, 18 (50%) in Q2. We have partially upheld one complaint. We have not upheld/ disagreed with 16 (40%) complaints.
15. When viewing across Q1-Q3, there remains a fairly even split between upheld/ not upheld. We have upheld 55 (50%) complaints and not upheld 50 (45%).



Complaints by directorate/ team

16. Corporate account for 59% (24) of all complaints received across Q3. This figure rises to 66% (74) when looking from the start of the financial year. Place account for 34% (14) of complaints in Q3



17. In Q3, Waste account for 50% (12) of corporate complaints, followed by Council Tax 42% (10)
18. Further analysis from the start of the financial year shows that Waste account for 55% of all complaints, Council Tax account for 35%.

Corporate	Waste	C.Tax	Elections	FOI	HB	other
April	5	4	1	0	0	1
May	4	2	0	0	0	0
June	0	3	0	1	0	0
July	8	0	0	0	1	0
August	6	4	0	0	1	0
Sept	6	3	0	0	0	0
Oct	3	4	0	0	0	1
Nov	3	3	0	0	0	0
Dec	6	3	0	0	1	0

Learning from complaints

19. The services receiving the highest number of complaints for Q3 were Waste, Planning and Council Tax. These service areas are the same as Q2.
20. For Waste, December saw the largest number of complaints received across the quarter. Of the completed waste complaints, failure to provide a service/ collect waste corresponds with the icy weather and lorries struggling to get out to complete rounds.
21. For Council Tax, complaints remain single issues. The service normally resolves complaints quickly and efficiently and there is ongoing dialogue between Officers to monitor individual complaints.
22. For Planning, the nature of the complaints shows the team potentially struggling with the workload, resulting in a number of poor communication or delay related complaints.

Ombudsman decisions

23. No complaints were escalated to the [Local Government Ombudsman](#) during this quarter.
24. Analysis on neighbouring authorities is possible for this stage. The Ombudsman publishes data on all local authority performance during specified date range.
25. For illustrative purposes, four neighbouring authorities have been considered with their performance set out below.

	Q1 Apr-June	Q2 Jul-Sept	Q3 Oct-Dec	Total
Hart DC	1	1	0	2
Rushmoor BC	0	3	1	4
Basingstoke BC	8	5	3	16
East Hampshire	2	2	0	4
Surrey Heath	4	1	0	5

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

26. As this report is for information and no decisions required, no options have been considered.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

27. Performance reporting is an essential element of understanding how the services are performing in the context of the actions being undertaken in Service Plans. Complaints analysis provides officers with invaluable feedback on the provision of services at an operational level.

Service Plan

- Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? Yes
- Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? Yes
- Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal? No

Legal and Constitutional Issues

28. There is no statutory duty to report regularly to Cabinet on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) an authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Regular reports on the Council's performance in responding to complaints assist in demonstrating best value and compliance with the statutory duty.

Financial and Resource Implications

29. None identified

Risk Management

30. Complaints about services can indicate where identified operational risks have materialised. This should be monitored through individual departmental risk registers. Learning from complaints can help mitigate the same risks occurring in the future.

EQUALITIES

31. The analysis conducted through this paper potentially have relevance to the Equality Act. One complaint reported during quarter 3 referenced bias or unfair discrimination.

- Complaint 1. Complaint not upheld by Communities following an allegation of unfair discrimination on race grounds

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

32. There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the report

ACTION

33. This report enables Overview and Scrutiny to understand the Council's current performance around complaints handling and performance. Those that are escalated to the Ombudsman could result in a significant detrimental impact on the Council if it is found to be at fault through maladministration or negligence and so it is important that Cabinet and the public can be satisfied that the Council is running a well-managed and effective complaints system.
34. To ensure transparency, the report is available on the Council's website through the committee reports pages.

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