
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	26 JUNE 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PAM CARROLL (595784) NIGEL GLOSSOP (595703)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	COMPLAINTS & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 01 OCTOBER 2007 TO 31 MARCH 2008	REF: NG/JHM
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: CE6

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

This report provides:

- 2.1 A summary of official comments, compliments and complaints received by the Council for the period 1 October 2007 – 31 March 2008. Figures for the previous six months are given for comparison purposes.
- 2.2 A summary of the Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the Council for the period 1 October 2007 – 31 March 2008. Figures for the previous six months are given for comparison purposes.

3.0 Executive Summary

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

- 3.1 The comments, compliments and complaints procedure is designed to encourage people to give informal feedback on our services.
- 3.2 Two comments, 17 compliments and 23 complaints have been received between 1 October 2007 – 31 March 2008.
- 3.3 The number of complaints received in the second half of this financial year has increased over the previous six months.
- 3.4 Members are informed when a complaint is received relating to their ward. This is for information purposes only.

Freedom of Information

- 3.5 South Derbyshire District Council is committed to making itself more open. A large amount of information is already available to the public, through our website or through our offices and at local libraries.
- 3.6 A total of 53 Freedom of Information requests have been received between 1 October 2007 – 31 March 2008.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 The Comments, Compliments and Complaints customer leaflet and procedure is available for download from the Website at www.south-derbys.gov.uk, or can be completed using an electronic form.
- 4.2 The aim of The Freedom of Information Act 2000, which came into force on 1st January 2005, is to extend the right to allow public access to information that the Council holds.

5.0 Detail

Comments

- 5.1 The table below compares the number of comments received for the first half of 2007/2008 against the second half of 2007/2008.

Division	01 April 2007 to 30 September 2007	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008
Legal and Democratic	1	0
Environmental Services	1	1
Leisure and Community Development	1	0
Planning Services	0	1
Total	3	2

Compliments

5.2 The table below compares the number of compliments received for the first half of 2007/2008 against the second half of 2007/2008.

Since making staff aware that compliments, as well as complaints, should be logged, there has been a 50% increase in the number of compliments recorded.

Division	01 April 2007 to 30 September 2007	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008
Customer Services	2 *	1
Environmental Services	1 *	5 *
Revenue Services	1	2 *
Planning	4	8 *
Housing	0	1 *
Leisure and Community Development	1	1
Legal and Democratic Services	0	1 *
All Departments	0	1
Total	8	17

- This indicates where one compliment has referred to two separate divisions

Complaints

5.3 The table below compares the number of official complaints received

	01 April 2007 to 30 September 2007	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008
Resolved at Stage 1	10	20
Stage 1 still ongoing	1	0
Resolved at Stage 2	6	3
Stage 2 still ongoing	1	0
Complaint withdrawn	0	0
Total received	18	23

5.4 The 23 complaints received can be broken down as follows

Division	01 April 2007 to 30 September 2007	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008
Planning Services	7	4
Housing	2	5 *
Revenue Services	2	7
Environmental Services	5	6
Finance and Property Services	0	0
Legal and Democratic	0	1
Leisure and Community	1	0
Policy and Regeneration	0	0
IT and Customer Services	1	1

- 5.6 The schedule, giving details of the comments, compliments and complaints received, actions taken and improvements made is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 5.7 A questionnaire is sent to each Head of Service following a complaint. This will give details of actions taken and improvements made as a consequence of a complaint.

Freedom of Information Requests

- 5.8 Although the Freedom of Information Act 2000 creates a general right of access to information, it also sets out information that we do not have to make available for specific reasons. This is information, which, if published, might prejudice the health, safety or security of the Council, our staff, systems, services or property.
- 5.9 We make as much information available as possible without charging for it. We do however reserve the right to levy a reasonable charge where the information request is extensive and would require more than 2 days staff time to satisfy the request.
- 5.10 The Council deals with hundreds of routine requests for information every day by phone and by letter. These are referred to as “business as usual requests”. We will deal with these in the normal way. However, information that is not readily available and that has to be prepared or extracted is handled differently. We are entitled to make a charge for this kind of information.
- 5.11 Requests for information under Freedom of Information have to be processed within 20 working days. If we turn down a request for information we must have an acceptable reason under Freedom of Information.
- 5.12 The table below compares the Freedom of Information requests received for the first half of 2007/2008 against the second half of 2007/08.

	01 April 2007 to 30 September 2007	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008
Number received	34	53
Number replied to within 20 statutory days	31	46
Number replied to after 20 statutory days (unavoidably delayed within department)	0	6
Number of Exemptions or partial exemptions	1	1
Number withdrawn	2	0

5.13 The requests for information received can be broken down as follows:

Division	01 April 2007 to 30 September 2007	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008
Environmental Services	9	10 *
Planning Services	9 *	8 *
Legal and Democratic	4 *	6 *
FOI/Data Protection Officer	0	0
Finance and Property	7 *	13
IT and Customer Services	2 *	7
Housing	2 *	4 *
Human Resources	3	8 *
Leisure and Community	2	2
Revenue Services	0	3 *
Policy and Economic Regeneration	1 *	1 *
Chief Executive	0	0
All Directorates	0	2

* Same request has involved several divisions

5.14 The details of the Freedom of Information requests received are attached at **Appendix B**.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 None directly stemming from this report.

7.0 Background Papers

None.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints - April 2007 – March 2008

Comments

Date	Ref No	Ward	Subject	Division	Resultant Action Taken/Comments
28.04.07			Election	Legal and Democratic Services	

Compliments

Date	Ref No	Ward	Subject	Division	Resultant Action Taken/Comments
02.04.07			Appreciation of service received from Rafe Shirley	Planning Services	
23.04.07			Appreciation of service received	Planning Services	
01.05.07			Thank you for lecture delivered by Phil Heath	Planning Services	
04.05.07			Thanks to Claire Stewart for resolving anti-social issues	Leisure and Community Services	
13.07.07			Sincere thanks for good work re appeal hearing	Planning Services	
13.08.07			Thanks to Benefit Visiting Officers for service received	Revenue Services	
31.08.07			Compliment re comprehensive and easy to follow website and service to arrange bulky	IT & Customer Services and	

			waste collection	Environmental Services	
20.08.07			Appreciation of service received from Tim Dening	Planning Services	
30.01.08			Impressed with swift response to remove dead animal from pavement outside house	Env Services	Passed to Head of Service
02.01.08			Appreciation of service received from Tony Young	Planning Services	
27.03.08			Compliment of planning application database	Planning Services	

Complaints

Date	Ref No	Ward	Subject	Division	Resultant Action Taken
12.04.07	218	Newhall	Publication of misleading advice re playing in the street	Leisure and Community Development	Amendments made to publications and website
12.04.07	219	Church Gresley	Allocation of sheltered housing	Housing	Policy explained
19.04.07	220 2 nd Stage	Findern	Funding re renovation grant	Environmental Services	Improvement to process
11.05.07	221	Walton on Trent	Land adjacent to Mewies Close	Planning Services	No action necessary
11.05.07	222	Etwall	Tree Preservation order	Planning Services	Condition introduced that on all planning applications that any excavation with the protection zone of trees within the preservation order should be

					undertaken by hand unless specifically agreed otherwise.
08.05.07	223 2 nd Stage	Hatton	Charge for Completion Certificate	Planning Services	Procedures altered to ensure future charges are made clear
18.05.07	224	Castle Gresley	Enforcement Issues	Planning Services	Case allocated to different officer
21.05.07	225	Hilton	Benefit application	Revenue Services	No action necessary
21.05.07	226	Melbourne	Review of licence of The Alma Public House, Melbourne	Env Services	Suspended
23.05.07	227	Woodville	Incorrect salutation	IT and Customer Services	Computer records updated and staff informed of correct salutation
13.06.07	228 2 nd Stage	Melbourne	Review of licence of The Alma Public House, Melbourne	Env Services	Procedures amended
11.06.07	229 2 nd Stage	Etwall	Railings erected outside property	Planning Services	Procedures tightened
22.06.07	230 2 nd Stage	Swadlincote	Problems with cavity wall insulation	Env Services	Help offered to liaise with the contractors responsible for work
19.07.07	231 2 nd Stage	Aston on Trent	Building Control	Planning Services	No action necessary
31.07.07	232	Swadlincote	Benefit section	Revenue Services	Standard documents reviewed and improved

21.08.07	233	Newhall	Housing Maintenance	Housing	Voucher offered as goodwill gesture in recognition of careless work by decorator
03.09.07	234	Walton on Trent	Building control issues	Planning Services	Action not relevant
11.09.07	235 2 nd stage	Woodville	Damp problems with property	Env Services	Still under investigation
18.10.07	236	Hilton	Recycling area at Hilton	Env Services	Improvements made with larger receptacles provided and frequent visits from Clean Team and Safer Neighbourhood wardens
15.10.07	237	Newhall	Out of hours service	Housing	Calls monitored and training provided to improve call handling
23.10.07	238	Newhall	Delay in issue of rent deposit cheque	Housing	Action not relevant
29.10.07	239 2 nd stage	Rosliston	Planning permission	Planning	Action not relevant
05.12.07	240	Etwall	Gold Card photographic sessions at Peartree Court, Etwall	Revenues	Improved procedures re room bookings etc
10.12.07	241	Hilton	Housing Benefit Overpayment and slime in water supply	Revenue Housing	Continual monitoring water supply
04.01.08	242 2 nd stage	Mickleover	Planning application 37 Mallard Walk Mickleover	Planning	Still under investigation
07.01.08	243	Castle Gresley	Noise Pollution	Env Services	Offer of digital recording

					equipment to be installed
08.01.08	244 2 nd Stage	Midway	Recharge invoice re 30 Chestnut Avenue, Midway	Housing	Charge for removal of garden waste written-off
08.01.08	245	Hartshorne	Backdated Housing Benefit	Revenue Services	Action not relevant
14.01.08	246	Newhall	Housing Maintenance	Housing	Action not relevant
16.01.08	247	Aston on Trent	Brown Bin collection	Env Services	Review and improve communication re Christmas time collections
14.01.08	248	Aston on Trent	Waste collection	Env Services	Review and improve communication re Christmas time collections
22.01.08	249	Swadlincote	Information re RTB	Legal Services	Action not relevant
22.01.08	250	Egginton	Planning Application	Planning Services	Action not relevant
25.01.08	251	Newhall	Conduct and attitude of officer	Env Services	Action not relevant
14.02.08	252	Egginton	Planning application	Planning Services	Action not relevant
03.02.08	253	Etwall	Contractors collecting recycling	Env Services	Crew returned to clear spillage – continual monitoring to ensure correct operation
11.03.08	254	Swadlincote	Delay in issuing Council Tax bill	Revenue	Action not relevant
11.03.08	255	Melbourne	Delayed refund of Council Tax	Revenue	Special procedures used to produce cheque until new system established

13.03.08	256	Etwall	Council Tax banding	Revenue	Suspended until decision received from District Valuer and Valuation Officer
17.03.08	257		Delay in processing taxi driver licence	Customer Services	Procedures tightened
19.03.08	258	Newhall	Housing Benefit allowance	Revenue Services	Action not relevant

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS - 01 APRIL 2007 – 31 MARCH 2008

Ref No	Dept	Request	Received	Reply Due	Reply Sent	Exemption
30127	Planning	Compulsory purchase	02.04.07	30.04.07	04.04.07	
30321	Legal	Proposed increase in LLC1 Search Fees	05.04.07	07.05.07	03.05.07	
31099	Env Services	Municipal waste market	13.04.07	11.05.07	01.05.07	
31670	HR	HR issues	26.04.07	24.05.07	02.05.07	
32052	Env Services	Research on vehicles leased or purchased	19.04.07	17.05.07	01.05.07	
33024	Planning Services/ Policy and Ec Regeneration	List of consulting studies re planning and economic development	08.05.07	06.06.07	04.06.07	
33512	Env Services	Assaults by public against refuse collectors	09.05.07	07.06.07	04.06.07	
33797	IT and Finance	List of companies used as contractors	18.05.07	18.06.07	22.06.07	
34226	Finance and Property	Total staffing bill for 05/06 and 06/07	24.05.07	22.06.07	21.06.07	
34438	Env Services	Diesel leak – Morrisons	24.05.07	22.06.07	20.06.07	
34804	Planning and Legal and Democratic Services	Building Regulations	29.05.07	26.06.07	22.06.07	
34808	Legal and Democratic Services	Home Information Packs	29.05.07	26.06.07	22.06.07	

34980	Env Services	Biodegradable garden waste collection sacks	04.06.07	02.07.07	19.06.07	
34983	IT and Customer Services	ICT Disposals	04.06.07	02.07.07	06.06.07	
34998	Planning	Data on Hilton	05.06.07	03.07.07	07.06.07	
35025	Env Services	Air Pollution	05.06.07	03.07.07	14.06.07	
35552	Human Resources	Policies and Procedures	11.06.07	09.07.07	09.07.07	
35558	Leisure and Community Dev	ATP Pingle School	07.06.07	05.07.07	13.06.07	
35597	Planning Services	Councillor involvement in planning decisions	13.06.07	11.07.07		Withdrawn on 18.06.07
35841	Planning Services	Work carried out relating to Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990	18.06.07	16.07.07	11.07.07	
37750	Finance and Property Services	No of staff employed and copies of Statement of Accounts	17.07.07	14.08.07	18.07.07	
38012	Environmental Services	Domestic wheelie and other rubbish bins	24.07.07	21.08.07	02.08.07	
38544	Planning Services	Information re loft conversion	23.07.07	20.08.07	01.08.07	
38675	Finance and Property Services	No of staff employed in communications	01.08.07	29.08.07	10.08.07	
38696	Planning Services	Planning Inquiry	03.08.07	03.09.07	03.09.07	
39152	Env Services	High hedges	07.08.07	05.09.07	04.09.07	
39879	Housing and Finance and Property Serv	List of contractors and consultants	16.08.07	14.09.07	13.09.07	

40177	Environ Services	Complaints and visits regarding rats	24.08.07	24.09.07	24.09.07	
40193	Leisure & Community Dev	Municipal Golf or Golf related facilities owned by Council	28.08.07	25.09.07	07.09.07	
40204	Finance & Prop Serv	Interest payments on leases	28.08.07	25.09.07	29.08.07	
40337	Human Resources	Contact names and addresses for internal training team and personnel management team for SDDC and schools in Swadlincote	30.08.07	27.09.07	31.08.07	
40828	Planning Services	S106 payments	06.09.07	04.10.07	04.10.07	
41255	Finance & Prop Serv	Water consumption and expenditure	12.09.07	10.10.07		Withdrawn on 13.09.07
42124	Housing / Legal Services	No of houses sold under Right to Buy scheme since April 2004	24.09.07	22.10.07	10.10.07	Partial exemption under section 40
43154	Finance/ Legal and Democratic Services/Planning	Information about works of art	09.10.07	06.11.07	05.11.07	
43886	Planning Services	Copy of all correspondence and decisions in relation to the process of TPOs	23.10.07	20.11.07	14.11.07	
44076	Env Services	Security cameras installed at local authority refuse tips	29.10.07	26.11.07	29.10.07	
44251	Finance & Leisure & Com Services	Lottery funds received and how distributed	31.10.07	28.11.07	07.11.07	
44289	Planning	Houses planned for construction & on flood plain under Local Development Plan	30.10.07	27.11.07	21.11.07	

44721	Finance & Leisure and Community	How much Council spend on bottled water	06.11.07	04.12.07	04.12.07	
44911	Planning	House numbering	08.11.07	06.12.07	05.12.07	
45336	Revenues	Non-returnable NNDR fund	14.11.07	11.12.07	22.11.07	
45675	Planning	Consents under the Planning (Hazardous Substances (Regulations 1992	01.11.07	29.11.07	21.11.07	
45679	Human Resources	Childcare vouchers	19.11.07	18.12.07	28.11.07	
46111		Blue badge parking and disabled services web mapping application	19.11.07	17.12.07	17.12.07	
46307	IT	Departmental structure charts	27.11.07	24.12.07	20.12.07	
46381	Env Services	Recycling initiatives	30.11.07	03.01.07	04.02.08	
46922	Planning	House numbering query	12.12.07	11.01.08	12.12.07	
47159	IT	Local Authority EDRM survey	14.12.07	13.01.08	15.12.07	
47248	Finance and Property Services	Senior Council Staff Remuneration	14.12.07	21.01.08	24.01.08	
47259	Legal and Democratic Services	Organisational chart for Legal Services	12.12.07	17.01.08	16.01.08	
47653	Planning	Notices under Section 215 Town and Country Planning Act 1990	01.01.08	30.01.08	25.01.08	
48243	Finance and Property Services	Sale of 1/3/5 Thomas Cook Close, Melbourne	08.01.08	05.02.08	25.01.08	

48247	Environmental Services	Advertising on taxis	10.01.08	07.02.08	29.01.08	
48266	Finance and Property Services	Concessionary Bus Travel – cost incurred	09.01.08	06.02.08	01.02.08	
48917	Environmental Services	Environmental Health inspections	07.01.08	05.02.08	01.02.08	
48924	Housing and Policy	No of residents in District and full list of Council run buildings	10.01.08	07.02.08	No contact available	
48925	Finance	List of External Auditors	18.01.08	15.02.08	06.02.08	
48926	All Depts	Volume of Notices/Orders served by Council on private/commercial properties in 2007	22.01.08	19.02.08	20.02.08	
48953	Revenue Services	Amount of HB, CT and NNDR written-off between 2000 and 2007	14.01.08	11.02.08	06.02.08	
48955	All Depts	Corporate Information	21.01.08	18.02.08	18.02.08	
49131	HR Legal	Information regarding Councillors' allowances for the periods covering 01/04/05 – 01/04/08	18.01.08	15.02.08	12.02.08	
49135	HR Finance	Costs incurred by council regarding external consultants	18.01.08	15.02.08	12.02.08	
49138	HR Finance	Salary rates and grading for Chief Officer and Asst CO posts.	18.01.08	15.02.08	12.02.08	
49274	HR Legal	Information re senior positions in Legal Dept	28.01.08	25.02.08	22.02.08	

49539	Finance and Property	Information and documents relating to Estates and Facilities Management	30.01.08	27.02.08	27.02.08	
49543	IT and Customer Services	Telephone access to Council services	30.01.08	27.02.08	26.02.08	
49545	Planning Services	Tree Preservation Order No 300	01.02.08	29.02.08	06.02.08	Refusal Section 41
49559	Finance/HR	Use of Consultancy Firms	31.01.08	28.02.08	27.03.08	
49560	IT	Implementation of E Government	01.02.08	29.02.08	05.02.08	
50025	IT	Breaches of Data Protection	06.02.08	05.03.08	14.02.08	
50027	Legal	Local Land Charges	06.02.08	05.03.08	05.03.08	
50034	Legal	Local Land charges	06.02.08	05.03.08	05.03.08	
50068	Housing	No of beds allocated to homeless people	11.02.08	10.03.08	10.03.08	
50378	IT & Customer Services	Inspections by OSC and OICC	13.02.08	12.03.08	10.03.08	
50387	Housing	Waiting lists for social housing	13.02.08	12.03.08	12.03.08	
50787	Env Services	Information relating to food hygiene offences	15.02.08	14.03.08	27.02.08	
51998	Env Services	Name and address of refuse lorry driver in relation to missed bin collection	25.02.08	26.03.08	03.03.08	
51433	IT	Documents relating to IT	25.02.08	26.02.08	10.03.08	
52176	Env Services	Emergency Planning	03.03.08	02.04.08	27.03.08	

52696	Finance/HR	Amount of money spent on temporary/agency staff during last financial year	11.03.08	12.04.08	09.04.08	
52699	IT & Customer Services	Information re Headteachers	13.03.08	14.04.08	14.03.08	
52701	HR	Contact details for Training Managers and Equalities Lead Managers	14.03.08	15.04.08	14.04.08	
52920	Housing/Env Services	Details of Mechanical & Electrical Building Services engineers/energy management	14.03.08	15.04.08	14.04.08	
53254	Env Services	Contaminated land	25.03.08	22.04.08	26.03.08	
53318	Env Services	Car parking for motorhomes	25.03.08	22.04.08	25.04.08	
53523	Revenues Finance	Costs of collection of Council Tax and different methods for collecting payment	26.03.08	23.04.08	25.04.08	

* Shading to the actual return date highlights where requests were not replied to within the 20 statutory days.