
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT	AGENDA ITEM: 16
DATE OF MEETING:	23 OCTOBER 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 APRIL 2008 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 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 April 2008 – 30 September 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 April 2008 – 30 September 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 Four comments, 22 compliments and 18 complaints have been received between 1 April 2008 – 30 September 2008.
- 3.3 The number of complaints received in the first half of this financial year has decreased compared to the previous six months. This follows the trend that fewer complaints are received during the first half of the year, possibly due to seasonality.

- 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 80 Freedom of Information requests have been received between 1 April 2008 – 30 September 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 second half of 2007/2008 against the first half of 2008/2009.

Division	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008
Environmental Services	1	1
Planning Services	1	0
Customer Services	0	2
Housing	0	1
Total	2	4

Compliments

- 5.2 The table below compares the number of compliments received for the second half of 2007/2008 against the first half of 2008/2009.

Since raising awareness that compliments, as well as complaints, should be logged, there has been an increase in the number of compliments recorded.

Division	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008
Customer Services	1	9 *
Environmental Services	5 *	4 *
Revenue Services	2 *	

Planning	8 *	5
Housing	1 *	1 *
Leisure and Community Development	1	1
Legal and Democratic Services	1 *	0
Finance & Property	0	3 *
Management Team	0	1
All Departments	1	0
Total	17	22

- 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 October 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008
Resolved at Stage 1	20	13
Stage 1 still ongoing	0	1
Resolved at Stage 2	3	3
Stage 2 still ongoing	0	1
Complaint withdrawn	0	0
Total received	23	18

5.4 The 18 complaints received can be broken down as follows

Division	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008
Planning Services	4	4
Housing	5 *	4
Customer Services (including Revenue)	7	5
Environmental Services	6	3
Finance and Property Services	0	0
Legal and Democratic	1	0
Leisure and Community	0	2
IT and Business Dev	1	0
Total	23	18

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 October 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008
Number received	53	80
Number replied to within 20 statutory days	46	75
Number replied to after 20 statutory days (unavoidably delayed within department)	6	5
Number of Exemptions or partial exemptions	1	0
Number passed to Third Party	0	2
Number withdrawn	0	1

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

Division	01 October 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008
Environmental Services	10 *	20 *
Planning Services	8 *	7
Legal and Democratic	6 *	7 *
Finance and Property	13	10 *
IT and Business Dev	7	13 *
Customer Services	3 *	9 *
Housing	4 *	7 *
Org Development	8 *	11 *
Leisure and Community	2	9 *
Policy and Economic Regeneration	1 *	0
All Directorates	2	1

* 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 - 01 April 2008 – 30 September 2008

Comments

Date	Ward	Subject	Division	Resultant Action Taken/Comments
17.04.08		Document availability on Website	Customer Services	Response provided by Shiela Dixon
19.05.08		Licence re RBCS 25	Env Services	Response provided by Mike Sunter
09.06.08		Website	Customer Services	Response provided by Shiela Dixon
18.06.08		Kerbside Fencing	Housing	Response provided by Karen Talbot

Compliments

Date	Ward	Subject	Division	Resultant Action Taken/Comments
1) 16.04.08	Etwall	Thank you for 1 st class service and response times re enquiry concerning public open space	Finance and Property Services	Forwarded to Head of Service
2) 17.04.08		Thank you to Benefit Fraud Officer for hard work into preparing case ready for trial and also for clear and confident manner in which he gave evidence	Customer Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
3) 22.04.08	Etwall	Thank you for help and assistance – very helpful and diligent	Planning Services	Forwarded to Head of Service
4) 24.04.08		Response to website queries	Customer Services	Forwarded to Head of Service
5) 28.04.08		Thank you to Heritage Officer for his excellent guest lecture to students on the BA (Hons)/ Joint Honours Architectural Conservation course at Derby University	Planning	Forwarded from Head of Service

6) 06.05.08	Swadlincote	Thank you for help with Liberation Day bookings	Customer Services	Forwarded to Head of Service
7) 08.05.08		Time and help put in with reference to rabbits	Environmental Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
8) 19.05.08		Praise for professionalism, helpfulness and high levels of quality received from Planning Officers	Planning	Forwarded from Head of Service
9) 12.05.08	Swadlincote	Dealing with sensitive issue and resolving a long-standing problem.	Property Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
10) 28.05.08	All Districts	Thank you for help with Liberation Day	Customer Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
11) 12.06.08		Congratulations and thanks for help and co-operation with Planning application and for keeping within target times	Planning	Forwarded to Head of Service
12) 26.06.08		Thank you to for help with concessionary travel card	Customer Services	Forwarded to Head of Service
13) 10.07.08	Woodville	Thank you for improving disabled access to footpath in Woodville	Planning	Forwarded from Head of Service
14) 14.07.08	Castle Gresley	Thank you for footpath cleaning service and increase from 2 to 3 or 4 times yearly	Env Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
15) 12.08.08		Thank you to Head of Housing and Head of Finance and Property Services for their talk to the group on the Council's Housing finances	Housing and Finance	Forwarded from Head of Service
16) 14.08.08		Thank you for help with Benefit application	Customer Services	Forwarded from Head of Service

17) 14.08.08	Swadlincote	Thank you for help with Benefit query	Customer Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
18) 14.08.08		Thank you for fantastic service re brown bin arrangements	Customer Services and Env Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
19) 28.08.08	Weston on Trent	Thank you to Private Sector Housing Officer for patience and kindness	Env Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
20)		Thank you for 5 star service re repair of wheelie bin	Customer Services	Forwarded from Head of Service
21) 09.09.08	Newhall	Compliment on how beautiful Newhall Park is to walk through.	Leisure	Forwarded from Head of Service
22) 29.09.08	Hilton	Thank you for the very prompt, courteous and empathetic response to e-mail	Director of Corporate Services	Forwarded from Director

Complaints

Date	Ref No	Ward	Subject	Division	Resultant Action Taken	Date response due and date sent
03.04.08	259	Etwall	Preservation order on lime tree and concerns re development next door	Planning	Action not relevant	Due: 17.04.08 Sent: 09.04.08
18.04.08	260	Newhall	Housing Allocations	Housing	Informed of proposed new housing allocation system	Due 22.04.08 Sent 22.04.08
01.05.08	261	Woodville	Attitude of officer & response time to queries	Customer Services	Action not relevant	Due 16.05.08 Sent 15.05.08
09.05.08	262	Findern	Damage to fridge caused by contractors	Housing	Replacement of fridge	Due 23.05.08 Sent 20.05.08

12.15.08	263 Stage 2	Elvaston	Upkeep of Elvaston Castle	Planning	Action not relevant	Due 27.05.08 Sent 27.05.08 Stage 2 Due 12.06.08 Holding ltr sent Responded 30.06.08
13.05.08	264	Rosliston	Housing Benefit	Customer Services	Staff training and awareness. Reinforced Customer Service Standards and Code of Practice. Member of staff left the authority, but lessons passed onto remaining members of the team.	Due 21.05.08 Sent 23.05.08
19.05.08	265	Hilton	Anti-social behaviour issues	Housing	Action not relevant	Due 03.06.08 Sent 03.06.08
22.05.08	266 Stage 2	Aston on Trent	The giving of a caravan and camping license when certain conditions were not in place.	Env Services	Action not relevant	Due 06.06.08 Sent 05.06.08 Stage 2 Due 30.06.08 Sent 03.07.08
23.05.08	267 Stage 2	Etwall	Housing allocation of property at Etwall	Housing	Ongoing	Due 09.06.08 Mtg on 13.06.08 Sent 16.06.08 Still ongoing
18.06.08	268	Etwall	Council Tax refund	Customer Services	Reduced backlog in processing refunds for Council Tax. Staff made aware that correspondence must be dealt with on a priority basis.	Due 02.07.08 Sent 27.06.08
19.06.08	269	Aston	Delay in receiving bus pass	Customer Services	Action not relevant	Due 03.07.08 Sent 30.06.08

07.07.08	270	Woodville	Housing Benefit overpayment	Customer Services	Focus on backlog of benefit claims has reduced time to process new claims. Member of staff made aware of mistake and re-trained in specific area.	Due 21.07.08 Sent : 18.07.08
08.07.08	271	Hilton	Martson on Dove Cemetery	Leisure and Community Development	Action not relevant	Due: 21.07.08 Holding ltr 15.07.08 Sent: 28.07.08
04.08.08	272	Drakelow	Grass cutting on verges	Leisure and Community Development	Action not relevant	Due: 18.08.08 Sent: 08.08.08
04.08.08	273 2 nd Stage	Bretby	Littering offence	Env Services	Action not relevant	Due: 18.08.08 Sent: 18.08.08 Stage 2 Due: 09.09.08 Sent: 04.09.08
10.09.08	274		Response time in Planning Dept	Planning	Action not relevant	Due: 24.09.08 Sent: 16.09.08
11.09.08	275		Response time in Environmental Health	Env Services	Development of online key holder notification form to allow instant notification. Ensure Customer First call centre can deal with such enquiry directly.	Due: 25.09.08 Sent: 24.09.08
09.09.08	276	Willington	Planning application	Planning		Due: 10.10.08 Sent:

Freedom of Information Requests – 1 April 2008 – 30 September 2008

Ref No	Dept	Request	Received	Reply Due	Reply Sent	Exemption
54254	Env Services	NHS food hygiene inspections	31.03.08	28.04.08	09.04.08	
54581	IT	Security breaches in relation to databases	15.04.08	14.05.08	24.04.08	
54586	IT	Key personnel within organization	15.04.08	14.05.08	16.04.08	
54697	IT, Leisure, Legal	How much money spent on alcohol, fireworks and paper	07.04.08	06.05.08	02.05.08	
54839	Housing	Woodyards Lane Site, Foston	15.04.08	14.05.08	16.05.08	
54857	Customer Services	Credit balance for all NNDR ratepayers	10.04.08	09.05.08	16.05.08	
55094	Finance/ Organisational Development / Env Services	Job descriptions, person specs and salary details of employees working in management positions in street cleansing division	15.04.08	14.05.07	14.05.08	
55219	IT	Names of Managers/Team Leaders in IT	23.04.08	23.05.08	25.04.08	
55232	Organisational Development	Child Care Vouchers	23.04.08	23.05.08	20.05.08	
55992	Housing	Social housing repairs and maintenance contracts	06.05.08	04.06.08	15.05.08	
56185	Env Services	Costs of black and brown bin collections	02.05.08	03.06.08	30.05.08	

56246	Env Services	Dog control orders	07.05.08	05.06.08	16.05.08	
56524	Customer Services	CT & NNDR Arrears and Bankruptcy	28.04.08	28.05.08	06.06.08	
56743	HR, Housing, Leisure & Community Dev	List of buildings owned and managed directly by Council	01.05.08	02.06.08	16.05.08	
56756	Housing	Organisational structures with relevant contacts for Housing	13.05.08	11.06.08	09.06.08	
57039	County Council	Dimming or switching off street lights	14.05.08	12.06.08	20.05.08	
57053	Customer Services	Survey on Bankruptcy involving Council Tax	14.05.08	12.06.08	24.07.08	
57087	Finance	Water bills for properties within Council's responsibility	15.05.08	13.06.08	12.06.08	
57189	Env Services	Air Pollution Control	21.05.08	19.06.08	19.06.08	
57195	Finance and Legal	Spend by Council on taxis and car travel	14.05.08	12.06.08	04.06.08	
57260	IT	Information on IT equipment	21.05.08	19.06.08	28.05.08	
57299	Leisure & Community Dev	Tourism spend	22.05.08	20.06.08	28.05.08	
57674	Legal	Council's Independent Remuneration Panel and Member Allowance Scheme	28.05.08	25.06.08	24.06.08	
57676	Leisure & Community Dev	Grounds Maintenance Contract	28.05.08	25.06.08	05.06.08	

58049	Env Services	Recycling collections	30.05.08	27.06.08	24.06.08	
58064	Env Services	Recycling collections	02.06.08	30.06.08	24.06.08	
58122	Organisational Development	Contact details for Managers	04.06.08	02.07.08	05.06.08	
58136	Planning	Building Regulations Applications	03.06.08	01.07.08	30.06.08	
58210	Planning	Copy of letter re ownership of party wall	23.05.08	23.06.08	06.06.08	
58497	Housing	No of women on housing waiting list	09.06.08	07.07.09	09.07.08	
58611	Housing	List of approved contractors/suppliers responsible for the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of housing stock	10.06.08	08.07.08	24.06.08	
59226	IT	ICT Strategy, Business Plan and Structure	17.06.08	15.07.08	15.07.08	
59635	Finance	Expenditure re Statutory Advertising	24.06.08	22.07.08	25.06.08	
59765	Env Services	Waste collection	25.06.08	23.07.08	11.07.08	
60067	All Depts	Copies of documents and various information relating to all departments	30.06.08	28.07.08	31.07.08	
60444	IT	Data security within local government	04.07.08	01.08.08	29.07.08	
60539	Env Services	No of licenses to sell alcohol issued	04.07.08	01.08.08	01.08.08	
60542	Env Services	No of funerals where no kin has been identified	07.07.08	04.08.08	01.08.08	

60587	IT Finance	Details of all gas and electricity supply contracts in place for council organizations	04.07.08	01.08.08	31.07.08	
60890	Customer Services	Further information re Business Rates - see ref 45336	04.07.08	01.08.08		Awaiting more specific information from Customer
60892	Env Services	Number of fixed penalty notices re S46 of the Env Protection Act	10.07.08	07.08.08	05.08.08	
60893	Env Services	No of enquiries to DVLA	10.07.08	07.08.08	15.07.08	Unable to supply as information not held by SDDC
60895	Organisational Development	Chief Officers pay	08.07.08	05.08.08	04.08.08	
60899	Organisational Development	Details of Consultants and Agency Staff	08.07.08	05.08.08	04.08.08	
61151	IT	SDDC's Use of RIPA powers & inspection report by Office of Surveillance Commissioner	11.07.08	08.08.09	16.07.08	
61373	Legal and Finance	Income from sales of information from electoral register during 2007/08	14.07.08	11.08.08	05.08.08	
61376	Env Services and Leisure and Community Dev	Rural car parks	11.07.08	08.08.08	06.08.08	
61794	IT/Env Services	Details of key people in organization	24.07.08	21.08.08	05.08.08	
62069	IT & Business Development	Organisational structure for IT	01.08.08	01.09.08	05.08.08	

62242	Env Services	Licences re wild and dangerous animals	01.08.08	01.09.08	05.08.08	
62257	Env Services	Assaults against Refuse Collectors	04.04.08	02.09.08	05.08.08	
62405	Env Services	Noise nuisance complaints	05.08.08	03.09.08	28.08.08	
62646	Organisational Development	Sickness	11.08.08	09.09.08	28.08.08	
62700	Leisure & Comm Dev	Free swimming policy	08.08.08	08.09.08	26.08.08	
62772	Customer Services	Amount refunded to Council Tax payers following representation to VOA	12.08.08	10.09.08		Withdrawn
62876	Planning	S38 highway adoption agreements between authority and developers	14.08.08	12.09.08	26.08.08	
62878	Planning	What steps has Planning Dept taken to implement ruling following Markinson decision	14.08.08	12.09.08	26.08.08	
63141	Organisational Development	Details of Heads of Services, etc	19.08.08	17.09.08	20.08.08	
63397	Leisure & Community	Anti-Social Behaviour Orders	26.08.08	23.09.08	05.09.08	
63402	Customer Services	Local Government Ombudsman	26.08.08	23.09.08	22.09.08	
63403	Housing	Estates and Facilities Management	22.08.08	22.09.08	22.09.08	
63422	Customer Services/ Legal/Finance	Complaints system	26.08.08	23.09.08	23.09.08	
63442	IT & Business Dev	Timber procurement policies	26.08.08	23.09.08	23.09.08	

64011	Planning	Conservation Officers	01.09.08	29.09.08	25.09.08	
64012	Finance and Organisational Development	Structure charts for Finance and Human Resources	02.09.08	30.09.08	25.09.08	
64036	N/A	Social workers within child protection service	29.08.08	26.09.08	04.09.08	Passed to 3 rd Party
64040	Organisational Development	Organogram of the internal structure of the positions within the Council	03.09.08	01.10.08	25.09.08	
64152	Leisure	Athletics and Cycling Tracks	05.09.08	03.10.08	16.09.08	
64306	Customer Services (Rev)	Credit balances on Rate Accounts 1990 to date	08.09.08	06.10.08		
64491	Finance and Legal	Council's twinning process	08.09.08	06.10.08	19.08.09	
64520	Finance and Legal	Details on the Chair's car	09.09.08	07.10.08	19.08.09	
64696	Planning	Details of Planning application	04.09.08	02.10.08	30.09.08	
64697	Leisure & Community Dev	Free swimming for under 16's	15.09.08	13.10.08		
64698	Env Services	Details of funerals where no next of kin have been identified	15.09.08	13.10.08	16.09.08	
64825	Env Services	Vehicle removal re On Street Parking Enforcement	16.09.08	14.10.08	25.09.08	
64998	IT & Business Development	Contact details of various positions within Authority	18.09.08	16.10.08	25.09.08	
64999	Planning	Details of Planning Applications since 2005 where Highways Agency consulted	22.09.08	20.10.08		

65248	Customer Services	Blue Badge Scheme	24.09.08	22.10.08	25.09.08	Passed to 3 rd Party
65340	Env Services	Details re Premises Licenses	26.09.08	24.10.08		
65460	Organisational Development	Outsourced Services	29.09.08	27.10.08		

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