

REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 7 NOVEMBER 2012

PORTFOLIO: SERVICE DEVELOPMENT, IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

REPORT FROM HEAD OF INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER FEEDBACK UPDATE AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATISTICS APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2012

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To note the customer feedback and freedom of information statistics for April – September 2012.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Executive has previously received information on the number of comments, compliments and complaints as part of broader reports on the Access to Services Strategy.
- 2.2 The information attached in Appendix A shows the total number of complaints, comments and compliments received by service area and by type of complaint for the first six months of 2012/13. Comparative information is also provided on the figures for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- 2.3 It is pleasing to note that the Council continues to receive a number of compliments across most service areas.
- 2.4 Complaints are discussed within the individual departments to ensure that action is taken where necessary and that lessons are learnt and improvements are made as a result. The number of complaints is slightly higher than in the previous year, and this can be accounted for by the issues with the verge cutting. In addition, we had over 170 service requests concerning verges.
- 2.5 This report also contains in Appendix B information about the volume of freedom of information enquiries that we are receiving. The number of enquiries has risen markedly from 213 in 2009/10 to 403 in 2010/11 to 530 in 2011/12. We have received 250 in the first six months of 2012/13 which is the same level as in 2011/12. The level of complexity of some means that they are taking an increasing amount of officer time to process.
- 2.6 There are statutory requirements covering the ability to charge for assembling information under the Freedom of Information Act. There is an exemption from the obligation to comply with a request where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the 'appropriate limit' of £450. Costs are calculated at

£25 per hour per person regardless of the actual rate of pay, which means that the limit will be exceeded if it is estimated to take 18 hours or more. In the last year one request was refused on these grounds and the request was withdrawn.

- 2.7 We do have an ability to recover reasonable costs incurred. This covers 'communication costs', for example photocopying and postage, but cannot cover the cost of staff time. The rate set is £5 if the request is likely to take more than 50 A4 sheets of paper. In reality this charge is rarely applied as most enquiries are answered by email.

Customer Feedback and Consultation Update

- 2.8 The Have Your Say Group was re-launched in September 2010, replacing the dormant citizens panel. The group is managed in-house by the Community Planning Officer. Any resident over the age of 16 can join the group.
- 2.9 A recruitment drive was undertaken in conjunction with the annual electoral canvass in July 2012 resulting in about 40 new members joining the group. Therefore the Group has 396 members, of which about half are signed up with an email address. The group is promoted on a continuous basis at community events and community venues as well as on the Council's website and in Rochford District Matters. The majority of consultations are communicated electronically but a quarterly newsletter keeps members of the group up to date with current activity and also feedback on closed consultation.
- 2.10 The group has been involved in several consultation exercises over the last six months such as the Council Tax Support Scheme, car park survey, determining policing priorities, the new Council Customer Satisfaction System and Rochford District Matters circulation. The group is currently being consulted on the budget priorities for the Council. On average about 80-100 responses are received for each consultation, this accounts for approximately 20-25% of the group responding on each occasion depending on the topic being consulted on.
- 2.11 Consultations continue to be posted on the Have Your Say webpage and feedback included in the quarterly Have Your Say newsletters.
- 2.12 The new in-house system for collecting customer feedback is now fully launched, and consists of:-
- Face to face surveys on a quarterly basis
 - Post cards in the reception areas to obtain feedback
 - The 'Have Your Say' logo placed on web pages and emails, linked to feedback forms
- 2.14 All feedback received will be considered within the relevant Division and considered corporately by the Customer Access & Consultation Group.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council needs to learn from customer feedback in order to make improvement to services wherever possible.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Comments, compliments and complaints are monitored so that we are able to assess any equality implications from them.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Information and Customer Services

Background Papers:

None.

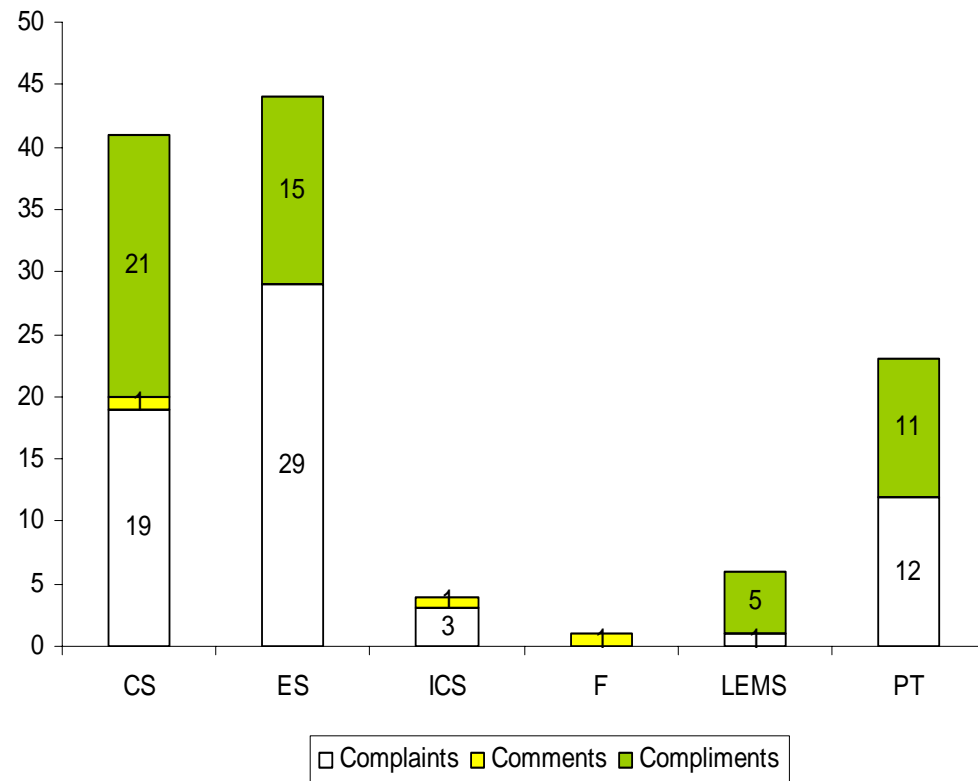
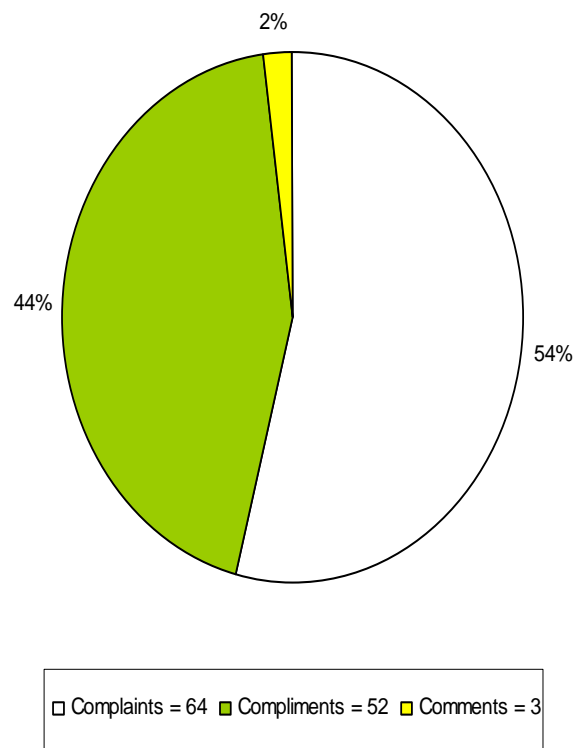
For further information please contact Sarah Fowler (Head of Information and Customer Services) on:-

Phone: 01702 546366

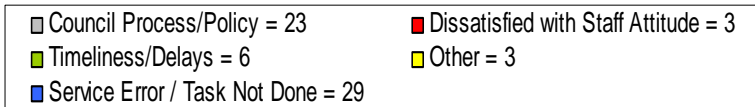
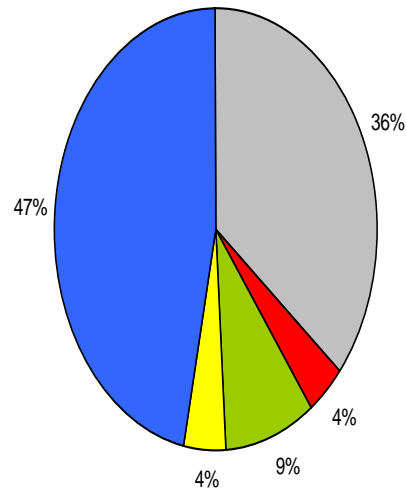
Email: sarah.fowler@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

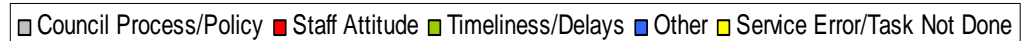
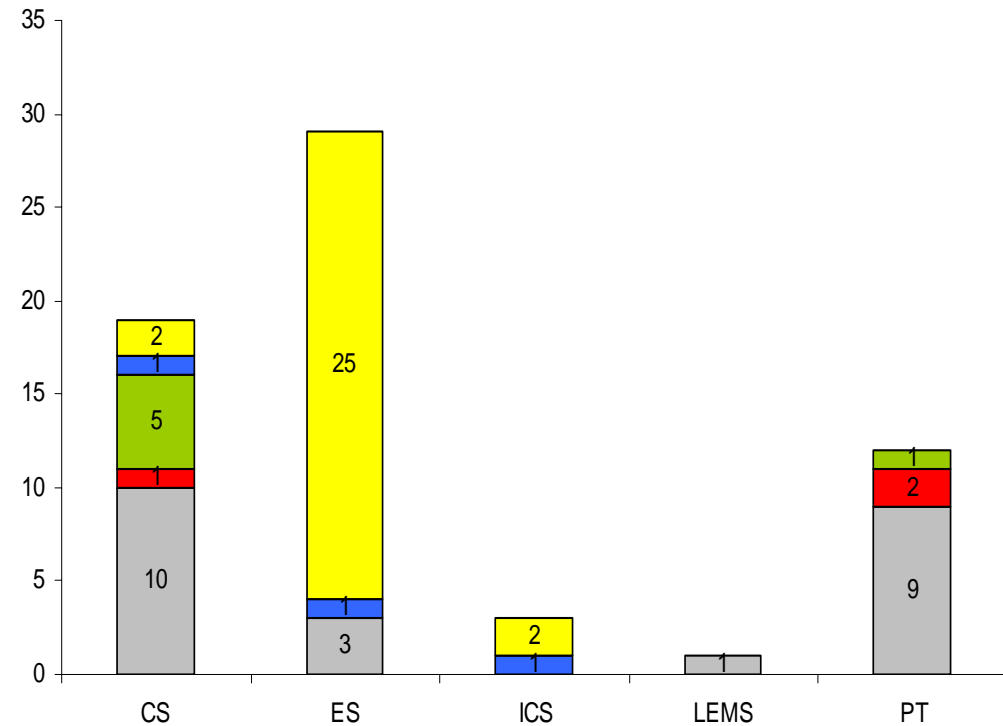
CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT 01.04.2012 to 30-09-2012



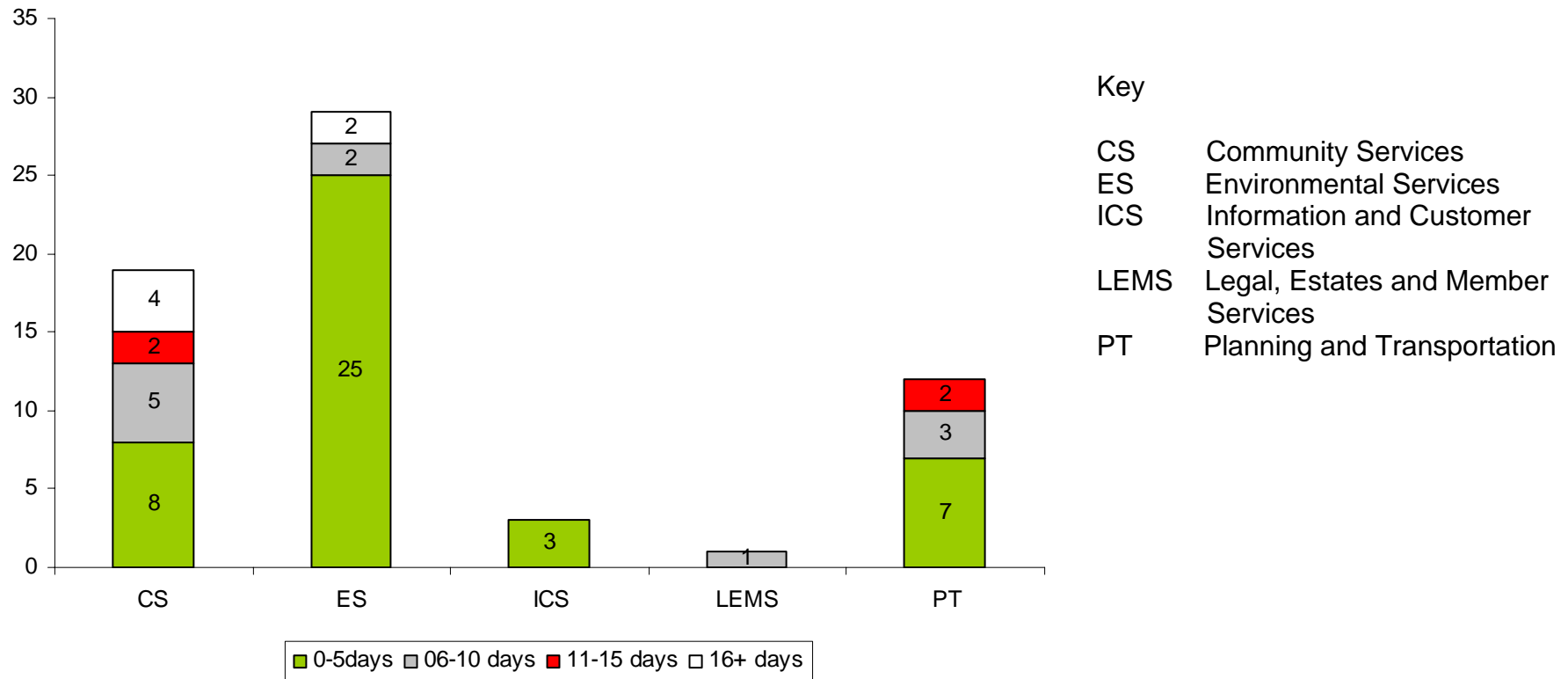
Total Complaint Categories



Complaint Category by Service



Time taken to respond to complaints



Total 0-5 = 43 Total 6-10 = 11 Total 11-15 = 4 Total 16+ = 6

Customer Feedback; Analysis of Corporate Quarter/Annual Statistics

Period		Total Feedback received				Total Complaint Categories					Number of days taken to send a full reply			
		Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Racial Incident	Council Process/Policy	Dissatisfied with Staff	Other	Service Error/Task Not	Timeliness/ Delays	0-5	6-10	11-15	16+
2009/ 2010	Q1	38	3	20	0	6	1	4	6	3	12	2	5	1
	Q2	29	9	43	0	16	4	8	10	5	27	9	4	3
	Q3	38	7	23	0	4	5	1	12	1	15	7	1	0
	Q4	30	6	30	0	12	6	1	8	3	18	10	2	0
	Annual	135	25	116	0	38	16	14	36	12	72	28	12	4
2010/ 2011	Q1	47	2	30	0	12	3	5	8	2	18	7	2	2
	Q2	30	5	27	0	15	2	2	5	3	9	4	9	5
	Q3	40	2	18	0	6	3	0	6	3	8	6	1	3
	Q4	33	4	53	0	39	3	1	6	4	33	12	7	1
	Annual	150	13	128	0	72	11	8	25	12	68	30	19	11
2011/ 2012	Q1	45	2	15	0	10	2	1	0	2	8	6	0	1
	Q2	45	4	35	0	18	5	1	7	4	24	7	2	2
	Q3	51	2	19	0	6	3	1	8	1	8	8	2	1
	Q4	38	3	17	0	7	5	1	4	0	5	8	1	3
	Annual	179	11	86	0	41	15	4	19	7	45	29	5	7
2012/ 2013	Q1	24	2	42	0	9	2	0	25	6	31	6	2	3
	Q2	28	1	22	0	14	1	3	4	0	12	5	2	3
	Q3													
	Q4													
	Annual													

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMPARISON

April 2009 – 30th September 2012

	April - March 2010	April - March 2011	April- March 2012	April – Sept 2012
Community Services	46	49	72	56
Corporate Collation	18	74	145	59
Environmental Services	35	99	124	65
Finance	42	51	54	6
People and Policy Unit (previously corporate policy and HR)	17	33	23	9
Info & Customer Services	27	43	32	21
Legal Services	10	13	19	4
Planning / Transportation	19	41	61	30
TOTALS	213	403	530	250

Quarterly comparison on total FOI requests received by RDC

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Quarter 1	45	74	127	120
Quarter 2	55	105	123	130
Quarter 3	51	91	120	
Quarter 4	62	133	160	
TOTALS	213	403	530	250