



Cambridge City Council

Annual Complaints and Feedback Report 2017-18

Cambridge City Council's Annual Complaints Report	3
Our Complaints Procedure	3
Executive Summary	4
Complaints to the City Council in 2017-18	5
How complaints were received	6
GovMetric - Customer Feedback System	7
Service Complaint Trends and Feedback	10
Independent Complaints Investigator	18
Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)	21
Complaints under the Councillors' Code of Conduct	22
Appendix 1 – 3 year service analysis	23

Cambridge City Council's Annual Complaints Report

Every year we publish our Annual Complaints Report, which gives an overview of the complaints the Council has received and how we have dealt with them, though we do not publish names or other personal details of people who have complained.

Cambridge City Council welcomes customer feedback, to help us to identify and address problems for customers, and to improve our services. This report shows how we have increased customer feedback about services and how we are responding to complaints.

Why we produce this report

- To learn from our mistakes so that we can improve our services.
- To encourage people who have cause to complain to make comments and suggestions to help us make these improvements.
- To show how we've responded to complaints and what we've done to try to put things right.
- To publicise and explain our complaints process.

Our Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

A complaint can be wide ranging, but can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided, or lack of action by the Council, or its staff. This can include failure to achieve specific standards of service.

It should be highlighted that issues brought to the Council for the first time, are dealt with as a request for service and so is not processed as a formal complaint. However service requests can then transpire into a stage 1 complaint if the customer is further unsatisfied, this may occur from delays in response or dissatisfaction with staff behaviour or policies.

Customers complain to the Council if they:

- Are unhappy about something we have or haven't done.
- Are not satisfied with the way a member of staff has treated them.
- Are not happy with the way a councillor has treated them.

Cambridge City Council has a three stage complaints process:

Stage One: A complaint that has been made for the first time.

Stage Two: Internal review of a complaint where the complainant is unsatisfied with the response to their complaint or the way in which the complaint has been handled, and they wish for their complaint to be considered further.

Stage Three: Review by an Independent Complaints Investigator, where the complainant remains unsatisfied with the internal process and wish to take their complaint further.

The **Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)** is the final stage - the person affected must have gone through our complaints process before going to the LGO for an independent review.

Executive Summary

Cambridge City Council welcomes feedback from customers, so that we can address immediate issues, and can learn from complaints, in order to improve our services. In 2017-18, total complaints rose 131 from 567 to 698. Many departments saw a decrease in complaints or small rises, however the re-structuring of the waste collection service took time to settle down and complaints against that service increased by 149. In the same time period we received 140 compliments.

In seeking feedback, we have also received 7330 comments via GovMetric, a customer satisfaction rating system. In April 2018, we appeared in the top 10 for positive telephone feedback across 70 plus councils who adopt GovMetric. Last year over 270,000 telephone and electronic contacts were received and over 57,000 face to face visits were recorded at the Customer Service Centre.

Overall 254 (35%) of complaints were for Waste Services. This is an increase of 149 from the 105 (19%) in 2016-17. Waste moved to a shared collection service with South Cambridgeshire in February 2017, and 69% of the complaints related to missed collections. A third of Waste complaints were received in April to June 2018 which suggests they were submitted as a result of the changes to routes and collection days. As staff and residents adjusted to the new service, the number of complaints decreased as the year progressed.

In addition to Waste, complaints were also up on the previous year for Car Parks. However they were down for Planning, Environmental Services, and Housing Services. Parking saw an increase from 12 complaints in 2016-17 to 36 in the current year mainly as a result in changes to car parking charges. Environmental Services saw a large drop from 99 complaints last year to 78 this year. Housing saw a similar decrease from 139 to 93.

Independent Complaints Investigator (ICI)

1 Stage 3 (ICI) Complaint was carried forward from 2016-17. 19 new complaints were submitted to the ICI in 2017-18. Of these complaints, 1 is outstanding, 19 were investigated, 1 was upheld. 7 were partially upheld and 10 were not upheld.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

19 complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman. Of these, three were investigated and two were upheld.

Reporting and Recording

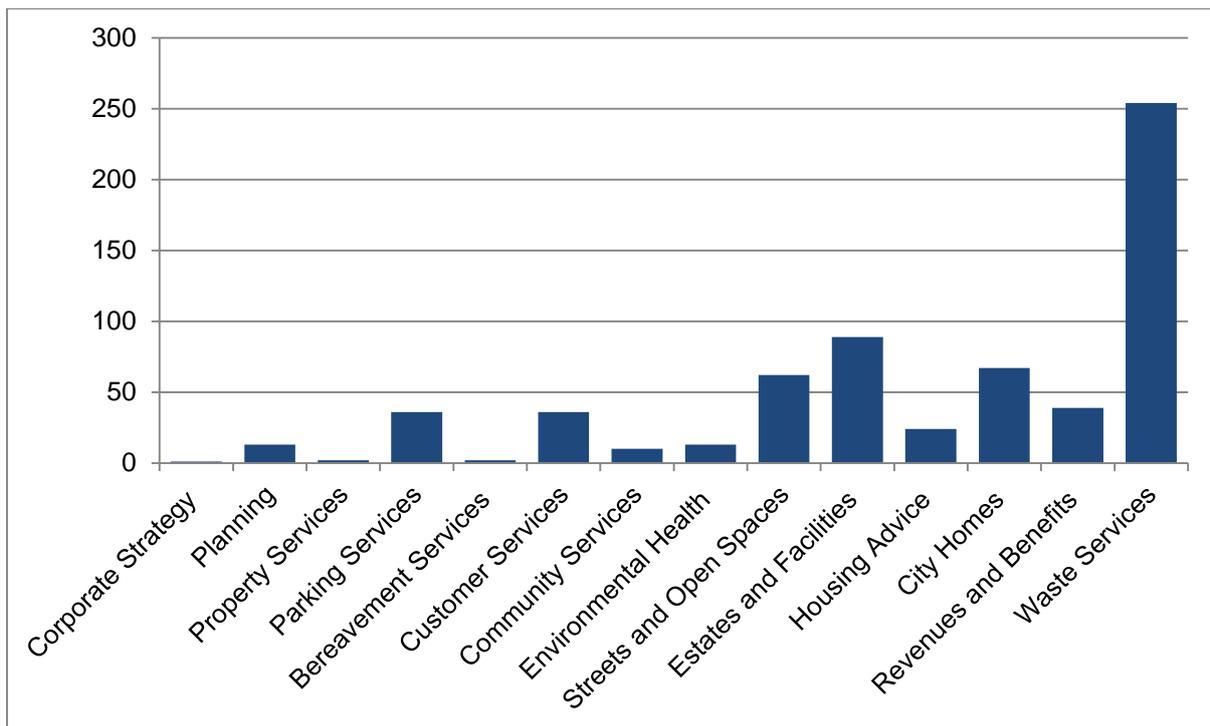
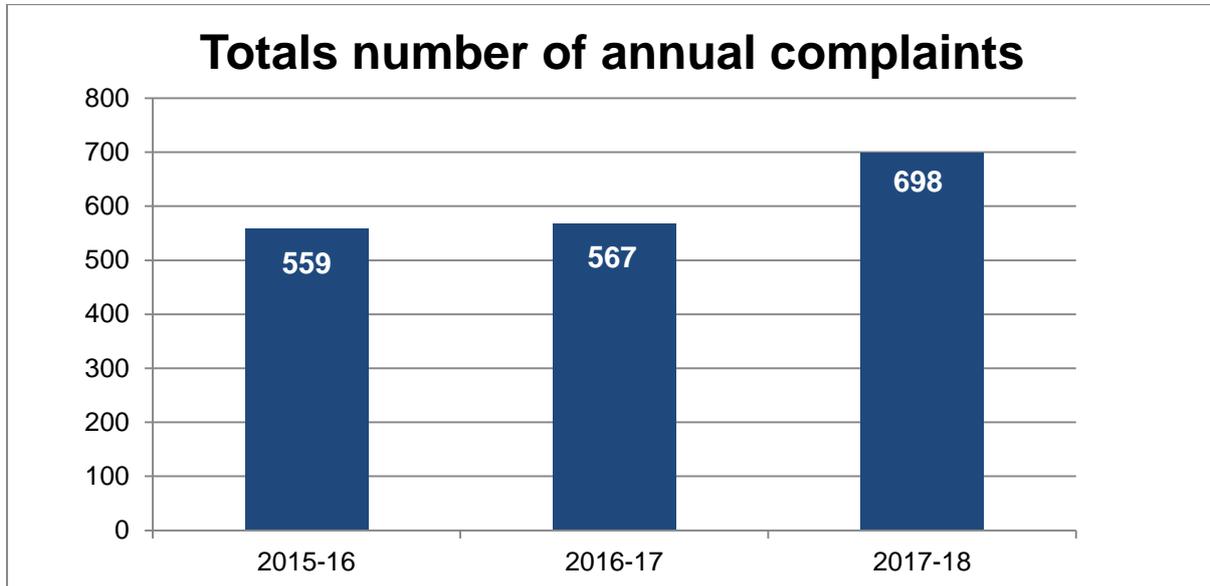
The City Council has worked hard to understand the reasons for the complaints, and has taken action to prevent the poor service that triggered those complaints from being repeated. We continue to work hard to deliver high quality services to all residents and customers, and welcome all feedback on our services and suggestions for improvement. Following feedback and a review of our complaints process we have changed the way we record and monitor complaints, compliments and comments.

The Lead Complaints Officer reviews data on a monthly and quarterly basis to establish themes and trends. This is discussed with Directors and Heads of Service to understand what the service needs to do to improve, change or prevent a reoccurrence. Particular attention is focused on reducing complaints being escalated to the independent complaints investigator. The reason for escalation has often in the past been due to the complaint

involving more than one council service at stage one and we have changed the procedure to ensure that such complaints are dealt with more efficiently.

Complaints to the City Council in 2017-18

We received 698 complaints in 2017-18. This was an increase of 26% on the number received in the previous year as can be seen in the table below.



Last year over 270,000 telephone and electronic contacts were received and over 57,000 face to face visits recorded at the Customer Service Centre. The number of complaints is relatively low in relation to the volume of customer contacts received by Council services. Complaints provide an opportunity to address customer issues and improve services for others where possible.

In 2017-18 the Council received 140 compliments via Complaints Tracker. We also received 4253 positive comments through GovMetric, our customer satisfaction rating system.

Authorities who adopt GovMetric are benchmarked against each other to compare monthly performance. In April 2018 Cambridge City Council appeared in the top 10 for telephone response satisfaction for the first time.

In 2017-18, Waste Services introduced a change to their rounds, which affected every household within the City. The service moved to a cross border collection with South Cambridgeshire, and implemented a complete rerouting of rounds and days of collection. With such a large change, a higher number of complaints was expected. 35% of complaints were for Waste services. This works out as 254 complaints, which is an increase of 151 from the previous year. 34% of these complaints were received in Q1. This could indicate that these complaints are related to unresolved issues from the aforementioned changes to collections. Following a review of these changes, the number of complaints declined as the year progressed, and the decline continued into Q1 2018-19, with a 56% decrease when comparing April 2018 with April 2017.

Numbers across services stayed close to last year for Stage 2 complaints. There was a decrease in the number of stage 2 complaints for Community Services, but an increase in stage 2 for Waste. 8 of the 9 stage 2 waste complaints related to missed bins, and were escalated because customers did not feel their case was resolved at stage 1.

Complaints Tracker was introduced in October 2017 as a new way of recording and reporting complaints. Tracker has enabled us to improve our recording of data, and ensure greater accuracy when responding to cases. A new and more user friendly customer reporting form was implemented as part of the new system.

Tracker also enabled more in depth reporting, and a simpler way to discover key themes and trends to complaints. In April 2018 we introduced monthly Heads of Service reports so that staff can keep track of their complaints on a monthly basis. In addition to these monthly reports, the senior leadership team monitors performance management across the Council with the aid of the corporate balance score card, quarterly complaints reports, and senior management meetings. Each quarter services provide performance data against around 40 corporate indicators. This provides a snapshot of how the Council is performing in key service areas including complaints.

Extensive training has been arranged to bed Tracker in with staff, including two sessions with the developer of the system. These sessions were well attended by managers and staff across the Council. Drop-In sessions and ad-hoc training have also been arranged for several services, and continues to be offered. A manager's forum event was held in July 2018 with a focus around complaints, and the quality of responses being sent to customers.

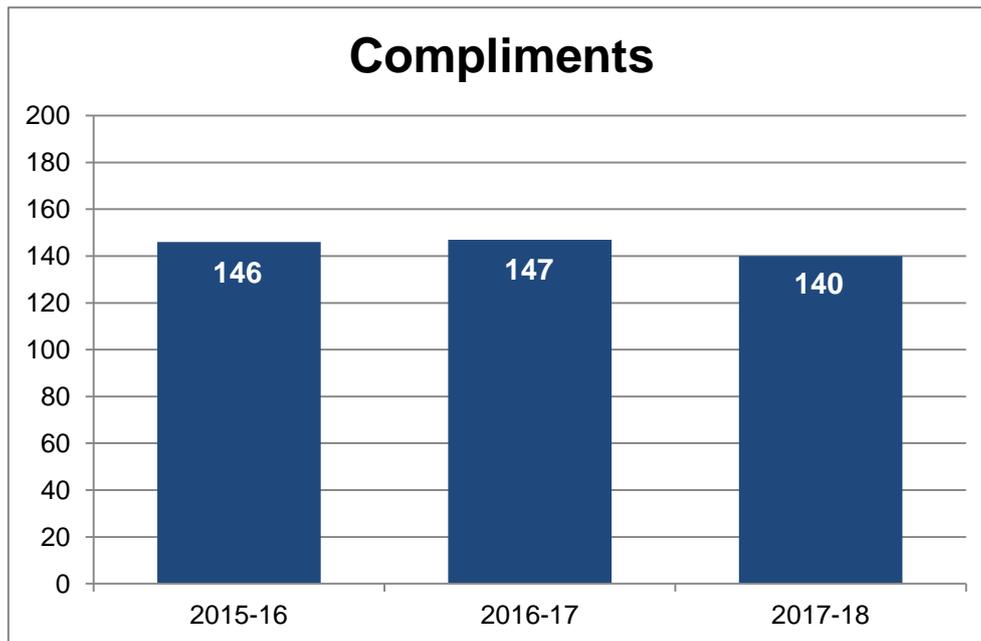
With a number of services now shared with neighbouring authorities, we are proposing to extend our target response timeline to ten working days instead of seven. This will bring the Council in line with South Cambridgeshire District Council, and allow colleagues working within a shared service to work to one timeframe. Our services have also evolved over the years and complaints have become more complex and time consuming to respond to. Therefore we believe this change will assist managers in ensuring a comprehensive response is made within target.

How complaints were received

Year	Face to Face %	Letter %	Email %	Telephone %	Other (Comment Cards) %
2017-18	2	3	86	6	3
2016-17	3	7	82	6	2
2015-16	3	9	76	10	2

The majority of complaints were received in writing, predominantly via email. 40% of complaints were logged by members of the public using the web form to report directly into Tracker. Following feedback, we have updated the format of our customer comment cards, and physical complaints form to support Community Services and the various reception desks across Council offices. This has led to a very small rise in use of these comment cards.

Compliments



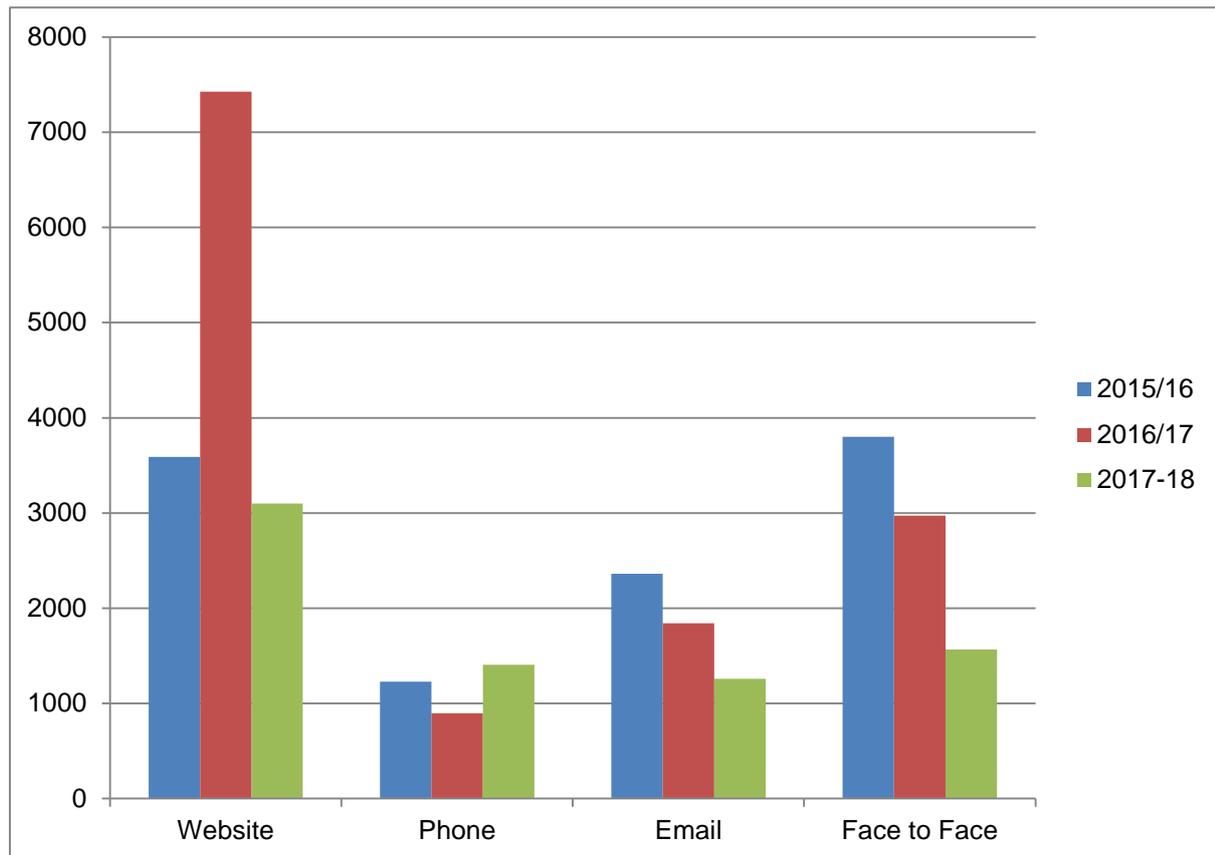
In 2017-18 compliments have stayed at a similar level to previous years. The Council received 140 compliments across all services via Complaints Tracker. As with previous years, Customer Services and Streets & Open Spaces received the highest amount of compliments, with the majority relating to helpful staff members.

GovMetric - Customer Feedback System

GovMetric was introduced by customer services to monitor feedback and measure improvement. The tool allows us to record how the feedback was received, ratings of good, average or poor can be selected by customers. They are also able to select service areas/departments and give more specific detail about their experiences.

We currently use GovMetric to monitor feedback from the website, face to face visits in Mandela House reception and via service e-mails and incoming calls to Mandela House.

Total Feedback via GovMetric 2015-2018



GovMetric feedback via channels 2015 – 2018

Channel	Date	Total	Good %	Average %	Poor %
Phone	2017-18	1405	82%	12%	6%
	2016-17	898	76%	16%	8%
	2015-16	1230	87%	6%	7%
Face to Face	2017-18	1567	76%	10%	14%
	2016-17	2974	73%	10%	16%
	2015-16	3801	71%	12%	17%
Email	2017-18	1259	57%	16%	27%
	2016-17	1843	58%	15%	27%
	2015-16	2361	70%	10%	20%

Feedback from the Customer Service Centre

In 2017-18 the volume of feedback received from Govmetric increased significantly in the contact centre due to a refocus within Customer Services. 82% of customers rated the service they had received from the advisor as good, demonstrating that customers appreciate the service they are receiving.

The automatic reports going to individual advisors which show the number of positive feedback results they have achieved are well received by the team. We continue to publicise the performance of the whole team on communications boards within the centre and we have set an objective for each advisor to encourage three customers per day to give feedback. This approach has proved effective with the results shown above and we have also been in the top ten of all 70+ local authorities which are benchmarked by Govmetric in their last update.

The feedback we receive from face to face enquiries also shows that customers value our service, with 76% of customers rating the service as good. The number of customers giving feedback face-to-face has reduced. This is as a result of the replacement kiosk not being operational until August of last year. The front of house team have also been in the top ten of benchmarked authorities twice in the last six months which is a great achievement.

Feedback on email communications has remained consistent with 2016-17 performance with a slight decline in numbers of customers giving feedback. Customers cannot give specific reasons for their feedback and due to the nature of the interaction, encouraging customers to give feedback is limited to the footer message and customers own motivation to leave feedback.

The 27% of poor feedback from the Email channel has highlighted that the two services contributing to this are Homelink and Waste and Recycling. Homelink comments from customers in is primarily in relation to the delays in response time, or dissatisfaction with their Homelink application. There has

Feedback from the Web Team

Channel	Date	Total	Good %	Average %	Poor %
Web	2017-18	3099	38%	15%	47%
	2016-17	7425	47%	18%	35%
	2015-16	3589	47%	13%	40%

The web team check Govmetric comments, and where possible make content amends to the website to help customers find information more easily, as well as fixing broken links. From recent feedback, the webteam are planning to work with services to improve conservation area maps, and are reviewing links to gov.uk to ensure their pages answer questions our customers may have.

Govmetric feedback has indicated that the high percentage of poor feedback received is in regards to the Council Tax web pages. The comments received from customers have primarily identified the wish to speak to an advisor, whether it is over the phone or in person, as their queries are regarded as too complex to be able to find an answer on the website. Feedback has also drawn attention that the content on the Council tax website is not user friendly when wishing to set up an account or when trying to pay council tax. In 2018-19 a new system has been introduced for creating a council tax account which is more user friendly and intuitive to use for both staff and customers.

There has been a drop in the volume of web feedback by over half on the previous year. This is because a change was made to how the Govmetric smileys display online. It was highlighted that an issue was being caused whereby the smileys would obstruct the main web page when users accessed the website via a mobile device. The smileys were moved to the bottom of each page, and made smaller to fit in line with the layout of the page. This may have contributed to the drop in feedback volumes.

Service Complaint Trends and Feedback

Each council department reviews the complaints and compliments it receives on a quarterly basis. This enables services to identify if there are any trends in the types of complaint being made or the services that complaints are being made about. As a result, changes are made to services and how they are provided.

Pages 10-17 detail comments from Services on actions they have taken to prevent, improve or change as a result of the feedback received in 2017-18. The total in the first column is the sum of Stage 1, 2 and ICI complaints.

Waste Services

Waste 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	254	11	-	51%	7	3
2016-17	105	2	-	71%		8
2015-16	104	9	-	75%		7

The shared waste service has seen a prominent spike in complaints, a 43% rise in comparison to last year. This surge in complaints is primarily due to service restructure and changes in collection dates. These changes affected 120,000 households, and every resident within the city. The main themes of complaint were missed bins, bin positioning and crew/driver attitude.

The majority of the 243 complaints received were successfully resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure, only 11 were escalated at Stage 2. The reason as to why these complainants wished for their complaint to be progressed to the second stage was due to repeat missed bin collections despite assurances from managers at Stage 1 that they would be collected.

Due to the large amount of complaints received, unfortunately there has been a substantial decline in complaints being responded to within target, this year only 51% were responded to within the allocated time, in comparison to 2016-17 where it was a 71%. The reason for these figures was that only one person was allocated to respond to these complaints, leaving no resilience if this person was out of the office. This has since been resolved by ensuring that additional measures have been put in place to ensure that complaints are followed up within the allocated timescale.

Additional customer care training has been provided to bin crews to reinforce the importance of delivering good customer service as highlighted by staff conduct themes in several complaints received.

Estates & Facilities

Estates & Facilities 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	89	4	1	43%	11	4
2016-17	86	4	-	62%		2
2015-16	98	11	-	57%		16

Estates & Facilities have found recruiting trade staff to carry out repairs difficult. Sustaining a level of skilled operatives to manage demand has also been a challenge this year. Due to the challenges faced, there is often a long wait for tenants from booking the initial job until it is completed. 48% of complaints in this service were because of delayed repair jobs. A new training programme has been introduced for operatives to learn other skills and become 'Multi-Skilled'. It is expected that at the end of the programme, ten staff will have skills to carry out repairs across multiple trades, increasing capacity and resilience, and reducing wait times. The team are also using a new system to identify missed appointments and where operatives' time is being wasted due to these.

Incorrect allocation and complexity of some cases relating to asset management led to a delay in response, and some complaints going out of target. In total 43% of complaints were responded to within the target time. One complaint for this service went to the ICI as the complainant was not satisfied with the response at the first two stages. The ICI did not uphold this complaint. Estates & Facilities also deal with planned works to council properties, and are looking at a way to bring some programmed work forward to prevent more frequent responsive repairs.

Environmental Services

Environmental Services 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	78	9	3	54%	10	54
<i>Environmental Health</i>	16	4	3	36%	2	-
<i>Streets & Open Spaces</i>	62	5	-	56%	8	54

2016-17

<i>Environmental Health</i>	22	2	-	59%	-	2
<i>Streets & Open Spaces</i>	77	7	2	73%	-	36

2015-16

<i>Environmental Health</i>	9	2	-	62%		5
<i>Streets & Open Spaces</i>	54	-	1	79%		12

This service has seen a drop in complaints from last year from 97 in total to 70. However the percentage of complaints responded to within the target has dropped from 70% to 54%.

Environmental Services have found that the complaints being reported are getting more complex, and this is reflected in the statistics as the majority (35%) of their complaints are individual complaints with no evident trends. These complaints can involve complex technical issues that need to be investigated, which can result in delays. All street enforcement staff now wear body cameras to assist with investigations around staff conduct, which is another prominent theme in this area.

Finally, the other large area of complaint was around public toilets. A large number of these are in older buildings which require a large amount of investment. There are also issues around vandalism in public toilets. Several complaints related to the toilets in Silver Street, and there is now a project underway to replace these toilets.

Housing Services

Housing Services 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	93	3	5	67%	12	17
<i>Housing Advice</i>	24	1	2	73%	6	2
<i>City Homes</i>	67	2	3	64%	6	8
<i>Supported Housing</i>	2	-	-	100%	-	9

2016-17						
<i>Housing Advice</i>	60	5	-	88%	-	5
<i>City Homes</i>	79	1	1	88%	-	18

2015-16						
<i>Housing Advice</i>	40	3	1	92%	-	2
<i>City Homes</i>	67	3	-	63%	-	21

Staff vacancies created at City Homes as a result of a staff restructure has increased the workload for each housing officer, and affected the delivery of the service. Responding to complaints within target has dropped from 88% to 67%, which in part is a result of this increased workload for housing officers, as City Homes has the lowest response rate in the entirety of Housing Services at 64%.

The main theme highlighted in relation to the 92 complaints received was failure to manage customer expectations at City Homes. Homelessness/banding decision and the application process were identified as one of the key factors for Housing Advice.

The housing application process is not performing at a level the team would want it to due to a backlog of applications which are being worked through. This backlog was created by changes made to the verification system, and the sickness levels within the team have had an effect on this backlog being cleared.

This service has noticed a number of requests for service being reported via Complaints Tracker. Further training for complaints admin staff has been made available to ensure that everyone is aware of what constitutes a complaint.

Customer Services

Customer Services 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	36	-	-	88%	11	30
2016-17	32	1	-	84%		31
2015-16	39	-	-	83%		38

38% of complaints in this area related to staff conduct. These have been very specific complaints about customer interactions with Customer Service Advisors. Where this has been the case, we have given targeted feedback to the advisors mentioned, and arranged individual coaching plans for any individuals mentioned in complaints.

Customers have also voiced their frustration with the automated telephone system across Council Tax, Benefits and some Environmental Services lines. The scripts used by these automated systems have been reviewed again, and changes were made to the introduction. Any specific issues reported about the Inform 360 system are investigated and escalated to the supplier to resolve where necessary.

Some customers were unhappy with the opening times for the cashiers office at Mandela House. These were changed to reflect customer demand. There is still support available for customers outside cashier opening hours and payments can be made via the self service payment kiosk. Following this change we conducted a survey of customers asking why they choose to queue and wait for the cash window to open rather than using the kiosk. 60% of the respondents said that they preferred the interaction of being served by a person rather than using the payment machine. This feedback is expected as part of our strategy to encourage customers to self-serve using digital methods.

Customer Service training was provided for all staff in September 2017 as part of the training programme within the centre.

Commercial Services

Commercial Services 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	38	2	-	71%	-	8
<i>Parking Services</i>	36	1	-	69%	-	5
<i>Bereavement Services</i>	2	1	-	100%	-	2
<i>Strategic Procurement</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1

2016-17						
<i>Parking Services</i>	12	-	-	92%	-	3
<i>Bereavement Services</i>	1	-	-	100%	-	-

2015-16						
<i>Parking Services</i>	26	2	-	93%	-	3
<i>Bereavement Services</i>	11	-	-	84%	-	1

Parking Services

38 complaints received for Parking Services for 2017/18. Each year approximately 2.5 million people use our car parks to put this figure into context.

Complaints main themes:

Price

Cambridge faces a continuing challenge in preventing the deterioration in air quality and ever increasing congestion, the City Council has an overall policy of discouraging non-essential car journeys. Our prices are aimed at incentivising the use of other modes of transport to access the city. Cambridge is considerably more expensive than comparative shopping areas in the region and we have a marked increase in tariff for stays over four hours. It is this comparison to others and the level of parking charge that generates the majority of complaints.

Payment machines

Following several incidents of theft and vandalism the Council decided on 17 March 2017 that, unfortunately, we would have had to remove payment by cash from our pay and display car parks. This was to prevent further thefts, protect the Council's revenue stream and be mindful of the impact of costs for replacement. Whilst the cash value stolen was not vast, the costs of replacing machines and the subsequent required civil works have run into thousands costing in excess of £30,000. It's worth noting that since the introduction of the pay by phone service, we have not had a machine stolen.

A delay at Gwydir Street car park between March and August 2017 whilst waiting for a software upgrade in order for it to accept card payments, meant that for a short period this car park became Pay by Phone only. The combination of no longer taking cash, card payment facilities not available at Gwydir Street or Riverside and the convenience fee charged when using the Pay by Phone service contributed to complaints in this area.

A 10p 'convenience charge' is payable if using the pay by phone service and this was absorbed by the Council from 4 May 2017 at Gwydir Street and Riverside as customers were only able to pay using this method. The convenience charge at Riverside will continue to be absorbed by the Council now pay by phone is the only payment option ensuring customers only pay the advertised tariff. A new pay by phone provider, Just Park took over the contract from 1 October 2018 with cheaper charges.

Signage

Signs displaying our tariffs are located at every pay machine, as well as the entrances to all our car parks thereby giving customers the option to decide whether to continue to enter and park. We have separate daytime and evening tariffs which can cause confusion as customers need to add the two elements together if they wish to pre-estimate the cost of parking. The tariff boards undergo design overhauls each year and customer feedback is channelled into improvements where practicable. All of our communications are kept under continuous review to ensure they are clear and easy to read.

Bereavement Services

This service received a low number of complaints at stage one, so will not be reported on in detail. The stage two complaint for this service was raised because action following the initial stage one complaint was not carried out. In the response at stage two, the investigating officer worked to agree a solution with the customer, and there was no further contact or escalation.

Strategic Procurement

There were no complaints recorded for Strategic Procurement in 2017-18.

Revenues & Benefits

Revenues & Benefits 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	41	1	2	85%	4	8
<i>2016-17</i>	35	1	-	94%	-	26
<i>2015-16</i>	33	1	-	85%%	-	6

During 2017/18 the team has received complaints from customers unhappy about receiving reminders and summonses for non-payment of council tax and complaints. We have also received complaints as a result of misunderstanding of complex issues where customers should be directed to seek an alternative remedy through a statutory appeals process. We have also seen some complaints resulting from delays in responding to customers.

We continue to review processes within both Revenues and Benefits, with an aim to reduce the time it takes to action incoming work. We now provide additional online functionality to enable customers to self-serve and update their accounts and claims, and we encourage customers to use this service. We now offer eNotifications for Benefit customers. We are

also reviewing the information provided within the complaints system to direct customers to established appeal processes.

Community Services

Community Services 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	11	1	1	70%	2	27
2016-17	23	7	-	87%		15
2015-16	9	-	-	100%		34

This service has not been reported on in detail due to a low number of complaints and no theme identified.

The stage two complaint in this area was escalated due to an unsatisfactory stage one response. Officers gave out information which they believed was correct, however it did not answer the customers complaint. There was no further response from the complainant following the initial stage two response.

Planning

Planning 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	15	1	5	46%	1	-
2016-17	36	3	1	81%		1
2015-16	63	11	3	83%		-

This service has not been reported on in detail due to a low number of complaints. However, the service received three ICI complaints. One of which was partially upheld. This complaint related to the Council's refusal to grant a certificate of lawfulness for the erection of an annexe. The customer was unhappy with the stage 1 & 2 responses, and chose to escalate further. The ICI found the customers complaint to be partially upheld, and an apology was made by the Council, along with some financial redress.

Property Services

Property Services 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	2	1	-	50%	-	-
2016-17	2	-	-	100%		-
2015-16	2	-	-	100%		-

This service has not been reported on in detail due to a low number of complaints.

The stage two complaint in this area was re-opened following a request for compensation from an old complaint which was originally raised in 2014. Following a review of the stage one complaint, compensation was not considered to be an appropriate resolution.

Chief Executive

Chief Executive 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target	No. of Multi-Service Complaints	No. of compliments
	1	-	1	100%	-	-
2016-17	4	1	-	75%	-	-

One complaint was escalated to ICI asking how to pursue a complaint about the Chief Executive. Advice was given on the process, but the complaint was not subsequently pursued further.

Multi-Service Complaints

Multi Service Complaints 2017-18	Total Complaints	No. of Stage 2 Complaints	No. of ICI Complaints	Complaints in Target
	32	5	2	41%

It was identified with the implementation of Complaints Tracker, that a new process was needed for dealing with complaints which span more than one service. Multi-Service complaints tend to be more complex and involve more officer time to investigate, which could explain the low number of complaints responded to within target.

The most common areas involved in multi-service complaints are Estates & Facilities and Customer Services with 11 complaints each. This is to be expected as Estates & Facilities can often involve housing officers if the complaints concern decisions made. Customer Services, as the first point of contact can also be expected to be involved in multi-service complaints.

When a multi-service complaint is allocated, all Heads of Service involved are contacted to establish a lead officer who will then co-ordinate an investigation and response, including input from all relevant services involved.

A multi-service case was partially upheld by the ICI, relating to Housing, Environmental Health and Commercial Services.

There is no data to compare to previous years, as multi-service complaint reporting was introduced for the first time this year.

Non-Cambridge City Council

In addition to the above complaints, the Council also received 18 complaints for non Cambridge City Council services. These complaints were responded to by admin officers, who directed the complainants to the correct authority.

Other Complaints

In 2017-18, several services were not reported on in detail due to a low number of cases. These were:

- ICT – one Stage 1 complaint
- Building Control – one Stage 1 complaint
- Housing Development Agency – three Stage 1 complaints
- Corporate Strategy – one Stage 1 complaint

Independent Complaints Investigator (ICI)

1 Stage 3 (ICI) Complaint was carried forward from 2016-17. 19 new complaints were submitted to the ICI in 2017-18. Of these complaints, 1 is outstanding, 19 were investigated, 1 was upheld and 7 were partially upheld. 10 were not upheld.

Upheld and partially upheld Stage 3 complaints in 2017-18		
Service	Date	Decision
Housing Advice	24 th April 2017	Partially upheld
Environmental Health	3 rd May 2017	Partially upheld
City Homes (North)	22 nd June 2017	Partially upheld
Revenues & Benefits	24 th August 2017	Upheld
City Homes (North)	18 th November 2017	Partially upheld
Planning	19 th February 2018	Partially upheld
Multi Service- City Homes & Environmental Health	2 nd March 2018	Partially upheld
Housing Advice	18 th March 2018	Partially upheld

ICI Complaints received between 2015 – 2017-18

Period	Partially upheld	Upheld
2017-18	1* + 7	1
2016-17	1* + 2	1* + 3
2015-16	3	2

*Complaints carried over from the previous financial year

ICI Complaint Service Feedback

Pages 19-21 detail comments from Services on actions they have taken to prevent, improve or change as a result of the ICI feedback received in 2017-18

Upheld ICI Complaints

Revenues & Benefits – 24/08/17

Decision – **Upheld**

Complaint Overview

A customer was dissatisfied with one of the Council's employees, and the failure to apologise following an unwarranted suggestion by the Council that the complainant had re-typed some submitted documents.

ICI Suggested Way Forward

- For the City Council to send a written apology in plain English recognizing the offence that had been caused to the customer. The written apology should include reassurance that the complainants future dealings with the Revenues & Benefits department will not be affected by the complaint, and all future dealings will be courteous and professional.

ICI Learning points and Recommendations

- The complainants concerns highlighted that staff were not aware of how members of the public can progress a complaint. ICI has suggested the staff member involved receive training in the staged complaints procedure of the City Council. This is to avoid a repetition of the failures identified, and ensure the public's confidence in the Council is maintained

Actions taken in response to feedback

- Staff attended training and received guidance on the complaints process, system and policy. The training also included guidance on response writing to try to improve the standard of apologies being sent.

Partially Upheld ICI Complaints

Housing Advice 24/04/17

Complaint: Delays in progressing Home-Link Application

Escalated to ICI as complainant not satisfied with Stage 1 and 2 responses. Council officers provided thorough responses in regards to Homelink application, offered explanation and apology, however complainant still wished for escalation.

- ICI recognised service failure about length of time in regards to the application and a further written apology and compensation of £100 to be awarded.

Environmental 03/05/17

Complaint: Mooring residency- Policy

Complainant unhappy with responses at stages at 1 and 2, citing discontent with City Council's Mooring Policy, however both responses from Council officers accurately and adequately reflected the factual position. Customer proceeded to escalate case to ICI.

- ICI report stated that the City Council should confirm and explain issues raised, no further action identified.

City Homes 22/06/17

Complaint: Housing Officer Complaint

Complainant was unsatisfied with answers from both Stage 1 and Stage 2, stating that they were both inaccurate and inadequate. Customer then approached LGO, who referred back to ICI for consideration. Complainant was unhappy with ICI report findings, however was informed that he has a right of appeal to the LGO.

- ICI overall findings highlighted that council officers failed to respond to complaints made in a timely manner and lack of action addressing anti-social behaviour with other tenants. Concluding in an apology and explanation to the complainant by the City Council.

City Homes 18/11/17

Complaint: Cost of cleaning services for tenants/leaseholders

Complainant specified that they received an un-satisfactory stage 1 and 2 response which left questions unanswered, due to this, they wished to escalate to ICI.

- ICI partially upheld the complaint and stated that Cambridge City Council should liaise with Churchill's cleaning service to ensure that residents are notified of changes concerning cleaning dates.

Planning 19/02/18

Complaint: Refusal to issue Certificate of Lawfulness for Annexe

Complainant contacted LGO however the case was referred back to stage 1 of the City Council's complaint process. Customer was unsatisfied with responses at Stages 1 and 2, and requested to escalate to ICI.

- ICI report recommendations state that City Council provide a written apology, recognising maladministration identified in poor customer service and service delivery and compensation in the sum of £250 to be awarded.

Multi Service (City Homes & Environmental) 02/03/18
Complaint: Nuisance neighbours, anti-social/criminal behaviour

Complainant escalated to ICI due to no improvement regarding Anti-Social Behaviour and noise and cites that the response was merely a review of things that have happened.

- ICI findings recommended that Cambridge City Council review its current policy and guidance in respect of its decision making processes when considering the closure of any of its live / on-going ASB cases.

Housing Advice 18/03/18
Complaint: Homelink account

This complaint was escalated to Stage 3 (ICI) due to customers dissatisfaction with both responses at Stages 1 and 2, finding her Homelink account still locked and being asked to provide additional information in regards to her application.

- ICI report proposed that the issue of ill health as a consideration for extending submission deadlines needs review.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGSCO)

If customers are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's office. The LGSCO investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies. In 2017-18 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman received 19 enquiries and complaints, 3 were treated as complaints where decisions were applicable. As a result of the LGO's detailed investigations, 1 were upheld and 1 was not upheld. A planning & Development enquiry (ref 16 004 091) was received and investigated during April 17, this was upheld and included in the Service comments below.

Department	No of Complaints Received	Decision
Revenues & Benefits	2	2 Referred back for local resolution
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	2	1 Referred back for local resolution 1 Closed after initial enquiries
Housing	6	1 Closed after initial enquiries 1 incomplete/invalid 3 Referred back for local resolution
Planning & Development	5	1 Upheld 1 Closed after initial enquiries 3 Referred back for local resolution
Corporate & Other Services	3	1 Not upheld 1 Referred back for local resolution 1 Closed after initial enquiries
Adult Care Services	1	1 Referred back for local resolution
Total	19	

Comments from Planning Services relating to upheld Complaint (ref 16 004 091)*:

This upheld complaint also concerned a resident who had submitted objections to a planning application by his neighbor for an extension. The application was reported to Planning Committee who accepted the officer recommendation of approval. The LGO summarised the complaint as relating to failings in the way in which application was determined, specifically that the submitted drawings were inaccurate and the Committee report contained errors. The LGO requested that an additional screen be provided to protect the neighbor which has been agreed by the applicant. The LGO also recommended a compensation payment of £500 which has been paid. Planning officers have been reminded of the need to check that plans are accurate. This complaint has been reported to Planning Committee and Council.

***This complaint was investigated during the 2016-17 period and the decision was made after the end of the year reporting in April 2017, taking it outside the LGO's reporting period. The investigation took place during the 2016-17 period which is why it is included in the report**

Yearly comparison 2015 – 18

Year	Total Enquiries Received	Change
2017-18	19	+11%
2016-17	17	+6%
2015-16	16	0

Complaints under the Councillors' Code of Conduct

Councillors must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct whenever they are conducting Council business, representing the Council or conducting the business of the office to which they were elected. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure high standards of ethics and conduct are maintained and that councillors treat everybody in an equal capacity and with respect, ensuring at all times that the integrity of the Council is not compromised in any way.

Complaints about councillors are considered initially by the Council's Monitoring Officer (who is also the Head of Legal Practice). When the Monitoring Officer receives a complaint about breach of the Code of Conduct, they consult one of two "Independent Persons" appointed by the Council. The role of the "Independent Persons" is to introduce external scrutiny of the complaints process. The Monitoring Officer can respond to a complaint, can commission a formal investigation or can refer it for consideration by the Council's Standards Sub-Committee. The Council's Standards Sub-Committee is made up of three Councillors.

During 2017-18, the Council received two complaints about the conduct of Councillors. Both of the complaints were dismissed.

Both complaints involved the conduct of a Councillor at a Committee meeting but in neither case was it the opinion of the Monitoring Officer or Independent Person that there had been a breach of the Member Code of Conduct. Both complaints were therefore dismissed.

There were 3 complaints in 2015/16 and 4 complaints in 2016/17. To find out more about the Council's Code of Conduct visit our website or contact the Council's Monitoring Officer Tom Lewis tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org

Appendix 1 – 3 Year Service Analysis

