

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Audit & Performance Review Committee : 10 August 2011

Subject: Corporate Complaints – Statistics from 2010/11

1. Purpose

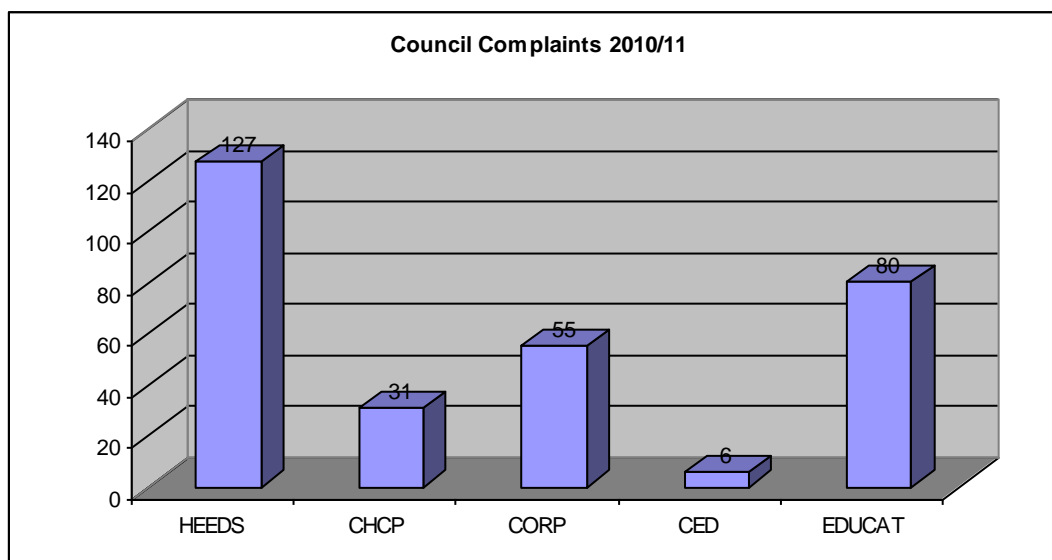
- 1.1** This report presents a summary of corporate complaints received in 2010/11 and an update on the development of a new complaints process and system.

2. Background

- 2.1** In the past the Audit & Performance Review Committee received a comprehensive six-monthly report on complaints routed through the corporate complaints process. Following a review in 2007/08, the Committee agreed that a summary report be produced following the end of each financial year for this Committee showing overall statistics and areas for improvement.
- 2.2** Departmental performance reports now include details of complaints. This report provides summary annual statistics on corporate complaints for 2010/11.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Overall 299 corporate complaints were received in 2010/11. There were 199 complaints in the previous year. A breakdown by department and category is shown below



This is an increase of 100 complaints from the previous year.

3.2 Housing, Environment & Economic Development

The Department has received 127 complaints in 2010/11. The Department received 61 complaints in 2009/10.

There has been a significant rise in the number of complaints received within the department as Housing Services piloted the new Corporate Complaints process for a six month period. This pilot captured all complaints from a formal and informal process and provided customers with a centralised point of contact, making it easier to complain to the Council.

The piloted process of providing a centralised point of contact and capturing all complaints, formal and informal, has been extended to the entire HEED Department and Corporate Services from May 2011.

This will have a significant impact on the number of reported complaints to the Council. However, the amount of staff time spent on complaints will be the same as before as these informal complaints were still being resolved without being counted in the official totals.

The benefit for the Council of capturing all complaints is comprehensive management Information can be provided to identify opportunities to learn from complaints and reduce the overall contact from customers.

3.3 Community Health & Care Partnership

The Department has received 31 formal complaints in 2010/11. This is a decrease of 5 complaints from the previous year. 27 complaints were acknowledged within 5 days and 14 received a full response within 28 days. 4 complaints received interim responses within the timescale and the investigation of 6 complaints is ongoing. Of the 31 complaints received, 4 were found to be justified, 5 partly justified, 14 unjustified and 2 unsubstantiated. 6 complaints are ongoing.

15 complaints were about Adult Services and 16 were about Children's Services.

Some of the improvement actions noted:

- Raise awareness with staff of the importance of best practice
- Further support being offered to carers
- Re-allocation of Workers/Teams

3.4 Corporate Services

The Department has received 55 formal complaints in 2010/11. This is an increase of 7 complaints from the previous year. All of these complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days and replied to within 20 working days. Sixteen complaints were considered unjustified/ partly justified. Most complaints were received by Finance and ICT regarding council tax and finance recovery issues.

3.5 Educational Services

The Department has received 80 formal complaints in 2010/11. This is an increase of 27 complaints from the previous year. All complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days and replied to within 20 working days. The majority of complaints were about school issues.

3.6 Chief Executive's Department

The Department received 6 formal complaints in 2010/11 regarding various Council Departments. One complaint was received regarding the Chief Executive's Department. This is a decrease in the number of complaints from the previous year. All complaints were unjustified and were acknowledged within 5 working days and replied to within 20 working days.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 An efficient corporate complaints system is an important feature of improving customer care – which is an aspect of reducing Strategic Risk SR004 – 'Lack of Dialogue'.

7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no issues identified.

8. Strategic Assessment

8.1 This report supports Fit for Purpose Services by regarding complaints positively and as a method of improving services and continually improving.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** The number of complaints has increased across the Council. This is due to a new complaints management system in Housing which also includes analysis and reporting of informal complaints. Education and Corporate services have also seen an increase in the number of complaints this year.
- 9.2** This trend of increasing complaints will be a regular feature in the years to come as the Council are now capturing informal complaints. This should be viewed positively as it presents the Council with an excellent opportunity to improve services using customer dialogue and feedback.
- 9.3** Members of the Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

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Date: 26 July 2011

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Appendix: None

Background Reports: None

Wards Affected: All