

- Report for:** **Scrutiny Committee**

- 1.3 This report provides a summary of the number of complaints, compliments and comments received for each service.
- 1.4 An official complaint is recorded when a customer expresses dissatisfaction with a service they have received. In some instances, customers use the complaints system prior to requesting a service. These requests are triaged accordingly where we are aware and re-logged as service requests.
- 1.5 Compliments, comments, and complaints are recorded on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in accordance with our corporate customer feedback policy. The name, address and contact details of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and the outcome of the complaint investigation are all recorded.
- 1.6 Members are provided with performance statistics for complaints via the quarterly performance dashboards at PDGs and as part of the Audit cycle.
- 1.7 Housing complaints are reported separately via the Homes PDG. Any questions regarding housing should be put to the relevant service or committee.

## 2.0 Performance Statistics

- 2.1 Feedback is recorded on the CRM. The table below shows the number of customer feedback contacts for all services that have been received during the period 1 August 2024 to 30 September 2025.

| Service                           | Comment | Complaint | Compliment |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------|
| Anti-Social behaviour             | 1       | 2         | 0          |
| Building Control                  | 0       | 1         | 0          |
| Council Tax & Benefits            | 0       | 32        | 1          |
| Customer Services                 | 3       | 13        | 8          |
| Devon Home Choice or Homelessness | 1       | 6         | 1          |
| Finance                           | 0       | 1         | 0          |
| Forward Planning                  | 0       | 1         | 0          |
| General                           | 0       | 15        | 5          |
| Housing Needs & Homelessness      | 0       | 7         | 0          |
| Leisure                           | 166     | 97        | 124        |
| Planning                          | 0       | 26        | 2          |
| Property Services                 | 0       | 3         | 0          |
| Public Health                     | 3       | 8         | 0          |
| Recycling & Rubbish               | 38      | 137       | 27         |
| Streets and Land                  | 5       | 22        | 4          |
| Trees                             | 0       | 1         | 1          |

- 2.2 Total complaints per service are shown below. Level 1 complaints are investigated by a designated officer, and Level 2 Complaints are investigated by more senior or independent officers, usually Operational or Corporate Managers. This is dependent upon the seriousness or nature of the complaint.

| Service                           | Total Complaints | Upheld | Partially Upheld | Not Upheld |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------|------------------|------------|
| Anti-Social behaviour             | 2                | 0      | 0                | 2          |
| Building Control                  | 1                | 0      | 0                | 1          |
| Council Tax & Benefits            | 31               | 5      | 7                | 19         |
| Customer Services                 | 11               | 3      | 5                | 3          |
| Devon Home Choice or Homelessness | 6                | 0      | 4                | 2          |
| Finance                           | 1                | 0      | 0                | 1          |
| Forward Planning                  | 1                | 0      | 0                | 1          |
| General                           | 15               | 1      | 1                | 13         |
| Housing Needs & Homelessness      | 7                | 1      | 3                | 3          |
| Leisure                           | 94               | 50     | 19               | 25         |
| Planning                          | 26               | 2      | 6                | 18         |
| Property Services                 | 3                | 0      | 2                | 1          |
| Public Health                     | 7                | 1      | 1                | 5          |
| Recycling & Rubbish               | 130              | 70     | 11               | 49         |
| Streets and Land                  | 22               | 3      | 4                | 15         |
| Trees                             | 1                | 0      | 1                | 0          |

- 2.3 As a measure of performance with complaint handling, the number acknowledged within five working days and resolved within timescales are recorded and reported on monthly as mentioned at paragraph 1.6.
- 2.4 Some services have struggled to adhere to the requirement to acknowledge complaints within 5 days of receipt and as a group meet the corporate target of 85%. Over the period an average of 74% has been achieved for this metric.
- 2.5 Work has commenced with services to improve this, with services receiving monthly performance stats and working with managers to address training needs and identify barriers to achieving this target. This is resulting in an upward trend most recently.
- 2.6 Services have a corporate target (85%) for resolved complaints within time. Corporately, MDDC is achieving an average of over 96%.

### 3.0 What does the feedback tell us?

3.1 What are the numbers telling us? We actively encourage feedback from customers for all services. However, some services receive more feedback than others. The top five services for ALL types of feedback are Leisure, Recycling & Rubbish, Council Tax/Benefits, Streets & Land, and Planning in descending order.

### 3.2 **Key patterns & Insights:**

- Leisure services dominate both in volume and in the variety of issues raised, especially around classes and pools (50% of all feedback).
- Recycling & Rubbish is the next most common area, with "Other" and "Missed Collections" being frequent issues.
- Case volumes fluctuate month to month, with a notable dip in December (due to holidays) and peaks in spring and early summer.
- There is a high 'upheld' rate for both Recycling & Rubbish and Leisure complaints indicating corrective action is necessary.
- In contrast Council Tax/Benefits and Planning have the lowest 'upheld' outcomes, which may indicate that complaints are logged about policy reinforcement or decisions based on policy rather than service delivery.

### 3.3 **Lessons learned:**

- Leisure services are the most frequent area where lessons are being learned. Operational or service delivery issues in leisure are a recurring source of learning and improvement.
- Across all services most lessons learned cases result in an action being proposed (35 out of 45), indicating that when a lesson is identified, it often leads to a tangible follow-up (see paragraph 3.4).
- The majority of 'lessons learned' cases are either upheld or partially upheld (33 out of 45), showing that lessons are most often identified in situations where the complaint was found to have merit.
- Very few lessons are recorded in cases that are not upheld, showing that we are focussing learning efforts on substantiated complaints.

3.4 **Qualitative analysis** of lessons learned and delivery of follow-up actions for complaints requires significant manual tracking. Efforts to do this for this report have been hampered by a vacancy in customer services. Recruitment to return the service to capacity and further work by Digital Services will be required over the coming months to address this to abide with Code of Complaints best practice.

- 3.5 **Compliments** - Compliments received are often for members of staff who customers feel have provided a good service. These are communicated to staff by line managers and shared in staff/member communications.
- 3.6 The top three services receiving compliments are Leisure, Recycling/Rubbish, and Customer Services. Leisure is by far the most common, but that service receives 50% of all feedback.
- 3.7 The closure categories for Compliments:
- No Service Failure is by far the most common closure category for compliments, indicating that customers most frequently give positive feedback when services are delivered as expected or better.
  - Staff/Conduct (alone or with "No Service Failure") is also a notable theme, highlighting the positive impact of staff professionalism and behaviour.
  - Other closure categories are rare, suggesting that compliments are overwhelmingly associated with routine, reliable, and well-delivered services.

#### **4.0 Referrals to the Ombudsman Complaints Service 2024/25**

- 4.1 Ten complaints were made to the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) by residents. Four were closed after the initial enquiry not requiring further investigation, and four were incorrectly registered with the LGSCO. Only two were further investigated during the period.
- 4.2 Of the two cases only one was upheld by the Ombudsman. This matches the Ombudsman outturn for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and is a testament to staff robustly applying processes and procedures in the delivery of services. A summary of the LGSCO findings can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 For comparison, a table of neighbouring authorities and their ombudsman cases has been provided at **Appendix 2**. Mid Devon is placed mid-table for overall complaint volume per capita.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 This annual report highlights a transparent and effective approach to collecting and acting on customer feedback across council services. Most feedback centres on Leisure and Recycling & Rubbish, with both areas receiving notable compliments and complaints—the latter often leading to corrective actions.

- 5.2 The Council resolves complaints efficiently, though improvements are needed in prompt acknowledgements. Lessons learned from upheld complaints need improved follow up, and positive feedback is shared with staff to reinforce good practice.
- 5.3 Low Ombudsman referrals indicate strong adherence to processes. Overall, the Council shows a clear commitment to openness, accountability, and ongoing improvement, with continued focus on rapid complaint response and effective tracking of lessons learned.

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** Accurate recording and monitoring of complaints is good practice and ensures openness and accountability to all customers.

**Impact on Climate Change:** None

**Equalities Impact Assessment:** Compliments, comments, and complaints are received by a variety of means which ensures that there is equality of opportunity for all customers. In addition, where there is a need Customer Services staff will always assist in the recording of these communications and complaints. There is also an interpretation service available. Reports of discrimination logged with complaints is reported to the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Group.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** To ensure that the Council provides access to services for customers in whatever way they choose to transact with us. Ensuring extended access via digital means and improving the way that we hold information and deliver our services to customers, placing them at the centre of what we do.

### **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer  
**Date:** 12.11.25

**Statutory Officer:** Maria De Leiburne  
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer  
**Date:** 12.11.25

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

**Date:** 12.11.25

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr

Agreed by the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 03 November 2025

**Cabinet member notified:** yes

#### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement

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#### **Background papers:**

Appendix 1 – App1 LGSCO 24\_25Cases SDCIPDG

Appendix 2 – App2 Nov25AnnComplReport SDCIPDG