

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS – UPDATE

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report updates members on the implementation of an electronic recording system has provided a standard approach to handling following the introduction of a new national model for complaints management.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this committee:-

- (i) notes the contents of the report;
- (ii) remits Chief Officers to ensure that complaints are logged on the system, to analyse complaints about their service and to aim to use lessons learned from complaints to drive service improvements, and
- (iii) agree that a detailed report comparing Quarters 1 and 2 be submitted to this committee on 12 November 2013.

2. BACKGROUND

Reference is made to Report No 703/12 which this committee approved on 4 December 2012. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed a new model complaints handling procedure which local authorities were required to adopt.

The procedure and an electronic system to log, monitor and report on formal complaints were introduced on 1 April 2013.

During the period 1 April-31 July 2013 133 complaints were recorded on the system during the four month period. This reflects continued encouragement to Directorates to log complaints.

Both stages of the new complaints handling procedure are recorded on the electronic system as follows:-

- Service Resolution – straight forward customer complaints that require little or no investigation.
- Investigation – complex issues that require detailed examination.

Ninety Four service complaints and 39 investigation complaints were logged.

All councils are required to report on a range of high level performance indicators which the SPSO only published on 23 August. It is, therefore, proposed that a full report analysing the complaints for Quarters 1 and 2 be submitted to this committee on 12 November 2013.

The indicators are as follows:-

Indicator 1 The total number of complaints received per thousand population.

Indicator 2 Complaints closed at stage 1 and stage 2 as a percentage of all complaints closed.

- Indicator 3** Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at each stage.
- Indicator 4** The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.
- Indicator 5** The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days.
- Indicator 6** The number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to 5 or 20 working days has been authorised.
- Indicator 7** A statement to report customer satisfaction with the complaints service.
- Indicator 8** A statement outlining changes or improvements to services or procedures as a result of the consideration of complaints.

Senior management within directorates will also review regularly the information gathered from complaints and consider whether our services could be improved or internal policies and procedures updated.

Standard reports have been created on the electronic system to extract the required data.

3. RISK

This report does not require any specific risk issues to be addressed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any aspects of the complaints handling procedures which have additional or significant financial implications for the council will be subject to separate reports.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

7. CONSULTATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8. CONCLUSION

Introducing an electronic recording system has provided a standard approach to handling complaints in Angus Council and aims to help us "get it right first time".

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.