

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Resources, Performance & Development Overview And Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 25th July 2006

Report Title Annual Report of WCC Complaints

Summary This report sets out the detailed analysis of the complaints received by the Council over the last year (April 2005 - March 2006)

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) N/A
- Other Elected Members Cllrs Booth, Atkinson and Hicks
- Cabinet Member Cllr Fowler
- Chief Executive
- Legal David Carter
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

Departmental Complaints Officers

FINAL DECISION *None*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by
this Committee

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To Council

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To Cabinet

.....

To an O & S Committee

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To an Area Committee

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Further Consultation

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Resources, Performance & Development Overview And Scrutiny Committee - 25th July 2006.

Annual Report of WCC Complaints

Executive Summary

- The number of complaints to Warwickshire County Council, between 1st April 2005 – 31st March 2006 is 1285, which is a 4.4% increase compared against the same period last year. This is largely due to Education reinstating the collection of figures for complaints resolved at the informal stage.
- In comparison with other departments, Social Services, PTES and LHTS receive the highest number of complaints because of the high level of contact with the public.
- Of the 1285 complaints received, 293 were found to be justified complaints.
- A total of 3489 compliments were received, which is a 2.8% increase compared with last year. The majority are for LHTS.
- The majority of complaints received by the County Council were dealt with at the informal stage.

**Resources, Performance & Development
Overview And Scrutiny Committee - 25th July 2006.**

Annual Report of WCC Complaints

Report of the Director of Performance and Development

Recommendation

That Members consider the Council's full year complaints figures together with the detailed analysis of the complaints data.

1. Background

1.1 This report provides the full year figures and detailed analysis of complaints data.

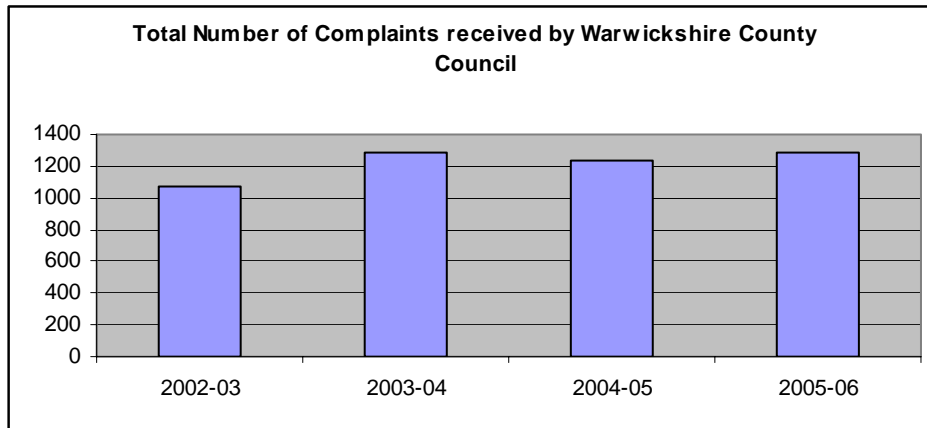
2. Current Situation

2.1 Directorates are requested to report against the following twice a year, however, this report covers the year April 2005 – March 2006, so figures relate to the old departments: -

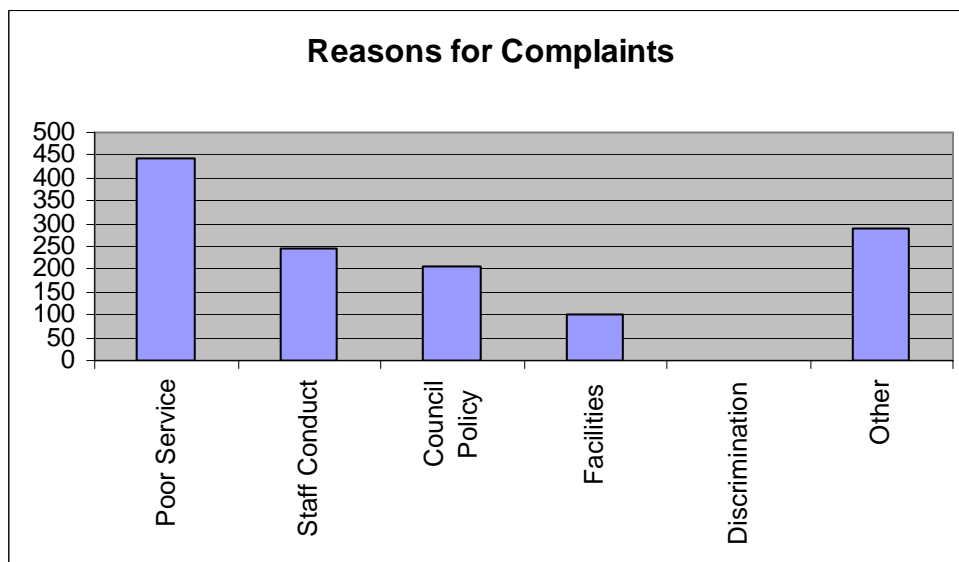
- Number of complaints, comments and compliments received
- The reason for the complaint – poor/inadequate service; conduct of staff; Council policy; facilities or discrimination
- The main complaint area for each category
- The number of complaints of a discriminatory nature
- Remedial action taken as a result of complaints
- The stage of the complaints procedure to which each complaint went
- The number of complaints dealt with within the time scales set out in the complaints procedure
- The number of complaints, which were substantiated/justified
- The number of complaints referred on by Members
- Number of complainants who asked for Members to be notified of their complaint

3. Key Messages

3.1 The number of complaints to the Council as a whole is 1285 for 2005-06, compared with 1230 for 2004-2005. The graph below shows at a glance the trend for complaint figures over the past four years (for more detail see appendix Fig. 1).

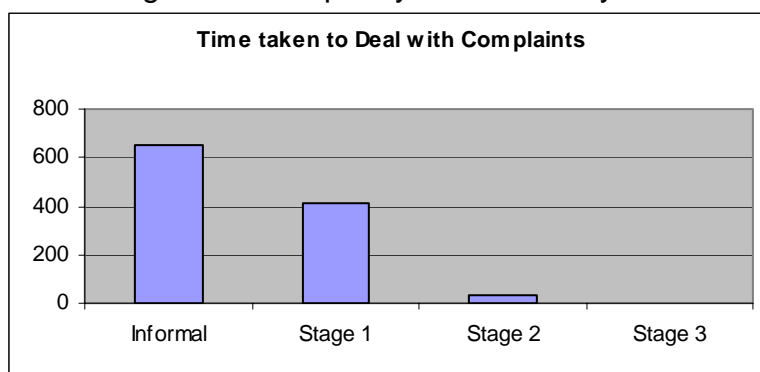


3.2 The graph below shows the reasons why people are complaining to the Council. This graph shows the number of complaints in each category out of 1285, the total number of complaints received this year (for the detail under each category see appendix Fig. 2 & 3)



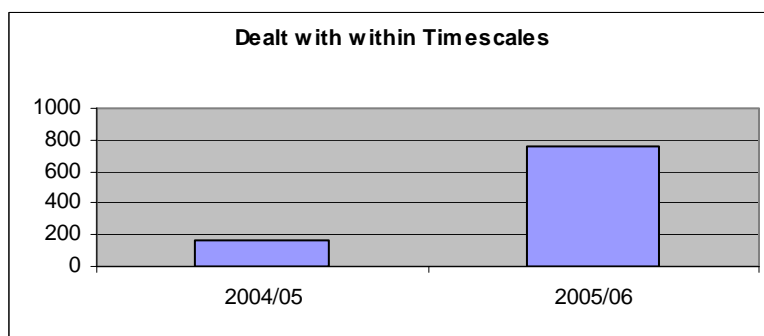
3.3 Of the 1285 complaints received this year under the various categories, 23% were judged to be justified complaints (see appendix Fig. 5). The analysis only includes half-year figures from PTES. Full year figures are not yet available due to staff absence (this also applies to 3.4 and 3.5).

3.4 The graph below shows that 51% of complaints were dealt with at the informal stage (within 7 days). This is a positive message and shows that most complaints are being dealt with quickly and efficiently.

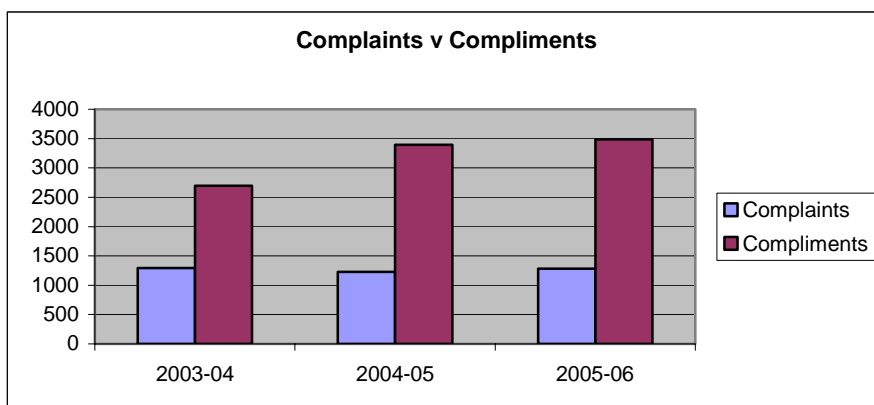


Informal – within 7 days
 Stage 1 – 15 working days
 Stage 2 – 21 working days
 Stage 3 – 30 working days

3.5 The graph below shows the number of complaints dealt with within the set timescales is on the increase. 80% were dealt with within the time set (for more detail see appendix Fig 4.)



3.6 A total of 3849 compliments were received during 2005/06 compared with 3394 last year. This shows that compliments continue to increase and outweigh the number of complaints we receive. The graph below shows the number of compliments compared with the number of complaints received over the last 3 years. This puts the number of complaints we receive in context.

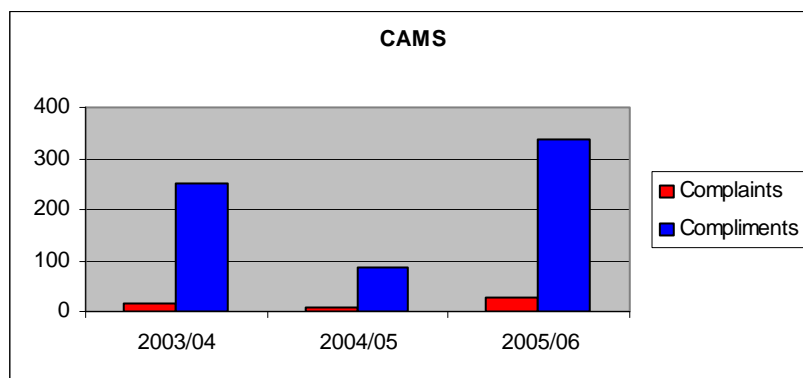


3.7 It should be noted that not all departments can capture compliments meaningfully in this form of analysis. For example, the majority of compliments about education services from the public are offered directly to schools and not reported to Council officers or members, other than anecdotally or via the Citizens' Panel surveys. (For more detail see appendix Fig 7.)

4. Complaints in Detail

CAMS

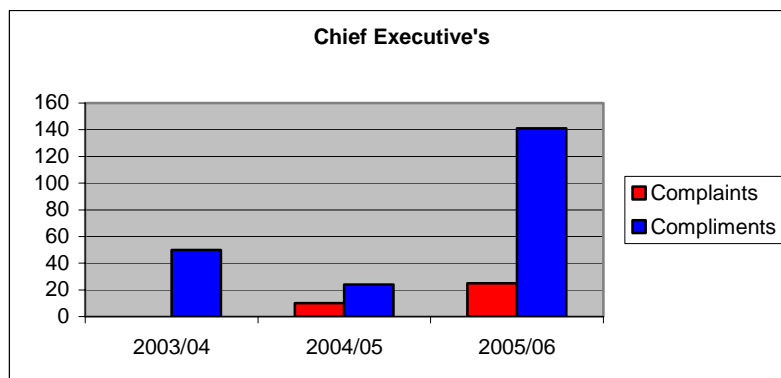
4.1 The number of complaints received by CAMS has increased over the last 3 years. (For details see appendix Fig 2 & 3)



4.2 The key complaint areas for CAMS are dissatisfaction with school meals and cleaning standards. However, improvement action has been taken in the form of the catering service being reviewed and new school meals being piloted. A review of communication was undertaken in the cleaning service this year by setting up a shared e-mail address, therefore giving customers one contact point. Also, quality inspection led to the creation of a remedial work plan. The new ICT transactional customer satisfaction survey has led to an increase in compliments and comments.

Chief Executive's

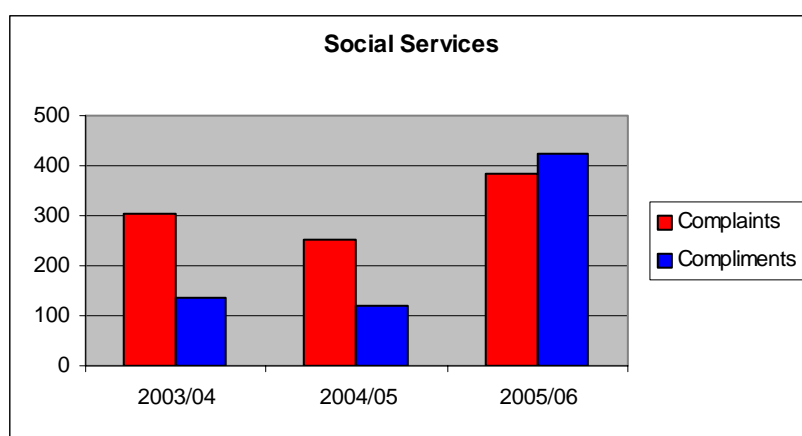
4.3 The number of complaints to the Chief Executive's Department has also increased since last year. (For detail see appendix Fig. 2&3)



4.4 The main area for complaints to Chief Executive's is from our Registration Division as they are the primary public facing division within the Chief Executive's Department. To rectify the complaints, letters were sent to dissatisfied customers and complaints were resolved through excellent customer care.

Social Services

4.5 Social Services receive higher numbers of complaints as they have a very high level of contact with the public. The number of complaints received has increased since last year. Some of the possible reasons for this are the increasing willingness to complain; better access and understanding of rights to complain; increased customer expectations of service; or overall service delivery issues.



4.6 Complaints are most often about problems experienced with receiving consistent and reliable home care packages, which is to be expected, given that these services for older people form the bulk of their daily activity. The volume of complaints activity is small compared with the overall volume of service provided by the department to its customers. The majority of the complaints relate to older people and domiciliary care.

4.7 Improvement action that has been taken include workers being given further guidance and training, and reinforcement of current procedures and protocols.

4.8 Compliments to the department outweigh complaints. Those most appreciative of Social Services are older people and their relatives, and the services they appreciate most are help to live at home.

4.9 From the 79 feedback questionnaires returned, it showed that 66% of complainants felt that staff in Social Services were polite and 49% felt they were kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

Fire & Rescue

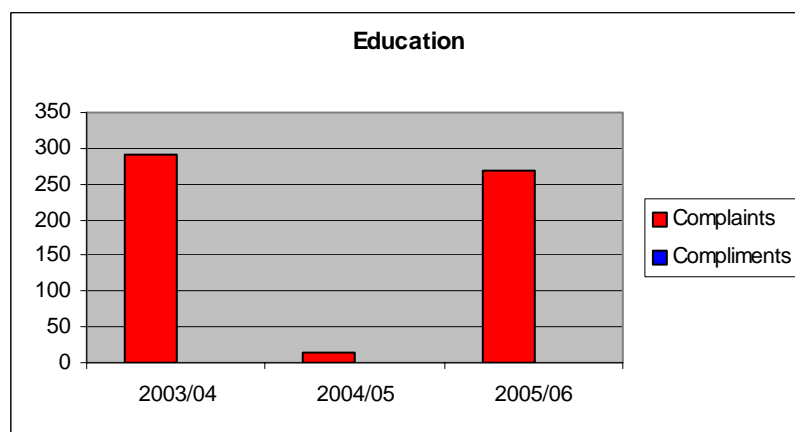
4.10 The number of complaints to Fire & Rescue has decreased in the last year.



4.11 Of the 8 complaints received, the majority were regarding driving incidents. Fire crews were reminded of brigade policy on driving whilst using blue lights and ensuring that they have regard to both their own and the public's safety.

Education

4.12 The number of complaints to Education have increased in the last three years. Council officers are not directly involved and do not get to hear about the majority of them. The figures are significantly higher than those supplied for the previous year, as all complaints are now counted. For 2004/05, only complaints which reached Stage 2 of the Corporate Complaints Procedure were recorded. All calls are now logged on a database and classified as complaints, or general queries, and as such, all future data should be consistent. Area Education Officers are notified of schools with high numbers of complaints.

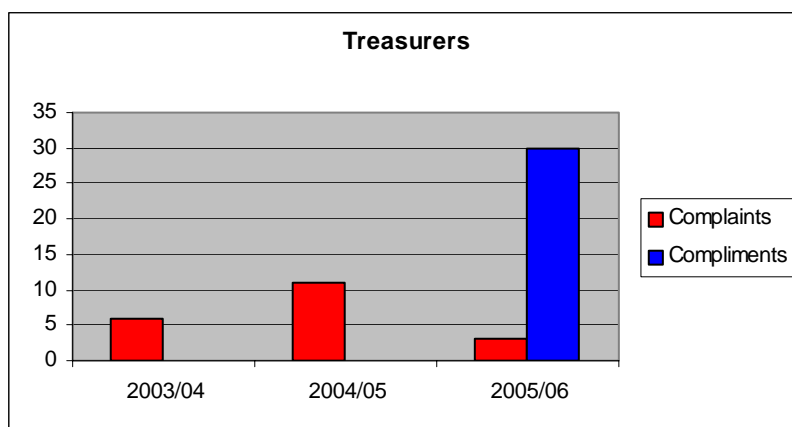


4.13 Complaints are dealt with by holding meetings between officers within the LEA and the complainant to reach a satisfactory outcome.

4.14 It should be noted that Education cannot capture compliments meaningfully in this form of analysis. For example, the majority of compliments about education services to the public are offered directly to schools and not reported to Council officers or members.

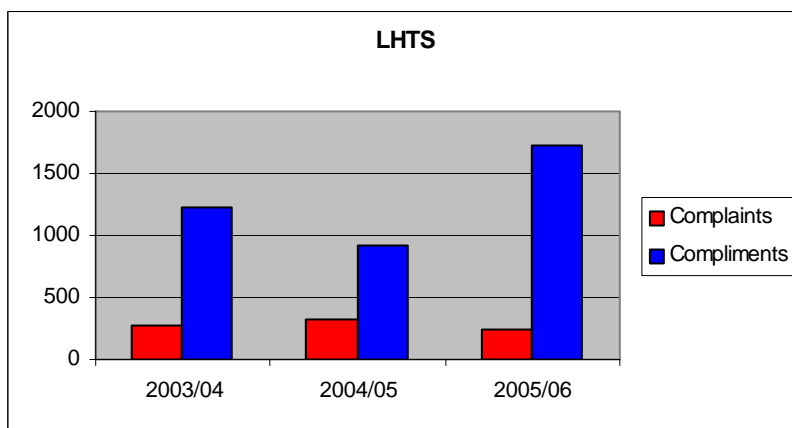
Treasurers

4.15 Complaints to the Treasurers department have decreased on last year's figures. Two of the complaints were concerning pay advice and the other was about a delay in receiving a pensions lump sum.



LHTS

4.16 LHTS have one of the highest levels of complaints to the department as they have the highest level of contact with the public. Complaints to LHTS increased since the previous year.

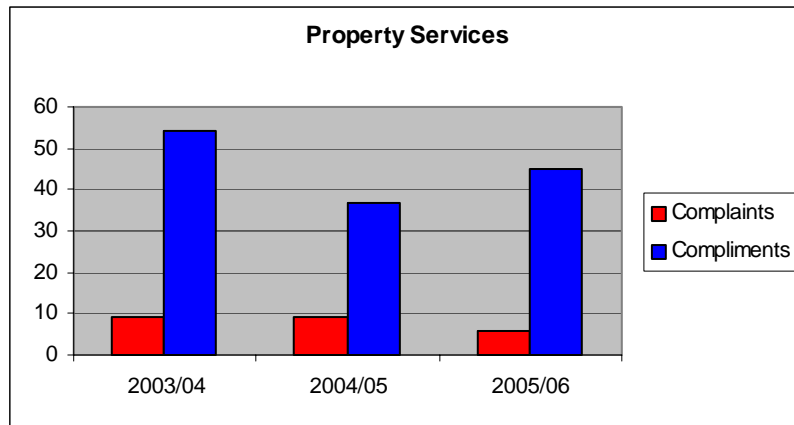


4.17 The majority of complaints are regarding stock quality; dissatisfaction with automatic phone system and cost of value added services.

4.18 Improvements have been made to stock acquisition and consultation with customers. They have also made improvements to the explanation of service charges and staff training in their application.

Property Services

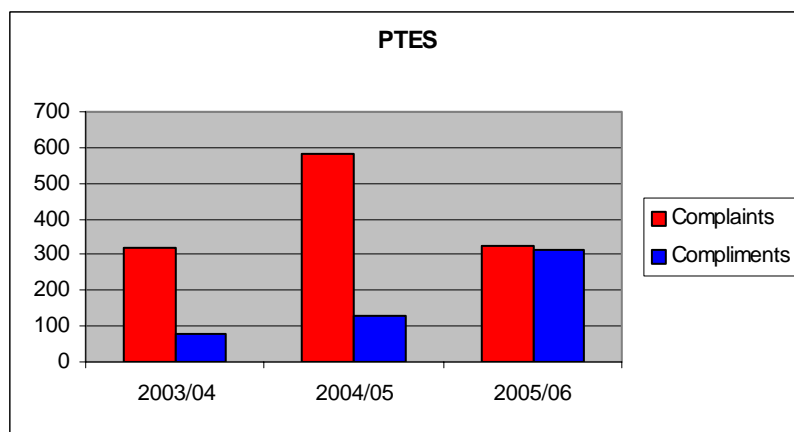
4.19 Complaints to Property Services have decreased since last year.



4.20 The 6 complaints were mainly concerning contractors. Examples of the complaints being resolved include contractors being re-inducted; work being rectified; ensuring the contractor concerned no longer carries out works for WCC.

PTES

4.21 The number of complaints to PTES has decreased on last year. PTES have one of the highest numbers of complaints as they have a high level of contact with the public.

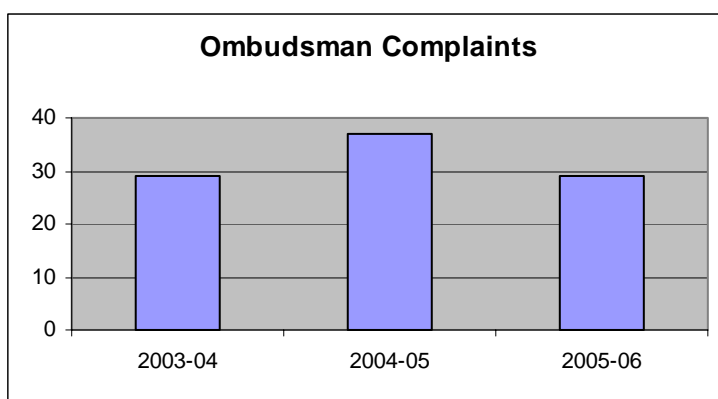


4.22 The type of complaints range from inconsistent bus services; behaviour of bus drivers; staff at recycling centres; lack of recycling centres and ban on the use of vans at waste sites.

4.23 Contractors have been contacted regarding early/ late buses and the behaviour of staff. Council policy continues on the use of vans at waste sites.

5. Ombudsman Complaints

- 5.1 The Corporate Complaints Officer deals with complaints, which reach stage 3 of the complaints procedure. If the complainant is dissatisfied at this stage they are advised that they can take their complaint forward to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 5.2 A total number of 29 complaints had been escalated to the Ombudsman in 2005/06, compared with 37 last year. 12 were for Education, 8 for PTES and 9 for Social Services.



- 5.3 Of the 12 Education Ombudsman complaints, mainly concerning education admissions, 7 were concluded as no or insufficient evidence of maladministration; 2 were settled at the Ombudsman's discretion; 2 were premature complaints; and the remaining 1 is still open.
- 5.4 Of the 8 PTES Ombudsman complaints, 5 were regarding Highways. 3 complaints are still open; 2 are concerned with consideration/ neighbourhood amenity; and the remaining 1 is about enforcement.
- 5.5 There were 9 Social Services Ombudsman complaints, 3 were about services for children, 3 for adults and 3 others. 1 was settled locally; 2 were concluded as no or insufficient evidence of maladministration; 1 was settled at the Ombudsman's discretion and the remaining 5 were deemed as premature complaints.

DAVID CARTER
Strategic Director of
Performance & Development

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31 May 2006

Fig. 1	Number of complaints			
	April – March 02/03	April – March 03/04	April – March 04/05	April – March 05/06
CAMS	104	57	29	28
Chief Execs	19	6	5	26
Education	93	292	13	270
Fire & Rescue	9	17	13	8
LHTS	225	282	315	235
Property Services	9	9	9	6
PTES	410	318	584	326
Treasurers	18	6	11	3
Social Services	302	305	252	383
WCC Total	1078	1291	1230	1285

Fig. 2	Reason for complaint					
	April – March 05/06	Poor service	Staff Conduct	Council Policy	Facilities	Other
CAMS	28	25	1	0	0	2
Chief Execs	26	11	1	1	8	5
Education	270	23	77	10	8	152
Fire & Rescue	8	0	0	0	0	8
LHTS	235	55	9	43	54	74
Property Services	6	3	2	0	0	1
PTES	326	67	82	124	30	23
Treasurers	3	2	0	1	0	0
Social Services	383	259	74	25	0	25
WCC Total	1285	445	246	204	100	290

Fig. 3	Reason for complaint						
	April – March 05/06	Poor service	Staff Conduct	Council Policy	Facilities	Discriminatory	Other
CAMS	28	8 – food related 17 – no detail	1 – Member of staff rude to customer				2 - School meals– Hair in food item and new fish product not liked
Chief Execs	26	11 – service inefficiency such as incorrect information; delay in refunding a fee; uninformative answering machine message	1 – no detail	1 – registration – Limiting photography at weddings	8 –registration – issues such as confetti litter; lack of disabled access; toilet facilities		5 – registration Poor service from host; Loss of old District name under Registrar General's re- organisation; Client confusion on information given; Increase in fee for services
Education	270	23 - no detail	77 - no detail	10 - no detail	8 - no detail	1 - no detail	152 - 54-bullying; 18-school specific policies; 15- supervision arrangements; 12- Health & Safety; 12-SEN provision; 41-others
Fire & Rescue	8	0	0	0	0	0	6 – Driving incidents 1 – Failure to install appropriate smoke alarm 1 – Possible failure of on-line booking system for home fire safety checks
LHTS	235	55 – no detail	9 – no detail	43 – no detail	54– no detail		74 – no detail
Property Services	6	1 – complaints about standard of workmanship; 2 – issues with service by contractors	2 – complaints about contractor's behaviour				1 – complaint from contractor that criteria used to select approved contractors is unfair
PTES	326	67 – no detail	82 – no detail	124 – no detail	30 – no detail		23 – no detail
Treasurers	3	2 – pay advice not sealed and pensions lump sum not received		1 – pay advice contained advertisement			
Social Services	383	259 – service inefficiency, such as standard of service; clarity of information	74 – staff inefficiency, such as staff rudeness, staff behaviour	25 – Issues surrounding eligibility for service, contractual agreements			25 – no detail

Fig. 4	Stage complaint went to						
	April – March 05/06	Informal	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	No. of complaints dealt with within the set timescales	Ombudsman
CAMS	28	28	0	0	0	28	0
Chief Execs	26	25	0	0	0	25	0
Education	270	254	16	0	0	270	12
Fire & Rescue	8	7	1	0	0	8	0
LHTS	235	204	30	0	1	235	0
Property Services	6	0	5	1	0	5	0
PTES	326	128*	7*	5*	0*	-	8
Treasurers	3	3	0	0	0	3	0
Social Services	383	-	356	24	3	190	9
Total	1285	649	415	30	4	764	29

Fig. 5	No. of complaints justified	
	April – March 05/06	Justified
CAMS	28	19
Chief Execs	26	17
Education	270	Unable to complete due to nature of complaints
Fire & Rescue	8	4
LHTS	235	53
Property Services	6	3
PTES	326	82*
Treasurers	3	2
Social Services	383	113
Total	1285	293

Fig. 6	Member Involvement		
	April – March 05/06	No. of complaints referred on by Members	No. of complainants who asked for Member to be notified
CAMS	28	0	0
Chief Execs	26	-	-
Education	270	0	0
Fire & Rescue	8	0	0
LHTS	235	0	8
Property Services	6	0	0
PTES	326	0*	0*
Treasurers	3	0	0
Social Services	383	3	-
Total	1285	3	8

Fig. 7	Compliments			Comments		
	April – March 2003/04	April – March 2004/05	April - March 2005/06	April – March 2003/04	April – March 2004/05	April - March 2005/06
CAMS	400	487	695	75	102	339
Chief Execs	139	160	141	15	2	1
Education	0	-	0	7	-	0
Fire & Rescue	50	133	112	0	-	-
LHTS	1577	1903	1727	743	800	858
Property Services	54	37	45	-	-	-
PTES	195	185	315	0	-	-
Treasurers	6	27	30	0	80	49
Social Services	276	547	424	156	83	-
Total	2697	3394	3489	996	1026	1247

* Figures for first half year only currently available