



City of Westminster

Annual Complaints Review 2017/18

June 2018

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents complaints performance trends and for 2017/18, and a comparison of performance for 2016/17 and 2017/18 across stage 1 and stage 2 of the corporate complaints procedure. It also includes a performance review of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) first time enquiries, and a limited review of Leader and Cabinet Member correspondence.

2. Background

- 2.1. The council's two stage complaints procedure is as follows:
- **Stage 1** - Complaints are addressed by the local service delivery manager (10 working day turnaround).
 - **Stage 2** - A Chief Executive's review undertaken (10 working day turnaround)
 - **LGO** - If the complainant still remains dissatisfied he/she can take the concern to the LGO
- 2.2. The procedure covers most council services although Adults and Children's Social Care Services each have their own statutory complaints procedure. In view of this separate reports are produced for Member and Officer oversight, therefore information about these services has not been included in this report.
- 2.3. CityWest Homes (CWH) has been operating its own complaints procedure since 1 April 2012, and therefore their complaints data has not been assessed in this report.

3. The Management of Complaints

- 3.1. The following are being or have been developed to address and improve the management of complaints:
- The Council's Complaints Team continue to oversee, train and develop the use of the iCasework complaints management system. Generally, there is good use of the system although there continues to be some localised training issues in the way data is being entered on the system. The Corporate Complaints team is also still cleaning up data so to produce the quarterly reports to the Executive Leadership Team. As a consequence the Complaints Team is having to review data on a monthly basis until such time as the organisation has truly embedded this system into its operation.
 - In 2017/18, it was proposed that the Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea consider the case for a Bi Borough Complaints and Requests for Information solution. This project work was delayed although project scoping work commenced in June 2018.
 - The aim of the project was to deliver efficiencies and improved customer satisfaction through best practice, common processes and a single IT solution, while respecting the sovereignty of each Borough. In scope was the bringing together of Corporate Complaints procedures, ICT systems and central functions in RBKC and WCC, although it may exclude certain types of complaints in accordance with each council's corporate complaints policy. The project would also consider if the Statutory Complaints systems and functions from bi-borough Adult Social Care and Children's Services could also come into scope.

4. **Headline Findings**

Complaint Numbers

- 4.1. There has been a 34% increase in complaints across all stages of the procedure when compared with 2016/17. Generally, the increase in volume is attributed to the take up of the complaints iCasework system.
- 4.2. 1785 customers have used the complaints web form in 2017/18, and of these 1007 cases were answered by the various service areas as stage 1 complaints.

Stage 1

- 4.3. **Complaint volume** - There has been a 46% increase in the volume of stage 1 complaints – the increase is attributed to increased use of the iCasework system which provides more reliable reporting
- 4.4. Three Directorates deal with complaints in significant volume, and City Treasurers has seen a reduction of stage 1 complaints from 62% in 2016/17 to 42% in 2017/18.
- 4.5. **Response Times** – 82% of stage 1 complaints were responded to within target response time (10 working days) against 84% in 2016/17. An average response time of 80% or over is considered a good performance.
- 4.6. **Complaint Outcomes** – 27% of stage 1 complaints were Upheld against 24% for 2016/17
- 4.7. **Most common causes of complaints** – The most common causes are failures to do something and delays in doing something.

Stage 2

- 4.8. **Complaint Volume/Escalation** - 113 stage 2 complaints were received against 145 complaints for 2016/17
- 4.9. **Escalation from stage 1 to stage 2** – Although there has been a 46% increase in the volume of stage 1 complaints there has been no increase in the % of complaints escalating to stage 2. In 2016/17 the escalation rate from stage 1 to stage 2 was 21% and for 2017/18 it is 11% (down 10%). This percentage reduction is a more reliable indication that complaints are being resolved at stage 1 of the procedure.
- 4.10. **Response Times** – There has been a 9 % reduction in stage 2 response time with 56% of stage 2 complaints being completed in target response time for 2017/18 against 65% in 2016/17. The slowing down is attributed to one of the two complaint investigators commencing a secondment half way through the financial year.
- 4.11. **Complaint Outcomes** - 4% of all stage 2 complaints were Upheld against 4% in 2016/17
- 4.12. **Reasons to Escalate** - Of all stage 2 complaints 47% had no specific reason for the escalation.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

- 4.13. **Volume** - There was a decrease in LGO first time enquiries 34 received in 2016/17 against 22 in 2017/18.

- 4.14. **Response Times** - 73% of first time enquires were completed in target response time against 65% in 2016/17
- 4.15. **LGO Annual letter** - At the time of drafting this report the LGO Annual letter had not been issued/received (due on 18July 2018)
- 4.16. **Complaint Outcomes** – No formal published public reports finding maladministration with injustice have been issued

Leader and Cabinet Member Correspondence

- 4.17. The data provided indicates that there has been a slight decrease (down 29) in the volume of correspondence received

5. Complaint Volumes- Across all Stages and Directorates

Table 1: Comparison of total numbers of complaints for 2016/17 and 2017/18

	2016/17	2017/18	Variance	% change
Stage 1	691	1007	319	46%
Stage 2	146	115	-31	-21%
Total	837	1122	285	34%

- 5.1. As indicated in **Table 1** there has been a 34% overall increase across all stages of the procedure when compared with 2016/17. Generally, the increase in volume is attributed to the take up of the complaints iCasework system and the use complaints web form which is linked to the system. More customers are choosing to use the complaints web form and in 2017/18, the system received 1785 web forms and of these 1007 were passed over to answer as stage 1 complaints. The remainder of the cases were dealt with by the service areas as enquiries. As the cases are captured on the system at source they can be tracked and the data used for the monitoring of performance. The use of the new system means there is less chance of under reporting as previously service areas used a number of different systems and were required to be manually recorded.

Stage 1

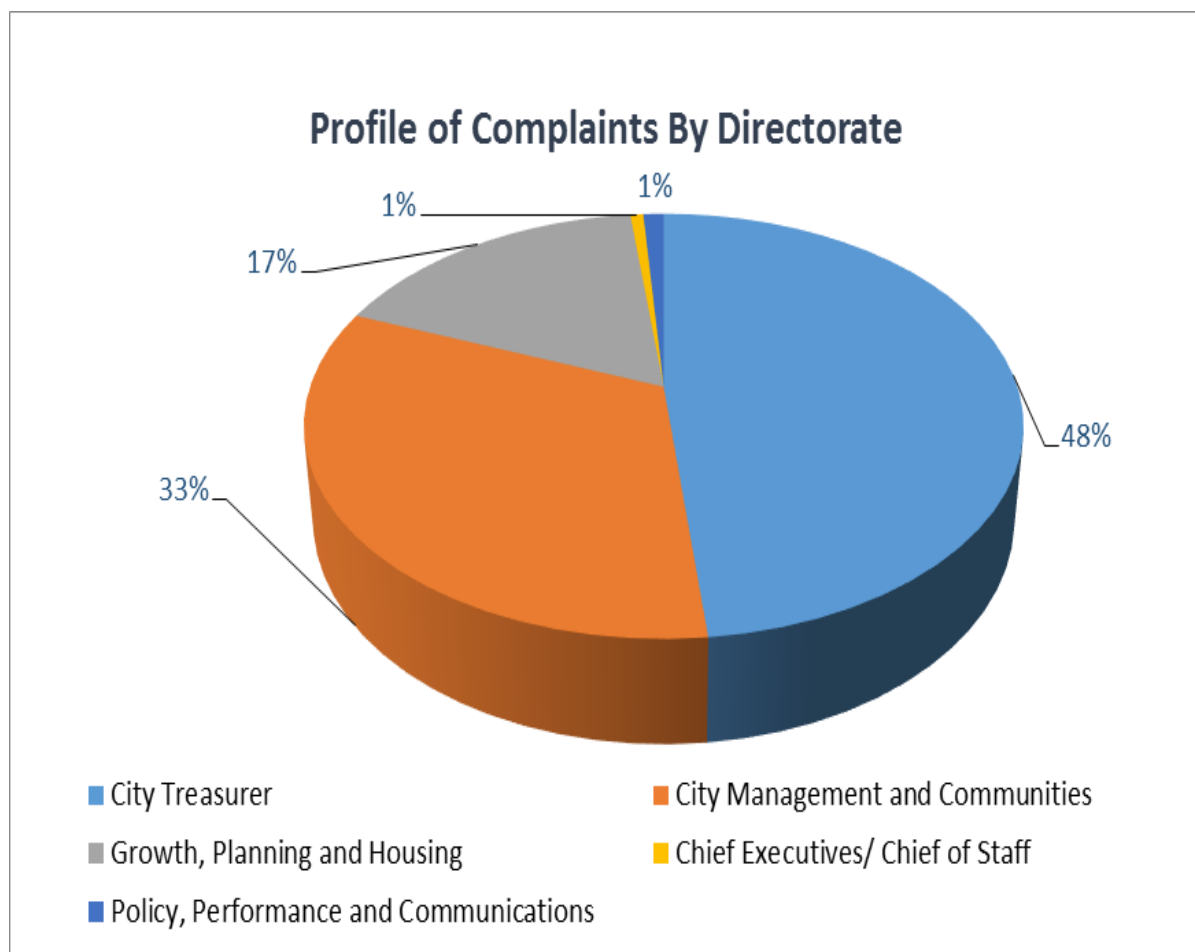
Number of stage 1 complaints received - 1007

- 5.2. **Stage 1 Date - Period Captured – complaints recorded between 1st April 2017 to March 31st 2018**
- 5.3. There has been a 46% increase in the volume of stage 1 complaints received when compared with the previous year. The increase is attributed to the take up of the iCasework system as explained in item 5.1.

Table 2 - All complaints made by Directorate 2017/18

Directorate	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
City Treasurer	91	103	118	175	487
City Management and Communities	57	80	108	84	329
Growth, Planning and Housing	50	49	30	44	173
Chief Executives/ Chief of Staff	6	0	1	0	7
Policy, Performance and Communications	1	3	3	4	11
Total	205	235	260	307	1007

Chart 1 - Profile of complaints made by Directorate in 2017/18



5.4. As seen in **Chart 1** three Directorates deal with complaints in significant volumes as recorded in iCasework. In 2016/17 the situation was similar. However, there has been a change in the percentage of complaints with a reduction from 62% in 2016/17 to 48% in 2017/18 for City Treasurers (Revs and Bens). There was also an increase for City Management & Communities (CMC) from 15% in 2016/17 to 33% in 2017/18.

5.5. In looking to determine why there has been an increase in % volume of CMC complaints it is worth noting that prior to the introduction of the iCasework system complaints were captured on various systems some complaints may not have been reported at a corporate level so some under reporting was expected. It is therefore difficult to draw any other firm conclusion especially since the use of the web form went live in September 2016/17 as this has improved the tracking and recording from complaints from this Directorate. In view of this complaint volumes will be closely monitored to see if the increase is a continuing trend.

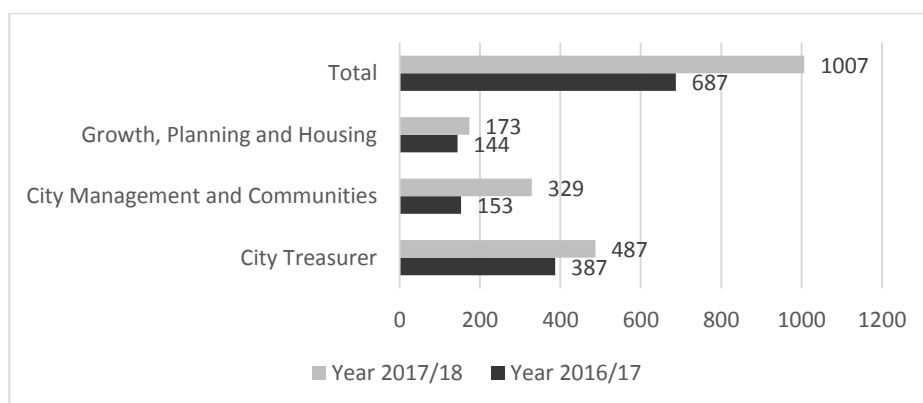
6. Number of Complaints by Divisions within each Directorate

6.1. **Table 3** below contains all complaints received in 2017/18 by the structural units within each Directorate recorded as "divisions in iCasework. The exception presented here, are teams within Shared services in City Treasurers, which are broken out, as they have high volumes

Table 3 - Complaints by Divisions within Directorates

Directorate/ Division	Qtr 1 Complaints	Qtr 2 Complaints	Qtr 3 Complaints	Qtr 4 Complaints	Total	% of all Complaints
City Treasurers	91	103	118	175	487	48%
<i>Housing Benefit</i>	56	63	62	95	276	27%
<i>Council Tax</i>	31	39	48	75	193	19%
<i>Business Rates</i>	4	1	8	5	18	2%
City Management and Communities	57	80	108	84	329	33%
<i>Waste and Parks</i>	6	19	33	17	75	7%
<i>Public Protection and Licensing</i>	14	18	21	13	66	7%
<i>Parking Services</i>	14	19	16	19	68	7%
<i>Highways and Public Realm</i>	11	11	21	17	60	6%
<i>Libraries and Archives</i>	8	2	9	3	22	2%
<i>Community Services (Sports)</i>	4	10	8	15	37	4%
<i>Residential Services</i>	0	1	0	0	1	0%
Growth, Planning and Housing	50	49	30	44	173	17%
<i>Development Planning</i>	20	22	10	20	72	7%
<i>Housing</i>	29	26	19	22	96	10%
<i>Corporate Property</i>	1	1	1	2	5	0%
Chief Executives	6	0	1	0	7	1%
<i>Electoral Services</i>	6	0	1	0	7	1%
Policy, Performance and Communications	1	3	3	4	11	1%
<i>Campaigns / Engagement</i>	1	0	2	2	5	0%
<i>City Promotions, Events and Filming</i>	0	3	1	2	6	1%
Total	205	235	260	307	1007	100%

Chart 2 - Comparison of stage 1 volumes across the three directorates who have the volume of complaints



7. Stage 1 Response times

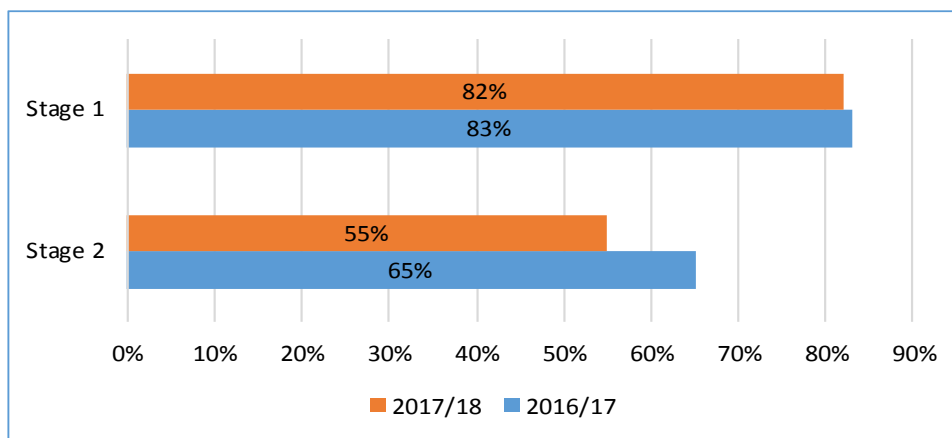
Speed of response for all Directorate across 2017/18

7.1. The target response time for replying to a stage 1 complaint is 10 working days. Performance is therefore measured by:

- Complaints completed in target response time (0 to 10 days)
- Those completed in 11 to 20 days
- Those complaints that took over 20 days.

An average response time of 80% or above for responded to stage 1 complaints is considered a good performance. As seen in in **Chart 3** below across all services the average response time was 82%. This is slightly down on 2016/17 when the average response time was 83%

Chart 3–Average Response Times across all Directorates for 2017/18



7.2. **Table 4** and **Chart 4** and **Chart 5** below show how departments and Divisions/service Areas have performed in more detail

Table 4 -Response Time Tables for 2017/18 (withdrawn cases omitted)

Stage 1	Totals within target response time	Total for 2017/18	% within target response
City Treasurers	450	476	95%
City Management and Communities	215	317	68%
Growth Planning and Housing	125	170	74%
Policy, Performance and Communications	6	11	55%
Chief Executives/Chief of Staff	7	7	100%
Total	803	981	82%

Chart 4 - Response Time by Directorates

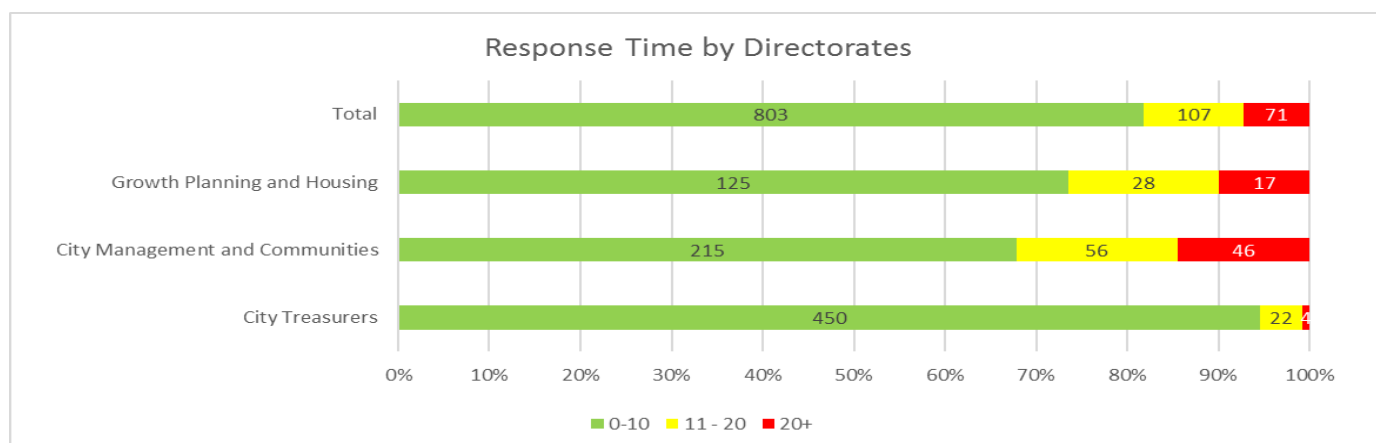
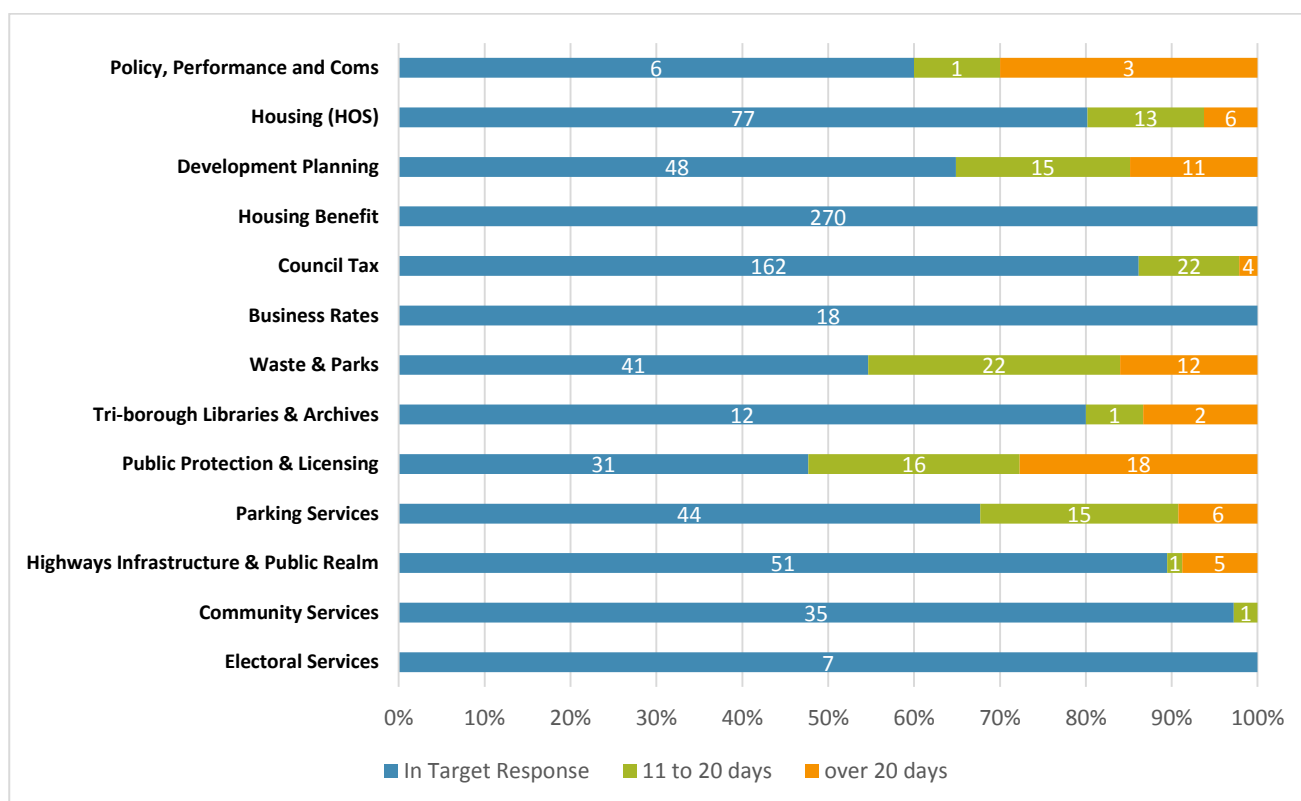


Chart 5 - Time Taken to Respond at a division level



7.3. Waste and Parks, met the target response time in 55% of all complaints and Public Protection and licensing met the response time in 48% of all stage 1 complaints. This has affected the average response time for the CMC directorate which is 68%.

7.4. Information in **Table 5** below and **Chart 5** above indicate the service areas where complaints are taking longer than 20 days. There will always be some complaints that take longer to resolve due to their complex nature, for instance complaints about planning matters. However, it is important that services do all they can to reply as quickly as possible and to make sure they keep the customer informed of any delays.

Table 5 - Complaints that took over 20 days Across all directorates

Directorate	Complaints (resolved complaints only)	Over 20 days	% of resolved complaints that took over 20 days
City Treasurer	475	2	0.4%
City Management and Communities	300	34	11.3%
Growth, Planning and Housing	152	14	9.2%
Others	18	2	11.1%
Overall	945	52	5.5%

8. Complaint Outcomes

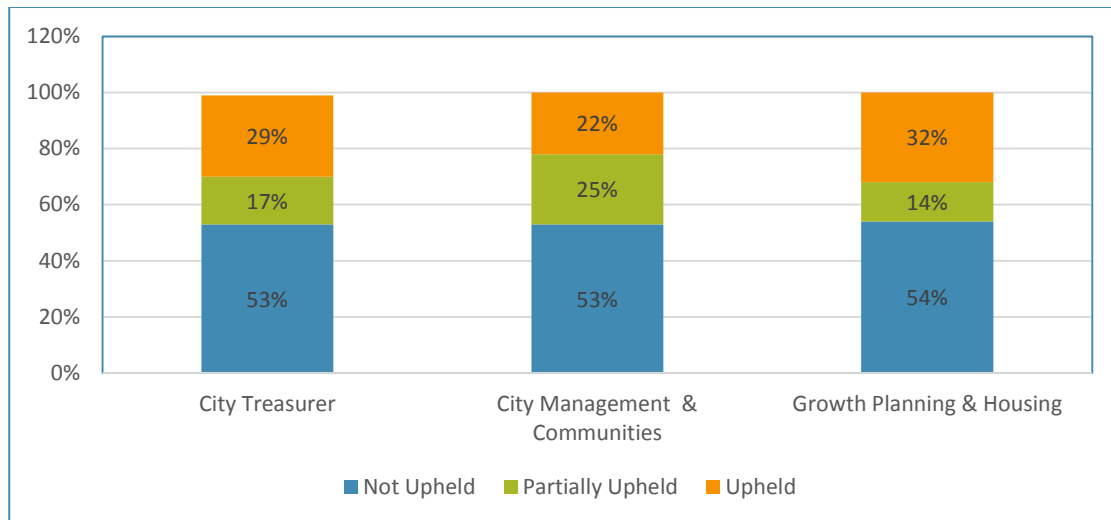
- 8.1. All outcomes should clearly explain if the Council considers whether anything went wrong and if it has was will be done to put it right. The complaint response should also clearly set out the complaint decision or outcome and complaint outcomes are recorded as Upheld, Not Upheld or Partially Upheld.
- 8.2. It is generally accepted that at stage 1 while there will be a higher percentage of complaints that are not upheld there will also be a number of complaints were some fault has been found and mistakes have been made. That said a high percentage of not upheld complaints at stage 1 can indicate that there is good service delivery although it is expected that fault will be found.
- 8.3. As seen in **Table 6** below In 2016/17 the 60% of stage 1 complaints were Not Upheld against 54% for 2017/18. Although the variance in percentage is small no firm conclusion can be drawn from this comparison. However, performance will be monitored over the next two years to see if it is a trend.
- 8.4. What is of real interest is this looking at the escalation rate from stage 1 to stage 2, those complaints that are upheld at stage 2 and the reasons for the complaints. These issues are address later in this report.

Table 6 - Comparison of complaint outcomes for 2016/17 & 2017/18

Stage 1				
	2016/17	as %	2017/18	as %
Not Upheld	371	60%	528	54%
Partially Upheld	101	16%	186	19%
Upheld	145	24%	267	27%

- 8.5. At a Directorate level the profile of complaint decisions as set out in **Chart 6** below. This report notes that there is a similar ratio of complaint decisions in each directorate. This decision pyramid is what we would expect to see at stage 1 of the complaint procedure.

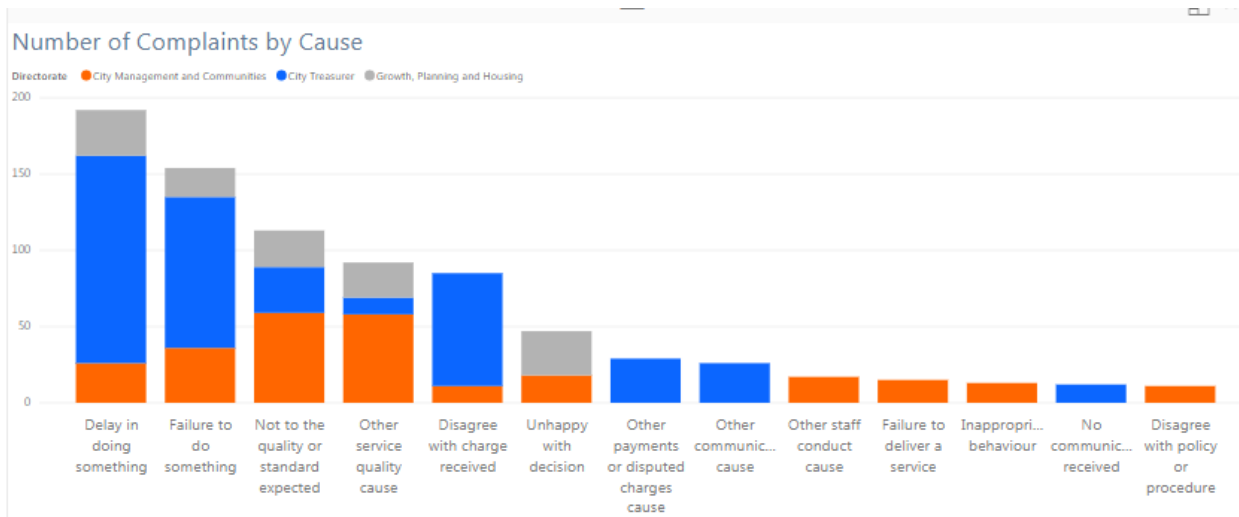
Chart 6 - Outcomes by Directorate



9. Reasons for Complaining

- 9.1. As seen in **Chart 7** indicates that delay/failure to do something is the main reason for complaining across all the services at stage 1 of the complaints procedure. City Treasurers will attract more complaints from people who disagree with charges as a more detailed look at data revealed that is reference to the amount of HB awarded or some are from Council Tax where there has been debt recovery action from enforcement agent and there are objections to the amount of bailiff fees.
- 9.2. **Chart 7** also indicates that services have similar sounding causes of complaint therefore the system would benefit from unifying some of the causes of complaints so it is clearer to understand.

Chart 7 - Cause of complaint by Directorate



Stage 2

10. Complaint Volumes at stage 2

10.1. Number of Stage 2 Complaints in the Year – 115

10.2. Number of stage 2 complaints in 2016/17 - 145

- 10.3. As seen in **Table 7** there has been a 22% reduction in the volume of stage 2 complaints when compared with the previous year. The reduction in complaints has come from City Treasurers (Housing Benefit and Council Tax). **Chart 8**, indicates the volume of cases for each four quarters and the number of complaints in Quarter 4, at 41 was double the previous quarter (21) and higher than both the first two quarters in 2017/18. This indicates the impact of the reduction complaints from City Treasurers escalating from stage 1 to stage 2.
- 10.4. The reduction 22% reduction is simply a comparison with volume from the previous year and on its own it is not a good indicator that complaints are being resolved when they enter the formal complaints procedure. However, this report has also indicated that there has been a 46% increase in the volume of stage 1 complaints and with such an increase you would also expect to see a corresponding increase in the volume of stage 1 complaints escalating to stage 2 of the procedure, and this has is not what happened. In 2016/17 the escalation rate from stage 1 to stage 2 was 21% and for 2017/18 it is 11%. This percentage reduction is a more reliable indication that complaints are being resolved at stage 1 of the procedure. **Table 8** provides a breakdown of the escalation rate across all directorates by division for 2017/18.

Table 7 - A comparison of stage 2 volumes by Divisions within each directorate for 2017/18 & 2016/17 (withdrawn cases removed)

Directorate and Division	2016/17 Directorate and Division	2017/18 Directorate and Division	Variance	Variance by %
City Treasurer	90	50	-40	-44%
Housing Benefit	49	33	-16	-33%
Council Tax	34	16	-18	-53%
Business Rate	4	1	-3	-75%
City Management and Communities	30	34	4	13%
Parking Services	12	13	1	8%
Public Protection and Licensing	10	9	-1	-10%
Waste and Parks	3	5	2	67%
Community Services	0	3	3	
Libraries and Archives	5	3	-2	-40%
Highways and Public Realm	0	1	1	
Growth, Planning and Housing	21	24	3	14%
Housing	14	16	2	14%
Development Planning	7	8	1	14%
Others	4	5	1	25%
Children's Services – SEN	3	3	0	0%
Chief Execs – Electoral Services	1	1	0	0%
Policy, Perf & Communications-Events	0	1	1	
Total	145	113	-32	-22%

Chart 8 - The Number of stage 2 complaints captured each quarter for 2017/18

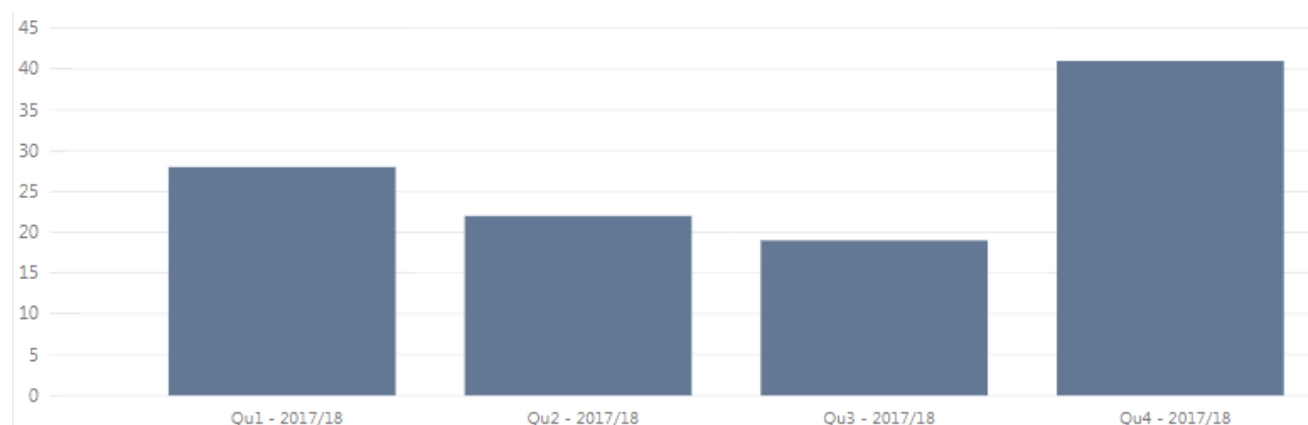


Table 8 – The Escalation rate from stage 1 to stage 2 across all directorates for 2017/18

Directorate	Division	Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalation Rate
Chief Executives/Chief of Staff	Electoral Services	7	1	14%
Total		7	1	14%
City Management & Communities	Waste and Parks	74	5	7%
	Parking Services	68	14	21%
	Public Protection and Licensing	67	9	13%
	Highways Infrastructure and Public Realm	60	1	2%
	Community Services	37	4	11%
	Libraries and Archives	22	3	14%
Totals		328	36	11%
City Treasurer	Housing Benefit	276	34	12%
	Council Tax	193	16	8%
	Business Rates	18	1	6%
Total		487	51	10%
Growth, Planning and Housing	Housing	96	16	17%
	Development Planning	72	9	13%
	Economy and Infrastructure	4	0	0%
	Property Investments and Estates	2	0	0%
Total		174	25	14%
Policy, Performance and Communications	City Promotion, Events and Filming	6	0	0%
	Campaigns and Customer Engagement	5	0	0%
Totals		11	0	0
	Westminster Totals	1007	113	11%

11. Response times to Complaints

- 11.1. As indicated in **Table 9** below response times have slowed when compared with 2016/17 and overall the target response was met in 56% of complaints for 2017/18 against 65% in 2016/17 (down 9%). The reduction in meeting the target response time was due in part to one of the complaint investigators commencing a secondment in August 2017, therefore the majority of complaints were investigated by the remaining complaints investigator, and also because there have been a number of complex investigations which have taken time to understand and resolve.
- 11.2. It is not clear why only 37% of City Management & Communities were responded to in target response time especially when in the preceding year the target response time was 48% for a similar number of complaints. A possible explanation was that a more detailed look at the data revealed that of the 34 stage 2 complaints 25 were received between August and March, and this was the period that the complaints team only had one main complaints investigator. It is also worth noting that only 4 CMC complaints took over 20 days to answer and the majority of CMC complaints were answered between 11 to 20 days.

Table 9 – A comparison of Response Time to Complaints by Directorate for 2016/17 & 2017/18

- Note 2 complaints have been withdrawn hence 113 not 115

Directorate	2017/18					2016/17				
	0-10 days	11-20 days	21+ days	Total	% in target response	0-10 days	11-20 days	21+ days	Total	% in target response
City Treasurer	30	15	5	50	60%	64	22	6	92	70%
City Management & Communities	13	18	4	35	37%	23	6	5	34	68%
Growth, Planning & Housing	17	4	2	23	74%	11	9	3	23	48%
Chief Exec's	1	0	0	1	100%	1	0	0	1	100%
Policy Performance & Comms	0	1	0	1	0%	0	0	0	0	no complaints
Children's	2	1	0	3	67%	0	0	2	2	0%
Total	63	39	11	113	56%	99	37	16	152	65%

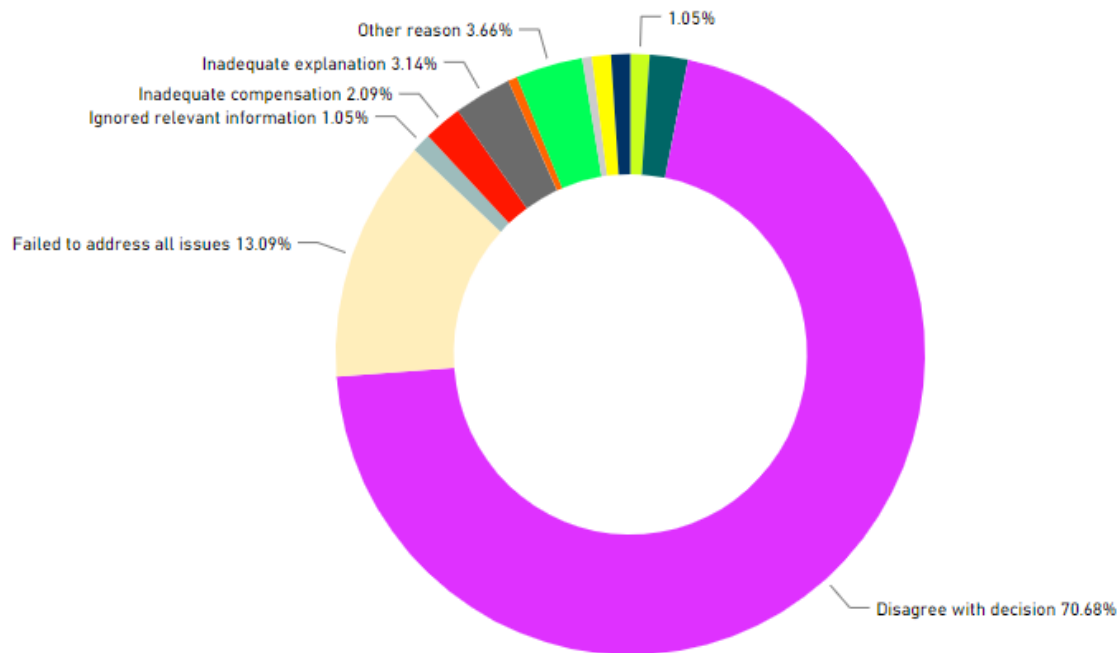
Table 10 - Number & Percentage number of complaints that took over 20 days to answer

Directorate	Complaints (resolved complaints only)	Over 20 days	% of complaints that took over 20 days
City Treasurer	50	4	8%
City Management & Communities	35	4	11%
Growth, Planning & Housing	23	1	4%
Policy, Performance & Communications	1	0	0%
Chief Executives/Chief of Staff	1	0	0%
Children's services	3	0	0%
Overall	113	9	8%

12. Reasons for complaints

- 12.1. The Figure 1 below indicates that 70% of stage 2 complaints gave no specific reason(s) for escalating their complaint to stage 2 other than to generally disagree with the stage 1 finding. Of those complainants who did cite per specific reasons for their dissatisfaction with the stage 1 decision 8.86% cited failing to address all the issues at stage 1 and 3.8% of complainants cited a delay in handling their stage 1 complaint as the main reason.

Figure 1 - Reasons for complaint



- 12.2. **Table 11** below shows stage 2 outcomes by initial cause of complaint. This is the cause of the complaint when it went to stage 1. Only 3 reasons had 5 or more cases and therefore the numbers are too small to draw a conclusion that a particular reason for complaint is likely to lead to a particular outcome. Currently data suggests that delays and failure (process) to do something are more likely to ultimately lead to a complainant having a successful outcome, than complaining about a decision (policy). We will continue to monitor over the next two years to see if a trend develops.

Table 11 – Initial Cause of Complaint

<i>Initial Cause</i>	<i>Total of Complaints</i>	<i>Number Upheld or Partially Upheld</i>	<i>As a % of all stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>% Upheld or partially upheld</i>
<i>Failure to do something</i>	32	8	28%	25%
<i>Delay in doing something</i>	16	3	14%	19%
<i>Unhappy with a Decision</i>	10	1	9%	10%
<i>Not to quality or standard expected</i>	6	3	5%	50%
<i>Disagree with charge received</i>	6	1	5%	17%
<i>Disagree with policy or procedure</i>	5	0	4%	0%
<i>All others</i>	38	10	34%	26%
All Stage 2 complaints	113	26	100%	24%

13. Outcome by Directorate

- 13.1. As indicated in table 12 only 4% of stage 2 complaints were upheld. The percentage figure is the same for 2016/17. This is a good indicator that stage 1 is finding and rectifying any fault as we would see more upheld complaints if this werenot the case. As seen in **Table 13** three of the 4 complaint that were upheld came from City Treasurers (Revs & Bens). This is to be expected considering that City Treasurers represents 44% of all stage 2 complaints therefore you would expect to find most of the upheld decisionin this directorate.

Table 12 – Comparison of stage 1 and 2 outcomes/decision for 2016/17 7 2017/18

	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	2016/17	2017/18		2016/17	2017/18	
Not Upheld	371 (60%)	529 (54%)	▼	120 (83%)	87 (77%)	▼
Partially Upheld	101 (16%)	187 (19%)	▲	21 (14%)	21 (19%)	▲
Upheld	145 (24%)	267 (27%)	▲	4 (3%)	4 (4%)	▲

Table 13 – Stage 2 outcome by Directorate for 2017/18

Directorate	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Total	% Upheld
City Treasurer	39	8	3	50	6%
City Management & Communities	27	8	0	35	0%
Growth, Planning & Housing	18	4	1	23	4%
Children's / Cex/ PPC	4	1	0	4	0%
Total	88	21	4	112	4%

14. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) – First time enquiries

- 14.1. The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) has not yet issued its Annual Letter to the City Council and this is due in July 2018. In view of this the LGO has not yet commented on the Council's performance for the whole year therefore this report will just focus on those LGO complaint investigations where First time enquiries have been made. Once the Annual Letter is issued a short report on the Council's performance for the whole year will be produced for ELT.
- 14.2. When the LGO decide that they wish to investigate a complaint about council services they can do so by simply reviewing the information the complainant has provided and/or use information from various web sites or set out in legislation. If they want to obtain specific information from a local authority, such as asking questions or requesting copies of correspondence to assist in an investigation they will write to the relevant council with their request. This is known as "first time enquiries". The LGO expect the local authority to reply to its concerns by the due date given in each letter therefore we measure performance on response times an average of cases meeting the due date.

Table 14 – A comparison of volume of First Time Enquiries for 2016/17 & 2017/18

	First Time enquiries Totals 2016/17	First Time enquiries Totals 2017/18	Variance
City Treasurer - HB	8	4	-4
City Treasurer- CT/NNDR	7	2	-5
GPH - HOS	8	4	-4
GPH - Planning	2	1	-1
CMC - Parking	0	0	0
CMC - Highways & Infrastructure	1	2	1
CMC- Public Protection & Licensing	1	2	1
CMC - Waste & Parks	0	1	1
Adult's	5	3	-2
Children's Services	2	3	1
Totals	34	22	-12

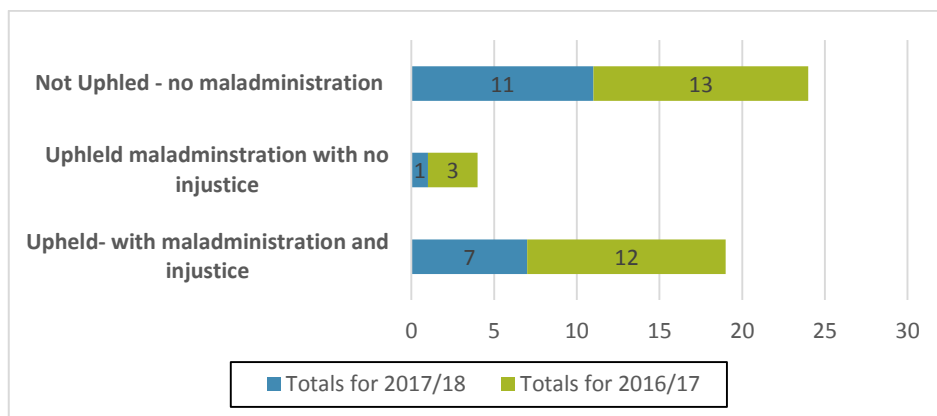
- 14.3. As shown in **Table 14** there was a decrease (down 12) in the number in the number of first time enquiries when compared with the preceding year. This report also notes that these first time enquiries include 3 cases from Adults Social Care which were not investigated under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure as they were dealt with under the statutory procedure

Table 15 – A comparison of first time enquiries completed in target response time

2017/18	Number of enquiries completed in target response time	Number of first time enquiries	% Completed in time
City Treasurer-CT/NNDR	1	2	50%
City Treasurer - HB	4	4	100%
CMC- Public Protection & Licensing	2	2	100%
CMC - Highways & Infrastructure	2	2	100%
CMC - Waste & Parks	1	1	100%
GPH - HOS	0	4	0%
GPH - Planning	1	1	100%
Children's	2	3	67%
Adults	3	3	100%
Totals	16	22	73%

- 14.4. Overall 73% of all first time enquiries were responded on time. This is an improvement on the previous year as 65% of first time enquiries were completed on time
- 14.5. Generally, all services try and respond to the questions asked as quickly as possible. Delays can occur when the information asked for is complex, or where the reply sent back to the Complaints Team was not adequate and resulted in a request that the service looks again at the questions asked and provides a fuller response. The complaints team does not have a particular concern regarding a directorate's performance.
- 14.6. While the Council has received 22 first time enquiries in 2017/18, to date 19 decisions have been issued. **Chart 9** below provides a comparison of decision issued by the LGO on first time enquiries. Please note that the decision finding of Upheld – maladministration with no injustice indicates that only minor fault was found and the fault did not require a remedy.

Chart 9 – A Comparison of LGO decision on first time enquiries for 2016/17 & 2017/18



- 14.7. There were no formal published reports issued against the Council finding maladministration with injustice for 2017/18. The last published public report issued against the Council was in 2013 and involved families who were staying in bed and breakfast accommodation beyond the statutory six week period allowed.
- 14.8. The reference to a formal published report should not be confused with the decisions finding of Upheld – Maladministration with Injustice as recorded in **Chart 9** above. These are cases where the LGO is satisfied with the Council's proposed action to remedy a complaint and therefore it is not appropriate to issue a report under S30(1B) of the Local Government Act. If a formal published report under S30(1B) of the Local Government Act is issued the decision finding would be recorded as **Report issued: Upheld; maladministration and injustice**.

Compensation

- 14.9. The LGO can award financial payments as part of a remedy for the complaint. **Table 16** below provides a comparison of financial compensation settlements for 2016/17 & 2017/18, and there has been a reduction in the number and total amounts of payments made when compared with the previous year.

Table 16 - A comparative breakdown of LGO financial remedies for the years 2017/18 and 2016/17

Financial Local settlements	2017/18	nos of cases		2016/17	nos of cases
GPH - HOS	£150	1		£4,700	2
City Treasurer- HB/CT	£550	3		£870	3
Adults	nil	0		£100	1
Children's	£400	1		£400	1
Totals	£1,100	5		£6,070	7

- 14.10. However, while there has been a significant decrease in compensation paid (down £4,970 when compared with the previous year). It is difficult to make performance comparisons between financial years as each complaint is dealt with on its own merits.

15. Leader and Cabinet Members Correspondence

- 15.1. Correspondence addressed to the Leader and Cabinet Members, specifically in their capacity as an Executive portfolio-holder rather than as a Ward Councillor, will often take the form of a complaint or issue with a service that is provided by the city council and that falls under their portfolio. It can also constitute wider correspondence received by the Cabinet Member in the course of their portfolio. For the purposes of this report all this correspondence is considered as part of the team and not as part of the complaints figures.
- 15.2. Over the past year the Cabinet Secretariat and Member Services team have found that the individual services have in general provide a prompt service and therefore the team are meeting the ten working day turnaround target for correspondence.
- 15.3. The quality of the responses is quite high overall and provides enough information to compile a full response to the correspondence. There are times however when some of the information is very technical and it needs to be put into more layman's terms for the resident.

- 15.4. From the backbench members, as in previous years, the main theme of correspondence/enquiries over the last year has been on housing (including high numbers on temporary accommodation and waiting/transfer lists).
- 15.5. The iCasework case management system has been in full use by the Cabinet Secretariat and Member Services team since 1 September 2016. This ensures that we keep an accurate record of correspondence received and answered. It also means that we can continue to monitor and meet our targets of acknowledging requests within in 24 hours and providing a response in ten working days.
- 15.6. The data provided in Table 9 indicates that there has been an increase in the volume of correspondence received over the year. However, it should be noted that this does not reflect the amount of enquiries the team deal with just the level of correspondence which is responded to and received on a formal basis.
- 15.7. **Table 9: A breakdown of correspondence totals received by Cabinet Portfolio**
Please note that correspondence received by the Leader has been distributed to the portfolios it relates to and not attributed to the Leader as a separate portfolio. Correspondence in relation to CityWest Homes is included under the Housing portfolio.

Portfolio	2017/18	2016/17
Adult Social Services and Public Health	20	15
Planning and Public Realm	32	55
Housing	138	167
City Highways	82	60
Business, Culture and Heritage	5	1
Children, Families and Young People	12	30
Finance, Property and Corporate Services	73	52
Public Protection and Licensing	65	18
Environment, Sports and Community	53	27
Totals	480	425