



## **Customer Feedback and Complaints**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on current work taking place to improve the Council's approach to managing and learning from customer feedback and complaints.
- 1.2 A more detailed report, including a new Customer Feedback Policy, will be brought to the next meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny and Climate Change Board on 21 November 2013.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note current work being undertaken to improve the Council's management of and learning from customer feedback and complaints.
- 2.2 To receive a further report at the Board's next meeting on 21 November 2013.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Performance levels for responding to and learning from customer feedback are falling below the Council's targets and require prompt action to improve.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to respond to complaints from service users and there are statutory procedures in place to formally address complaints relating to children's and adults social care. The corporate complaints policy approved in 2006 provides a definition of complaints and sets out a three stage process for investigating complaints within the Council. There is also an agreed service standard that the Council will respond to corporate complaints within 10 working days. Performance against this standard is monitored monthly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

- 4.2 A Performance Surgery was held in January 2011 to review response rates to complaints and an improvement plan was agreed. Since then, customer contacts have been centralised and the complaints process has been standardised and automated through the Lagan CRM system. Response rates have seen some improvement since the Performance Surgery held in 2011.
- 4.3 Following review of complaints performance at the end of 2012/13, the Leader of the Council asked for a report to be prepared for Council Cabinet in October 2013 and Corporate Scrutiny and Climate Change Board in November 2013 containing actions for improvement.
- 4.4 The updated improvement plan is likely to include the development of a customer feedback policy and clearer complaints procedure, with more training for investigating officers and better monitoring / tracking of cases. Ultimately there is a need for greater focus on learning outcomes derived from the investigation of complaints to inform better quality of practice and service delivery. Part of the challenge in tackling complaints is cultural and creating positive attitudes towards customer feedback will require considerable change across the organisation. Members have an important role to play in developing this approach.

<b>OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>
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- 5.1 None.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Director of Transformation and Strategic Services Head of Customer Management
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<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Heather Greenan 01332 643462 e-mail <a href="mailto:heather.greenan@derby.gov.uk">heather.greenan@derby.gov.uk</a> None Appendix 1 – Implications
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 Failure to address complaints can lead to financial penalties and poor perceptions of value for money by service users.

**Legal**

- 2.1 The Local Government Ombudsman provides an appeal mechanism for service users who are not satisfied with responses from councils.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 None directly arising.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 The Council's Equalities officer is notified of complaints with equality implications.

**Health and Safety**

- 5.1 None directly arising.

**Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.1 None directly arising.

**Asset Management**

- 7.1 None directly arising.

**Risk Management**

- 8.1 Failure to address customer feedback and complaints can cause reputational damage if not managed effectively.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 9.1 Improving the Council's management of complaints is an objective included in the Council Plan to achieve 'good quality services that meet local needs'.