

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 10th September, 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

This meeting will be held remotely. Joining details will be emailed to all participants.

The meeting will be livestreamed for the public to view on the Council's YouTube channel, 'sunderlandgov' at :-

<https://youtu.be/njUrBjdaJFw>

Membership

Cllrs D. Dixon, Heron, Hunt (Vice Chairman), Jenkins, D. MacKnight (Chairman), McDonough, F. Miller, Mullen, O'Brien, P. Smith, Speding, D. Trueman, Turner and Watson.

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Part C – Health Substantial Variations to Service

No items.

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No items.

E. WAUGH,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance,
Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

2nd September, 2020.

At a meeting of the SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE held REMOTELY on THURSDAY 25th JUNE, 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. MacKnight in the Chair

Councillors D. Dixon, Heron, Hunt, Jenkins, McDonough, F. Miller, Mullen, O'Brien, P. Smith, D. Trueman and Turner.

Also in attendance:-

Councillor Paul Stewart, Cabinet Secretary

Mr Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Ms Sarah Reed, Strategic Director of People, Communications and Partnerships

Mr Jon Ritchie, Executive Director of Corporate Services

Mrs Christine Tilley, Community Governance Services Team Leader, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Speding and Watson.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12th March, 2020

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12th March, 2020 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest made.

Reference from Cabinet – 16 June 2020 – Revenue Budget Outturn 2019/2020

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) setting out for advice and consideration of the Committee the report on the Revenue Budget Outturn 2019/2020 to 31st March 2020 considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 16 June 2020.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Mr Jon Ritchie, Executive Director of Corporate Services advised that the report set out the final part of the budget monitoring that was in place during the year.

Mr Ritchie reported that the outturn would feed into the statutory accounts that would be going in draft form onto the website the following week, would be subject to external audit and then would go through to the Audit and Governance Committee for approval on 25th September. He advised that the deadlines for the statutory accounts had been pushed back because of the COVID – 19 pandemic but the Council was well ahead of the deadlines that had been put in place.

Mr Ritchie referred Members to the table set out at paragraph 3.2.2 of the report setting out the final outturn position for the year pointing out that there was an underspend of £496,000 against the budget. Mr Ritchie advised that the table did not include the first of the COVID – 19 grants, almost £10.6m that was received on 27th March because the vast majority of those costs would come through in the current financial year. The whole grant had been rolled forward and therefore the summary position of almost £0.5m was not after that grant had been received.

Mr Ritchie referred to the significant overspend pressures of approximately £9.5m, the majority of which was due to the demand and complexity for both adult and children's social care, advising that Appendix A set out the major variations by Portfolio.

Mr Ritchie advised that over 60% of the target savings were achieved over the year, a target of £17m was set and where savings hadn't been achieved, they had either been mitigated or addressed through the budget that Council set at the beginning of March.

With regards to contingencies, there was an underspend of £11m and paragraph 3.5 set out the factors for this. The main one was the release of historic equal pay provision that was put in place to deal with equal pay, however this was addressed through the Pension Actuarial Valuation that was carried out for the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund and therefore that provision was no longer needed and released back. This equated to £6.4m. Another notable one was a saving on the utilities and a dividend in respect of Newcastle Airport.

In terms of debt charges, due to the timing of the Capital Programme and also to the good treasury management activity, there was an underspend of a little over £4m.

In terms of reserves, a number of earmarked reserves had been set up. There was a carry forward of a grant that Together for Children had received and also some money in relation to some historic TfC payments where money had been set aside, the airport because of the difficult trading position due to the COVID pandemic and £500,000 had been set up for social recovery to help some of the community organisations.

Mr Ritchie advised that the general fund balance remained unchanged at £12m which could be very important as the Council moved into an increasingly difficult position with COVID.

Mr Ritchie confirmed an overall review of reserves had been carried out as set out in section 5 of the report and that overall the Council's reserves had increased by

£14.6m. This reflected the first tranche of COVID - 19 grant received of £10.6m that had been carried forward.

Mr Ritchie also highlighted that there was quite a few ambitious commercial investments in the city planned as part of the regeneration agenda and that there was sometimes a timing issue between when the Council needed to start paying for them and when the income would flow from them and so a Regeneration Reserve of £10m has been earmarked to help smooth some of those financial timing cashflow differences.

Councillor McDonough enquired whether the Council might have to pump some money into the airport into the short to medium term to keep it going due to the problems caused by the COVID – 19 pandemic.

Mr Ritchie commented that he was not aware of any press releases that day in these terms if that was the case, however he advised that they had been doing a lot of work on the airport valuation for several reasons. He advised that the 7 Local Authorities owned a 71% stake in the airport, so it needed to be valued for the accounts purposes and also looking at the income associated with it. He referred to the vast drop in terms of passenger numbers that would have a financial impact. The Council had looked at the valuation based on the long-term position. It had been accepted that the Council would not get the next two interest payments that were due hence the reserve had been set aside so there was not a cash issue in the short term and in the long term the implication was that the business plan still stacked up and it would be that those interest payments were pushed back in time. The valuation reflected that and the draft accounts which were subject to audit did see a reduction in the value of the investment but the long-term going concern of the airport wasn't in question. The 7 Local Authorities were all treating the airport valuation on the same basis, although they all had different shareholdings and subject to audit and anything else changing before the accounts are signed off, the long term sustainability and importance of the airport for trade, for tourism for the North East wasn't in question, although it wasn't a surprise to anyone that there was an impact on their financial forecasts in the short term. At the minute there was no request from the airport to put money into it. If there was a request the usual business case would be carried out as to whether the Council wanted to invest depending on what the ask was if a request came forward.

Councillor D. Dixon referred to the two payments received from Government to address COVID - 19 pressures and its promise to compensate Councils in full for the money spent and he enquired what the position was in respect of the balance which remained.

Mr Ritchie advised that for the last three months the Council had been submitting detailed forecasts of to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), setting out what they thought the financial impact would be. There had been some specific grants come through for instance in relation to the Hardship Fund and Infection Control in Care Homes, however in terms of the day to day loss of income and additional costs, they were forecasting £40/41m of financial impact so with £18m of grant there was a shortfall of a little over £22m. There was no indication of what any third tranche of funding would be. Mr Ritchie advised that about £10.7m of the current financial forecast was the impact of lost Council Tax and business rates after the specific grant support that the Government had put in place

for certain Council tax payers and businesses. Some of that cost would manifest itself the following financial year, that is in 2021/22 because of the way the Collection Fund worked but the Government had asked the Council to capture the immediacy of that. He advised that the Cabinet would next month get the first Budget Monitoring Review which was largely following the MHCLG return. There were no issues about paying the bills in the next few months but they were looking very closely at what this meant for this financial year and it was becoming increasingly important for the Medium Term Financial Plan. There was a lot of uncertainty moving forward. It was still not known what was happening with the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review and it was difficult to forecast accurately when there was information missing. The £22m shortfall was the best estimate and there was a best case scenario and worst case scenario depending on if things went in the Council's favour or against it. The figure would therefore, change and it would also be impacted by how businesses recovered after the lockdown, whether people got back to work soon after being furloughed. It was an area of concern, however the Council was not in the position of some Local Authorities who were talking about a Section 144 Notice, but that was something that the Council was monitoring on a daily basis as statutorily the Council had to set a balanced budget. Whilst the Council had reserves of £150m, they were predominantly earmarked for specific purposes. The General Fund Balance of £12m was important and was the Council's ultimate safety net. The pressures were significant.

The Cabinet Secretary, Councillor Paul Stewart reminded the Committee of the commitment the Local Government Minister had made in March to Council Leaders to support Councils in whatever they needed in their response to Coronavirus.

Councillor Stewart commented that Sunderland City Council had responded very well in relation to the support it had been providing to residents in the City and that the Council expected the Government to honour what it had said on 16th March. He commented that he believed the Local Government Minister and the Prime Minister were honourable individuals and that they would honour the commitment they had given. The Council had recently submitted its monthly return so the Government would know the pressures placed on the Council due to increased expenditure and also the significantly reduced income due to the lockdown, which the Government quite rightly put in place and therefore the Council expected the Government to provide additional funding before the end of the current financial year to ensure it was able to balance the books.

In response to Councillor Hunt, who enquired about the financial resilience of the Council due to the impact of coronavirus, Mr Ritchie advised that the Government did come to ask the Council how it had reached the £40m figure and that whilst it was built up on estimates, it was built up on a very granular basis. He advised that the figure was built up by additional amounts on PPE, the additional costs associated with the Joint Venture that the Council had for the leisure centres, the additional impact of fees going up and more people coming through Adult Social Care, estimates from lost income from car parks, the rents from both the premises that the Council had and Siglion, which could affect the dividends that they paid back to the Council. They were inherently uncertain based on estimates and whilst, for example, the car park charges had kicked back in, they didn't know how quickly they would fill up back to normal levels of activity. The estimates were built up using the best

information available however it was a undoubtedly a concern for councils across the country.

Councillor O'Brien enquired what the worst case scenario looked like for the Council and asked if the Council was preparing for it and to provide some insight for the Members of the Committee.

Mr Ritchie confirmed that the Council was planning for a worst case scenario and this assumed everything working against it. Mr Ritchie stated that they were working through the potential figures which would go to Cabinet and then through Scrutiny in the coming months. He advised that he was more concerned about the Medium Term Financial Plan and the impact on the 2021 scenario was most concerning. The Finance Directors across the 12 Northeast authorities were all comparing notes and had the same concerns as to how this would be addressed. It would be very much dependent on the government response as to whether the shortfall would be bridged as expected at the outset, but also how any residual amount would be picked up especially from Council Tax and business rates, as that went through the collection fund and the Council currently sent half to of the business rates the Council collects to Whitehall and they allocated it back through grant funding. In addition to this about 12-13% of the amount the Council collected went to the Police and Fire so they needed to see how that impacted on them. At the moment the Council was not allowed to run the collection fund at a deficit, however one scenario the MHCLG was considering was a five-year longer term plan which could be run at a deficit. The Council was preparing for lots of different scenarios. At the moment, the Council was saying that it needed another 1.3 times the grant it had had, whereas some authorities in the North were saying they needed another three to four times the grant. Mr Ritchie said that he was confident that the Council could address the in-year position, however if it got worse, they would need to look at stopping firstly non-essential services and then looking at how they delivered essential services as statutorily they needed to balance the books. A Section 144 Notice would be the ultimate sanction but the Council was not in that territory at the moment and was waiting to see if further funding from Government was made available.

In response to a further enquiry from Councillor O'Brien, Mr Ritchie advised that Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children would always be primary services which the Council would need to deliver and that there were other services which were more discretionary and not as catastrophic as stopping the above. The Council would look at this in a measured way and continue with some of the principles that were put into the current budget such as invest to save, but ultimately if there wasn't enough money the Council would need to cut its cloth accordingly.

Councillor McDonough enquired what possibility there was of transferring some of the reserves for capital funding into general funding on a short-term basis and pushing some of the capital projects back to try and plug some gaps caused by the world wide crisis.

Mr Ritchie replied to say that technically yes that this was possible and things like the PFI reserve could be used but he did not consider this to be financially prudent to do so unless there was a plan to replenish it. It was pointed out to Government in the May and June return that this could be used. The General Fund wasn't earmarked for anything and was about 5.5% of the Council's net expenditure. If the Council was not to do the Capital Programme that the reserves were set aside for, there would be

an implication in that it would not drive the regeneration, which wouldn't give the Council the income from either Council Tax from new houses or business rates from the new businesses that it supported, but yes, theoretically the Council could do this. Mr Ritchie added that depending on what the longer term outcome was going to be in terms of government funding, the Council might need to revisit some of its plans but if the Council didn't invest in the city, invest in the computer systems for its staff they would not be able to work in an agile way. There were certain reserves which were payments that the Council would need to pay, PFI was one and there were some around the land the Council had acquired from the Homes and Community Agency. If the Council did not keep the reserves for this then they would have to be replenished at a time when budgets would be tight.

The Chairman, Councillor MacKnight enquired about Children's Services commenting that the service had been going through a difficult time due to the pandemic.

Mr Ritchie advised that some of the pressures on Children's Services as a result of COVID had not been as immediate as it had been in Adult Services. However, there were some concerns because of the pressure that lockdown had put on some families that the costs could come in future months. Mr Ritchie added that as schools went back in the new academic year in September, depending on what the social distancing rules were, the Council might need more mini buses and buses than it currently had to enable people to spread out more and the costs associated with home to school transport, both for mainstream and the Special Educational Needs sector, might fall to the Council. Schools had their own financial challenges through the Dedicated Schools Grant and some of those costs could fall on the Local Authority and so Officers were monitoring those very closely.

Full consideration having been given to the report and there being no further questions for Mr Ritchie, the Chairman thanked him for his report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Scrutiny Committee accepted the report and noted the overall outturn position for 2019/2020 of the Council.

Complaints and Feedback Annual Report

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) hoping to provide the Committee with information regarding compliments, complaints and feedback received by the council.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Mr Jon Ritchie, Executive Director of Corporate Services advised that they had hoped to provide the above information however information to complete the report had not been received from the Local Government Ombudsman and the report had therefore been withdrawn from consideration and would be submitted to the Committee's September meeting.

3. RESOLVED that the Complaints and Feedback Annual Report be submitted to the Committee's September meeting.

COVID – 19 Verbal Update

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) advising that a general overview of the COVID – 19 situation in Sunderland would be provided at the meeting through a verbal update.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Ms Sarah Reed, Strategic Director of People, Communications and Partnerships provided the Committee with a presentation detailing what the Committee had done in response to the COVID – 19 pandemic which had been three months of work, how the Council was moving now into recovery and also into reform and what the long term impacts had been.

Ms Reed advised that from the outset the Council had tried to keep business as usual and that had meant within the crisis, working seven days a week in many services and in Adults and Children's Services in particular. In terms of the Council's emergency approach, they had had to have daily calls and deal with daily issues as Members had done in their own communities. Work around response still continued with the foodbanks providing support to people and helping people who were shielding.

Ms Reed reported that between April and June, one of the Council's first priorities was to make sure its staff were safe as well as elected Members, which meant that they had to work a lot from home and also think about how to protect frontline staff which meant a lot had to change in terms of how the Council worked.

Ms Reed advised that emergency structures were brought in and they established what they would normally do in a crisis – a gold, silver and bronze command structure which was tied into regional work with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and that there were key links to Elected Members on a daily basis updating them on the situation. Ms Reed stated that a lot of this was done digitally which was a big challenge for everyone, however this had allowed a lot of the Council's staff to work from home and support those who had to go out and work in a more agile manner as well. A huge amount of work had been carried out around communications to Elected Members, staff and to partners with whom there had been reciprocal arrangements and a massive amount of collaboration had been going on as well with the Voluntary and Community sector.

Ms Reed pointed out that every service had had to adapt as part of the response. The Council had tried to maintain frontline services as best as it could and in terms of Children's and Adults Social work, the services had tried to do home visits where they were needed bearing in mind some of the COVID restrictions on how to work. Safeguarding had been the Council's absolute priority. There had been unprecedented demand on some services such as the crematorium service working seven days a week and much longer hours, having to bring in digital support so people could attend funerals. The Council had also had to develop the community hubs working within the Council's area arrangements. Sunderland had been working better than a lot of other areas because of the area arrangements which had been in place for the last 15-20 years.

Ms Reed referred to the call for volunteers and that over 1000 people had come forward in Sunderland. The Council then had to deal with things like Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which had been a massive budget pressure. The Council had provided support with the Nightingale Hospital and all the negotiations around regeneration associated with that and the work around the 0800 numbers to support vulnerable people and helping to distribute food and medicine supplies. The Council had looked at its staffing numbers on a day to day basis using different reporting, as it had had to reallocate staff to new areas of business and to make sure staff were safe had been doing all the things around testing.

Ms Reed stated that as a city, Sunderland had remained open for business. In terms of regeneration, trade and the allocation of grants to businesses, the Council had tried to make sure economic recovery had also been continuing with City Hall, the work being done in the city centre and supporting traders as well.

Ms Reed reported that as some of the restrictions were starting to ease, the Council was now moving into the recovery phase and things were starting to look like business as usual. Therefore, the Council was looking at how to bring in a new business as usual, whilst making sure that if there was another surge in COVID that it was able to provide the response side also.

Ms Reed referred the Committee to a diagram which had been circulated earlier on Test, Track and Trace explaining the arrangements and responsibilities moving into recovery and the new business as usual.

Ms Reed pointed out the positive feedback from the Council's new way of working and the desire to capture this moving forward, such as the use of technology, building on the community hubs as part of the community approach and the collaboration of partners and with regional colleagues across all disciplines.

The Cabinet Secretary, Councillor Paul Stewart commended the community spirit which had been shown in the last few months and how people had taken on board the challenges and difficulties caused by the virus outbreak and supported themselves and each other.

Councillor Stewart commented on the commitment shown by the Council's workforce to ensuring essential services continued and how it had supported the local communities and he mentioned that he had received a number of positive comments about Council staff. He paid tribute to every single member of staff of the Council for the work they had undertaken over the last few months.

Councillor Stewart referred to the fact that the Government had issued a number of grants to local businesses and he advised that the impact on Sunderland was that around about £43m had been passported by the Council to approximately 3,800 local businesses who had received grants of either £10,000 as an initial basic grant, or in some cases, companies in the retail and leisure sectors had been able to access grants up to £25,000, which had clearly benefitted the SME sector within Sunderland. There had been an additional discretionary grant issued by the Government to try and encompass those organisations which did not fit into the initial criteria. The Council had received approximately 200 applications from SMEs and charities to access this discretionary grant and also there was the local support scheme which the Council had initiated to support local community organisations

and the Voluntary and Community sector. Councillor Stewart advised that the deadline for applications for this grant had been closed during the course of the last few days and that information could be provided on this for Members. In relation to business rates, there had been support from the Government but also the Council, who had initiated free periods for tenants where it was the landlord. Those organisations and companies were beginning to come back on stream and back into being an ongoing business again so that temporary measure that was rightly put in place, was no longer required.

In relation to Council Tax bills, there were around about 16,000 households in the city which benefitted to the point that they would not be paying Council tax this year and a further 4,000 households would be receiving a reduction of up to £150 towards their council tax bill. There had been an increase of 15% since 1st April in the number of households which qualified for council tax relief and with the number of applications that was understood to be going through with regards to Universal Credit, there was concern that this would continue to rise and would impact this financial year and moving forward.

In relation to the grants from the Government, the Council had received just over £80m of support and it was hoped that future instalments would be coming to the city soon.

Councillor Stewart commented that the Council continued to work in collaboration with other stakeholders in the city to make sure local businesses and people in the city were supported through maximising community wealth across the city to deal with the impact on both the Council and the city. The Council was facing significant financial funding challenges both in the medium and long-term and as Jon Ritchie had stated, the main concerns were not necessarily this financial year but the following financial year. As the Council moved into medium term financial planning, a number of incomes streams were going to be significantly hit such as council tax, particularly if there was a downturn in the economy.

Turning to education, Councillor Stewart stated that there was an issue with face to face teaching and a lot of learning had been missed by children and students. It was becoming a real concern and part of the recovery planning was that the Council worked with schools and colleges to do whatever it could to support children to catch up on their education.

Councillor Stewart stated that the Council would need the resources from the Government. The Council did have reserves but the reserves were there for a purpose and the vast majority of the reserves were committed. There was a small general reserve of £12m but that would not make a significant difference in the underlying position of the Council in this financial year and the next financial year. The Council would continue to work with partners in the city in resetting the city plan which would need to be reviewed to see what was relevant, what needed to be amended and whether there was anything which needed to be added post COVID – 19. This work was continuing and underway.

Councillor Stewart referred to the need to reform the Council going forward and to the fact that it had adopted a Community Wealth Building Strategy which the COVID – 19 virus had shown just how crucial that strategy was on two fronts. Firstly, in relation to empowering the Council's local communities and ensuring that they were

resilient and had the ability moving forward and, secondly, having a robust SME and co-operative sector in the city. Councillor Stewart advised that there were over 4,000 SMEs and this had shown how important they were to the city and how the Council needed to continue to develop, encourage and grow them further moving forward.

Councillor O'Brien enquired whether the Council was going to use its reserves at all or was it intending to keep them.

Councillor Stewart provided an analogy as to when the reserves might have to be used should further funding from Government not be forthcoming.

Councillor Turner reiterated that especially in her own area of the city that the volunteers had really worked hard and that customer services staff had been replying to enquiries pretty quickly, especially with regards to fly tipping etc. and that she wanted to thank the staff for this and also the volunteers as they had been absolutely marvellous.

The Chairman concurred with the comments Councillor Turner made and thanked Councillor Stewart and Ms Reed for the report.

4. RESOLVED that the information provided on the situation and key issues facing the city in relation to the COVID - 19 pandemic be received and noted.

Annual Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing options, support and advice to Members on the development of the scrutiny work programmes for 2020/21.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Mr Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, briefed the Committee on the report highlighting the principles to be taken into account when determining the work programme as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report. He referred to the delay in starting this work due to the COVID – 19 virus.

Mr Cummings referred Members to the arrangements to hold individual workshops for each of the scrutiny committees via Teams to develop the work programmes during July and August, looking at key priorities for services and advising that they would look to invite key stakeholders and officers also. He advised that a draft work programme would be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for approval at the September meeting. The Committee would also receive the draft work programmes of the Thematic Scrutiny Committees and he asked Members to endorse the proposed approach.

Full consideration having been given to the report it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the scrutiny work programmes be developed through individual workshops organised and developed through the scrutiny function; the workshops to take place during July/August with the aim of providing a number of

relevant issues and topics for consideration and approval by the respective scrutiny committees.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated), providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28-day period from 15th June, 2020.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Mr Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, advised that if there was anything on which any Member wanted further information to let him know and he would get that for them and circulate it.

6. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

The Chairman closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) D. MACKNIGHT,
Chairman.

REFERENCE FROM CABINET – 14 JULY 2020

FIRST REVENUE BUDGET REVIEW 2020/2021

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To set out for advice and consideration of the Committee the report on the First Revenue Budget Review 2020/2021

2. Background and Current Position

- 2.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting on 14 July 2020, gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services. The report gave details of the overall Revenue Budget position following the first review for 2020/2021 including proposed contingency transfers.
- 2.2 Copies of the 14 July 2020 Cabinet agenda were circulated to all Members of the Council.
- 2.3 The Cabinet:-
- Noted the contents of the report; and
 - Approved the contingency transfers proposed at Section 3.4.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The report is referred to this Committee for advice and consideration. The comments from the Committee will be reported to Cabinet on 15 September 2020.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is invited to give advice and consideration on the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Cabinet Agenda, 14 July 2020.
- 5.2 A copy of the Agenda is available for inspection from the Assistant Director of Law and Governance or can be viewed on-line at:-

[Cabinet, 14 July 2020](#)

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CABINET MEETING – 14 JULY 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

First Revenue Budget Review 2020/2021

Author(s):

Executive Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report:

To report details of the outcome of the Revenue Budget First Review for 2020/2021

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note the contents of the report; and
- Approve the contingency transfers proposed at Section 3.4.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

To respond to variations in expenditure and income which have arisen in 2020/2021 and enable effective budgetary control to be exercised.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

No alternative options are proposed

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

FIRST REVENUE BUDGET REVIEW FOR 2020/2021**Executive Director of Corporate Services****1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the overall Revenue Budget position following the first review for 2020/2021 including proposed contingency transfers.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note the contents of the report; and
- Approve the contingency transfers proposed at Section 3.4.

3. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021

- 3.1 Overall Position

- 3.1.1 Budgets for 2020/2021 as approved by Council in March 2020 have been realigned to reflect new Portfolio responsibilities. A full review has been undertaken for each Portfolio, together with contingency allocations proposed for the first quarter.

- 3.1.2 At this early stage in the financial year the forecast outturn position reflects the continued challenge the Council faces in delivering savings approved by Council in order to balance the budget, known areas of pressure, and significantly the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The financial consequences of the latter are included within the report, but a degree of caution should be noted at this early stage in the financial year given the current working arrangements and additional pressures on staff resources in relation to budget monitoring across the organisation alongside all of the uncertainties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 3.1.3 The overall forecast outturn position is a deficit £10.552m, pending any further Covid-19 grant allocations from government, and is summarised in the table below, with further detail provided within Appendix A, Appendix B, and the remainder of Section 3 below.

Area of Variance	Para reference	Variance Overspend / (Underspend) £m
Delegated Forecast Outturn	3.3	32.423
Contingency Transfers	3.4	0.000
Transitional Costs	3.5	0.000
Treasury management Savings	3.6	(3.679)
Grants	3.1.4	(7.600)
Use of Covid-19 Reserve	3.1.4	(10.592)
Forecast Outturn position		10.552

3.1.4 The Council's forecast outturn position is significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the wider economic consequences that are likely to entail. The government provided its first tranche of funding to support Local Authorities in response to the financial pressures arising from the pandemic on the 27th of March. This first tranche, distributed in the main to reflect social care responsibilities using factors that took into account factors such as deprivation and need, totalled £10.592m and was rolled forward in full as a reserve. A second tranche, allocated on a simple per capita (population) basis, resulted in a lower allocation of £7.600m in April, meaning that to date £18.192m of grant has been provided and is available to use during 2020/2021.

3.1.5 The government announced further further support measures for local government on 2nd July. These are:

- A further £500 million of funding to cover local authority spending pressures;
- A co-payment mechanism for irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income, with the government covering 75% of losses beyond 5% of planned income;
- Phased repayment of Collection Fund deficits over the next 3 years; and
- A commitment to determine what support is needed to help councils meet the pressures of irrecoverable tax income at the Spending Review.

Allocations of the £500m funding are yet to be confirmed, however, government have indicated that they have developed a new formula that takes into account population, deprivation and the way that service costs vary across the country in arriving at the individual amounts to be received. Similarly further details are awaited in relation to sales, fees and charges lost income, including for example how any baselines are to be determined and whether there are specific categories of income that are excluded.

An update will be provided to Cabinet at the second revenue review.

3.1.6 Based on the return made to MHCLG on the 19th of June 2020, the current forecast impact on the Council is set out in the table below. The forecast Covid-19 position reflected in the MHCLG return reflects the assumption of a steady loosening of current restrictions over the course of the year, no second "lockdown" period and a broadly normal return to school from the Autumn term. Should these assumptions prove incorrect, then the forecast cost will likely increase as the position is ultimately largely dependent upon recovery and government policy. Cabinet will be updated as the year progresses.

	2019/2020 Cost £m	2020/2021 Forecast Cost £m
General Fund Expenditure	0.6	16.5
General Fund Income	0.7	12.1
Business Rates Collection Fund	0	2.0
Council Tax Collection Fund	0	8.7
Total Forecast Gross Impact	1.3	39.3
MHCLG Grants (including reserve b/fwd)	0	(18.2)
Total Forecast Net Impact by year	1.3	21.1
Total Forecast Net Impact as per MHCLG returns	22.4	

- 3.1.7 It should be noted that the financial impact of Covid-19 will likely result in a deficit position on the collection funds. These deficits will not impact on current year general fund activity, but will need to be taken into account in the budget set for 2021/2022. Therefore, the estimated net impact on general fund activity for 2020/2021, after taking into account the specific Covid-19 grant funding of £18.2m, is £10.4m which is reflected in the overall budget position presented.
- 3.1.8 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will require updating to reflect the forecast deficit and the likely ongoing negative impact on the collection fund in 2021/2022 and beyond. Taken together with the anticipated additional costs and lost service income, the current budget gap within the MTFP, as agreed at Council in March 2020, of £9m for 2021/2022 is expected to significantly increase.
- 3.1.9 The Council, including through the likes of ANEC, SIGOMA and the LGA, continue to make the case for additional funding to meet the current shortfalls and equally a full and fair financial settlement to address the significant ongoing impact to the Council's finances this crisis will create.
- 3.2 Budget Transfers
- 3.2.1 Budget transfers undertaken at the first review primarily reflect the need to realign budgets to ensure correct accountability of the approved budget. These are set out in Appendix A.
- 3.3 Portfolio Budgets – Overall Summary
- 3.3.1 Details of the forecast major variations for each portfolio, are set out at Appendix A. In overall terms there is currently forecast a net service pressure of £32.423m, inclusive of the savings plan position detailed at Section 3.3.2 below.
- 3.3.2 Progress in the implementation of the £3.225m approved savings plans for 2020/2021 has continued and overall shows positive progress. The position is positive for this stage of the financial year and reflects the limited savings plans in place for 2020/2021 in comparison to previous years. Portfolio holders and Executive Directors continue to take the necessary action to mitigate any delays in implementation and, as such, the position is expected to improve as the year progresses.
- £1.379m (43%) of the savings have been fully realised to date.
 - £0.813m (25%) of reductions where good progress is being made, with a good prospect that full savings will be achieved.
 - £0.890m (28%) is in respect of areas where delays and issues have been encountered, hence where corrective actions or alternative options are being considered, which require close attention to ensure a positive outcome and timely delivery of savings. For budget monitoring purposes these are included as a forecast outturn pressure within the delegated budgets if appropriate.
 - £0.143m (4%) of savings are no longer anticipated to be delivered as originally planned. For budget monitoring purposes these are included as a forecast outturn pressure within the delegated budgets.
- 3.3.3 Transitional reserves continue to be held to meet any profiling delays in the implementation of the 2020/2021 savings plans and any additional pressures arising.

3.3.4 The forecast position for the Local Authority Controlled Companies is included within the delegated budget outturn within the relevant portfolio at Appendix A, and budgetary issues highlighted as required. This includes the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4 Contingency Transfers

3.4.1 Transfers from the contingency fund take place on a quarterly basis to reflect expenditure actually incurred in respect of approved provisions. First quarter contingency transfers, totalling £0.552m have been enacted as follows;

- Allotment Fees Review (£0.075m)
Pending a review of tenancy arrangements for allotments within the city, rentals have reverted to the 2018/2019 levels with income budgets realigned accordingly.
- TfC Ofsted Support (£0.470m)
One off provision to provide additional capacity to Together for Children in preparation for the Ofsted inspection scheduled for the current year.
- Saving Plan Development (£0.046m)
As previously reported, the Council are working with external consultancy support to develop savings plans within the MTFP. Costs incurred to date are being met through a drawdown from general contingencies.
- Energy Savings (£0.039m return to contingencies)
Known energy savings arising from energy efficiency measures undertaken using the Salix recurring investment funding.

3.4.2 Based on the forecast use of specific contingencies, at this stage in the financial year the use of the full contingency provision is anticipated.

3.5 Transitional costs

3.5.1 As set out as part of the budget setting process, no transitional costs are currently anticipated through workforce planning arrangements in 2020/2021, however, as work progresses to address the current and future years budget position, transformational costs may arise. The potential need to utilise capital receipt flexibility to fund transitional costs arising in 2020/2021 was highlighted in the budget setting process, with the final decision to be made at outturn 2020/2021 in light of the overall resources position at that time.

3.5.2 At this stage, no unbudgeted transitional costs are forecast to be incurred during 2020/2021. To date no capital receipts have been received in 2020/2021.

3.6 Treasury Management Savings

3.6.1 Net one-off savings on debt charges and interest on investments of £3.679m are anticipated at this stage. This reflects the position reported in the Capital Programme First Review, elsewhere on the agenda, and investment income generated. It is proposed that any savings at outturn be utilised to support the overall corporate position.

4 Review of Existing Reserves

- 4.1 During the finalisation of the Statement of Accounts, a small number of amendments between reserves was enacted to comply with technical requirements. These amendments had no impact on the overall balance of reserves. The opening balance at Appendix C reflects the position as reported in the Statement of Accounts.
- 4.2 Following a full review of planned usage, the Council's reserves are forecast to decrease by £36.869m in 2020/2021 to £131.816m as reserves are utilised for their agreed purpose, including in support of the capital programme.
- 4.3 With the exception of the General Fund, useable reserves are earmarked for specific purposes and commitments, and are subject to regular review.

5. Collection Fund

5.1 Business Rates

The budget sets out a Local Business Rate requirement of £46.400m. Following the award of a number of reliefs, particularly in respect of retail premises, the collectable business rates for 2020/2021 has fallen significantly. However, the Council will be compensated for this reduction through Section 31 grant. Of the remaining collectable business rates, at this stage a shortfall of £2m is forecast for the year which would manifest itself as a deficit to be taken into account in setting the 2021/2022 budget. A further update will be provided at the second revenue review.

5.2 Council Tax

The budget sets out a Council Tax requirement of element of £104.926m. Based on current forecasts the shortfall is anticipated to be £8.7m against this requirement. This has arisen due to a marked increase in the number of working age Council Tax support claimants of over 15% since the start of the year (thereby reducing the amount of council tax that is payable), reduced collection rates, and an anticipated reduction in the forecast housebuilding for the year resulting in less council tax to be generated. As with Business Rates, this forecast shortfall would manifest itself as a deficit to be taken into account in setting the 2021/2022 budget. A further update will be provided at second review.

- 5.3 As set out in paragraph 3.1.5, government have announced measures that will impact on the Collection Fund. Whilst the phased repayment of Collection Fund deficits is helpful, the phasing is yet to be confirmed and ultimately any deficits will still need to be repaid. Government also confirmed a commitment to determine what support is needed in relation to irrecoverable tax income, again whilst helpful, it is unclear if and at what level any support will be provided. Earlier confirmation ahead of the Spending Review would also assist with the Council's financial planning for next year and then medium term.

6. Reasons for Decision

- 6.1 To respond to variations in expenditure and income which have arisen in 2020/2021 and enable effective budgetary control to be exercised.

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 No alternative options are proposed.

8. Impact Analysis

- 8.1 Impact assessments of Directorate actions to ensure the achievement of savings targets and a balanced budget position will be undertaken within Directorates as each action is developed.

9. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- 9.1 None

10. List of Appendices

- Appendix A - Major Variations 2020/2021
- Appendix B - Overall Position 2020/2021
- Appendix C - Major Earmarked Reserves

11. Background Papers

None

**Cabinet Meeting 14th July 2020
Major Variations 2020/2021**

Portfolio	Re-cast Original Budget (Budget Book) £m	Contingency Transfers £m	Budget Adjustments £m	Current Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variation Under / (Over Spend) £m	Reason for Variation
Leader	4.841	0.000	(0.049)	4.792	4.751	0.041	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor variations of £0.041m underspend across a number of services, as a result of held vacant posts and reduction in staffing hours.
Deputy Leader	50.221	0.075	(0.326)	49.970	54.186	(4.216)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overspend across a number of services, primarily due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business and Investment (£0.277m overspend) – loss of income due to rental and room hire shortfalls arising from the closure of the business centres. The position will be kept under review and could deteriorate as the year progresses. Parking Services – a shortfall against budgeted surplus of £1.600m following closure of car parks, introduction of free parking and suspension of permit requirements. The position reflects the expectation of a slow improvement in car parking income as the year progresses and the economic position improves, however, there could well be a permanent or sustained impact due to changes in working and shopping habits. Bereavement – a forecast overspend of £0.322m mainly in respect of temporary storage facilities and associated costs. Waste Collection and Recycling – shortfall of £0.391m primarily in relation to loss of income in respect of trade and garden waste, collection. Variations totalling £1.626m on a number of service areas following suspension of works, loss of income, additional staffing costs and additional deep clean costs.

Appendix A (continued)

Portfolio	Re-cast Original Budget (Budget Book) £m	Contingency Transfers £m	Budget Adjustments £m	Current Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variation Under / (Over Spend) £m	Reason for Variation
Cabinet Secretary	11.107	0.007	(0.019)	11.095	10.991	0.104	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various over and underspends across a number of services, including costs and lost income in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic, offset by savings elsewhere, particularly in respect of vacant posts and reduced hours.
Children, Learning and Skills	73.858	0.470	(0.069)	74.259	85.085	(10.826)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together for Children (TfC) - The TfC Board is responsible for monitoring the financial position of the company, with updates provided to the Council through the established contract performance monitoring arrangements. At this early stage in the financial year £8.600m of pressures have been identified. It should be noted that this includes £2.3m of forecast pressures as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The position will be subject to continuous monitoring and an updated provided at second review. Additional costs of £1.549m in respect of school's lost income and additional costs relating to the current crisis. Whilst normally the Council would not meet such costs, pending clarification from the MHCLG / DfE these costs are included within the overall Council's return of Covid-19 costs that require central government funding, and as such are included within the budget monitoring position. Derwent Hill – forecast lost income of £0.677m in respect of the current crisis and the likely continued impact during the rest of the financial year.

Appendix A (continued)

Portfolio	Re-cast Original Budget (Budget Book) £m	Contingency Transfers £m	Budget Adjustments £m	Current Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variation Under / (Over Spend) £m	Reason for Variation
Dynamic City	3.449	0.000	(0.012)	3.437	5.806	(2.369)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overspend across a number of services, primarily due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, including; Miscellaneous Land and Property (£1.397m overspend) – loss of income due to rental shortfalls following a short rent free period and forecast continued income pressure in this area, particularly in respect of the Bridges ground rent income. The position will be kept under review and could deteriorate as the year progresses. Access to Housing – a forecast overspend of £0.492m incurred to ensure additional homelessness provision during the crisis. Other income shortfalls (£0.480m) including within Development and Building control as fee earning income stalled, with the anticipation of a gradual return to normal over the remainder of the year.
Healthy City	84.507	0.000	0.061	84.568	99.252	(14.684)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant financial pressure of £15.757m in respect of Adult Social Care and commissioning attributable to increasing complexity of need, including as a consequence of the current Covid-19 crisis. These pressures include additional care home fees, PPE and workforce pressures. The budget will be kept under close scrutiny as the year progresses to understand any impact to the on-going budget position as the crisis subsides. Welfare Reform – a direct pressure of £0.103m as a result of Covid-19 increased demand, offset by salary slippage in this area. Public Health – a current forecast underspend of £1.176m on existing grant expenditure, in part due to lower take up of activity based contracts due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Appendix A (continued)

Portfolio	Re-cast Original Budget (Budget Book) £m	Contingency Transfers £m	Budget Adjustments £m	Current Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variation Under / (Over Spend) £m	Reason for Variation
Vibrant City	13.020	0.000	0.414	13.434	13.907	(0.473)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various over and underspends across all services. The overspends in the main relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, with these costs offset by savings within the events budget due to the postponement or cancellation of a number of Council organised events within the city.
Total Service (Delegated) Outturn	241.003	0.552	0	241.555	273.978	(32.423)	

Cabinet Meeting 14th July 2020
Overall Position 2020/2021

	Original Budget	Contingency Transfers / Budget Adjustments	Current Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance Under / (Over) Spend
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Leader Portfolio	4.841	(0.049)	4.792	4.751	0.041
Deputy Leader Portfolio	50.221	(0.251)	49.970	54.186	(4.216)
Cabinet Secretary Portfolio	11.107	(0.012)	11.095	10.991	0.104
Children, Learning and Skills Portfolio	73.858	0.401	74.259	85.085	(10.826)
Dynamic City Portfolio	3.449	(0.012)	3.437	5.806	(2.369)
Healthy City Portfolio	84.507	0.061	84.568	99.252	(14.684)
Vibrant City Portfolio	13.020	0.414	13.434	13.907	(0.473)
Total Service (Delegated) Expenditure	241.003	0.552	241.555	273.978	(32.423)
Provision for Contingencies and other Corporate Budgets	10.289	(0.552)	9.737	9.737	0.000
Capital Financing Costs	23.600	0.000	23.600	19.921	3.679
Transfer to/from Reserves	0.335	0.000	0.335	0.335	0.000
Technical Adjustments	(28.635)	0.000	(28.635)	(28.635)	0.000
Levies	15.210	0.000	15.210	15.210	0.000
Hetton Town Council	0.068	0.000	0.068	0.068	0.000
Less Grants	(38.028)	0.000	(38.028)	(45.628)	7.600
Total Net Expenditure	223.842	0.000	223.842	244.986	(21.144)
Revenue Support Grant	(27.956)	0.000	(27.956)	(27.956)	0.000
National Non-Domestic Rates/Retained Business Rates	(46.400)	0.000	(46.400)	(46.400)	0.000
Top Up Grant	(43.725)	0.000	(43.725)	(43.725)	0.000
Collection Fund Surplus	(0.835)	0.000	(0.835)	(0.835)	0.000
Council Tax Requirement	(104.926)	0.000	(104.926)	(104.926)	0.000
Draft Forecast Outturn	0.000	0.000	0.000	21.144	(21.144)
Drawdown of Covid-19 tranche 1 reserve	0.000	0.000	0.000	(10.592)	10.592
Final Forecast Outturn Position	0.000	0.000	0.000	10.552	(10.552)

Cabinet Meeting 14th July 2020
Major Earmarked Reserves

Reserves	Purpose of the Reserve	Opening Balance 01.04.2020 £m	Forecast Movement in Year £m	Forecast Balance 31.03.2021 £m
General Fund	General Fund of the Council	12.000	0	12.000
School Balances	Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation	7.982	(0.015)	7.967
Riverside Transfer	Reserve established to fund capital works associated with the Homes and Communities Agency land transferred to the Council.	9.188	0	9.188
Capital Priorities Reserve	A reserve established to address some of the Council's key capital developments and strategic priorities.	9.254	(4.400)	4.854
Section 106 Reserves	Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, developers make financial contributions to the Council relating to affordable housing, public open spaces including allotments and locally equipped play parks, educational facilities, highways and public transport improvements, sports and recreational facilities and environmental improvements.	7.280	(1.621)	5.659
Strategic Investment Reserve (Capital)	A reserve established to address some of the Council's key developments, strategic priorities and address other major liabilities.	4.545	(1.367)	3.178
Strategic Investment Plan Reserve	This reserve is necessary to fund part of the Council's contribution to its Strategic Investment Plan	1.194	(1.194)	0
Commercial and Economic Development Activity	Reserve established to take advantage of commercial and economic development opportunities that will meet priorities of the Council.	1.153	(0.945)	0.208
Other Earmarked Capital Reserve	Funding set aside to fund future capital projects previously approved.	1.737	(0.941)	0.796
Strategic Investment Reserve (Revenue)	A reserve established to address some of the Council's key developments, strategic priorities and address other major liabilities.	11.769	(4.686)	7.083
Strategic Regeneration Reserve	A reserve to support the Council's regeneration ambitions, specifically to smooth any revenue impact of projects until they become self-sustaining.	10.000	(0.268)	9.732

Appendix C (continued)

Reserves	Purpose of the Reserve	Opening Balance 01.04.2020 £m	Forecast Movement in Year £m	Forecast Balance 31.03.2021 £m
Service Reduction Reserve	This reserve is to provide temporary transitional funding relating to the implementation of planned service reductions.	12.146	0.000	12.146
COVID-19	A reserve established from government grant to fund the immediate costs and lost income associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.	10.592	(10.592)	0.000
Medium Term Planning Smoothing Reserve	This reserve has been established to address any potential impact arising from increased risk and uncertainty with the Business Rate Retention Scheme. It is being used to smooth the impact of government funding uncertainties.	6.528	0.000	6.528
Insurance Reserve	This reserve has been established to provide for potential future claims or claim increases.	5.677	0.000	5.677
Street Lighting and Highway Signs PFI Smoothing Reserve	The reserve was established to smooth the financial impact to the Council across the 25 years of the contract life.	4.280	(0.300)	3.980
HCA Stadium Park	Reserve established to fund ongoing maintenance of Homes and Communities Agency land transferred to the Council.	3.109	0.000	3.109
SIB Reserve	A reserve held to fund future allocations through the Strategic Initiatives Budget.	3.303	0.000	3.303
Sandhill Centre PFI Smoothing Reserve	The reserve was established to smooth the financial impact to the Council across the 25 years of the contract life.	2.151	(0.050)	2.101
Housing Benefit Smoothing Reserve	This reserve has been established to smooth any potential impact of outstanding debtors as housing benefit is subsumed within universal credit.	1.577	(0.050)	1.527
Education Redundancy Reserve	The reserve was established to meet the anticipated costs of redundancies as a result of falling pupil rolls within maintained schools.	1.916	0.299	2.215
Riverside Transfer	Reserve established to fund ongoing maintenance of Homes and Communities Agency land transferred to the Council.	1.334	(0.105)	1.229
House Sale Income	The reserve relates to the sale of client's homes that will be utilised to support future support needs of those clients.	1.236	0.000	1.236
Collection Fund Surplus Reserve	Reserve established as part of 2018/19 budget setting to smooth the collection fund surplus benefit into future years.	1.198	0.335	1.533

Appendix C (continued)

Reserves	Purpose of the Reserve	Opening Balance 01.04.2020 £m	Forecast Movement in Year £m	Forecast Balance 31.03.2021 £m
Children's Social Care	A reserve to fund any one-off Children's Social Care costs that may arise in the future.	3.000	0.000	3.000
Airport Smoothing Reserve	Reserve established to smooth any delayed airport loan interest payment that may arise.	1.253	(0.036)	1.217
Other Earmarked Revenue Reserves	Numerous small revenue reserves less than £1m which are set up for specific purposes.	19.229	(7.326)	11.903
Total General Fund Reserves		154.631	(33.262)	121.369
Capital Receipts Reserve	Balance of capital receipts held, pending use to fund the capital programme.	9.062	(3.607)	5.455
Capital Grants Unapplied	Balance of capital grants held pending expenditure on capital programme.	4.992	0	4.992
Total Usable Reserves		168.685	(36.869)	131.816

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE – 2019/20 YEAR END & QUARTER 1 OF 2020/21

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with the Corporate Performance Report for the year end of 2019/20 and Quarter 1 of 2020/21
- 1.2 The Assistant Director of Digital and Customer Service and Chief Officers (or their senior representatives) will attend the meeting to respond to questions.

2. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 A key element of the Council's Corporate Performance Management Framework is to present, on a quarterly basis, an update to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on key performance information for consideration and discussion.
- 2.2 The Council's Corporate Performance Management Framework is aligned to the Sunderland City Plan 2019 – 2030.
- 2.3 The City Plan 2019-2030 covers:
 - A Vision for the city and Values for the council which provide the focus for the council's activity
 - Three Key Themes – Dynamic City, Healthy City and Vibrant City - which are used to organise the council's aims
 - Five Commitments for each Key Theme under which the council's Activities are aligned
 - A Timeline of Activities illustrating the council's actions across all of the Key Themes for the years 2019-2020 to 2024-2025 and the five-year period 2025-2030
- 2.4 The Corporate Performance Report is aligned to the three key themes of the City Plan (*Dynamic City*, *Healthy City* and *Vibrant City*) as well as including additional Council indicators for organisational health / productive & innovative working, financial management and a council ready for the future.
- 2.5 The report sets out the progress made to the end of 2019/20 and in Quarter 1 of 2019/2020, against a City Plan that spans an eleven-year period through to 2030.

- 2.4 It should be noted that detailed performance indicators for Children's Service are separately reported and discussed at the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information provided in the report.

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DYNAMIC CITY

More and better jobs – more and better housing – more local people with better qualifications and skills – a stronger city centre with more businesses, housing and cultural opportunities – a lower carbon city with greater digital connectivity.

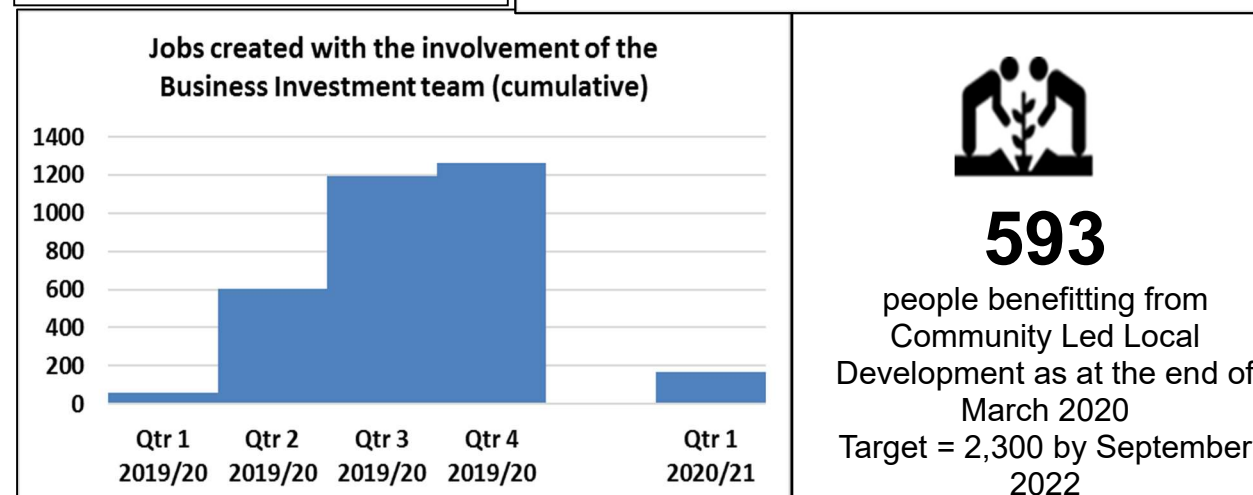
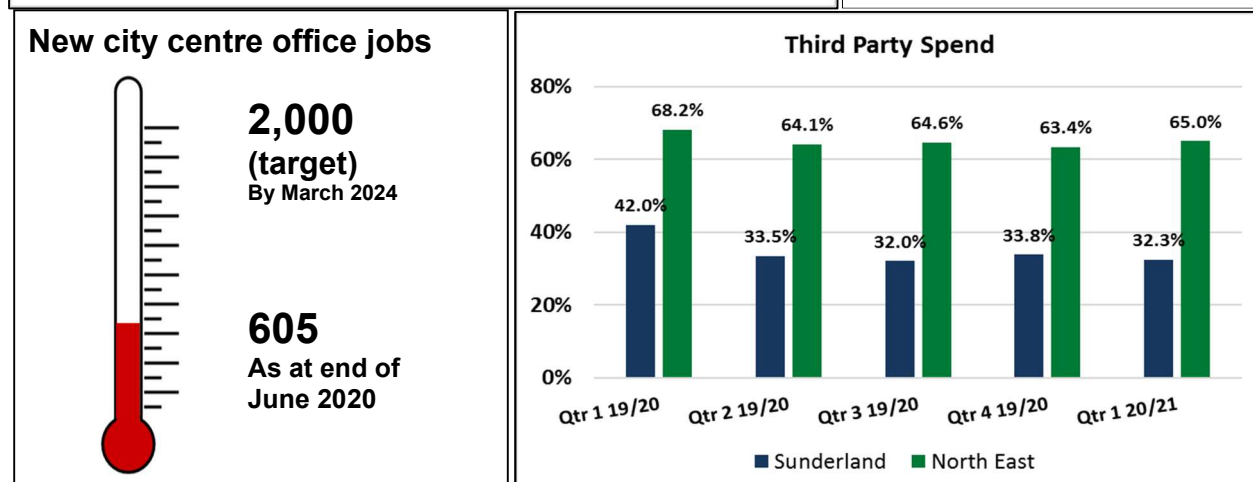
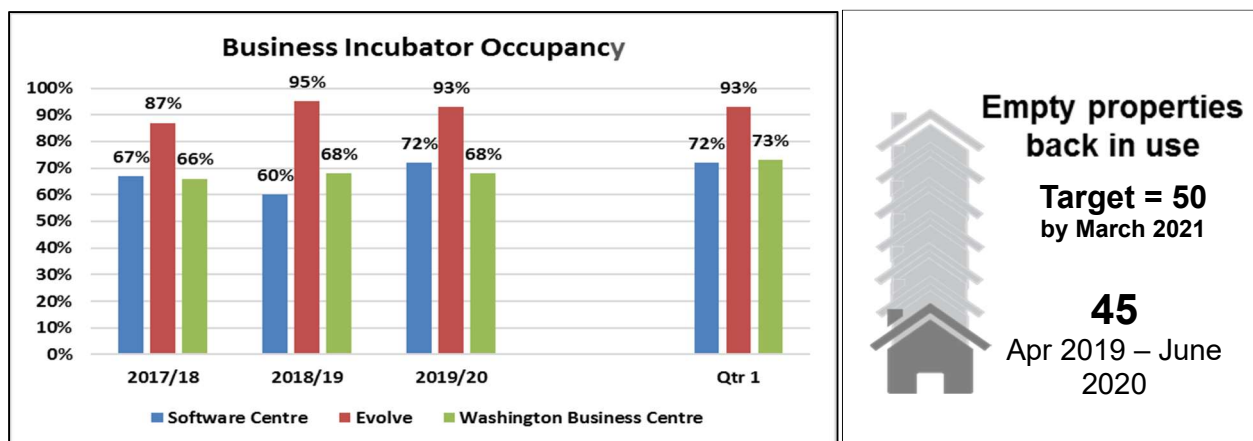


CITY CONTEXT

	COMPARATIVE DATA	SUNDERLAND TREND
Employment rate 2019/20: 70.3%	NE 71.15%, GB 76%	Improving (2018/19: 70%)
Median wage workers 2019: £526.80	NE £533 GB £586.50	Improving (2015: £482)
Population of the City 2019: 277,705	N/A	Increasing (2018: 277,417)
People employed in the City Centre 2018: 11,890	N/A	Increasing (2015: 11,874)
Net Internal Migration 2019: -511	N/A	Improving (2014: -880)
New homes-built Qtr.1 2020/21: 81	N/A	Declining (Qtr.1 2019/20: 177)
City Centre new homes Qtr. 1 2020/21: 0	N/A	No change (Qtr.1 2019/20: 0)
Completed affordable homes Qtr.1 2020/21: 23	N/A	Declining (Qtr.1 2019/20: 29)
% Population NVQ Level 4 qualification 2019: 27.4%	NE 31.9% GB 40.3%	Improving (2016: 25.4%)
% of residents with no qualifications 2019: 9.9%	NE 9.4% GB 7.7%	Improving (2016: 10.2%)
GCSE - % achieving a grade 4-9 in Maths & English 2018/19: 58.6%	NE 61.6% England 64.9%	Improving (2017/18 57.3%)
Level 3 (A level & equivalent) attainment by age of 19 in 2018/19: 49.8%	NE 51.2% England 56.9%	Declining (2015/16: 52.5%)
Higher apprenticeships 2018 /19:129	N/A	Improving (2014/15: 65)
Community Led Local Development – People benefitting Q3 2019/20: 106	N/A	N/A
% of properties with ultrafast broadband June 2020: 62.7%	UK 61.2%	Improving (June 2019: 57.8%)

COUNCIL LED ACTION & PROGRESS

2019/20 Timeline	Status
Digital Ambition in place for the city	Completed
1 st drive-thru rapid charging facility for electric cars	Completed
1 st Building on Vaux site	Completed
Empty properties strategy published	Completed
1 st building on IAMP operational	Completed



More and better jobs – Our focus has been on increasing the number of well-paid jobs in the city through promoting growth in target sectors including advanced manufacturing, Port activity, digital and software sector, professional sector (office jobs) and creative and cultural businesses. As at the end of March 2020 the employment rate had risen by 0.3%, however, as the Coronavirus pandemic hit the UK businesses began to be significantly impacted and benefits claimants began to rise in April 2020. It is anticipated that this will be reflected in the employment rate figures for the end of June 2020 when these are released. Re-profiling the cashflow for our major schemes has been of significant assistance to sub-contractors keeping businesses afloat. Also, work began in Quarter 1 to administer the Government's Covid-19 business grant programmes, with significant demand from businesses for support in very challenging times. We continue to ensure that our Council activity supports growth in the local economy. In 2019/20, 1,262 jobs were to be created by businesses following support by the Council's Business Investment Team and 166 in the first quarter of 2020/21 (the latter relates primarily to job creation identified retrospectively with limited creation in the Quarter). 65% of all Council third party spend was within the regional economy as at the end of Quarter 1 2020/21 and £48,365,548 of social value was secured through our procurement projects in 2019/20 and Quarter 1 combined.

More and better housing – Our focus under this City Plan commitment is to enable the delivery of more housing, including more large, family and high-status homes to stem outward migration from the city. This will be achieved through the delivery of key housing sites. Latest figures show a slowing of out migration from a net of -722 in 2018 to -511 in 2019. At the end of Quarter 1 of 2020/21 there are 630 additional properties in the city compared with Quarter 1 of 2019/20, of which 404 are in council tax bands C-G. Alongside this, we are committed to ensuring that the housing we have is of quality by bringing empty homes back into use, reducing properties with a category 1 hazard and ensuring sufficient affordable housing. There have been 104 completed affordable homes in 2019/20 and Quarter 1 of 2020/21 and we are on track to have 50 homes brought back into use by the end of 2021.

More local people with better qualifications and skills – The City Plan sets out the challenge that the qualifications that residents have don't match the needs of industry in the city. Sunderland residents, therefore, are less able to access all the employment opportunities that are created in the city, with the weekly median wage for Sunderland residents being £29.80 lower than that for workers. Our plans focus on tackling the barriers for those least able to access employment and ensuring that more local people benefit from a stronger economy through initiatives such as Community Local Led Development. Towards the end of 2019/20 a new project proposal was developed for improving employment pathways and opportunities and a bid submitted. This has been on hold due to COVID 19 but is now being considered for progression. Support arrangements are in place through the ELEET Group to enable care leavers to access training and employment. We will also support and enable apprenticeship and work experience opportunities focused on skills and experience for the local economy.

A stronger city centre with more business, housing and cultural opportunities – The City Plan sets out the challenge that Sunderland City Centre is not functioning as the economic motor of the city. It identified the need to attract new jobs (office jobs in particular) to the city to increase the number of people employed there (at 11,890 in 2018) and for new homes to be built for city centre living. The challenge has been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the impact of government restrictions on city centre businesses in Quarter 1. We have, however, continued to make progress on our plans for a range of physical developments with key activity towards the delivery of key city centre housing sites completed and on-site construction commenced for the delivery of a new City Centre hotel. Through our everyday planning responsibilities, we continue to work to promote a desirable and vibrant retail and leisure offer ensuring no more food take-away premises.

A lower carbon city with greater digital connectivity for all - A focus of this commitment is the physical aspects of digital connectivity for both residents and business. High speed and resilient digital connectivity will support the City Plan ambitions under the commitment of more and better jobs by attracting digital companies, supporting the momentum in the software sector and enabling employment growth. The Digital Ambition for the City is now in place and the Smart Cities Strategy will deliver a range of use cases for smart working and living in the city. The significant progress made in this area resulted in three digital leaders' nominations for

the Council and four for the city overall. Nearly two thirds of all properties in the city have ultrafast broadband and this continues to increase. There is also a focus on reducing overall emissions, with transport known to be a significant factor in emission levels. A 2030 Shadow Board has been set up bringing together partners across Sunderland to develop a Low Carbon Framework for the city and this is to be in place by March 2021.

HEALTHY CITY

Access to the same opportunities and life chances – more people living healthier longer lives – people enjoying independent lives – cleaner and more attractive city and neighbourhoods – a city with great transport links.



CITY CONTEXT

	COMPARATIVE DATA	SUNDERLAND TREND
Healthy Life Expectancy at birth 2016-2018 as at 2018/19: Female: 56.5 yrs. Male: 57.9 yrs.	England 63.9 yrs. NE 59.7 yrs. England 63.4 yrs. NE 59.4 yrs.	Declining (2013-2015: 58.6 yrs.) Declining (2013-2015: 58.8 yrs.)
Women who smoke at time of delivery Qtr. 4 2019/20: 21.7%	England 10.5% NE 14.8%	Declining (Qtr. 4 2018/19: 16.2%)
EYFSP Good level of development 2018/19: 72.6%	England 71.5%, NE 71.5%	Improving (2013/14: 60%)
Teenage pregnancy (under 18 conception rate) rolling year Qtr. 3 2018/19: 29	England 16.7, NE 24.9	Declining (Qtr. 3 2017/18: 25.7)
Admission episodes for alcohol-related (Broad) (Persons) 2018/19: 3,197 (per 100,000 pop)	England 2,367, NE 2,927	Declining (2014/15: 2,482)
Smoking prevalence: 2018/19: 16%	England 13.9%, NE 15.3%	Improving (2014/15: 21.5%)
The proportion of adults who are overweight or obese 2018/19: 66%	England 62.3%, NE 64.9%	Improving (2014/15: 70.8%)
Prevalence of overweight (incl. obese) among children in Year 6 2018/19: 39.2%	England 34.3%. NE 37.5%	Improving (2015/16: 39.8%)
% of people that are fairly active / active (Active Lives) 2018/19: 71.3%	England 78.6%, NE 76.2%	Declining (2015/16: 73.3%)
Litter - % of relevant land & highways with deposits that fall below an acceptable level Qtr. 4 2019/20: 0.99%	N/A	Improving (Qtr.4 2018/19: 8.67%)

COUNCIL LED ACTION & PROGRESS

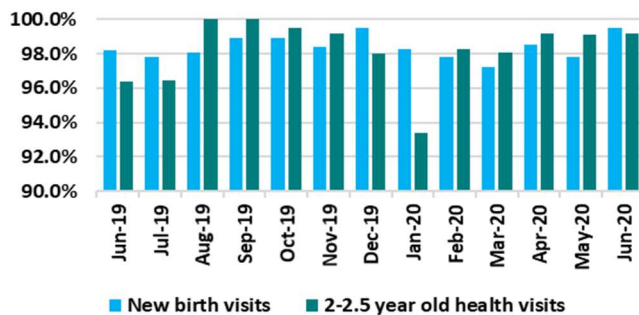
2019/20 Timeline	Status
100% schools engaged with Active Charter	Completed
University Medical School Opens	Completed
£20m investment in sports facilities	Completed
Launch Step-Up Sunderland	Completed

4,660

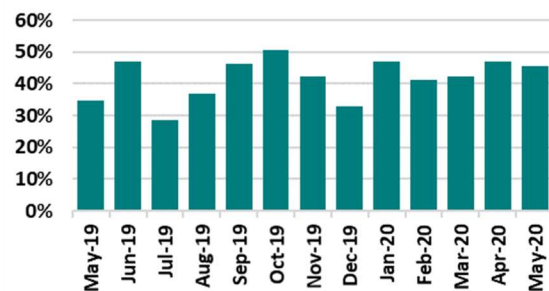
Individuals have taken part in Active Sunderland BIG events in the year to March 2020, an increase on the 3,331 seen in the previous year.



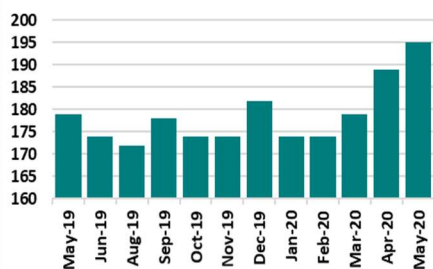
New birth and 2-2.5 yr old visits



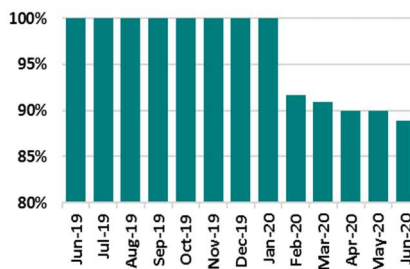
% smokers setting a quit date who successfully quit at 4 weeks



Successful completions - alcohol users (Adults)



% successful completions - alcohol users (YDAP)



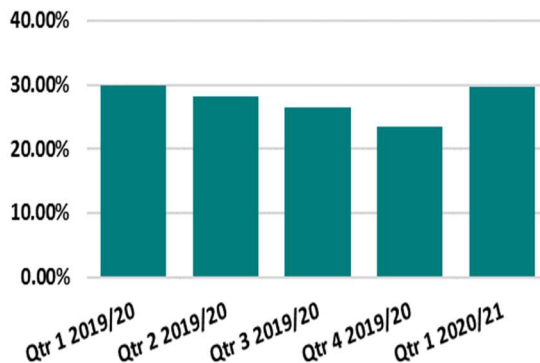
305 homes with assisted technology supporting independent living.



Target 32% by April 2021



Household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting



New adopted roads, footpaths and improved cycleways

0m Footpaths

0m Roads

1,800m Cycleways

Qtr.1 of 2020/21



Access to the same opportunities and life chances – We want children to have the best start in life and equal life chances through early years to teens. To address the rate of smoking in pregnancy, an enhanced smoking in pregnancy service was implemented in 2019/2020 as part of the new specialist Stop Smoking Service. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in April and throughout Quarter 1, new birth visits and 2.5 year-old checks continued to be carried out in timescale, within the target of 95%. Work has continued on the building of a new primary school and a new school for children with autism. We have disseminated to key stakeholders the key findings from the Health-Related Behaviour Survey (young people's healthy eating, leisure and physical activity behaviours). We are committed to residents of all ages, across all areas of the city, having equality of opportunity - but we know that deprived communities may have experienced more direct and indirect impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic because they already have greater vulnerability and may have had a compromised ability to respond to the extra impact of COVID-19. With the work done in 2019/20 to establish our Neighbourhood Plans, we were ready to support our communities through our Community Hubs, providing support to those referred through the NHS daily COVID-19 shielding referral list, and many more residents who were also identified as needing help.

More people living healthier longer lives – One of the key challenges for the city, is that health outcomes in Sunderland are still poor with healthy life expectancy at birth in Sunderland (at 57.9 years for males and 56.5 years for females) lower than the North East and England - and in decline. We know we need to impact on levels of smoking, alcohol consumption, obesity and inactivity and that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have impacted on behaviours in relation to these. Our plans continue to focus on areas where we can support people to make healthy choices. To tackle obesity, we have undertaken a high-level needs assessment to inform long term plans and in 2019/20 established a Sunderland Healthy Weight Alliance. Simultaneously, we have sought to increase physical activity with a targeted approach to encouraging greater activity for specific areas and groups. As at the end of 2019/20, 100% of schools in Sunderland were engaged in the Active Schools Charter. Alongside the new specialist smoking service, smoking brief advice in primary care has been implemented with the aim of further reducing smoking prevalence (latest figures showing an improvement). We continue to support and promote healthy choices by our own people through our Employee Wellness Programme.

People enjoying independent lives – Although 99% of people 18+ in the city live independently (without social care services) based on mid-year estimates, we remain committed to ensuring people in the city can enjoy independent lives. With the roll out of the assistive technology in the home offer, following the evaluation of the pilot at the end of 2019/20, 305 homes had the technology by the end of June 2020. Working with our partners, through the Sunderland Falls Group, we aspire to reduce the number of emergency hospital admissions due to falls (in people aged 65+). At the end of 2019/2020 a Strategy was in place and 5-year plan commenced for a Health and Social Care workforce to meet the needs of the city.

Cleaner and more attractive city and neighbourhoods – Our focus here is on promoting environmental responsibility amongst residents to achieve a cleaner and more attractive city. With the level of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting at 29.6% by the end of Quarter 1 of 2020/21, we aim to improve this to 32%, or better, by April 2021. In Quarter 4 of 2019/20, the percentage of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level improved to less than 1%. In Quarter 1 of 2020/21, we have commenced further targeted activity on identified areas to ensure cleaner and greener streets. We are encouraging communities to take greater responsibility for their environments through a community responsibility communication plan and we are issuing sanctions where appropriate following enforcement investigations. 877 enforcement activities were carried out in Quarter 1 of 2019/2020. Over two thirds related to statutory notices relating to household bins as a result of targeted activity to respond to complaints from the public relating to mis-presentation of bins or bins left on public highways.

A City with great transport and travel links – Our emphasis within this City Plan commitment is about ensuring that people can move around the city with ease through improved transport routes - enabling access to key employment sites. In 2019/20 funding was confirmed for £27m investment in infrastructure with a delivery plan in place. It is also about active travel within the

city by having in place the necessary infrastructure of enough and appropriate cycle routes and walkways. In 2019/20 there were 1,421 metres of new adopted footways and 1,424 metres of improved cycleways. In Quarter 1 there have been a further of 1,800m of improved cycleways. We continue to promote active travel through Step-Up Sunderland with 2,370 people signed up to the initiative at the end of June 2020.

VIBRANT CITY

More creative and cultural businesses - More residents participating in their communities - More visitors visiting Sunderland and more residents participating in cultural events and activities - More people feel safe in their neighbourhoods and homes - More resilient people.

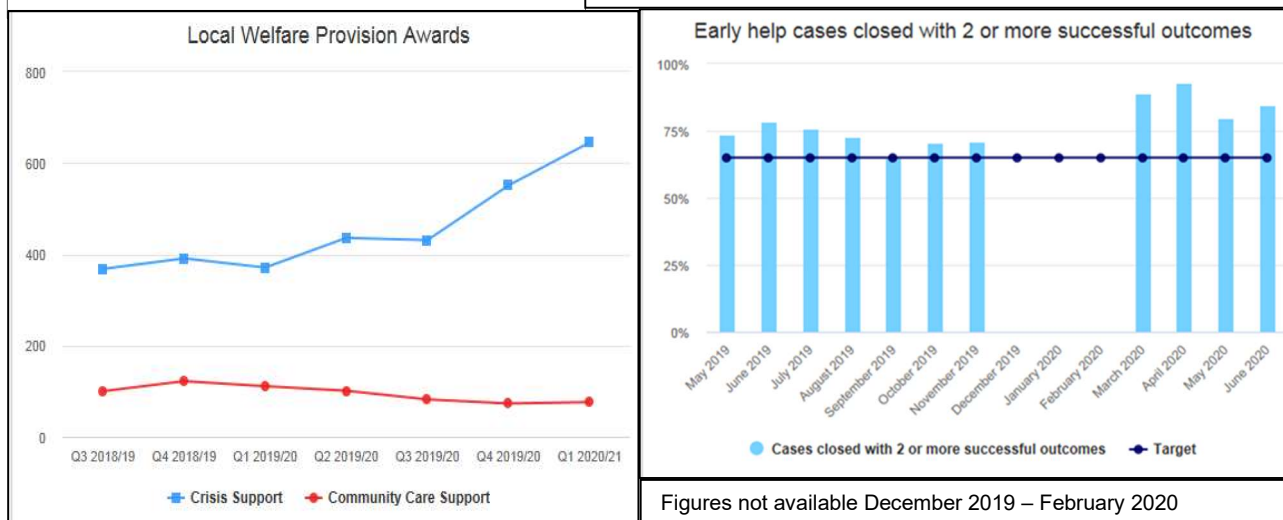
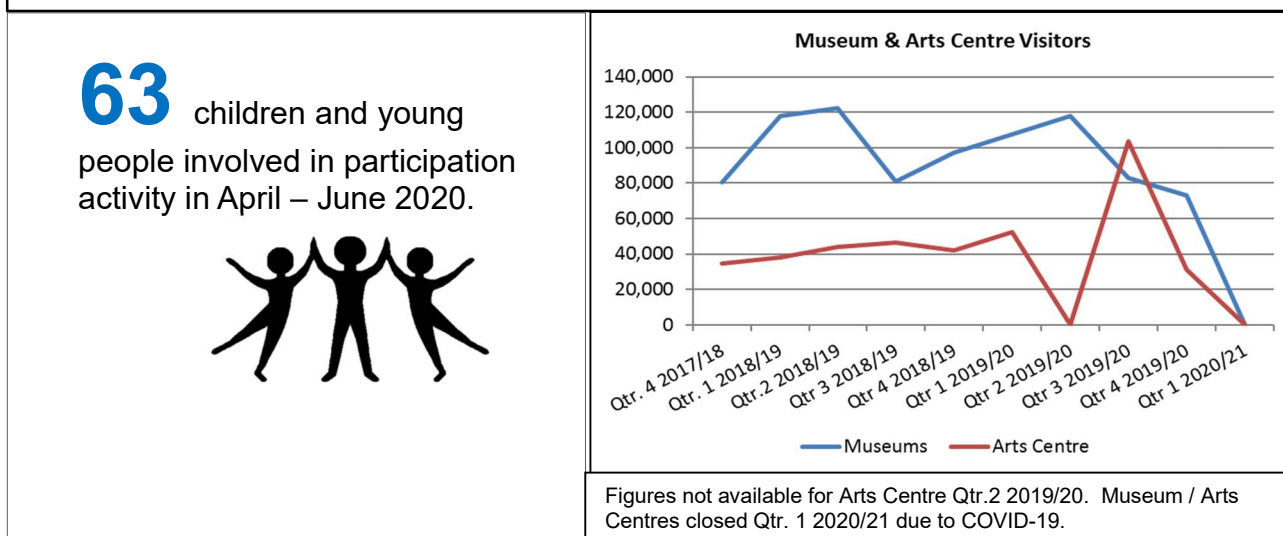
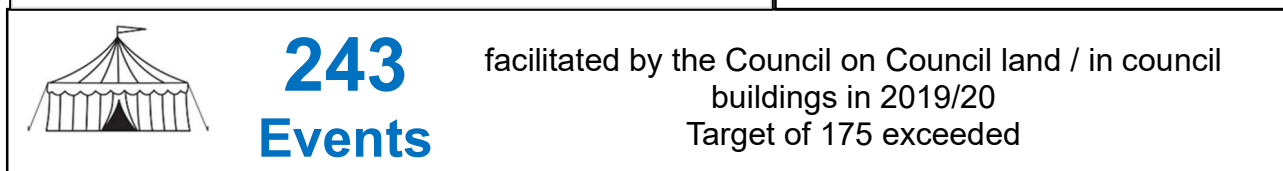
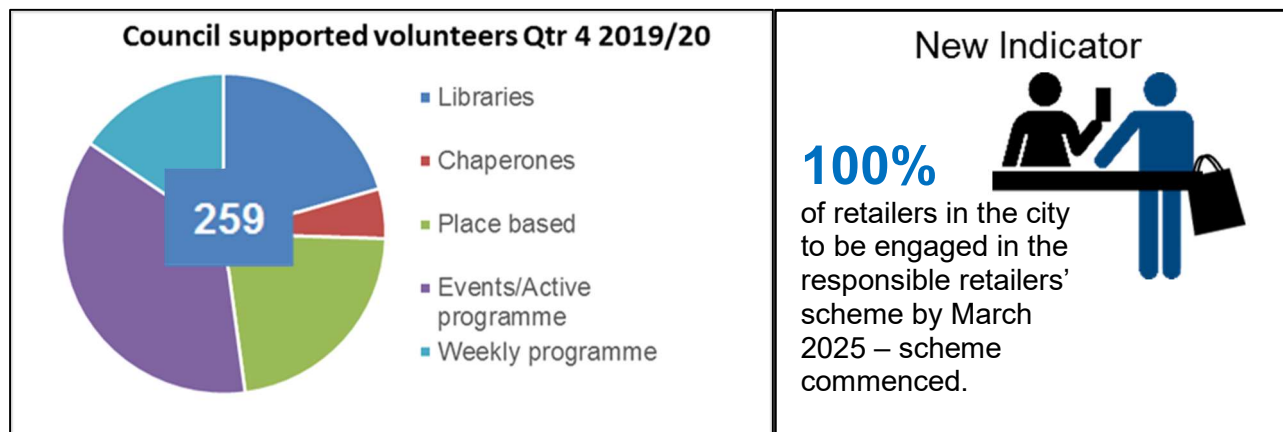


CITY CONTEXT

	COMPARATIVE DATA	SUNDERLAND TREND
Number of visitors to the City 2019: 9,490,000	N/A	Improving (2015: 8,001,000)
Overall spend of visitors to the City 2018: £475m	N/A	Improving (2014: £384m)
Crime (recorded incidents): (April – June 2020): 6,565	N/A	Improving (April - June 2019: 8,139)
Residents feelings of safety (local) Qtr. 4 2019/20: 96%	N/A	No change (Qtr. 4 2018/19: 96%)
The proportion of people who use services who feel safe 2019/20 (provisional): 79.7%	England 70%, NE 74.3%, SN 72.8%	Improving (2017/18: 78.6%)
Out-of-work benefits claimants June 2020: 8.2%	N/A	Declining (June 2019: 4.9%)
Residents supported by foodbanks Qtr.1 2020: 4,450	N/A	Declining (Qtr. 1 2019: 1,303)
Rate of children looked after (per 10k) June 2020: 109.8	England 65, NE 101, SN 103.6	Improving (June 2019: 111.8)
Rate of CYP subject to a child protection plan (per 10k) June 2020: 70	England 43.7, NE 63.1 SN 56.22	Improving (June 2019: 88.7)
Rate of Children in Need (per 10k) June 2020: 386.9	England 334.2, NE 445.1 SN 436.55	Improving (June 2019: 487.7)

COUNCIL LED ACTION & PROGRESS

2019/20 Timeline	Status
World Transplant Games take place	Completed



More creative and cultural businesses – To create vibrancy within the city one of the employment sectors focused on within the City Plan is the creative industries. National statistics show that the UK's creative industries are developing jobs faster than other sectors, however, as these statistics are not available at a local level, our creative industries action plan will include the development of local growth measures. Our action plan will set out key activity to develop a regeneration programme to facilitate creative businesses in key geographic areas and support individual creative and cultural businesses to set up and grow.

More residents participating in their communities – This commitment is about residents, including children and young people, being able to engage with and participate in their communities. In 2019/20 we widened our volunteering opportunities to support more people to volunteer in a more diverse range of volunteering activities. Building on a strong programme of opportunities in our events and weekly programme of activities and a new volunteering platform we supported over 250 people to volunteer in each quarter of 2019/20. This put the council in a strong position to be able to respond to the needs of our communities through the Coronavirus pandemic with the support of our volunteers co-ordinated by our Community Hubs. 1,068 people were registered on the volunteer platform as at the end of June 2020.

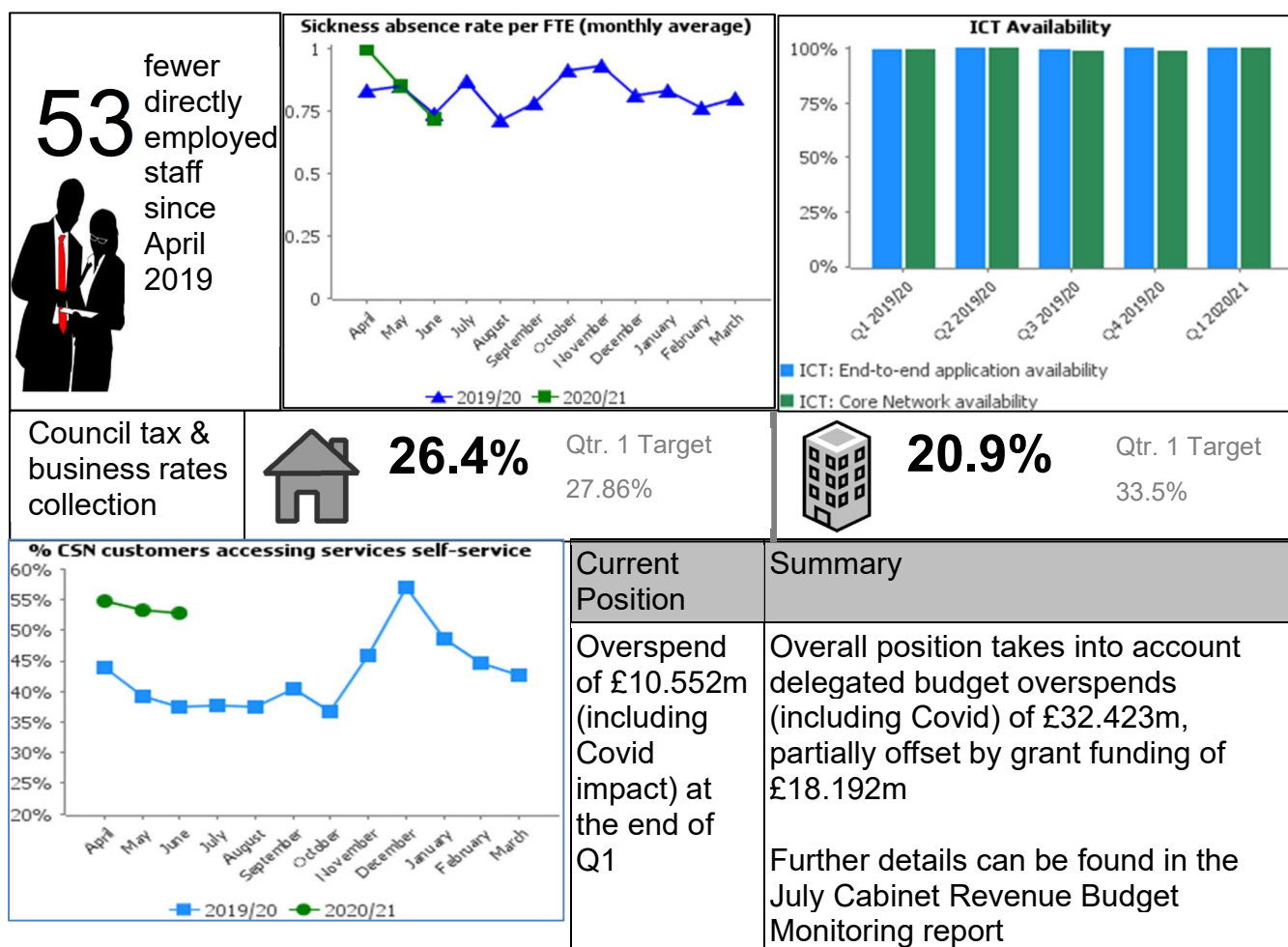
More visitors visiting Sunderland and more residents participating in cultural events and activities – Over the last four years the number of visitors to the city has increased year on year with increased associated spend. In 2019/2020 we continued to attract visitors through our events programme and sought to increase awareness of Sunderland as a city that can host high level events. As the Coronavirus pandemic hit the UK, cultural venues and events were particularly impacted due to the greater challenges of ensuring social distancing and safe delivery. Many cultural venues and businesses remained closed after other sectors began recovery. In 2019/20 the council exceeded its target for facilitated events, however, there were 0 events facilitated in Quarter 1 due to government restrictions in place. There were 266,440 visits to the Empire Theatre, 381,119 visits to Museums and the Winter Gardens and 186,854 visits to Arts Centre Washington in 2019/20, however, these venues were closed to visitors during Quarter 1 of 2020/21.

More people feel safe in their neighbourhoods and homes – This commitment relates both to people feeling safe from crime and also vulnerable adults who use our services feeling safe. Overall, our residents feel safe in their local area, with the percentage consistently at 96% or above since 2012/13 based on the Northumbria Police Survey. Furthermore, recorded crime for April to June 2020 has reduced when compared with the same period in the previous year. We are committed to disrupting criminal and anti-social behaviour through intervention and enforcement. In Quarter 1 we have completed activity in relation to a multi-agency co-located hub and enforcement functions across the city. The additional resource will enable the Council to maximise enforcement powers available. We hope to engage 100% of retailers in the city in our new Responsible Retailers Scheme with the scheme guidelines and implementation plan now agreed.

More resilient people - We will support families that require early help, where children are subject to Child Protection or are Looked After. The rates for children who require this intervention are reducing and we are committed to continuing the progress we have made through the delivery of the Together for Children Learning and Improvement Plan. We will support our people to be more resilient. We know that our communities have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased hardship experienced by some and the use of foodbanks more than trebled in April to June of 2020. Our Community Hubs have worked with local community groups and volunteers across the city to support our communities in these times of need.

ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

Good organisational health - productive and innovating working – strong financial management – a council ready for the future



Council – As an organisation, we have a challenging but exciting cultural change journey ahead. The council needs to continually improve and be innovative in our approach to counteract austerity and financial uncertainty. Directly employed people figures (excluding schools) enables an understanding of how the organisation has changed as the Council has moved to new delivery models and reduced costs. At the end of Quarter 1, there were 53 fewer directly employed staff compared with April 2019. We are committed to ensuring that we have a productive and healthy workforce, maintaining lower levels of sickness absence. We responded to the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly to enable our workforce to work from home where-ever possible, maintaining productivity by enabling shielding and self-isolation whilst employees continued to work.

We are developing a new operating model to ensure that the council is as customer focused and effective as it can be. We continue to enable more agile and paperless working through the adoption of digital technologies and have enhanced the ability to work remotely through the deployment of laptops and the adoption of tools such as Microsoft Teams. We are also investing in our digital technologies to enable more and higher quality digital interaction with our customers,

thereby promoting self-serve. Business Rates Collection (at 20.9%) is under the expected level (of 33.5%) for the end of Quarter 1. The collection rate reflects the impact of Covid-19 on our businesses with deferments being agreed on a case by case basis enabling payments to be made by the end of the financial year in order to help city businesses. Council Tax collection (at 26.4%) is slightly under the expected rate (of 27.9%), reflecting the impact of Covid-19 on our residents. There were 0 reports to the Information Commissioner's Office by the Council in Quarter 1.

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information regarding compliments, complaints and feedback received by the council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council is committed to listening to those who use its services and learning from complaints and feedback to improve those services.
- 2.2 This report is the Annual Report for the financial year April 2019 – March 2020 and presents an overview across the full range of complaints and feedback received by the council.
- 2.3 Unfortunately, due to the timings of the committee it has not been possible to present a separate report covering Quarter 4 (January – March 2020). Information about Quarter 4 has been incorporated into the Annual Report.
- 2.4 In view of the importance to the council of ensuring an appropriate response is provided to all aspects of customer dissatisfaction it is timely for the Committee to receive an overview of complaints received across all council services.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 It was agreed that following the presentation of the Annual Complaints and Feedback Report, further quarterly reports would be brought to Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. This would ensure Members were provided with the most current information available, to allow for the monitoring of themes and trends in a timely manner.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information provided regarding compliments, complaints and feedback received by the Local Authority.

Contact Officer: Marie Johnston, Complaints Manager
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marie.johnston@sunderland.gov.uk

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK TEAM

Annual Report

Compliments, Complaints & Feedback

For the period:

April 2019 – March 2020

Introduction

This report from the Complaints and Feedback Team covers the financial year, April 2019 - March 2020.

Unfortunately, due to the timings of the committee it has not been possible to present a separate report for Q4 (January – March 2020) to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. Information regarding this quarter is incorporated into this annual report.

This report brings together all compliments and complaints received by the council.

Together for Children (TfC) provide a six-monthly report on complaints regarding Children's Services, which is presented to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee for detailed analysis. To ensure the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has a complete overview of complaints made about council services, it was agreed that the report from TfC would be appended to the Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report in Q2 and Q4/Annual Report.

Sunderland Care and Support's report regarding complaints received about its service will be appended to Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report on a quarterly basis.

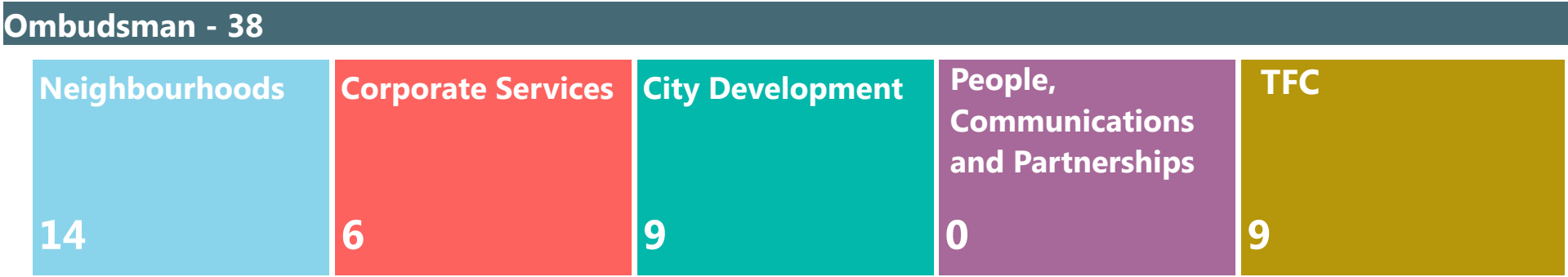
Part A - of the report provides statistical data, presented in an updated, easy to view format.

Part B of the report provides information on the different Compliments and Complaints Procedures that are used by the council to handle customer feedback.

Part C includes the separate appendices

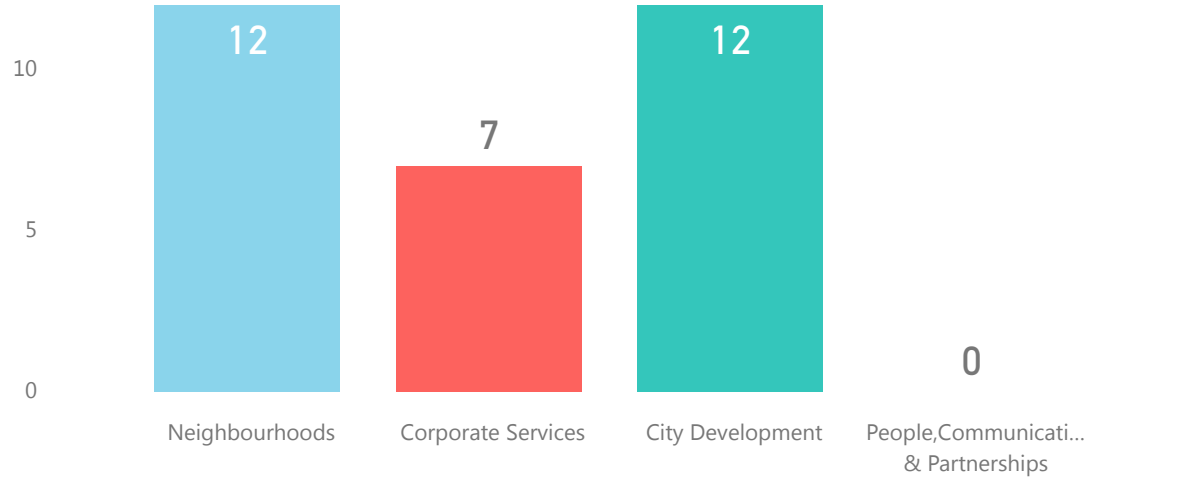
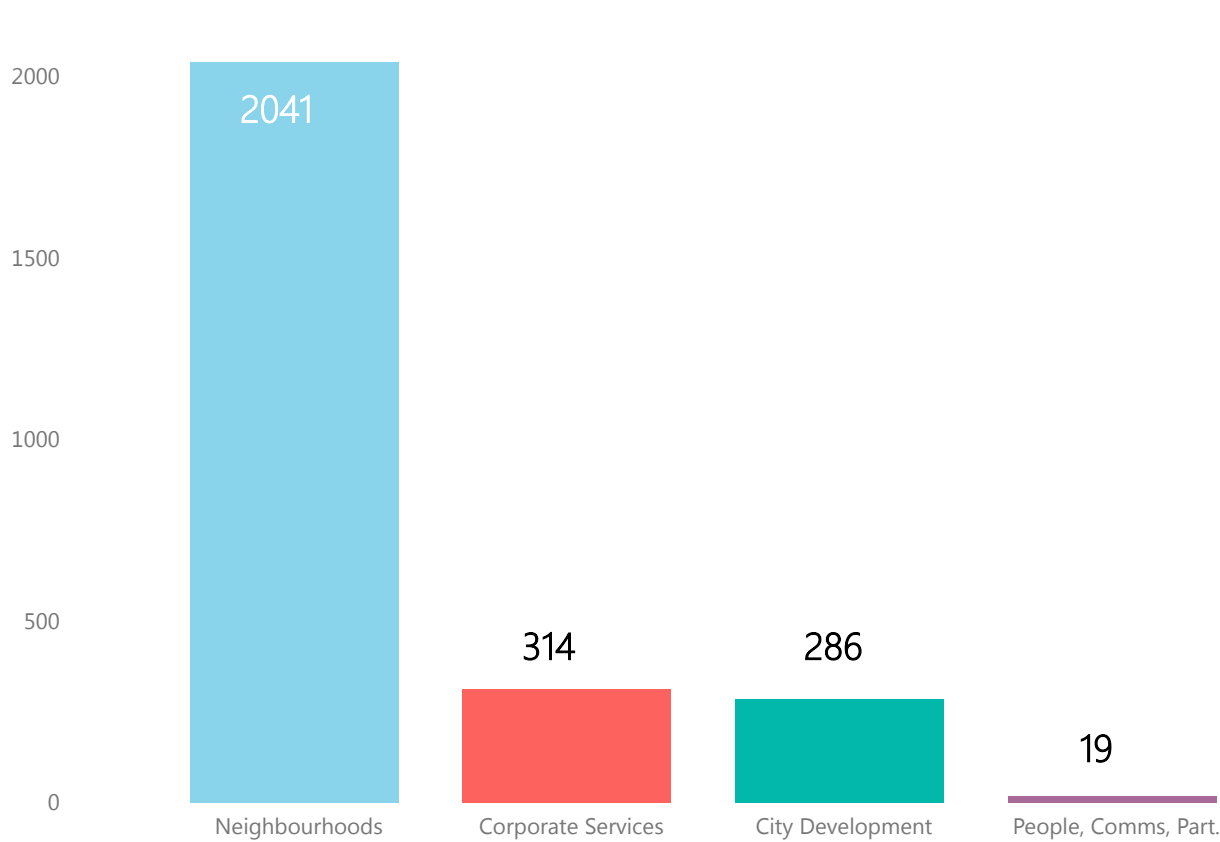
Appendix 1	-	Compliments
Appendix 2	-	Ombudsman complaints
Appendix 3	-	Corporate complaints
Appendix 4	-	Adult Statutory complaints
Appendix 5	-	Sunderland Care and Support complaints
Appendix 6	-	Together for Children

Complaint Overview



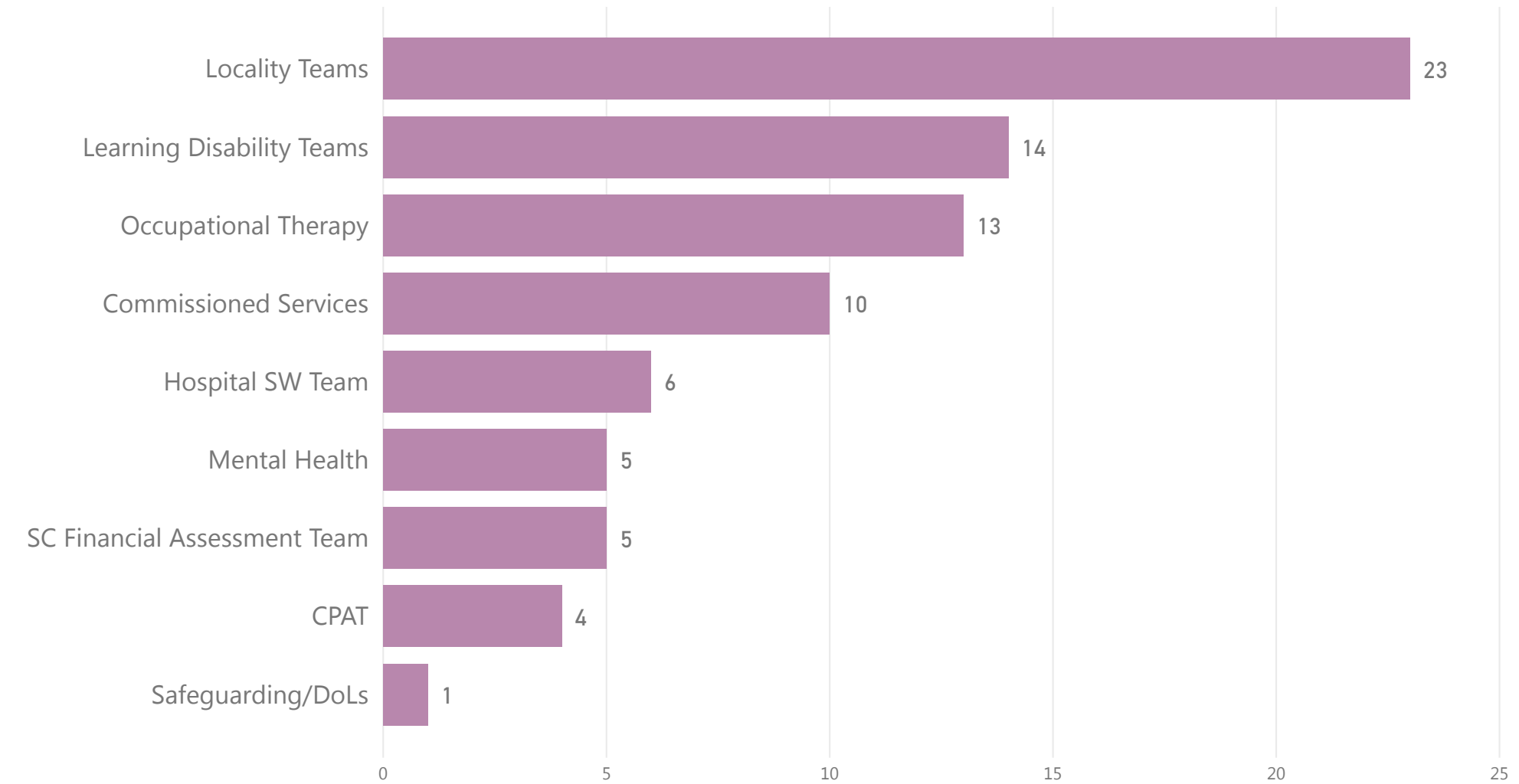
Corporate Stage One - 2660

Corporate Stage Two - 31



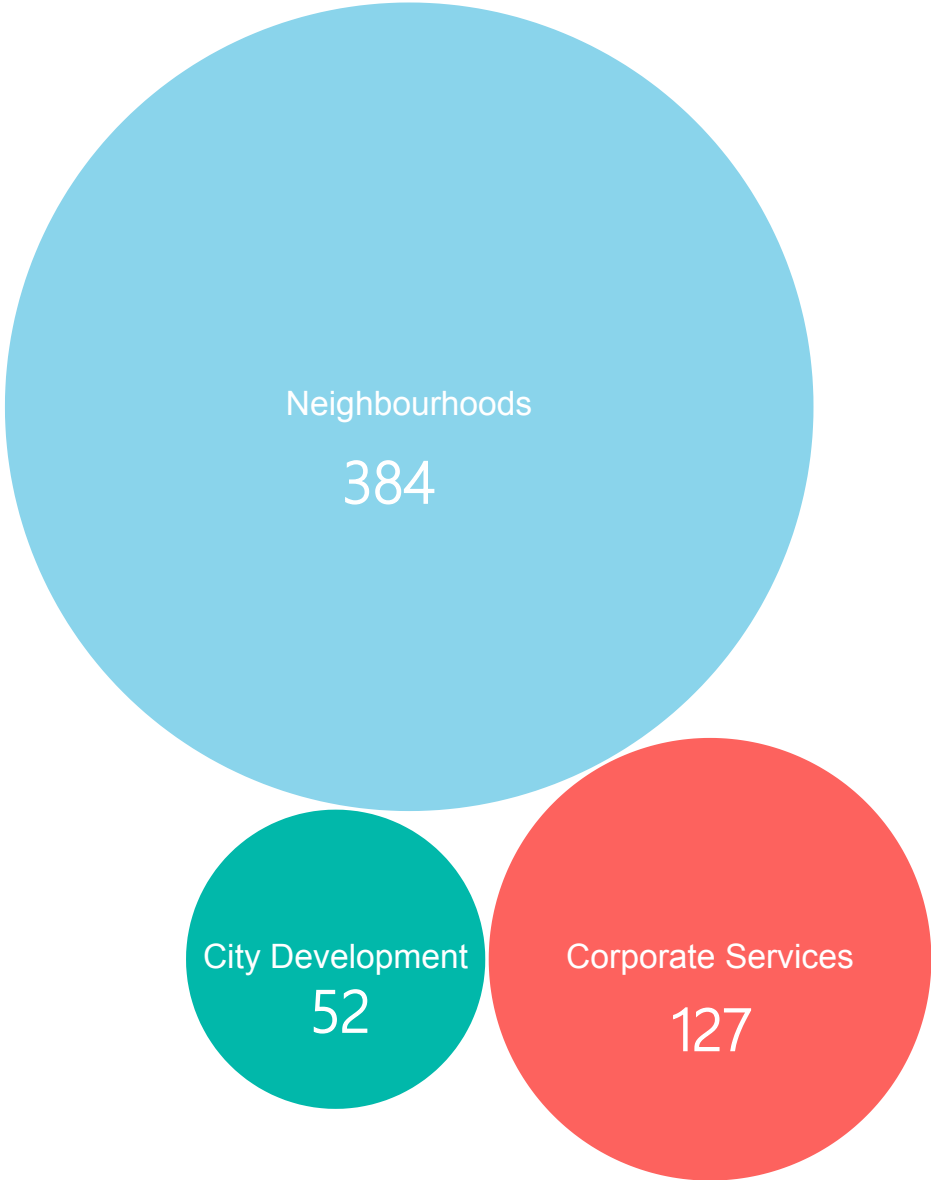
Complaint Overview

Neighbourhoods - Adult Statutory Social Care - 81



Compliments

Compliments - 563 (Without SCAS)



I have found the worker very helpful and proactive in sorting a problem with a piece of equipment. The worker was very thorough and went above and beyond to help. It was clear that the worker wanted the best for the customer.

Compliments to the council tax recovery team for helping to resolve a council tax issue. The customer stated they couldn't thank the member of staff who helped them enough

Customer rang to say thank you to the bin crew for been so helpful she said that they always help her on her bin collection.

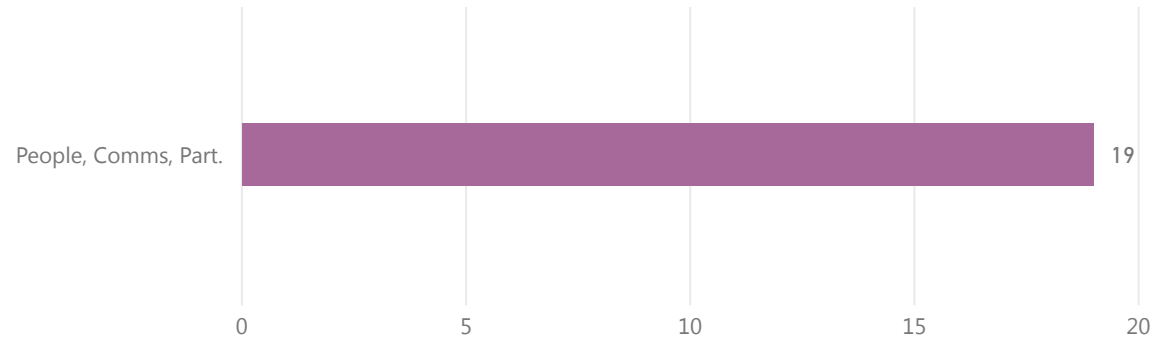
Thank you, Sunderland Council and Summer Streets, for a great local event! Attended this festival over the last few years and watched it grow! Cliffe Park this year was the best yet. Music, activities and a real family & friends' atmosphere! Well done!

The staff at the building planning section, have been incredibly helpful and cheerful. Thank you

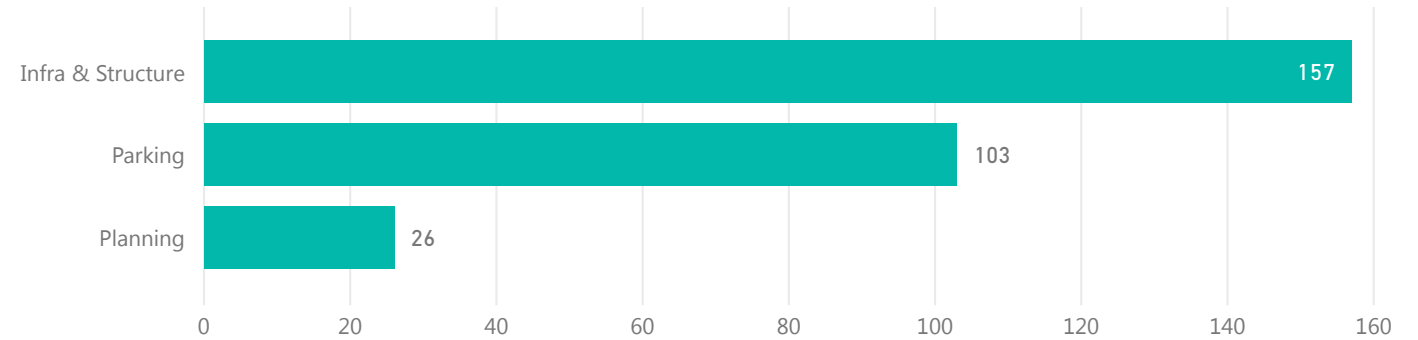
As part of Sunderland Libraries Literature Festival, the customer took the opportunity to attend the Local Studies Library for a taster session on Find My Past. The customer said the guide was welcoming, very knowledgeable and provided clear guidance including pctical tips on search strategies. She was very approachable, and nothing was too much trouble

Corporate Complaints Breakdown for Stage 1

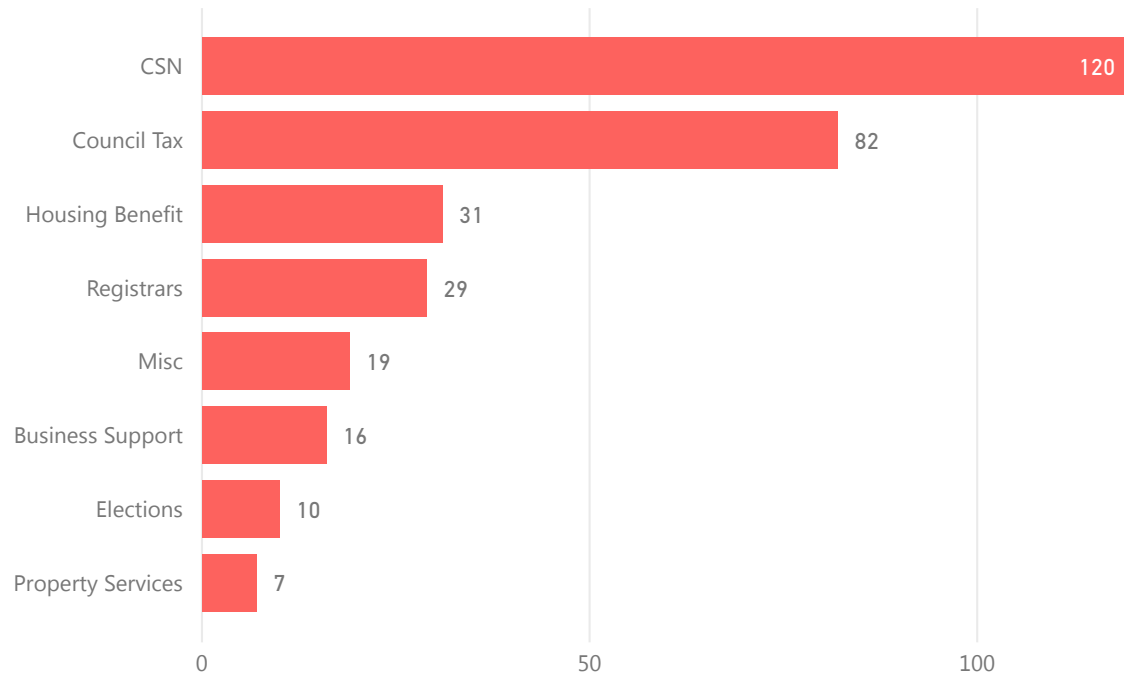
People, Communications and Partnerships - 19



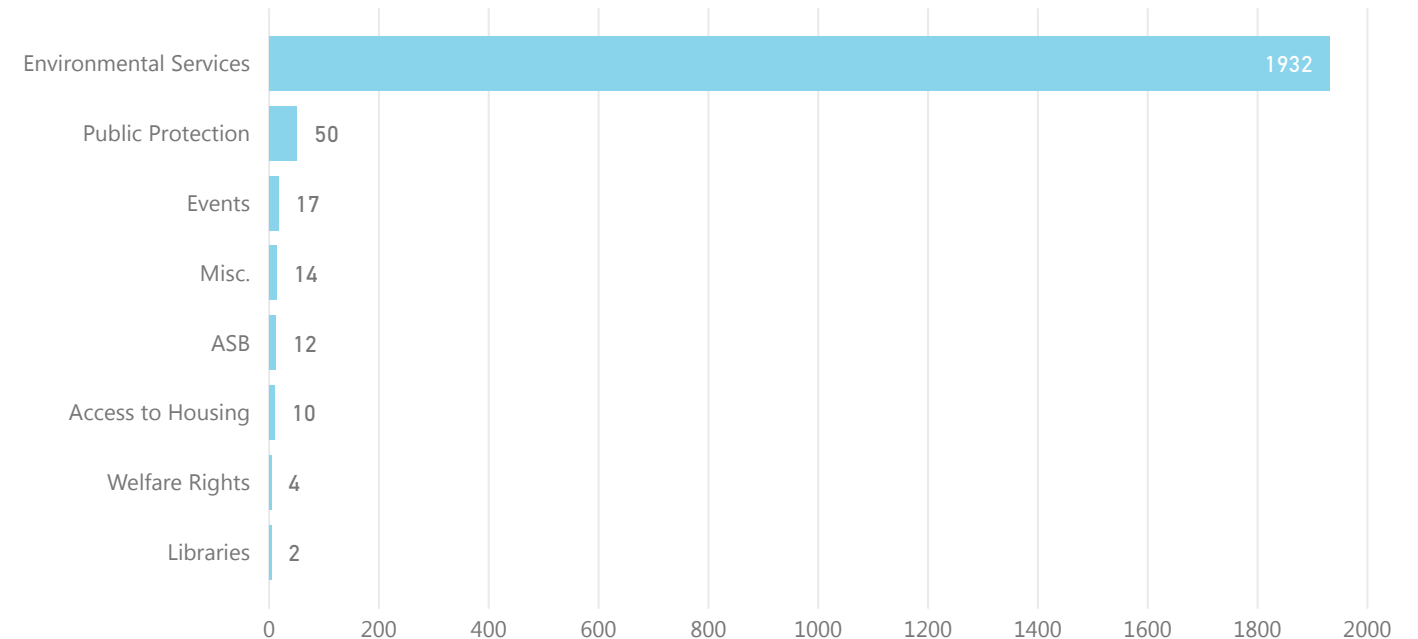
City Development - 286



Corporate Services - 314



Neighbourhoods - 2041



PART B

Compliments

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction. Compliments are logged centrally through the Complaints and Feedback Team.

Information on compliments is attached as **Appendix 1**

Complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local councils. The Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has been through the council's complaints procedure and the customer remains unhappy. Complaints from the Ombudsman are made against the council including those about Children's Services.

Information on Ombudsman complaints is attached as **Appendix 2**

Corporate Complaints Procedure

How the procedure works:

There are two stages to the council's Corporate Complaints Procedure;

Stage One: These are dealt with by the Directorate and should be completed within 25 working days. All responses advise the complainant that if they remain dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint to the Complaints and Feedback Team for review.

Stage Two (Review): Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint, they can request a review be undertaken by the Complaints and Feedback Team. Complainants are advised that, should they remain dissatisfied with the response at stage two, they can ask the Ombudsman to consider their complaint.

Information on Corporate complaints is attached as **Appendix 3**.

Statutory Procedures

Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure

Legislation & Regulations

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 provides for a single complaints process for all health and local authority *adult social care services* in England.

How the procedure works:

There is one stage to the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure.

One Stage (Local Resolution by the Council): local resolution is about the council trying to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source as possible. We acknowledge complaints within three working days and make arrangements for an appropriate manager to consider the issues and provide a response to the complainant.

Most complaints can be dealt with and resolved satisfactorily at the local resolution stage, however, if this is not the case, any unresolved concerns can be referred to the Ombudsman.

Information on Adult Statutory complaints is attached as **Appendix 4**

Sunderland Care and Support

Sunderland Care and Support is a Local Authority Trading Company, formed in December 2013, wholly owned by Sunderland City Council. The company has a board of directors appointed by the council (as the shareholder of the holding company).

Sunderland Care and Support offers care and support 24/7 to more than 6,000 vulnerable customers across a wide range of services including: Supported Living schemes for people with a Learning disability, Mental Health needs; Autism or challenging behaviour; Day Services and Short Break care services; Intermediate Care and Reablement services; Sunderland Telecare; Community Equipment Service; and Home Improvement Agency.

How the procedure works:

Complaints are dealt with under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure. Some eligible complaints may fall outside this procedure and these complaints are considered as a corporate complaint.

A report from Sunderland Care and Support regarding all complaints received and handled by them in Q1 is attached as **Appendix 5**

Children's Services Statutory Complaints

Legislation & Regulations

Statutory regulations were introduced by the Department for Education in 2006 entitled '*Getting the Best from Complaints – Social Care Complaints and Representations Procedure for Children and Young People*' to deal with complaints and representations made to Children's Services by children and young people (the regulations and guidance cover complaints and representations made by children and young people).

On 1 April 2017 *Together for Children*, the new company responsible for Children's Services in Sunderland came into operation. The statutory duty to deliver services for children remains with the council, who commissions the company to deliver services.

How the procedure works:

There are three stages to Together for Children's Complaints Procedure;

Stage One: An emphasis is placed on local problem solving. Complaints are acknowledged within three working days and responded to within 10 working days (with a possible extension to 20 working days in total).

Stage Two: If dissatisfied a complainant can progress their complaint to stage two. An investigation is undertaken by an Investigating Officer who has not been involved with the case. An Independent Person must be appointed to oversee the investigation, and these are commissioned externally. Investigations should be completed within 25 working days, although an extension of up to 65 working days is allowed.

Stage Three: This is an Independent Review Panel, comprising of an independent chair and two independent panel members. A panel must take place within 30 working days of receiving the request from the complainant. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they can request a further investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman.

The 6-monthly report from Together for Children is attached as **Appendix 6**

Appendix 1: Compliments

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020	% change from same period last year
Q1 -Apr-Jun	137	126	152	+21%
Q2 - Jul-Sep	146	184	176	-4%
Q3 - Oct-Dec	134	170	120	-29%
Q4 - Jan-Mar	140	134	115	-14%
	557	614	563	-8%

Some examples of compliments received in Q4

Adult Services

I just wanted to formally thank you for the support, advice and guidance you have provided me and my family in helping my mam over recent months.

I just want to let you know I really appreciate the occupational therapist...who has been very supportive and helpful, she always goes above and beyond call of duty... so thank you very much

Council Tax

The worker was very helpful, and the customer was delighted in the service she received.

Customer Service Network

The officer who had been dealing with my query had been really helpful and I felt so much better now that everything had been resolved. The officer has been an Angel.

Customer spoke to officer regarding a council tax over-payment. The officer made enquiries and rang the customer back promptly to advise that this was a system error, and that the overpayment had been removed from his account. Customer felt that the staff member went the extra mile, and that she was a very brilliant and helpful advisor

Environmental Services

Customer rang to say thank for a speedy service as she ordered a bin and it was received this morning. The guy who delivered the bin was lovely and helpful and took the old bin away

Customer would like to say thank you for the quick delivery of her replacement caddy

Following a request for a grave to be topped up the customer said it was completed quickly and she was very pleased with the work carried out. She wanted to say thank you.

I am delighted to see the streets looking so much cleaner...My back lane has never been so clean

Events

I wanted to say thank you so much for all your help for Friday it went really well and the guests were really happy...Thank you to all the team for making us feel so welcome and for all your patience as well, it's greatly appreciated...We got some great feedback about the location from our team here as well...It was a pleasure to meet you and have a look around the Museum as well it looks amazing!

Highways / Network Management

Thank you to the highways department for a speedy service to repair the pot hole reported recently.

Customer would like to thank the team that went out today to install disabled bay outside her home. She is very happy, this will help her a lot

Housing Options

Thanks for all your help with this matter. It makes life so much easier when you get a proactive case worker.

Parking Services

Thank you to wardens for their actions and time

Customer would like to thank parking services. The officer was in customers street for nearly an hour after 3pm keeping school traffic from parking on the zig zag lines.

Appendix 2

Complaints dealt with by the Ombudsman

The Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local councils. The Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has been through the council's complaints procedure and the customer remains unhappy.

Complaints Received at the Council

The Council received 38 complaints from the Ombudsman for the period 2019-20. This is an increase of 44% on the previous year. The tables below provide comparative data to previous quarters/years.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Q1	6	6	5	6
Q2	4	6	10	11
Q3	18	8	6	6
Q4	11	11	6	15
Total	39	31	27	38

The table below shows the number of complaints received for each Directorate, how many of those complaints the Ombudsman chose to investigate; and from those investigations how many were upheld.

	Complaints made to the Ombudsman 2019-20	Number Investigated by Ombudsman	Number upheld by ombudsman	% upheld rate
City Development	9	0	0	
Corporate Services	6	0	0	
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	9	5	2	40%
Neighbourhoods (other)	5	0	0	
People, Communications & Partnerships	0	0	0	
Together for Children	9	6	5	83%
	38	11	7	64%

Detailed Investigations

Of the 11 detailed investigations, 7 were upheld, providing the outcome rate of 64%. This compares to 62% in 2018-19 and 64% in 2017-18.

Information on all complaints received from the Ombudsman is included throughout the year in the quarterly reports presented to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. Information on the 7 upheld complaints is set out below. This information includes the Ombudsman's reference and the full report can be found on their website; www.lgo.org.uk.

Complaints Upheld (7)

Adult Services (Sunderland City Council - 18 018 804)

A complaint about the council's refusal to issue a Concessionary Travel Pass.

Outcome: *The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint as there was no unremedied injustice*

Adult Services – (Sunderland City Council 18 007 253)

Complaint about the level of care a relative received at a nursing home

Outcome: *The Council was asked to apologise and make a payment to reflect avoidable distress*

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 18 004 685)

Delay in transfer from a SEN to an EHCP; son has not received the support he is entitled to

Outcome: *The council has apologised for the delay and made a payment to the complainant for missed provision.*

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 19 002 360)

Disagreement with a decision made by TfC not to progress complaint to stage 2 of the complaint's procedure.

Outcome: *The council apologised and made immediate arrangements for the complaint to be considered at Stage 2.*

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 19 004 608)

A complaint that the Council had not properly considered a claim for compensation.

Outcome: *No further action required as the Ombudsman considered the injustice had already been remedied.*

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 18 017 487)

Complaint about how the Council had handled contact issues regarding her grandchildren

Outcome: *The Council apologised for a lack of communication and not keeping the complainant informed.*

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 19 002 550)

A complaint about the Council's actions regarding its involvement with his child and a delay in implementing recommendations.

Outcome: *The Council apologised for the lengthy complaint's procedure, and delay in providing copies of minutes. An offer of compensation was made to acknowledge time, trouble and avoidable distress.*

Appendix 3 – Corporate Complaints

CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage One

These are dealt with by the Directorate and should be completed within 25 working days. All responses advise the complainant that if they remain dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint to the Complaints and Feedback Team for review. Below is a table showing corporate complaint numbers for Stage One complaints.

	<i>Number of complaints 2017-18</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Q1	3,315	1,951	704	-64%	92%
Q2	2,415	1,389	770	-44%	96%
Q3	1,496	592	684	+16%	95%
Q4	1,231	499	502	+0.5%	91%
	8,457	4,431	2660	-40%	90%

The 502 complaints received during 2019/20 are broken down into Directorates in the table below;

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	%
City Development	47	75	89	75	286	11%
Corporate Services	91	74	59	90	314	12%
Neighbourhood's	560	612	532	337	2041	76%
People, Communication & Partnerships	6	9	4	0	19	1%
Total	704	770	684	502	2660	100%

Neighbourhoods

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Environmental Services	537	574	510	311	1932
Libraries	2	0	0	0	2
Access to Housing	2	3	2	3	10
Anti-social Behaviour	1	5	4	2	12
Welfare Rights	0	2	1	1	4
Public Protection	11	15	6	18	50
Events	1	11	5	0	17
Misc.	6	2	4	2	14
Total	560	612	532	337	2041

Complaints in respect of Environmental Services make up 95% of the complaints made against the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

The table below provides a breakdown of the service areas within Environmental Services for 2019/20.

Total	Place Management Service/Team Area	Issues of Complaint
1583	Refuse	<i>Non/late delivery of bins & caddies/missed bins</i>
31	Bereavement	<i>Maintenance of cemeteries/ crematorium</i>
215	Street Cleaning	<i>Fly tipping/dog bins/grass cutting/litter collections; pruning/removal shrubs & bushes; public toilets.</i>
57	Trees, fixed play, trade waste	<i>Grass cutting/ tree pruning</i>
16	Enforcement	<i>Fly tipping/littering/dog fouling</i>
30	Waste Management	<i>Beach Street Depot – staff attitude/permits</i>
1932		

Refuse Complaints

Of the 1932 complaints received for Environmental Services, 1583 (82%) were about issues to do with refuse collection.

This should be viewed in context; in any quarter the council will service approximately 1.6 million containers, therefore this number of complaints represents approximately 0.02% of activity for this service area.

The table below contains a breakdown of complaints about refuse.

Refuse Complaints	Number of Complaints for 2018/19	Number of Complaints for 2019/20	% change from previous year
Q1	1,606	433	-73%
Q2	1,012	464	-54%
Q3	358	454	+27%
Q4	253	232	-8%
Total	3,229	1583	-51%

There has been a 49% decrease in numbers from Q3 to Q4. A similar drop was noticed in the previous year, which also saw Q4 record the lowest number of complaints.

Overall there has been a year on year reduction amounting to -51%

City Development

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Planning & Property	4	7	6	9	26
Infrastructure & Transport	21	51	43	42	157
Parking	22	17	40	24	103
Total	47	75	89	75	286

Infrastructure & Transport

Complaints about this service area were regarding road resurfacing, footway repairs, traffic calming/restrictions and potholes.

Corporate Services

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Council Tax	22	19	17	24	82
Customer Service Network	38	26	23	33	120
Benefits	8	7	6	10	31
Property Services	3	2	0	2	7
Business Support Services	2	7	5	2	16
Registrars	9	9	5	6	29
Electoral Services	5	2	1	2	10
Misc.	4	2	2	11	19
Total	91	74	59	90	314

Complaints regarding the Customer Service Network (CSN) make up 38% of complaints made about Corporate Services. Viewing the complaints in context the CSN handled just over 1.4 million contacts in the financial year 2019/20. 120 complaints represents a dissatisfaction rate of 0.008%

Stage Two - Review

Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint, they can request a review be undertaken by the Complaints and Feedback Team. Complainants are advised in the final response that, should they remain dissatisfied, they can ask the Ombudsman to look into their complaint.

Completed Stage 2 Reviews				
	<i>Number of Reviews 2017-18</i>	<i>Number of Reviews 2018-19</i>	Number of Reviews 2019/20	% responded to within 25-day timescale
Q1	5	4	5	100%
Q2	7	8	7	86%
Q3	3	6	8	63%
Q4	8	6	11	82%
Total	23	24	31	81%

The Complaints and Feedback Team undertake most Stage 2 Reviews and aim to do this within 25 working days. There are times when more complex cases require further time to complete and the aim is to complete these within 65 working days.

6 Reviews (19%) took longer than 25 working days to conclude. 3 were completed within 30 working days; 2 within 40 working days and 1 took 57 working days.

Each of these reviews had a higher level of complexity requiring a more comprehensive consideration. The Review which took 57 days was also subject to extra delay due to the time of the year (Christmas) where planned holidays and also officer sickness had an impact.

Outcome of Stage 2 Reviews

Directorate	Total	Upheld in full	Upheld in part	Not upheld	Other
City Development	12	1	0	9	2
Corporate Services	7	0	4	3	0
Neighbourhoods	12	2	6	4	0
People, Communications & Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0
Total	31	3	10	16	2
		10%	32%	52%	6%

Details on the Stage 2 Reviews have been included in the quarterly reports provided to the Scrutiny Committee. Information is included below on the three reviews that were upheld.

Information on those Reviews that were upheld are included below for information.

Reviews Upheld (3)

Cleansing & Ground Maintenance - *customer unhappy that his pet, which had been knocked over, had not been stored correctly by the council and procedures for returning the animal had not been followed.*

The council fully accepted that correct procedure had not been followed on this occasion. The service area reviewed its processes and staff were reminded of the correct procedure. Apologies and compensation were offered to the complainant for the distress and inconvenience caused.

Bereavement Services - *A grave excavated in the wrong section of a cemetery.*

An administration error resulted in the family's request not being actioned appropriately. The Council did respond quickly to remedy the situation and offered sincere apologies and paid the funeral invoice. Internal procedures have been revised to prevent similar errors occurring.

Parking Services - *Delay in providing a response to a request for service regarding parking spaces outside their property.*

The request should have been forwarded to Parking Services for consideration but due to an oversight this did not happen. Whilst the actual request was outside of the scope of the council's remit, the customer should have been advised of this in a timely manner. The council apologised for the unacceptable delay.

Appendix 4: Adult Social Care

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Adult Social Care

Below is a table showing complaint numbers for this year together with some comparative data for the previous two years.

	<i>Number of complaints 2017-18</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Apr-Jun	30	14	24	+71%	69%
Jul-Sep	33	38	21	-45%	69%
Oct-Dec	32	18	20	+11%	66%
Jan-Mar	42	23	16	-30%	31%
Total	137	93	81	-13%	59%

81 complaints were received in the year 2019-20 regarding adult social care services. This is down (-13%) on last year's figure of 93.

The nature of complaints

Below is a table showing the nature of the complaints received, together with some comparative data for the previous two years.

Nature of Complaint	<i>Number of complaints 2017-18</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	
Actions of worker	45	22	21	26%
Assessment Disagreement	18	10	10	12%
Breach of Confidentiality	0	1	0	
Care Practice Issues	0	1	1	1%
Communication	15	11	11	14%
Delay	24	13	6	7%
Equipment Issues	1	1	2	3%
Finance	12	17	13	16%
Lack of choice	4	0	5	6%
Quality Issues	16	14	9	11%
Actions of residents	1	0	2	3%
Lack of help/support	1	3	1	1%
	137	93	81	100%

Outcome of complaints

Complaint Outcomes	Number of complaints 2017-18	Number of complaints 2018-19	Number of complaints 2019-20	
Upheld in full	33	27	11	13%
Upheld in part	23	18	20	25%
Not Upheld	44	32	41	51%
NE/WD/OTH**	37	16	5	6%
Ongoing	0	0	4	5%
	137	93	81	100%

**not eligible/withdrawn/other

31 complaints (38%) had some element upheld.

46 complaints (57%) were either; not upheld, withdrawn, not eligible or classified as 'other'.

Ongoing complaints

There are 4 complaints (5%) ongoing with outcomes not yet known. Unfortunately, the impact of Covid-19 has meant we have not been able to conclude responses to some complaints. In these instances, customers have been advised of the situation and the delay. The Complaints and Feedback Team review the situation on a regular basis. Responses will be provided as soon as it is possible to do so.

Detailed Investigations

Whilst under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure there are no defined stages, there are still those complaints that have a high level of complexity requiring a more comprehensive consideration.

2 detailed investigations were completed during the period 2019-20 which equates to 2.5% of all complaints received. This compares to 5 investigations in 2018-19 and 2 investigations in 2017-18.

The internal target for completing detailed investigations is 90 working days, although due to the nature of the investigations this is only a guideline as it is important that the investigations are given due consideration. One investigation was completed in 114 working days with the other investigation taking 136 working days. Both investigations were carried out by independent investigators and the longer timescales reflect the complex nature of the complaints being investigated and the involvement of third-party agencies/care providers.

The two investigations had a total of 15 separate elements of complaint and the outcomes of these elements are included in the table below:

Outcomes	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld	Other	Total
No. of elements	6	2	6	1	15
%	40%	13%	40%	7%	100%

Information on both investigations has been included in the quarterly reports provided to the Scrutiny Committee. In all cases where a complaint has been upheld or partly upheld the council has offered its apologies and provided an explanation as to how the issue had occurred.

Themes and trends arising from all complaints are analysed and used to identify any staff training needs which can ultimately lead to an improvement in service delivery. Below is a summary of the learning outcomes from these investigations:

Complaint Investigation 1

A complaint that a care home had not provided adequate care for a relative and had continued to charge fees for the period after the relative gave notice to end the placement; the following learning outcomes were achieved:

- The care home reviewed all staff levels of training in respect of dementia and all staff will receive yearly refresher training in dementia.
- The care home has adapted a problem solving and decision-making process tool. Staff have received supervision sessions regarding this to help them develop their skills. An escalation process is also now place.
- A new computer system is now in place which allows staff to work to individual daily targets.
- The care home has reiterated to staff the importance of following the protocols of updating appropriate documentation.
- The care home introduced a process to ensure that any irregular medication administered by the District Nurse is documented to include information on the date last administered; amount in stock; and the date it is next due.

Complaint Investigation 2

The complaint was about a failure to follow proper procedure and practice in the assessment, calculation and notification in determining the financial contribution to a care support package.

The Investigating Officer found no evidence to suggest any incorrect procedure or practice; but did find that key information had not been provided to the family in either a timely, accurate or acceptably professional way at certain points in the process.

The investigating officer noted that a previous response from the Council to the complainant had addressed this point and had also offered a suitable remedy at the time.

The following outcomes were achieved:

- The Council reiterated its apology for any confusion or inconvenience
- To offer clarity, the family were provided with a further written breakdown of how the care support costs been calculated, and confirmation of the final arrears sum.
- The family were offered the option of paying the outstanding arrears in monthly instalments rather than a single payment.

Appendix 5:



REPORT TO SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

SUNDERLAND CARE AND SUPPORT LIMITED (SCAS)

COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS Q4 2019-20 (JANUARY-MARCH 2020) UPDATE

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Sunderland City Council's Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on recent performance activity in relation to SCAS compliments and complaints.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Council's Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are requested to note the contents of the report.

3 OUR APPROACH

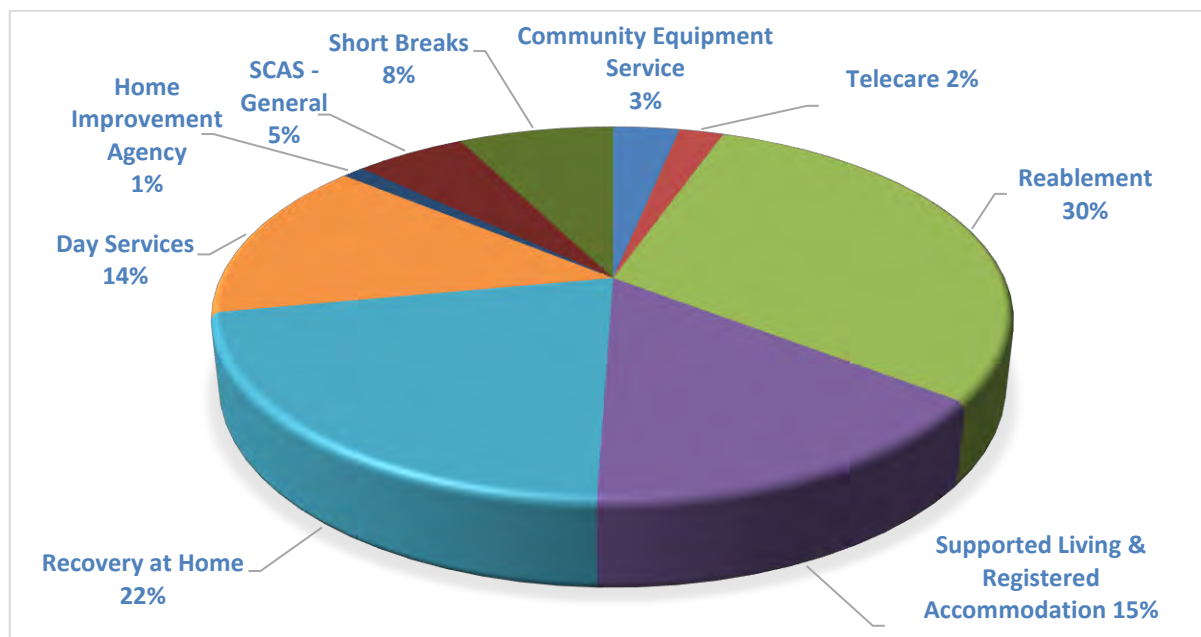
- 3.1 Sunderland Care and Support Limited takes pride in the high-quality services we provide our customers.
- 3.2 We pro-actively welcome both positive and negative feedback from all of our customers and view this as our opportunity to learn and to improve; and recognise that such feedback helps us to corroborate the standard of service our customers receive.
- 3.3 This reporting period has been quite extraordinary given that it covers both the end of the winter when SCAS characteristically expect to see an increase in demand, it also captures the start of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic. But despite this unprecedented scenario, the Company has continued to deliver within what have been extremely challenging circumstances, using creative means to ensure that we have supported our customers both in the community and in an out of hospital pathway.

4 COMPLIMENTS

- 4.1 It is of note, that despite this report covering the beginning of the Pandemic, a total of **93** compliments were received by the Company from **1st January** to **31st March 2020**, representing only 7 (7%) less than had been recorded over the previous period.

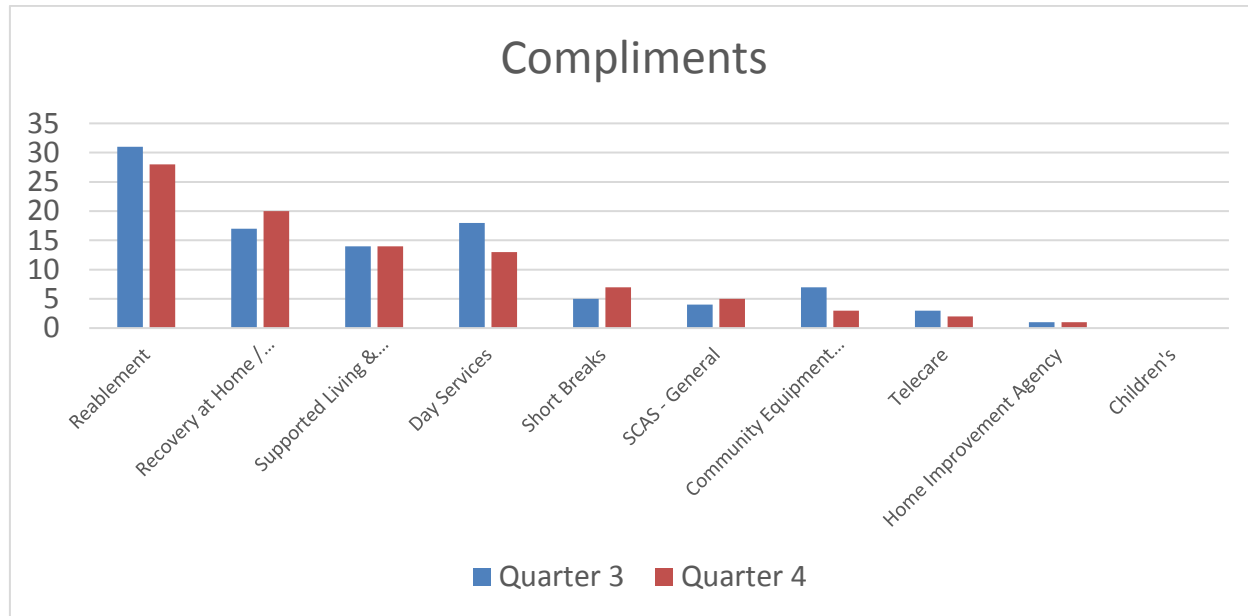
Q4 Compliments Breakdown - Distribution

4.2 Compliments received during Quarter 4 were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Reablement:** 28 (30%) - **three less than the previous quarter**
- **Recovery at Home / Farmborough Court:** 20 (22%) - **three more than the previous quarter**
- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation:** 14 (15%) - **no change from the previous quarter**
- **Day Services:** 13 (14%) - **five less than the previous quarter**
- **Short Breaks:** 7 (8%) - **two more than the previous quarter**
- **SCAS - General:** 5 (5%) - **one more than the previous quarter**
- **Community Equipment Service:** 3 (3%) - **four less than the previous quarter**
- **Telecare:** 2 (2%) - **one less than the previous quarter**
- **Home Improvement Agency:** 1 (1%) - **no change from the previous quarter**
- **Children's:** zero - **no change from the previous quarter**

4.3 Q4 Compliments Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



4.4 It is of note that around 60% of Service Areas services saw an increase or equivalent number of compliments received in the quarter with the remainder seeing a small reduction, however it should also be noted that during the final four weeks of the quarter the City was experiencing the impact of the Pandemic therefore we wouldn't have expected to see as many customers taking the time to offer feedback.

4.5 Q4 Compliments Breakdown - Synopsis

4.6 Praise during the quarter was extensive, a few highlights of which include:

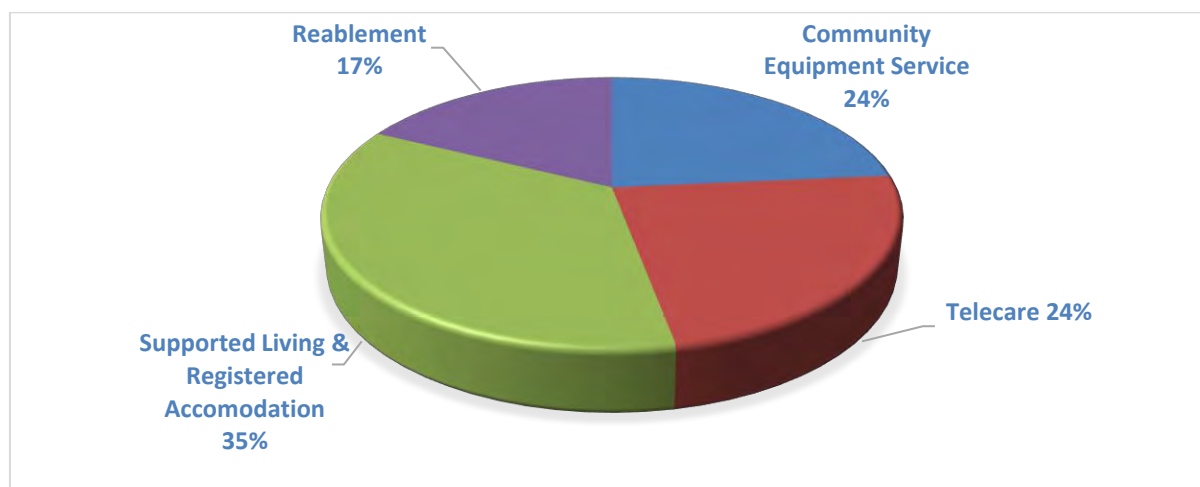
- Letter of thanks in recognition of the £9800 raised by SCAS from their 2019 chosen charities Sunderland City Hospital's Integrated Care Unit (ICCU) and the Sunderland RNLI
- Letter of thanks in recognition of the regular donations made by SCAS to Sunderland Foodbank
- Short Break Care – thanks for the 'outstanding care' provided
- Community Equipment Service – thanks for the 'fabulous' service provided
- Farmborough Court – thanks for the "patient and gentle care" from staff who are "walking angels and a huge credit"
- Reablement – appreciation of the 'wonderful' service provided by 'proactive, positive and hard-working' staff
- Member of the public observing SCAS staff supporting customers in the community – 'showed care and compassion rarely seen to this standard'

5 COMPLAINTS

5.1 It is of note, that despite this report covering the beginning of the Pandemic, a total of **17** complaints were received by the Company from **1st January to 31st March 2020**, representing **12 (29%) less** than had been recorded over the previous period.

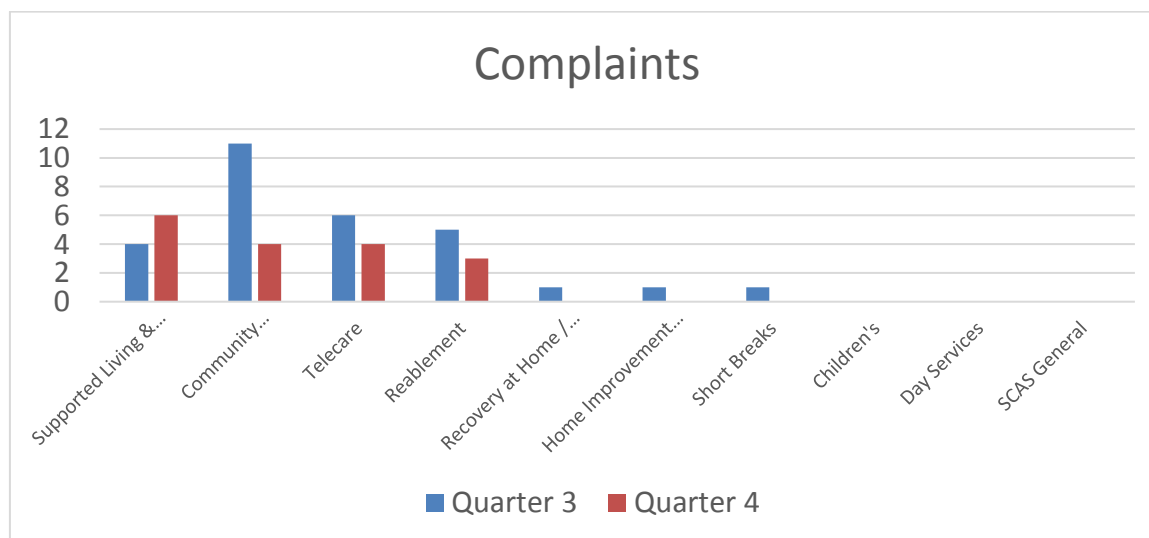
5.2 Q4 Complaints Breakdown – Distribution

5.3 Complaints received during Quarter 4 were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation:** 6 (35%) - two more than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service:** 4 (24%) - seven less than the previous quarter
- **Telecare:** 4 (24%) - two less than the previous quarter
- **Reablement:** 3 (17%) - two less than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home:** zero - one less than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency:** zero - one less than the previous quarter
- **Short Break:** zero - one less than the previous quarter
- **Children's:** zero - no change from the previous quarter
- **Day Services:** zero - no change from the previous quarter
- **SCAS - General:** zero - no change from the previous quarter

5.4 Q4 Complaints Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



- 5.5 It is of note that 60% of Service Areas saw **zero** complaints during Quarter 4.
- 5.6 It is also of note that around 90% of Service Areas received zero complaints or significantly less complaints than seen during the previous quarter, with only one Service Area noting a slight increase for the period, however it should also be noted that during the final four weeks of the quarter the city was experiencing the impact of the pandemic therefore we wouldn't have expected to see as many customers taking the time to offer feedback.

Of particular interest was that the **Community Equipment Service** saw a **63% decrease** in complaints when compared with figures for the previous quarter - and an **88% reduction** when compared against complaints received by the Service during the first quarter of 2019/20.

5.7 **Q4 Complaints Breakdown - Resolution**

- 5.7 Of the complaints received during the period, 15 (88%) were to be resolved locally utilising the Company's Step 1 - Local Resolution complaints procedures and 1 (6%) to be resolved formally using the Company's Step 2 - Formal Resolution complaints procedure. One other complaint was noted as to be resolved under the Company's Step 3 – External Resolution complaints procedure.

6 **COVID-19 REPORTING**

- 6.1 Throughout the reporting period the company have continued to operate within the scope of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedures, despite the temporary suspension of complaints clinics at the peak of the pandemic.
- 6.2 Complaints clinics are now being reinitiated using MS Teams in order to ensure social distancing is observed.

7 **OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

- 7.1 Just prior to the pandemic the Company successfully completed a thorough review of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedures.
- 7.2 The review of our Whistleblowing Policy, originally scheduled for Quarter 1 of 2020/2021 but delayed due to the Pandemic, is expected to be completed during the next reporting period, at which time it is planned that the company will relaunch both Policy documents across the Company
- 7.3 It is of note that during the reporting period Sunderland City Council's Complaints Team had supported SCAS to access Complaints Management training, led by the LGO, that would, but for the Pandemic, have been delivered during the Quarter. It is hoped that this opportunity will be made available again in the future.

Together for Children Customer Feedback Annual Report 2019-2020



HIGHLIGHT SUMMARY 2019/20

What are our key achievements?

- We have received 301 compliments/positive feedback this year from children, young people, families and professionals.
- We successfully helped 120 customers to receive satisfactory resolutions to their issues or concerns informally, without having to initiate a complaint.
- Overall the number of complaints received has reduced by 34% with almost all our services seeing a decrease in the number of complaints.
- The number of complaints relating to our largest service area, child protection has decreased by 23% when compared with the previous year.
- We have reduced compensation payments in relation to upheld complaints.

What are our areas of focus for 2020/21?

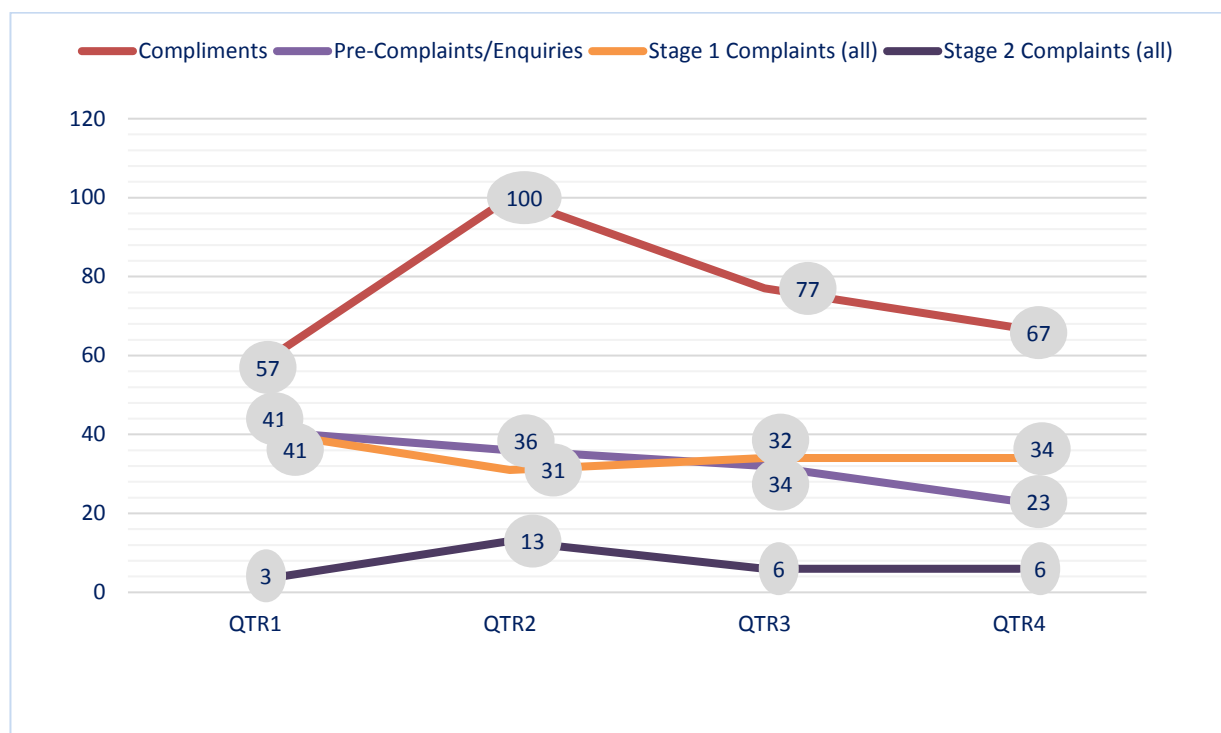
- Reducing the number of non-statutory complaints.
- Improving the timeliness of stage 1 responses to prevent complaints escalating to stage 2.
- Improving stage 2 investigation and adjudication timescales.
- Addressing the causes of communication/contact complaints.

1. PURPOSE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

- 1.1. This report covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. Together for Children (TfC) welcomes all forms feedback as a way of improving service delivery to children, young people and families. The report provides an overview of customer feedback received throughout the year, identifying topics and trends in relation to complaints information and areas of organisational learning that have taken place in response to feedback received.

2. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

- 2.1. The Customer Feedback Team are responsible for receiving, recording and responding to feedback received from children, young people and families regarding services delivered by Together for Children. The following graph shows the different types of feedback received in each quarter in 2019/20.



3. COMPLIMENTS & POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- 3.1. In 2019/20, we received 301 compliments from children and young people, parents and other family members, foster carers, external professionals and staff within TfC.
- 3.2. Positive feedback is communicated to workers and management structures of the relevant teams and is used to congratulate workers and teams and to inform service developments and best practice. Compliments are also shared more widely with the Senior Management Team and the TfC Communications Manager, so all staff can be recognised for their dedication and hard work.
- 3.3. There has been an increase of 22 compliments compared with the previous year which is a 7.9% increase in recognition of good practice. The table below shows the breakdown of compliments received by each team in each quarter. The highest number of compliments were received in relation to Early Help Services and Child Protection Teams with CLA & Permanence Teams, Next Steps Teams, children's homes, the IRO Service, and Fostering Team receiving high numbers.

Team	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Total 2019/20
Assessment Teams	3	4	1	2	10
Children with Disabilities Team	2	4	4	3	13
Children's Homes	7	1	5	5	18
Commissioning Team	0	1	0	0	1
Communications Team	0	2	3	0	5
Connexions Service	0	0	1	0	1
Child Protection Teams	9	16	15	12	52
Customer Feedback Team	1	1	0	0	2
Early Help Service	12	40	6	14	72
Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)	1	0	0	0	1
Family Time Service	0	0	2	0	2
Fostering Service	4	4	4	5	17
Human Resources Service	0	2	2	0	4
ICRT	0	0	1	0	1
IRO Service	2	7	3	4	16
CLA and Permanence Teams	8	9	11	2	30
Legal Service	0	0	0	2	2
Next Steps Teams	1	6	7	5	19
Participation and Engagement Service	0	2	5	0	7
Performance Team	0	0	1	1	2
SEND Team	1	1	1	3	6
Youth Offending Service	1	0	3	6	10
TOTAL	57	100	77	67	301

3.4. Below are some examples of compliments we received in 2019-2020:

Early Help Service

- “I am writing to thank you and your amazing team, for the excellent support shown to our daughter, our three grandchildren and my husband and I, through the most difficult time we have ever had. Without your support I don't think we would be where we are today. Our daughter is a year alcohol free and in a much brighter place. xx, who was our daughter's support worker is an absolute credit to your team, always there to listen and help and advice, her support comes second to none.”

SEND Team:

- “I just thought I had to e-mail you to express my gratitude for the utmost professionalism you exhibited during our meeting today. You were actively listening to my concerns, were 100% non-judgemental of my views and demonstrated a genuine interest to reach a solution so thank you. I hope you have a nice weekend”.

Emergency Duty Team:

- “Good morning; last night we needed access to your duty social worker with regard to a friend of my son's. I wasn't sure who to turn to with the child's problem being quite complex, calls to ChildLine and NSPCC eventually led to referral through to yourselves. A lovely duty social worker called X came out to our house promptly and dealt with the child involved in a fantastic manner, bearing in mind the difficulties that he was facing in terms of the child's care. He also dealt with myself, husband and son very well, assuring us all that we had done the correct thing in contacting yourselves. Working in the NHS myself I know the difficulties and challenges that can be faced on a daily basis, and I would like this

message to get to X please commending him on his work last night, as he really is a credit to your service going above and beyond the line of duty”.

IRO Service:

- “Morning X. I was at a conference meeting last Wednesday.. XX was the chair/IRO. I had to let you know what a brilliant meeting it was.. XX was fantastic... She put us all at ease and made the meeting. My daughter.. Who's children are involved... Said that it was brilliant meeting.. Better than the last one. She walked out in tears during that one. People are quick enough to complain about things.. But not that quick to praise or compliment... So I just wanted you to know what a brilliant chair XX was/is...and to pass on our thoughts..... The new approach in the meeting was fab too...the professional also thought so...gives the families their chance too put their views 1st”.

Children's Homes:

- “I've been supported by staff at the children's home I lived in for many years, from my leaving care worker, and from my extended family. I'm sure they would all be pretty rich if they were given a pound for every time I rang saying I was quitting.”

Fostering Service:

- “I would like to let you know that during the worst time of our lives X was collecting the information needed about our grandchildren, she was indeed a true professional, very supportive from the word go. X was friendly and put us at ease the moment she entered our house, she is a credit to the service and was a pleasure to meet at such a difficult time.

CLA & Permanence Teams:

- “To a truly great social worker, you was hard to find difficult to part with and hard to forget (precious). Thank you for all you have done for our lads I cannot thank you enough. The lads say thank you and love you lots; the X family”.

Assessment Teams:

- Just a quick email to X and XX moved into XXX this afternoon. I just wanted to say thank you on behalf of them both and myself for all of your help whilst they have been at XXXX. You've been really supportive and helped get them through a difficult time. You've also kept us in the loop which we are grateful for.

Children with Disabilities Team:

- “X was allocated as a key worker for our daughter, XX. Since her initial contact with XX and our family, we have been very impressed by her professionalism. X has demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills. She is able to communicate appropriately with XX, who has severe learning difficulties and cerebral palsy. She always puts us at our ease and has a great positive outlook on matters. X always attends her appointments on time and takes it upon herself to follow up the visit with a phone call to update us with progress. She recently identified that XX, and ourselves, were in need of increased respite. She pursued the matter to a positive outcome. While we appreciate the workload and pressures faced by staff, X never lets us down and is a refreshing change. We believe that shortfalls should be identified in services, but, as importantly, good practices should be highlighted. The latter is definitely the case with the service we have received from X, who is a credit to the department.”

Child Protection Teams

- “I just wanted to say thank you and well done for all of your hard work on the X case. This was a complex case having regard to XX difficulties and, I was pleased to hear that the Judge complimented you at the conclusion of the proceedings. The final statement was extremely detailed and pulled together an abundance of information, received from XXX and XXXX. The court would have been greatly assisted with that document, making it clear what support we had implemented having regard to the XXXX Assessment and on that basis why X was unable to care for the child in the long-term. The LA was able to demonstrate to the Court that all efforts in supporting X had been exhausted and, at the end of the proceedings X accepted our final threshold. Thank you”.

Next Steps Teams:

- “My experience with next steps has been very positive for me. X has helped and guided me through anything I was concerned about or just general life questions. She has made sure I have full re-assurance in things (complaints) and over-all has been a pleasure letting her into my home. X has supported me very much and with her the vulnerable people of Sunderland city council will be safe with her”.

4. PRE-COMPLAINTS & ENQUIRIES

4.1. Pre-complaints are where enquiries, issues and or concerns presented by individuals are dealt with through informal resolution. Whilst customers are provided with information about the complaints process and their rights to complain, we aim to achieve informal resolution where appropriate and when in the best interests of customers. The table below shows the pre-complaint data for each quarter:

4.2.

Pre-Complaints & Enquiries	Q1 (Apr – Jun)	Q2 (Jul – Sep)	Q3 (Oct – Dec)	Q4 (Jan – Mar)	Total 2019/20	
Number Received	41	36	32	23	132	↑
Number Escalated to Stage 1	2	3	6	1	12	9%

4.3. In 2019/20 we received 132 pre-complaints. Through responding to issues or concerns at the outset, we have helped 120 of our customers to receive satisfactory resolutions informally with just 12 (9%) pre-complaints escalating to a formal stage one complaint. Overall, the number of customers who have received a satisfactory response through the pre-complaints process has increased by 27.7% compared with the previous year.

5. COMPLAINTS PROCESS

5.1. The Complaints Process for Statutory Children’s Services follows the statutory guidance. This is a 3-stage process as follows:

- **Stage One** – the initial stage of the process is investigated by the appropriate Team Manager. The service must respond within 10 working days, however an extension up to 20 working days can be requested for more complex cases.
- **Stage Two** – on receipt of the response to their stage one complaint, complainants have 20 working days to request their complaint is progressed to stage two if they are unhappy with the initial outcome. At this stage, an Investigating Officer will be appointed to investigate the complaint and it can take up to 65 working days to complete.
- **Stage Three** – if the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of the stage two complaint, they have 20 working days to request their complaint is progresses to stage three. The review should take place within 30 days of the request. At stage three, a review panel will be appointed to review the complaint. This will consist of three independent people who will make recommendations to the Director of Children’s Services.

5.2. If the Complainant remains unhappy, they can raise their complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.

5.3. Any complaints that do not relate to Statutory Children’s Services, are handled under the Non-Statutory Complaints Procedure which consists of two formal stages. Non-statutory complaint figures are included in this report.

6. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

6.1. The table below shows the number of complaints we received across each stage of the complaints process:

Complaints Stage	Q1 (Apr – Jun)	Q2 (Jul – Sep)	Q3 (Oct – Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Total 2019/20	
Statutory:						
Stage One	39	30	28	28	125	↓
Stage Two	3	12	6	4	25	↑
Stage Three	2	0	2	0	4	↓
Non-Statutory:						
Stage One	2	1	6	6	15	↑
Stage Two	0	1	0	2	3	↑
Total	46	44	42	40	172	↓

6.2. Overall in 2019-20 we received 172 complaints compared with 260 in 2018-19 which shows a decrease of 33.8%. 154 were statutory complaints and 18 were non-statutory. In 2019-20 we received 125 statutory stage one complaints compared with 226 in 2018-19 which shows a decrease of 44.6% compared with the previous year.

6.3. 25 stage two complaints were received in 2019-20 compared with 20 in 2018-19 which shows an increase of 25% compared with the previous year. Four complaints progressed to stage three in 2019-20 compared with eight in 2018-19. We also received 15 non-statutory stage one complaints compared with six in 2018-19. Three progressed to stage two.

Number of Complaints by Young People:

6.4. The table below shows the number of complaints from young people received across 2019-20 each stage of the complaints process. There were 14 complaints received in total which is consistent with the previous year.

Complaint Stage	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2019/20
Stage One (all)	1	4	2	3	10
Stage Two (all)	0	2	1	1	4
Stage Three	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	6	3	4	14 →

7. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS

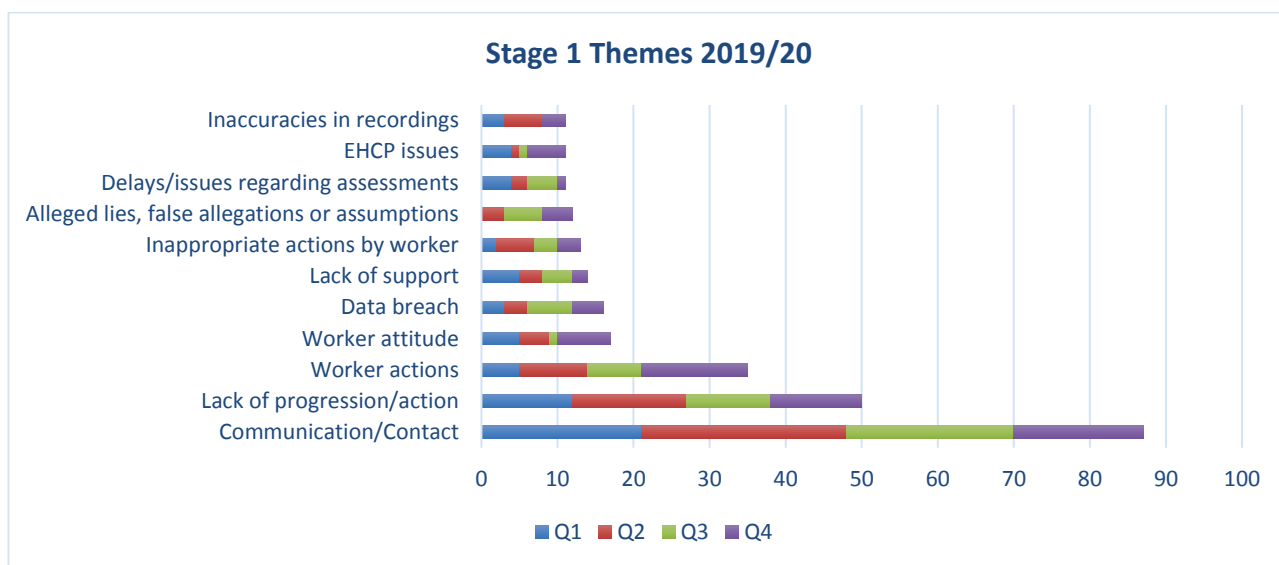
7.1. The table below shows the number of stage one complaints received by service area.

TEAM	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Total 2019/20
Assessment Service	6	4	8	6	24
Children with Disabilities Service	1	1	3	2	7
Child Protection Service	19	13	15	15	62
Early Help Service	0	1	0	2	3
Fostering Service	0	1	0	1	2
ICRT Service	2	1	0	0	3
LAC and Permanence Service	6	6	1	5	18
Next Steps Service	2	3	0	0	5
SEND Service	5	1	5	3	14
Assessment Service and IRO Service	0	0	1	0	1
Child Protection Service and IRO Service	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	41	31	34	34	140 ↓

- 7.2. 44.2% of stage one complaints received in 2019-20 relate to the child protection services. This is to be expected as child protection is the largest service area and due to the nature of work carried out within this service. There has however been a decrease in the number of complaints relating to this service from 80 to 62 when compared with the previous year.
- 7.3. The second-highest area of complaints received in 2019-20 relate to the assessment service equating to 24 which shows a decrease compared with 30 in the previous year. The number of complaints received in the Children Looked After/Permanence Teams has also decreased from 22 to 18 when compared with the previous year and SEND (non-statutory) complaints have remained stable at 14.
- 7.4. Overall 91% of services listed in the above table saw a decrease in the number of complaints with only one team showing a slight increase (of one complaint) when compared with the previous year.

Themes:

- 7.5. The main themes of the complaints received at Stage one in 2019-20 are shown in the table below:



- 7.6. From April 2019 – March 2020 most complaints related to communication issues i.e. not being able to contact worker and/or worker not keeping families appropriately informed. Complaints regarding lack of progression or action together with complaints regarding the actions that have been taken by workers make up the top three themes across all four quarters which is in line with the top themes identified in the 2018-19 report.
- 7.7. There will always be an element of dissatisfaction from the families that Children's Social Care are working with due to the nature of the work and families not always seeing at first that working with social care is in the child's best interest. The top three themes are reviewed regularly by Children's Social Care Senior Management Team to identify if there are areas for improvement or if complaints regularly relate to the same teams. Senior Managers have also spoken first hand to complaints listening and responding to their concerns where appropriate.
- 7.8. Although it is accepted that complaints are inevitable, Children's Social Care also understand that by having a stable workforce across all teams in social care is allowing stronger and more trusting relationships to develop between families and their workers which is contributing to an overall reduction in complaint numbers and is reducing the number of complaints regarding communication, contact and lack of progression or action.

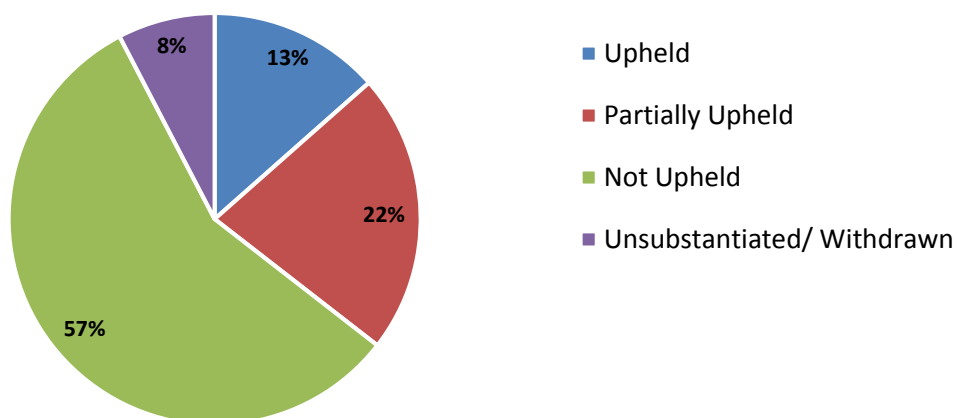
Timeliness of Response to Stage One Complaints:

- 7.9. In 2019-20, the response time to statutory stage one complaints decreased from 69.9% to 45.5% when compared to the previous year. 42.9% of non-statutory stage one complaints were responded to in timescale with the highest increase of timeliness completed in timescale in Q4, showing that the response time is improving.

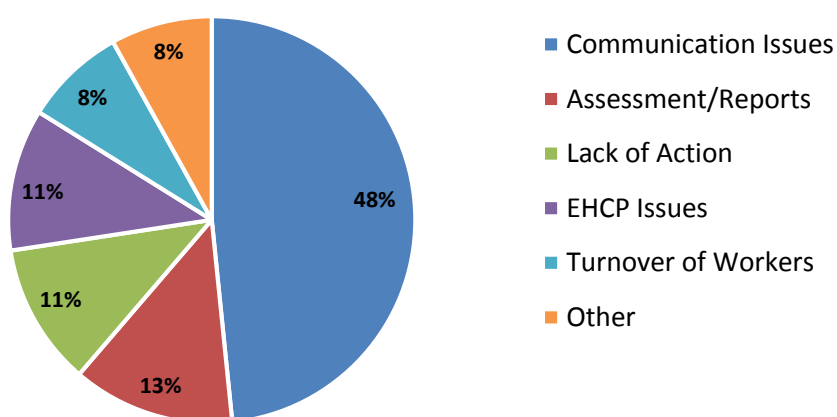
Complaint Stage	% of stage 1 complaints responded to in timescale				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Statutory stage 1 complaints (Timescale 10-20 working days)	50%	42.9%	50.0%	39.4%	45.5% ↓
Non-statutory stage 1 complaints (Timescale 10-20 working days)	0%	0%	20%	71.4%	42.9%

Stage One Complaint Outcomes:

- 7.10. There were 445 elements of complaint identified within stage one complaints that concluded in 2019-20. The outcomes of all stage one complaint elements for the year are shown below.



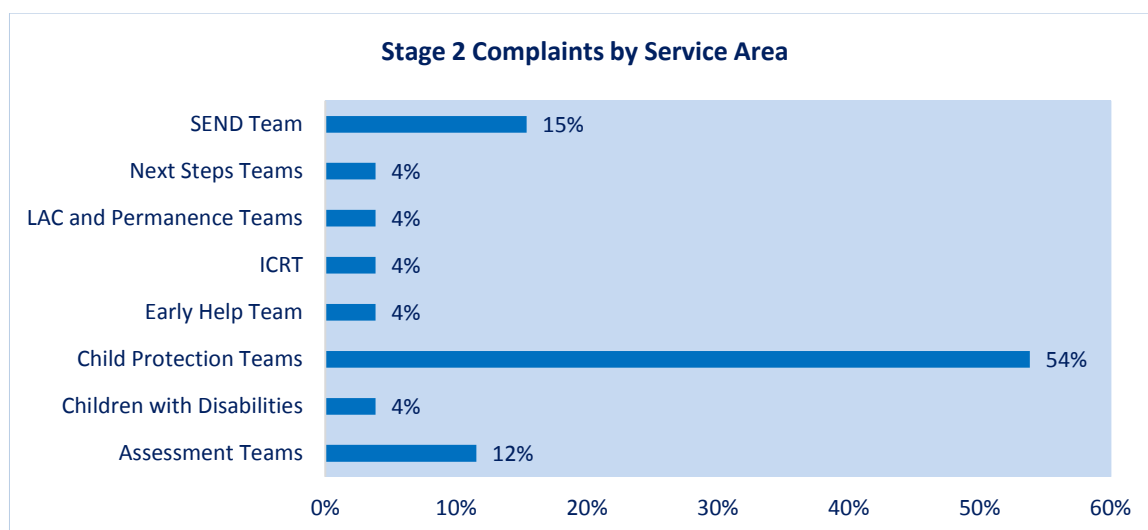
- 7.11. The majority of complaint elements equating to 57% were not upheld and a further 8% were unsubstantiated or withdrawn. 22% of elements were partially upheld and 13% were upheld. The chart below shows the main reasons for complaint elements that were upheld.



- 7.12. Of the 60 elements that were upheld, 48% related to lack of/poor communication between the service and family. Other themes included accuracy of reports or assessments (13%), lack of action by service (11%), EHCP plans (11%) and changes in workers (8%). The remaining 8% related to other issues that were individual to each complaint.

8. STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS AND STAGE THREE REVIEWS

8.1. The table below shows the number of all stage two complaints received by service area.

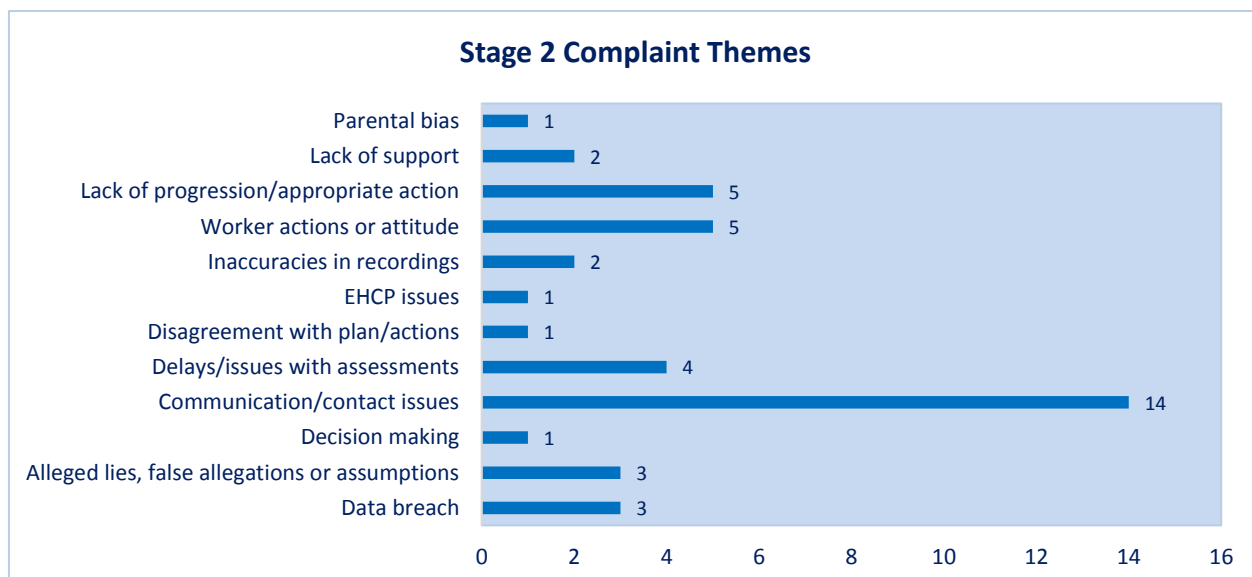


8.2. The majority of stage two complaints received in 2019-20 relate to child protection services. Similarly, to stage one complaints, this is to be expected given the size of the service and nature of its work. The second-highest area of stage two complaints received in 2019-20 relate to the SEND team equating to 15% and then the Assessment Service equating to 12%.

8.3. Overall the number of stage two complaints has increased from 20 to 25 when compared with the previous year but only four progressed to a stage three review which is 50% less than the previous year.

Themes:

8.4. The main themes of the complaint received at Stage two in 2019-20 are shown in the table below (*note one complaint can have multiple themes*):



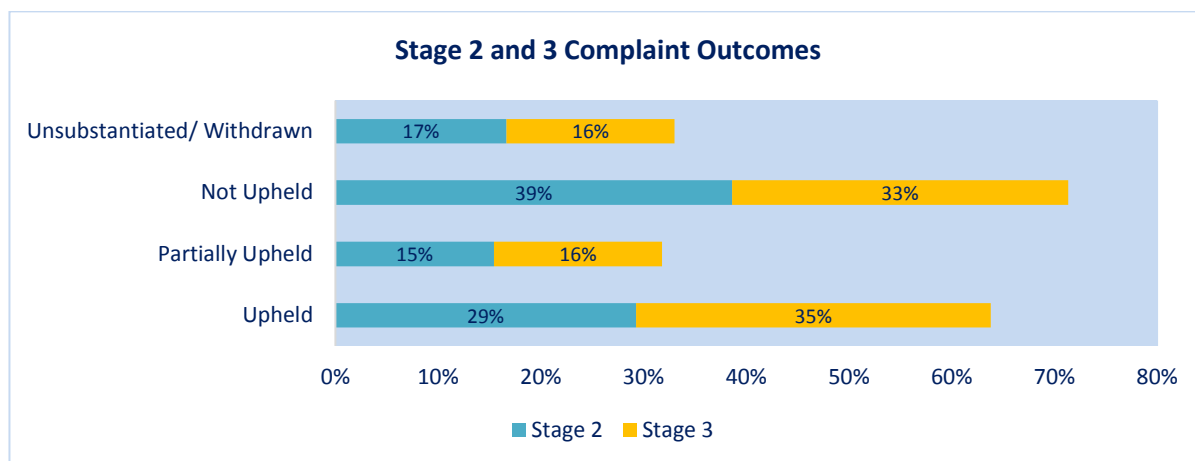
8.5. From April 2019 – March 2020 most stage two complaints related to communication and contact issues. Complaints regarding lack of progression or action together with complaints regarding the actions or attitudes by workers make up the top three themes which is consistent with the stage one complaints.

Timeliness of Response to Stage Two Complaints:

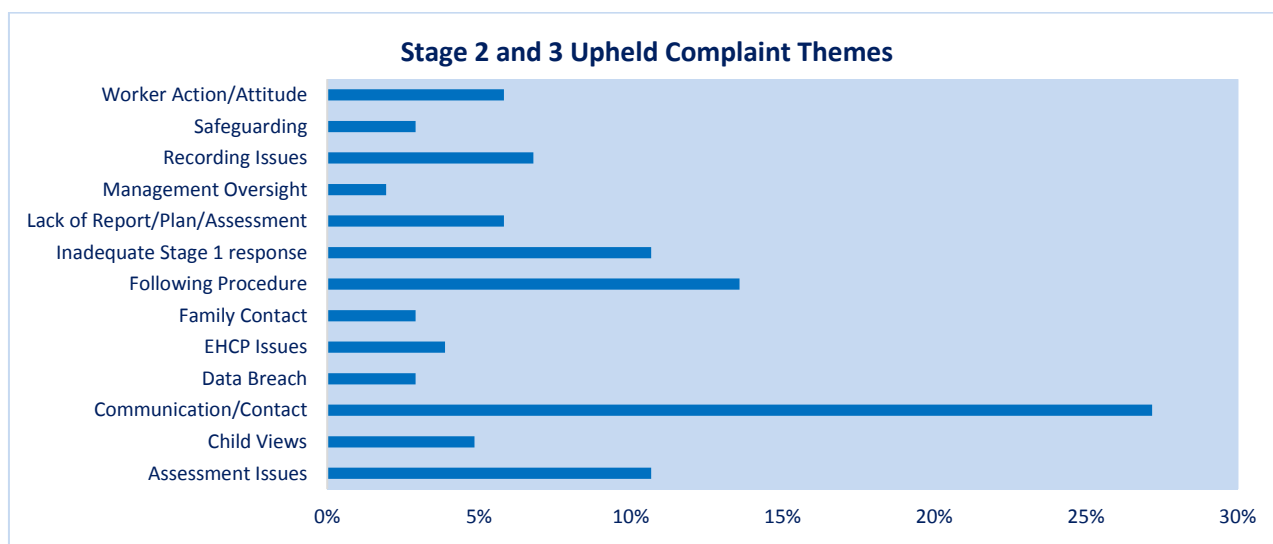
- 8.6. In 2019-20, 23 statutory stage two complaints were concluded together with one non-statutory complaint (*figures differ to numbers received, as there were complaints open at the start of the year from 2018/19 and complaints that remain open moving into 2020-21*). None of the stage two complaints were completed within timescale. The average days taken for investigation and adjudication of the 23 complaints was 139 days against a target of 65 days. The average number of days for investigating complaints was 103 and the average days for adjudication was 37.

Stage Two and Three Complaint Outcomes

- 8.7. There were 246 elements of complaint identified within all stage two complaints that concluded in 2019-20 and 55 elements concluded at stage three (statutory). The outcomes of stage two and three complaint elements for the year are shown below.



- 8.8. At stage two, the majority of complaint elements equating to 39% were not upheld and a further 17% were unsubstantiated or withdrawn. 15% of elements were partially upheld and 29% were upheld.
- 8.9. At stage three a higher majority of elements were upheld equating to 35% with a further 16% partially upheld. 33% were not upheld and 16% were unsubstantiated or withdrawn.
- 8.10. Since April 2019, of the 55 elements that went to Stage three panels the following outcomes changed; four of the elements that were partially upheld were changed to upheld; two elements classed as 'other' were also changed to upheld.
- 8.11. The main subject areas of elements upheld at stage two and three are as follows:



- 8.12. Comparing upheld elements with the previous year, there are several themes that are reoccurring such as communication, assessment issues and worker actions or attitude. However due to the individualised nature of complaints it is difficult to say if the reasons for reoccurring themes are due to limited impact of recommendations or if it is due to other reasons. Inadequate response to stage one complaints and following procedure are new themes when compared with the previous year. To assist with the analysis of themes, the upheld elements identified in both stage two investigations and stage three panels are reviewed quarterly by Children's Social Care Senior Management Team. The Customer Feedback Team identifies any reoccurring complaint elements and feeds this back at the quarterly meetings.

9. OMBUDSMAN REFERRALS

- 9.1. Eleven complaints were highlighted to the Customer Feedback Team in 2019-2020 by the Local Government Ombudsman. The LGO concluded:
- 4 cases - no further action investigation not required
 - 3 cases - considered premature as the complaint was still being investigated
 - 1 case – upheld due to delay in complaint process (recommended £600 awarded to complainant)
 - 1 case – upheld due to delay in complaints process (recommended stage 2 investigation)
 - 1 case – upheld due to delay in complaint process (recommended date for adjudication to be completed)
 - 1 case upheld but no further action as already remedied

10. LESSONS LEARNED

- 10.1. An action plan is maintained by the Customer Feedback Team which includes actions and recommendations from stage two investigations and stage three panels. The action plan is closely monitored by the team. Reminders are sent to managers with responsibility for the recommendations each month and reported into Senior Management Team meetings to ensure that the learning is shared across the whole service.
- 10.2. Below are some key actions that Together for Children is delivering, taking account of lessons learned.
- Together for Children has commissioned an independent SEND consultant to review all current processes and support the redesign of services including communication and information sharing strategies.
 - The importance of the Together for Children workforce splitting meetings to safeguard parents and family's members who are victims of domestic violence from the perpetrators is being reiterated to management and staff and this message will also be included in any relevant training delivered to the Together for Children workforce.
 - The complaints process in relation in documents that have been considered in court will be reviewed, with due diligence to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman guidance. The outcomes of the review will be captured and provided to Investigating Officers.
 - We will remind Social Workers within team briefings of the need to ensure all parents are aware of the services available to support their engagement with Children's Services via other agencies. We will look to develop a parental information guide with reference to support available to parents and for this to be routinely provide to all parents.
 - TfC staff will receive updated training from DFE from April 2020 to ensure annual reviews of EHCP are undertaken in accordance with current guidelines. With the aim of ensuring compliance and effective service delivery. An additional review officer has been recruited to provide improved coordination of this service.

- Additional training for SEND team, school SENDCOs and wider professionals is to be delivered from April 2020 to improve multiagency planning and cooperation.
- The SEND commissioning team are currently undertaking a review of the TfC commissioning strategy with the view to improving the quality of monitoring of equipment and resources.
- Communications to be sent out to all the social work teams and commissioning to make clear that when we are commissioning a service for a child the worker fully understands the service provision and that the provision can meet the child's needs. Communications will remind workers that it is their responsibility to share full information before the child accesses the provision.
- The outcomes and learning from an investigation will be shared with all frontline social workers. To ensure there is consistency in recording meetings which are held as well as those cancelled, this will be discussed within the Senior Service Managers meeting and will be cascaded to Team Managers within a full manager meeting. Team managers will share this within their team meetings on a regular basis to reinforce the importance.
- TfC will endeavour to ensure that record keeping will be addressed with all employees. we are developing training and improvement actions to ensure that all staff are appropriately skilled in this regard.

10.3. Some of the key actions achieved over the last year include:

- Together for Children's Practice Standards have been reviewed and strengthened in relation to gaining consent and ensuring parental involvement and understanding. The revised Practice Standards were relaunched and made available to all social workers via the Practice Hub at the beginning of May 2019.
- Together for Children has introduced a new Care and Legal Gateway Panel that is chaired by the Director of Children Social Care or a Head of Service. The panel oversees decisions for children to become looked after. The panel is also attended by a TfC legal adviser to ensure that the correct legal framework is applied.
- Mental Health First Aid training was rolled out to social work staff in 2019, with a number of workers receiving mental health training from Sunderland City Council. Plans are in place for 2020 training to incorporate Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Together for Children's legal team has implemented a process whereby duty solicitors confirm legal advice given verbally with a follow up email, that can be added to the child's file to assist when queries are received.
- Although it is not a requirement to inform parents/carers on the outcome of a strategy meeting, Together for Children feel it should be a practice requirement and have included it in Together for Children's Practice Standards.
- Together for Children have recognised the need to develop more robust commissioning processes for disabled children's short break provision and reflected this in our Sufficiency Strategy 2017-2020.
- Six monthly reviews for short breaks are in place where it has been assessed that short breaks are necessary to meet the needs of a disabled child and their family.
- Further training provided to Team Managers regarding authorising assessments and implementing a robust checking system to ensure accuracy of reports and discrepancies are rectified accordingly and that parents receive a copy of completed assessments.
- Together for Children have developed a leaflet for families, to include guidance around the process of Section 20 ensuring families have a clearer understanding of processes and the need for them to seek their own legal advice and representation.
- Together for Children have introduced a new model of social care practice called Signs of Safety. Forging and maintaining strong working relationships with families is fundamental to this approach.
- Business Managers circulate a calendar of important dates for diverse religions and cultures to all social care staff and Team Managers remind staff to avoid such dates wherever possible when arranging meetings with families (however the safeguarding and welfare of children take priority, as enshrined within the Children's Act, and as such the earliest date possible will always be the primary consideration for the Children's Social Care when arranging urgent court dates).

11. COST OF COMPLAINTS

11.1. The total cost of investigating claims in all four quarters is £87,874.74 compared with £57,886.76 for the same period in 2018/19. The increase is largely due to the rise in stage two complaints and the time taken to undertake the investigations. The table below shows the compensation costs paid in relation to upheld complaints. Overall £3,625 compensation costs were issued compared with £5,200 in the previous year.

	Q1 (Apr – Jun)	Q2 (Jul – Sep)	Q3 (Oct – Dec)	Q4 (Jan – Mar)	YTD
Compensation costs	£1,800	£925	£300	£600	£3,625

12. ABUSIVE, UNREASONABLE PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS

12.1. There were no recorded Abusive, Unreasonable Persistent or Vexatious Complainants in 2019/20.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1. Together for Children are committed to getting it right for the families in Sunderland. To do this we will continue to drive improvement from learning from the complaints and compliments raised. To develop a robust system in 2020- 2021 we will;

- Arrange workshops to discuss the following emerging themes arising from the Annual Report and develop relevant action plans from the workshops:
 - Increase in non-statutory complaints and statutory stage two complaints
 - Timeliness of stage one responses
 - Timeliness of complaints investigated at stage two
 - Top three themes for upheld elements at stages one and two
- Review complaint elements that have changed at stage 3 panels to understand the reasons for this and if any action is to be taken.

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK QUARTER 1 APRIL – JUNE 2020**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information regarding compliment, complaints and feedback received by the council.
- 1.2 Liz St Louis, Assistant Director of Digital and Customer Services, will be in attendance at the meeting to provide Members with information and progress.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council is committed to listening to those who use its services and learning from complaints and feedback to improve those services.
- 2.2 This report covers Quarter 1 of the financial year (April – June 2020) and presents an overview across the full range of complaints and feedback received by the council.
- 2.3 The report also contains information on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter to the council.
- 2.4 In view of the importance to the council of ensuring an appropriate response is provided to all aspects of customer dissatisfaction it is timely for the Committee to receive an overview of complaints received across all council services.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 It was agreed that following the presentation of the Annual Complaints and Feedback Report, further quarterly reports would be brought to Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. This would ensure Members were provided with the most current information available, to allow for the monitoring of themes and trends in a timely manner.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information provided regarding compliments, complaints and feedback received by the Local Authority.

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marie.johnston@sunderland.gov.uk

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Quarterly Report

Compliments, Complaints & Feedback

**For the period:
April – June 2020**

Introduction

This report from the Complaints and Feedback Team covers Q1 (April – June 2020).

This report brings together all compliments and complaints received by the council.

Together for Children (TfC) provide a six-monthly report on complaints regarding Children's Services, which is presented to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee for detailed analysis. To ensure the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has a complete overview of complaints made about council services, the report from TfC will be appended to the Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report in Q2 and Q4.

As TfC reports on a six-monthly basis it is not possible to include information in the quarterly graphs. However, where complaints are made to the Local Government Ombudsman regarding TfC they are included in the relevant Scrutiny report.

Sunderland Care and Support's report regarding complaints received about its service will be appended to this Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report on a quarterly basis.

The report also contains information on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter to the council.

Part A of the report includes statistical data, which is presented in an updated, easy to view format.

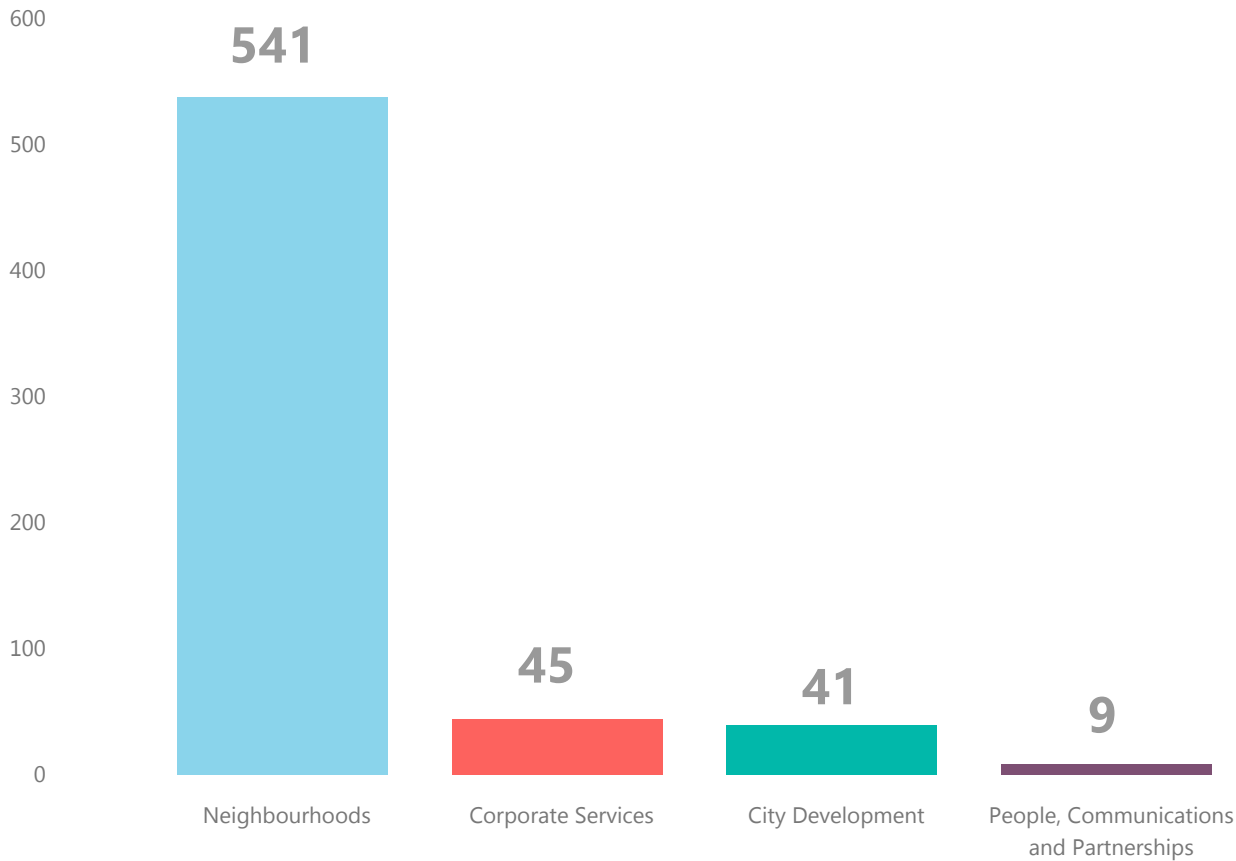
Part B of the report provides information on the different Compliments and Complaints Procedures that are used by the council to handle customer feedback.

Part C of the report includes further information on each service area within separate appendices.

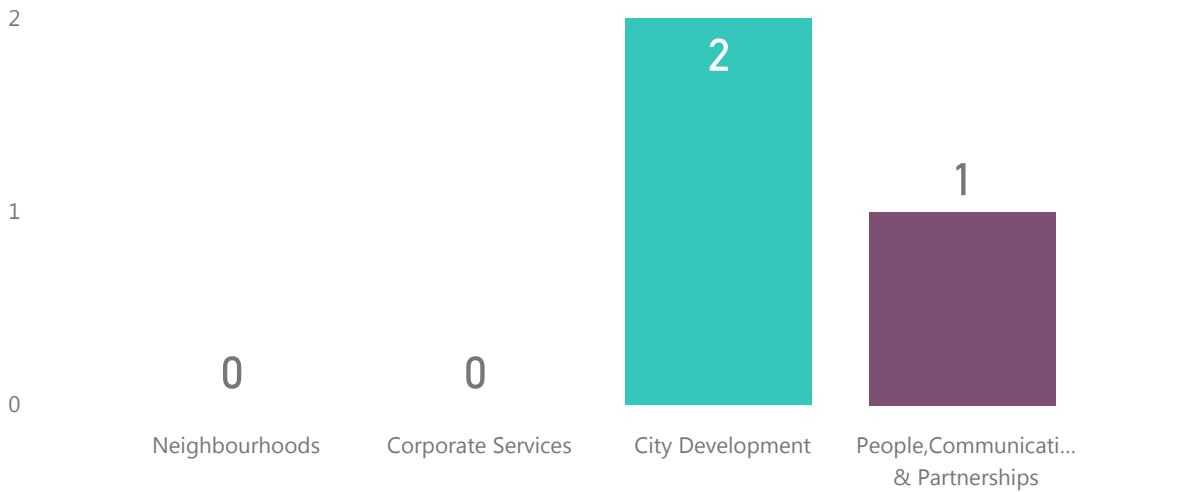
Complaints Overview



Corporate Stage One

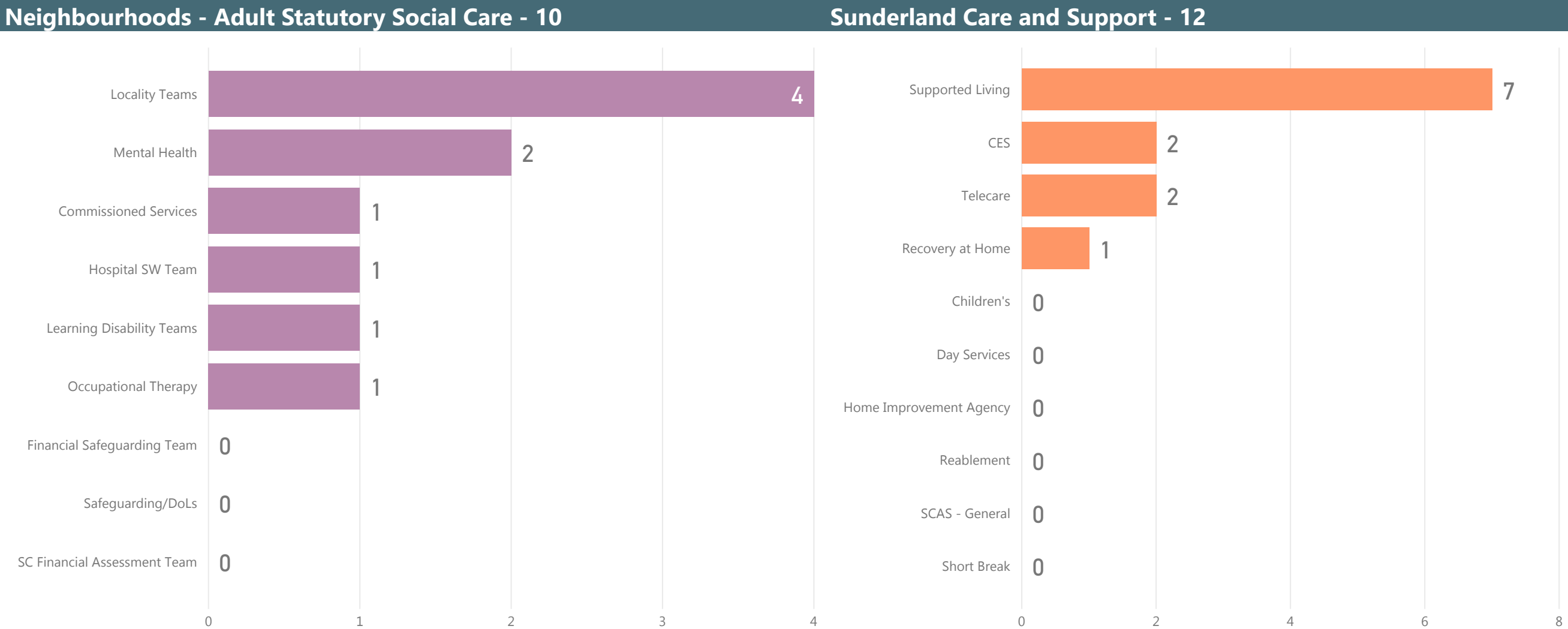


Corporate Stage Two



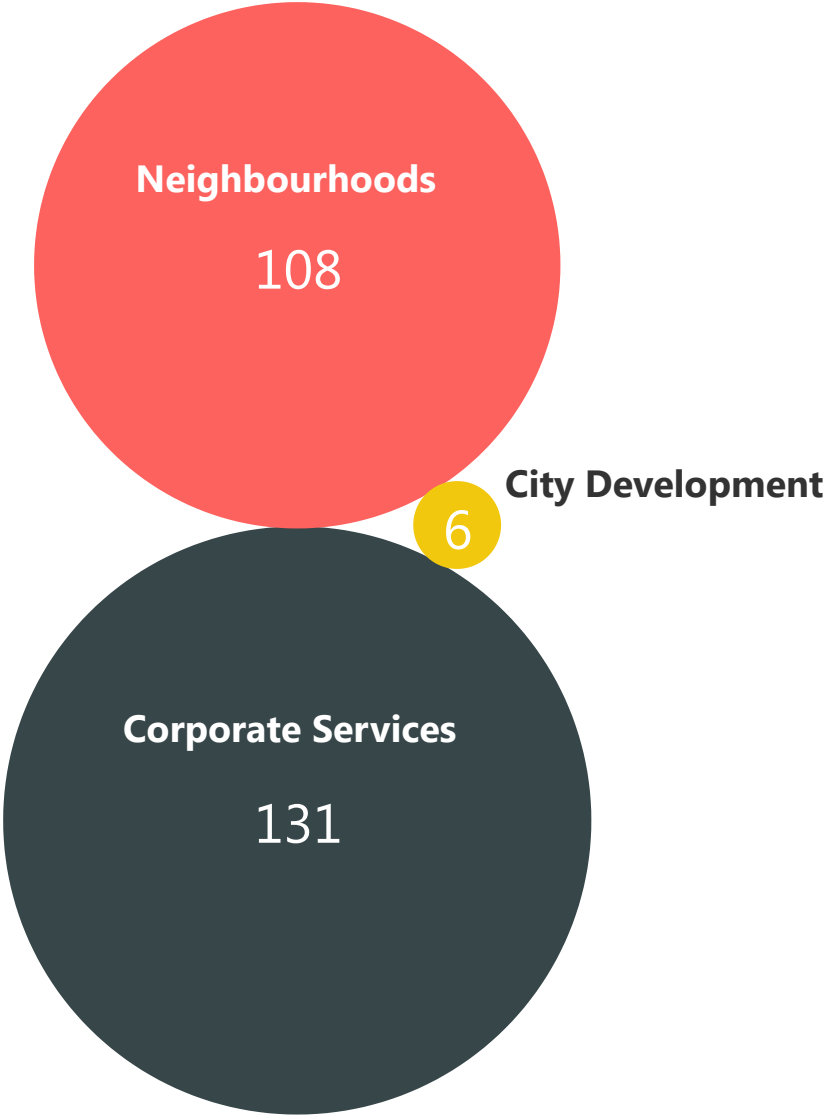


Complaints Overview



Compliments

Compliments



I just would like to say that the new permit system in place at the Beach Street Household recycling was a good experience. Less waiting time in queues and helpful staff. Please consider implementing this system all the time.

Customer wanted to thank the contact centre for still being here during this difficult time and keeping everything up and running.

Customer ordered replacement green bin yesterday, it was delivered today, and damaged bin taken away, thank you for the speed of service, well done refuse team

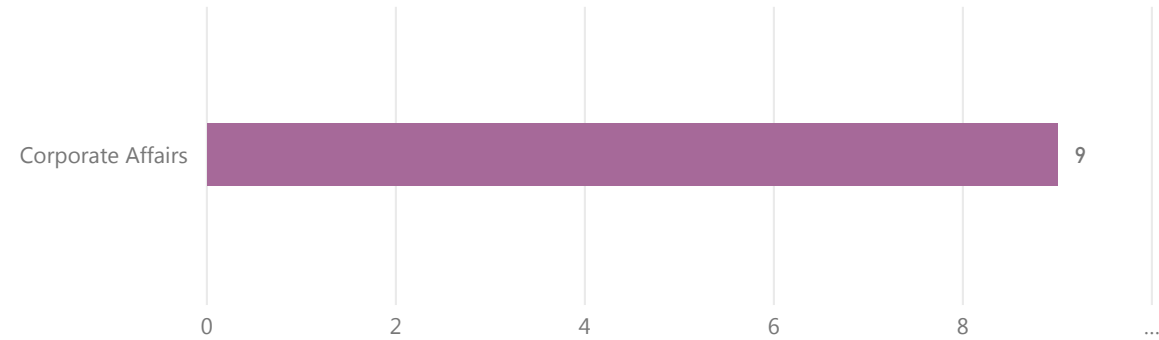
Just wanted to say the officer has been absolutely brilliant in the contact we have had and so helpful in guiding me around complex housing matters

Just to pass on many thanks for having the path resurfaced. We are delighted with the work carried out.

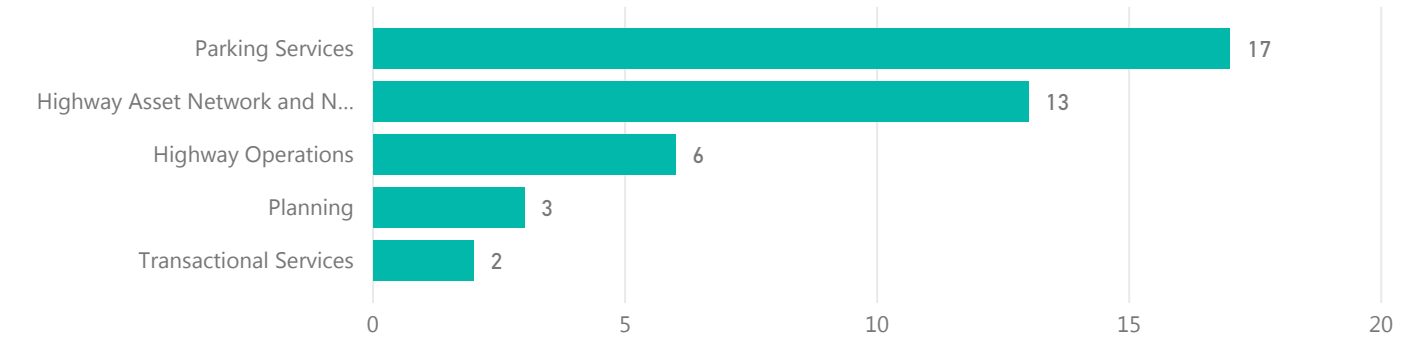
I attended a funeral at the Crematorium, the service room was carefully set out adhering to social distancing guidelines was very well planned and didn't distract from the service. Everything went really smoothly – a credit to your team.

Corporate Complaints Breakdown for Stage 1

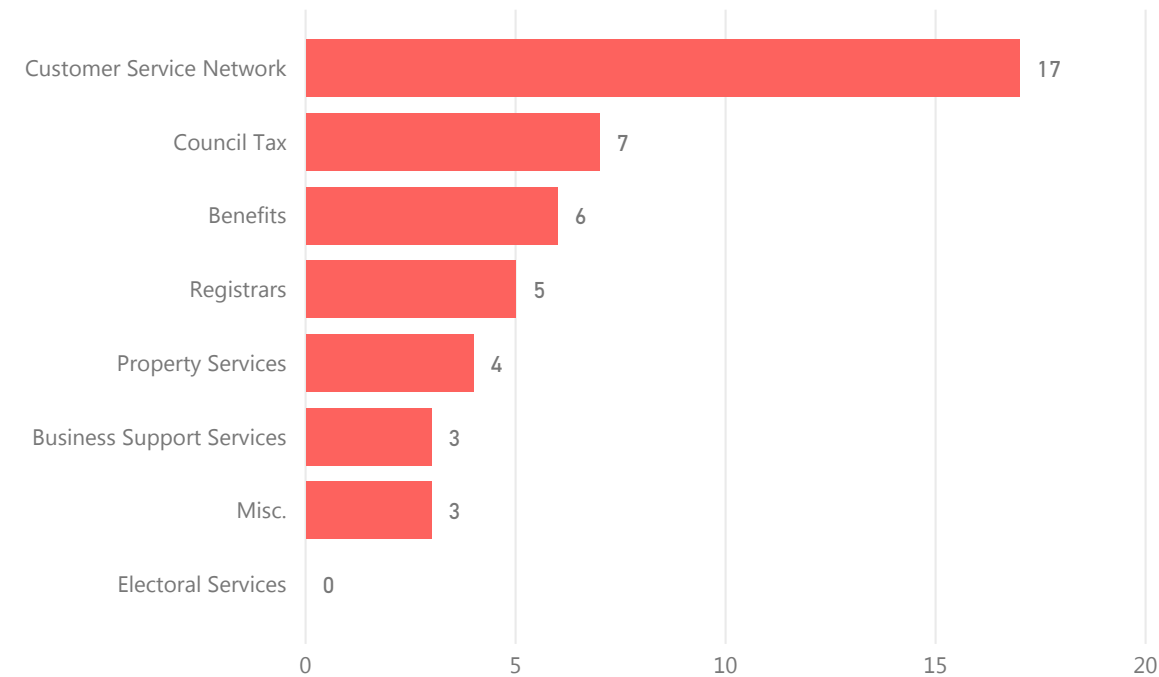
People, Communications and Partnerships - 9



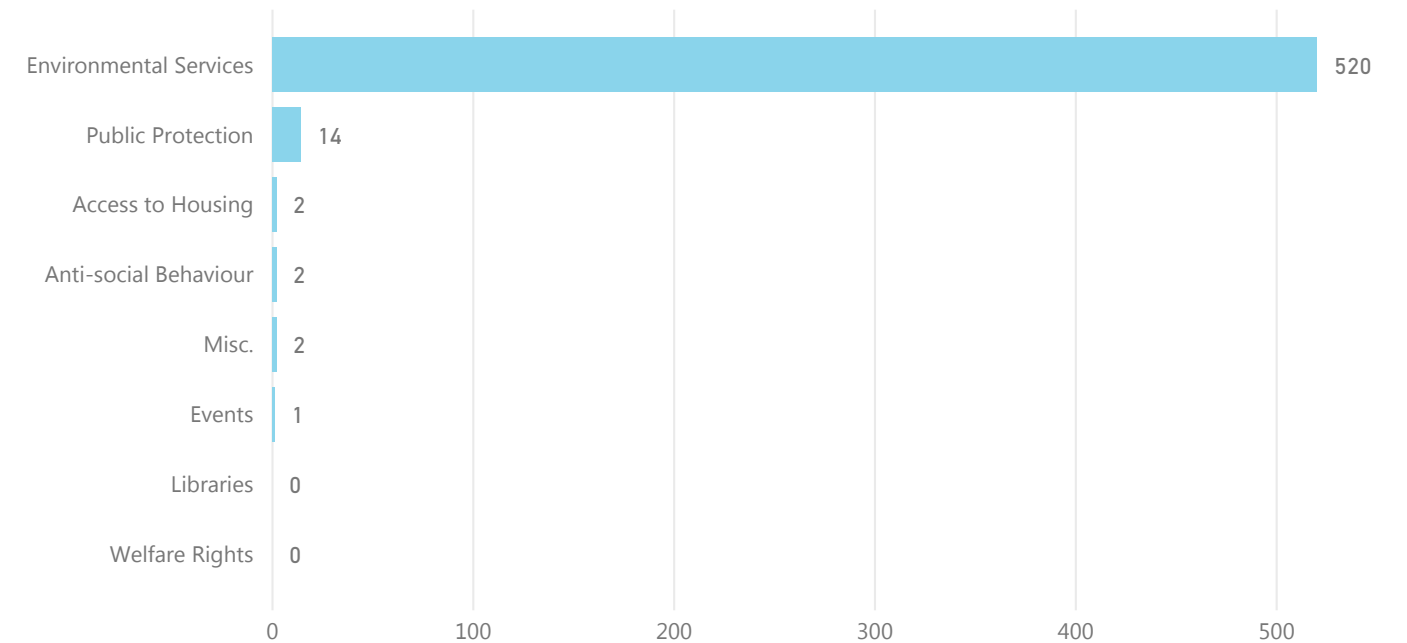
City Development - 41



Corporate Services - 45



Neighbourhoods - 541



PART B

Compliments

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction. Compliments are logged centrally through the Complaints and Feedback Team.

Information on compliments is attached as **Appendix 1**

Complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local councils. The Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has been through the council's complaints procedure and the customer remains unhappy. Complaints from the Ombudsman are made against the council including those about Children's Services.

Information on Ombudsman complaints is attached as **Appendix 2**

The Ombudsman provides the council with an annual Review Letter which is a summary of statistics on the complaints made to them regarding the council for the financial year. Information includes the number of complaints and enquiries received; decisions made; and the council's compliance with any recommendations.

Information on Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter is attached as **Appendix 2a**

Corporate Complaints Procedure

How the procedure works:

There are two stages to the council's Corporate Complaints Procedure;

Stage One: These are dealt with by the Directorate and should be completed within 25 working days. All responses advise the complainant that if they remain dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint to the Complaints and Feedback Team for review.

Stage Two (Review): Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint, they can request a review be undertaken by the Complaints and Feedback Team. Complainants are advised that, should they remain dissatisfied with the response at stage two, they can ask the Ombudsman to consider their complaint.

Information on Corporate complaints is attached as **Appendix 3.**

Statutory Procedures

Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure

Legislation & Regulations

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 provides for a single complaints process for all health and local authority *adult social care services* in England.

How the procedure works:

There is one stage to the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure.

One Stage (Local Resolution by the Council): local resolution is about the council trying to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source as possible. We acknowledge complaints within three working days and make arrangements for an appropriate manager to consider the issues and provide a response to the complainant.

Most complaints can be dealt with and resolved satisfactorily at the local resolution stage, however, if this is not the case, any unresolved concerns can be referred to the Ombudsman.

Information on Adult Statutory complaints is attached as **Appendix 4**

Sunderland Care and Support

Sunderland Care and Support is a Local Authority Trading Company, formed in December 2013, wholly owned by Sunderland City Council. The company has a board of directors appointed by the council (as the shareholder of the holding company).

Sunderland Care and Support offers care and support 24/7 to more than 6,000 vulnerable customers across a wide range of services including: Supported Living schemes for people with a Learning disability, Mental Health needs; Autism or challenging behaviour; Day Services and Short Break care services; Intermediate Care and Reablement services; Sunderland Telecare; Community Equipment Service; and Home Improvement Agency.

How the procedure works:

Complaints are dealt with under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure. Some eligible complaints may fall outside this procedure and these complaints are considered as a corporate complaint.

A report from Sunderland Care and Support regarding all complaints received and handled by them in Q1 is attached as **Appendix 5**

Appendix 1: Compliments

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction.

	2018-19	2019-2020	2020-21
Q1 -Apr-Jun	126	152	245
Q2 - Jul-Sep	184	176	
Q3 - Oct-Dec	170	120	
Q4 - Jan-Mar	134	115	
	614	563	

The table below shows the service areas where compliments were received during Q1

	Q1
Adult Services	14
Council Tax	1
CSN	124
Environmental Health	4
Environmental Services	83
Events	0
Highways / Network Management	6
Housing Benefits	3
Housing Options	2
Libraries	0
Misc.	5
Parking Services	0
Registrars & Bereavement (Incl. Business Support)	3
	245

Some examples of compliments received in Q1

Adult Services

I must say how delighted and amazed I am at how quick you have reacted in supplying me with PPE. I was getting quite worried about this, but now feel completely reassured. Thank you again stay safe

The response and the way the entire service (social workers, OT, CES and CSN) have reacted during the Covid Crisis has been amazing. The impact that it has had on the people that need it most has been wonderful.

I just want you to know that both Dad and I are so grateful to you for everything you did to help mum in these last difficult weeks. It has been awful being unable to help her in these last weeks and

we've taken huge comfort from knowing you were there to look after her. We are truly thankful that you were there for her.

City Wide Services

I just would like to say that the new permit system in place at the Beach Street Household recycling was a good experience. Less waiting time in queues and helpful staff. Please consider implementing this system all the time.

Customer Service Network

Can I please take this opportunity to thank a member of your staff who has helped me tremendously under very difficult times for everyone, she is a credit to the Council, and it is so nice that she took care in looking after me. thank you

The member of staff who took the details from me was extremely helpful and her understanding of the communication difficulties a person living with dementia has were very appreciated.

Customer wanted to thank the contact centre for still being here during this difficult time and keeping everything up and running.

Customer has received the leaflet and whilst she did not need help, she wanted to say thanks - she thought it was lovely that we are helping people and to keep up the good work

Customer said the Community Hub is brilliant and the work the council are doing is Magic!

Emergency Food Parcel delivered and customer over the moon with the speed of service as well as the items in the food box

Environmental Services – Bereavement

I thought I would drop you a line to let you know how helpful your staff have been. They have gone above and beyond what I expected during these troubling times. I now have the information I need to make the funeral arrangements - this meant a lot to me and I am immensely grateful them. Thank you too for your fast response to my enquiry.

I attended a funeral at the Crematorium, the service room was carefully set out adhering to social distancing guidelines was very well planned and didn't distract from the service. Everything went really smoothly – a credit to your team. The crematorium gardens are really lovely, very well kept and tidy.

Environmental Services – Cleansing and Ground Maintenance

Customer reported litter tipped outside her property this morning and it has been cleared. She rang to say thank you for the speed of the service

We would like to thank all of the staff who work at Herrington Country Park; we have walked there every morning since the Lockdown was imposed. We have always loved HCP, but never imagined it would be the lifeline that it has been over the last 4 weeks. It really is looking beautiful at the moment

Customer ordered replacement green bin yesterday, it was delivered today, and damaged bin taken away, thank you for the speed of service, well done refuse team

Environmental Services – Refuse

Customer would like to say thank you - she states she is vulnerable and has to stay home and is amazed the bin crew are still working and would just like to say thanks and stay safe

Customer reported his blue bin had been damaged. A new bin was sent the next day. He wants to thank the refuse team for the speedy response and a general thanks for all that they do

Customer rang to say what a good service we are providing for the bulky waste service. She has had an email to let her know her collection has been brought forward. She said well-done everyone

Highways

Customer reported the drains in the street yesterday and they have been out today, she would like to say thank you as they have done a great job and came out really quickly

Housing Benefits

Just wanted to say the officer has been absolutely brilliant in the contact we have had and so helpful in guiding me around complex housing matters.

Registrars

Too often people are quick to criticise but not compliment, so I'd just like to Thank you and your team for the work and effort you have shown so far dealing with our queries. Take care and stay safe during these uncertain times.

Just to say many thanks indeed for calling me this morning. I really appreciate you taking the time to speak to me. You were really very helpful in explaining the current position, as well as the steps that you will try to take to ensure that we are able to give notice on time subject to the ongoing public health situation, and we are both very grateful to you.

Appendix 2

Complaints dealt with by the Ombudsman

The council received 4 complaints from the Ombudsman for Q1. The table below shows the number of complaints received together with comparative data for the previous year.

	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>
Q1	5	6	4
Q2	10	11	
Q3	6	6	
Q4	6	15	
	27	38	

The table below shows the number of complaints received in each quarter and for each Directorate.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
City Development	2				
Corporate Services	-				
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	1				
Neighbourhoods (other)	1				
People, Communications & Partnerships	-				
Together for Children	-				
	4				

The table below shows the total number of complaints received for each Directorate, how many of those were closed after initial enquiries and how many complaints the Ombudsman chose to investigate; and from those investigations how many were upheld.

	Total Complaints made to the Ombudsman in Q1	Closed after initial enquiries	Number Investigated by Ombudsman	investigations upheld by ombudsman	% upheld rate
City Development	2	2	-	-	
Corporate Services	-	-	-	-	
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	1	1	-	-	
Neighbourhoods (other)	1	1	-	-	
People, Communications & Partnerships	-	-	-	-	
Together for Children	-	-	-	-	
	4	4	0	0	

The Ombudsman's reference is included in brackets and the full report can be found on their website; www.lgo.org.uk.

Complaints closed after initial enquiries (4)

Adult Services (Sunderland City Council – 19 003 263)

A complaint about the Council's lack of support and communication regarding the complainant's regular contact with her grandson.

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because matters were being considered by the Court of Protection.

Parking (Sunderland City Council – 19 019 958)

A complaint that the Council was taking enforcement action for an unpaid 2017 parking fine

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because the Council was entitled to pursue the debt.

Planning (Sunderland City Council – 19 015 214)

A complaint about the consultation process/decision to grant planning permission

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because they were unlikely to find evidence of fault in the way the Council made its decision.

Refuse (Sunderland City Council – 19 019 820)

A complaint about a recycling collection issue

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because it was unlikely they could add to the Council's investigation into the matter.

Detailed Investigations

There were no detailed investigations undertaken in Q1.

Appendix 2a – Ombudsman’s Annual Review Letter 2019-20

Introduction

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local Councils. The Ombudsman writes to local authorities annually to feed back on their performance in dealing with complaints that the Ombudsman has received about them. The aim of the letter is to provide the Council with information to help it improve complaint handling, and to inform the improvement of local services for the public.

Mr Michael King, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for England has issued his annual review letter to the Council. A copy is attached at the back of this appendix.

Complaints made to the Ombudsman

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the 74 complaints that were received at the Ombudsman regarding Sunderland City Council. The table also provides a comparison to figures for previous years.

Table 1	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Adult Care	13	5	13
Benefits & Council Tax	7	5	9
Corporate & Other	2	8	4
Education & Children	30	15	21
Environmental Services/Public Protection	11	4	9
Highways & Transport	4	9	9
Housing	1	2	2
Planning & Development	3	6	6
Other	0	1	1
Total	71	55	74

Table 1a: compares the numbers of complaints received by the Ombudsman for Council’s in the Northern Region for 2019-20.

Table 1a	Adult Care	Benefits & C/Tax	Corporate & other	Children’s Services	Environ. Services	Highways	Housing	Planning	Other	Total
Durham	23	14	13	41	23	15	0	14	1	144
Northumberland	15	8	3	18	7	11	5	20	1	88
Sunderland	13	9	4	21	9	9	2	6	1	74
Newcastle	11	12	1	20	7	4	6	3	1	65
Gateshead	12	2	4	11	3	8	7	2	2	51
North Tyneside	6	5	2	17	4	7	3	3	3	50
South Tyneside	7	3	4	12	7	2	5	0	0	40

Decisions made by the Ombudsman

The Ombudsman then made decisions on 76 complaints. This is a different figure to the number received at the Ombudsman (74). In this case it is likely that 2 complaints were received in the previous year with a decision been made in this reporting year. This can happen when complaints are received close to the end of one financial year.

Table 2 sets out how these 76 complaints were decided. It also provides information on the previous year's figures for comparison.

Table 2	Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	'premature' complaints	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Detailed investigations	Total
2019-20	6	2	30	27	11	76
2018-19	3	0	27	14	13	57
2017-18	4	1	31	20	11	67

Of the 76 complaints on which the Ombudsman came to a decision;

- 6 were incomplete/invalid and 2 were provided with advice, however the Council would not have been made aware of these.
- 30 were referred back to the Council for local resolution, we term these 'premature'. These complaints are dealt with through the appropriate complaint's procedure. To avoid double counting we do not include these numbers in our own Ombudsman statistics but rather count them against the complaint procedure utilised.
- **38 complaints** were forwarded from the Ombudsman to the Council. These are shown in the Ombudsman figures provided for *closed after initial enquiries* (27) and *detailed investigations* (11) as shaded in the table.

For information, *closed after initial enquiries* cases are those where the Ombudsman has made an early decision not to investigate the complaint. Sometimes the complaint will be outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction for example where issues are already been considered through a court process.

Complaints received at the Council

Mr King emphasises in his annual letter that the statistics reflect the data held by his organisation and may not necessarily align with the data held by the Council. That is the case with the figures presented in this report.

Table 3 provides a comparison regarding the numbers of complaints received at the Ombudsman compared to those forwarded to the Council.

Table 3	Adult Care	Benefits & C/Tax	Corporate & other	Children's Services	Environ. Services	Highways	Housing	Planning	Other	Total
<i>Complaints received at the Ombudsman</i>	13	9	4	21	9	9	2	6	1	74
Complaints forwarded to the Council	8	4	3	9	4	5	1	4	0	38

Information on these 38 complaints has been reported to the Committee over the course of the previous year through the Complaints & Feedback Team quarterly reports.

Table 3a: compares the number of complaints received from the Ombudsman by Council's in the Northern Region.

Table 3a	Closed after initial enquiries	Detailed Investigations	Total
Durham	64	36	100
Northumberland	35	26	61
Sunderland	27	11	38
Newcastle	17	18	35
North Tyneside	20	12	32
Gateshead	21	8	29
South Tyneside	12	11	23

Detailed Investigations

For the period 2019-20 the Ombudsman carried out 11 detailed investigations regarding Sunderland City Council. 7 of these complaints were upheld.

Table 4 shows the breakdown for the detailed investigations for service areas, together with the outcomes.

Table 4	Upheld	Not upheld	Total
Adult Care	2	3	5
Children's Services	5	1	6
Total	7	4	11

Table 4a: provides comparative data regarding the number of detailed investigations carried out by the Ombudsman for Council's in the Northern Region together with upheld rates.

Table 4a	Total	Not Upheld	Upheld	<i>Uphold Rate (%)</i>	Average uphold rate (%) of similar authorities
Durham	36	15	21	58%	56%
Northumberland	26	17	9	35%	56%
Newcastle	18	6	12	67%	67%
North Tyneside	12	4	8	67%	67%
South Tyneside	11	5	6	55%	67%
Sunderland	11	4	7	64%	67%
Gateshead	8	4	4	50%	67%

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

22 July 2020

By email

Mr Melia
Chief Executive
Sunderland City Council

Dear Mr Melia

Annual Review letter 2020

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the Local

Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2020. Given the exceptional pressures under which local authorities have been working over recent months, I thought carefully about whether it was still appropriate to send you this annual update. However, now, more than ever, I believe that it is essential that the public experience of local services is at the heart of our thinking. So, I hope that this feedback, which provides unique insight into the lived experience of your Council's services, will be useful as you continue to deal with the current situation and plan for the future.

Complaint statistics

This year, we continue to place our focus on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. We want to provide you with the most insightful information we can and have made several changes over recent years to improve the data we capture and report. We focus our statistics on these three key areas:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before we investigated. A focus on how often things go wrong, rather than simple volumes of complaints provides a clearer indicator of performance.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice. Our recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault and we monitor authorities to ensure they comply with our recommendations. Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority - We want to encourage the early resolution of complaints and to credit authorities that have a positive and open approach to resolving complaints. We recognise cases where an authority has taken steps to put things right before the complaint

came to us. The authority upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

This data will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), along with a copy of this letter on 29 July 2020, and our Review of Local Government Complaints. For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our [website](#).

Resources to help you get it right

There are a range of resources available that can support you to place the learning from complaints, about your authority and others, at the heart of your system of corporate governance. [Your council's performance](#) launched last year and puts our data and information about councils in one place. Again, the emphasis is on learning, not numbers. You can find the decisions we have made, public reports we have issued, and the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

I would encourage you to share the tool with colleagues and elected members; the information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

Earlier this year, we held our link officer seminars in London, Bristol, Leeds and Birmingham. Attended by 178 delegates from 143 local authorities, we focused on maximising the impact of complaints, making sure the right person is involved with complaints at the right time, and how to overcome common challenges.

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. During the year, we delivered 118 courses, training more than 1,400 people. This is 47 more courses than we delivered last year and included more training to adult social care providers than ever before. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MK' with a stylized flourish underneath.

Michael King
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Appendix 3 – Corporate Complaints

Stage One

The table below shows the number of Stage One corporate complaints together with comparative data for the previous two years.

	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Q1	1,951	704	636	-9%	
Q2	1,389	770			
Q3	592	684			
Q4	499	502			
	4,431	2660			

The **636** complaints received this quarter are broken down into Directorates in the table below;

	City Development	Corporate Services	Neighbourhoods	People, Communications & Partnerships	Total
Q1	41	45	541	9	
Q2					
Q3					
Q4					
	41 (6%)	45 (7%)	541 (85%)	9 (1%)	

Neighbourhoods

Service Area	Q1
Environmental Services	520
Libraries	0
Access to Housing	2
Anti-social Behaviour	2
Welfare Rights	0
Public Protection	14
Events	1
Misc.	2
	541

Complaints in respect of Environmental Services make up 96% of the complaints made against the Neighbourhoods Directorate this quarter. The table below provides a breakdown of the service areas within Environmental Services.

Environmental Services	Q1
Refuse: <i>non/late delivery of bins & caddies/missed bins</i>	419
Bereavement: <i>maintenance of cemeteries/ crematorium</i>	5
Street Cleaning: <i>fly tipping/dog bins</i>	61
Trees, fixed play, trade waste: <i>grass cutting/ tree pruning</i>	20
Enforcement: <i>Fly tipping/littering/dog fouling</i>	1
Waste Management: <i>Beach Street Depot – staff attitude/permits</i>	14
	520

Refuse Complaints

Of the 520 complaints received for Environmental Services, 419 (81%) were about issues to do with refuse collection. This should be viewed in context; in any quarter the council will service approximately 1.6 million containers, therefore this number of complaints represents only 0.02% of activity for this service area.

The table below contains a breakdown of complaints about refuse.

	<i>Number of Complaints for 2018/19</i>	<i>Number of Complaints for 2019/20</i>	<i>Number of Complaints for 2020/21</i>	<i>% change from previous year</i>
Q1	1,606	433	419	-3%
Q2	1,012	464		
Q3	358	454		
Q4	253	232		
	3,229	1583	419	

City Development

Service Area	Q1
Planning & Property	3
Infrastructure & Transport	21
Parking	17
	41

Infrastructure & Transport

Complaints about this service area were regarding road resurfacing, footway repairs, traffic calming/restrictions and potholes. Complaints regarding Infrastructure and Transport continue a downward trend from 42 in Q4 (2019-2020).

Corporate Services

Service Area	Q1
Council Tax	7
Customer Service Network	17
Benefits	6
Property Services	4
Business Support Services	3
Registrars	5
Electoral Services	0
Misc.	3
	45

Complaints regarding the Customer Service Network (CSN) make up 39% of complaints made during this quarter. Again, the number of complaints should be viewed in context. The CSN handled 370,248 contacts this quarter; 17 complaints represents a dissatisfaction rate of 0.004%.

Stage Two - Review

Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint, they can request a review be undertaken by the Complaints and Feedback Team.

3 Reviews have been concluded in this quarter.

The internal timescale for completing Reviews is 25 working days. However, there are times when more complex cases require further time to complete and the aim is to complete these within 65 working days.

Due to the impact of covid-19 emergency we did not meet the 25-day deadline for the three reviews undertaken in Q1.

Stage 2 Reviews	<i>Number of Reviews 2018/19</i>	<i>Number of Reviews 2019/20</i>	Number of Reviews 2019/20	% responded to within 25-day timescale	% responded to within 65-day timescale
Q1	4	5	3	0%	100%
Q2	8	7	-		
Q3	6	8	-		
Q4	6	11	-		
	24	31	3		

The reviews were in respect of services within the following Directorates;

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2020/21	Comparison Figures for previous year 2019-20
City Development	2					12
Corporate Services	-					7
Neighbourhoods	-					12
People, Communications & Partnerships	1					0
	3					31

Outcome of Stage 2 Reviews

Complaint Outcomes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2020/21	Comparison Figures for previous year 2019-20
Upheld in full	-					3
Upheld in part	-					10
Not Upheld	3					16
Unsubstantiated	-					0
Not Eligible	-					1
Withdrawn	-					1
	3					31

Reviews not upheld (3)

The elements of complaint were;

- *Actions of the Data Protection Officer and delays in the case (not upheld)*
- *Impeding the flow of a Burn by installing of a culvert screen (not upheld)*
- *A lack of consultation in allowing a temporary closure of a back lane (not upheld)*

Reviews upheld (0)

Reviews partly upheld (0)

Appendix 4: Adult Social Care

The table below shows the number of complaints received together with comparative data for the previous two years.

10 complaints received in Q1 regarding adult social care services.

	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Apr-Jun	14	24	10	-58%	80%
Jul-Sep	38	21	-		
Oct-Dec	18	20	-		
Jan-Mar	23	16	-		
Total	93	81	10		

The complaints were about the following issues;

Nature of Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Actions of worker	3			
Assessment Disagreement	-			
Care Practice Issues	1			
Communication	2			
Delay	1			
Finance	1			
Quality Issues	2			
Lack of help/support	1			
	10			

The complaints were made regarding the following service areas;

Service Area Involved	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Mental Health Service	2			
Hospital SW Team	1			
Learning Disabilities Service	1			
SW Locality Teams	4			
Occupational Therapy Service	1			
Financial Assessment Team	-			
Commissioned Services	1			
Financial Safeguarding Team	-			
Safeguarding Adults/DoLs	-			
	10			

Outcome of complaints

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Upheld in full	2			
Upheld in part	2			
Not upheld	4			
NE/WD/OTH**	1			
Ongoing	1			
	10			

**not eligible/withdrawn/other

In Q1 there were 4 complaints (40%) that had some element upheld or partly upheld;

- *A complaint about not being kept informed when requesting details regarding the care co-ordinator (partly upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: Apologies/explanation provided. The complaint highlighted an area that required some clearer guidance re: the interface between a social care DP and a DP for health. CCG working on procedure prior to the Covid-19 pandemic which will be revisited once CCG revert to normal working.

- *A complaint that a home care service would not attend due to lack of PPE (partly upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: The provider had a duty of care to customers/carers - due to risk of cross infection care and had suspended the service until PPE could be sourced. Council confirmed customer would not have been left without support and this case the complainant had already agreed to support their relative in the meantime.

- *A complaint about a lack of communication when changing SU's social worker (upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: There had been a lack of proper explanation/handover amidst the unfolding scenario with Covid-19. Apologies and an explanation were provided, and the new worker was introduced properly. The customer was happy with reassurance offered.

- *A complaint that the AMHP did not get a form signed meaning the SU can now leave the hospital (upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: Apologies and explanation offered. The form had not been signed and additional checking mechanisms also failed to pick up the error. These measures are now under joint review by ASC and CNTW with additional steps already implemented to strengthen the process.

Detailed Investigations

Whilst under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure there are no defined stages, there are still those complaints that have a high level of complexity requiring a more comprehensive consideration.

The internal target for completing detailed investigations is 90 working days, although due to the nature of the investigations this is only a guideline as it is important that the investigations are given due consideration.

1 detailed investigation was completed during Q1 and information on this complaint is included below.

Detailed Investigation 1

A complaint about the actions of workers and the level of communication and involvement following the placement of a relative in a Durham hospital following a Mental Health Assessment.

The investigation was carried out by an independent investigating officer and took 177 working days to complete. The complaint was complex in nature involving a number of Health Trusts, third-party agencies and care providers.

There were 10 elements of complaint: 3 were upheld; 6 were not upheld and 1 was unsubstantiated.

The three elements upheld were;

- *That the family's request for a bed at a Sunderland Hospital had been ignored and the family later found that this was an option that should have been available to them.*

Information provided to the investigation from the Health Trust revealed that the process regarding the option to relocate to a bed in Sunderland had not been fully explored with the family.

- *A failure to provide notice to the family of the decision to section.*

The earliest indication that an MHA Assessment may be undertaken was at 1.25pm and this would have been the first opportunity to make the complainant aware. The worker contacted the complainant at 2.55pm. In this respect there was not a failure to provide notice, but rather there was a delay in doing so.

- *A failure to include the complainant at the earliest opportunity, whilst undertaking the assessments of their relative.*

The opportunity to inform at the earlier time, was not purposely missed, but rather was due to the speed the issues unfolded on that day. Nonetheless, the delay did have an impact which meant the relative was not able to attend the first MHA Assessment at 3pm.

Actions/Learning Outcomes

Apologies were offered regarding those elements of complaint upheld, and the following actions have been taken in accordance with the investigating officer's recommendations for improving practice:

- To help ensure we can be confident in providing advice to families in what can often be difficult circumstances, Adult Social Care staff have been made aware of the bed management policy and the potential option for a transfer to a Sunderland Hospital. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for identifying a hospital bed remains with the Health Trust.
- The Council liaised with the Health Trust regarding the reimbursement of any additional travel costs to the complainant in line with the Trust's own protocol.
- Adult Social Care staff have been reminded of the importance of contacting the nearest relative at the earliest opportunity.

Appendix 5: Sunderland Care and Support

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

SUNDERLAND CARE AND SUPPORT LIMITED (SCAS)

COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS Q1 2020-21 (APRIL-JUNE 2020) UPDATE

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Sunderland City Council's Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on recent performance activity in relation to SCAS compliments and complaints.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Council's Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are requested to note the contents of the report.

3 OUR APPROACH

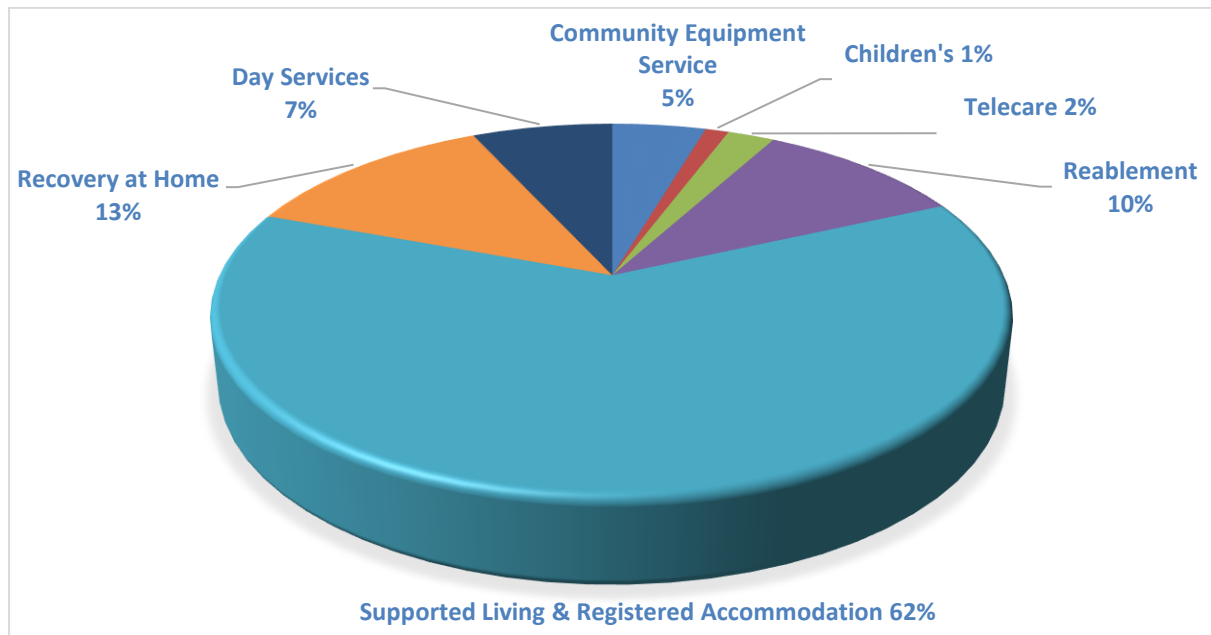
- 3.1 Sunderland Care and Support Limited takes pride in the high-quality services we provide our customers.
- 3.2 We pro-actively welcome both positive and negative feedback from all of our customers and view this as our opportunity to learn and to improve; and recognise that such feedback helps us to corroborate the standard of service our customers receive.
- 3.3 This reporting period has been quite extraordinary given that it covers the beginning and initial peak of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic. But despite this unprecedented scenario, the Company has continued to deliver within what have been extremely challenging circumstances, using creative means to ensure that we have supported our customers both in the community and in an out of hospital pathway.

4 COMPLIMENTS

- 4.1 It is of note, that despite this report covering the beginning and initial peak of the Pandemic, a total of **88** compliments were received by the Company from **1st April to 30th June 2020**, 5 (3%) slightly less than had been recorded over the previous period.

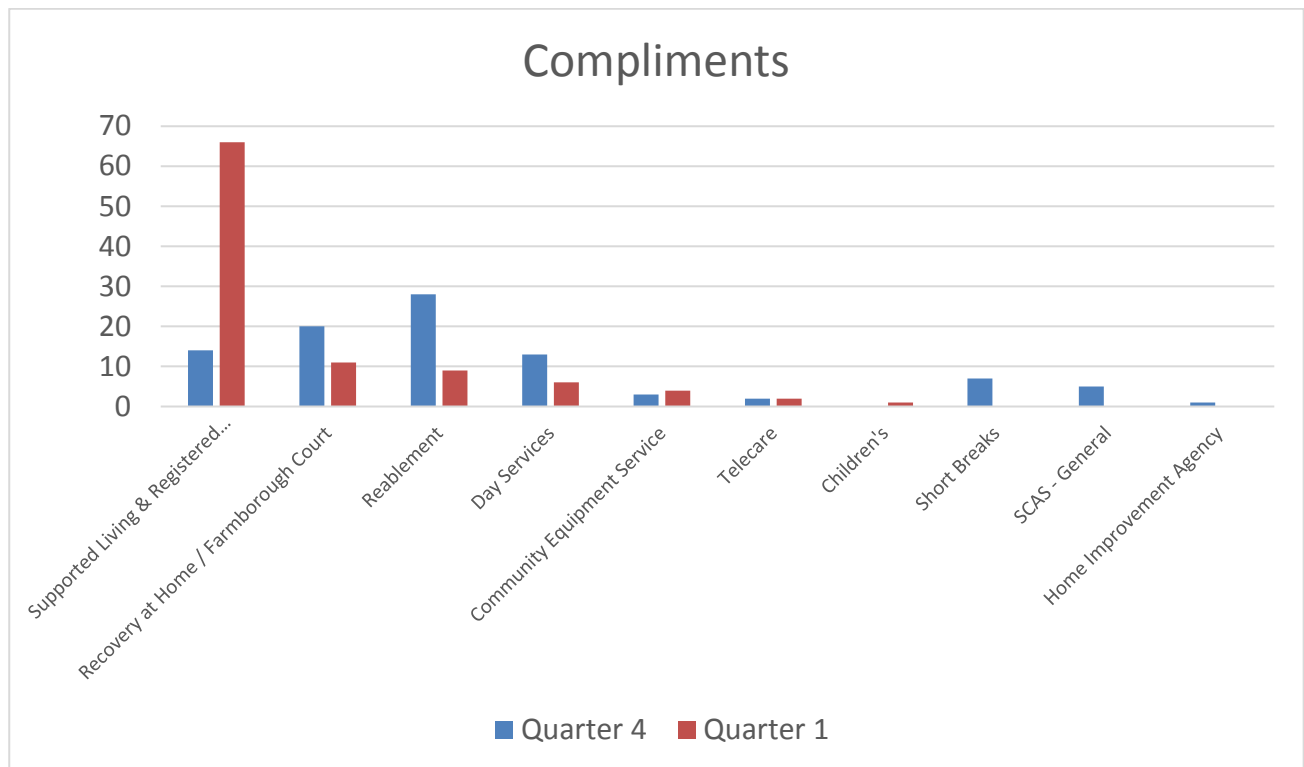
4.2 Q4 Compliments Breakdown - Distribution

Compliments received during Quarter 1 were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation:** 55 (62%) – **forty-one more** than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home / Farmborough Court:** 11 (13%) – **nine less** than the previous quarter
- **Reablement:** 9 (10%) - **nineteen less** than the previous quarter
- **Day Services:** 6 (7%) - **seven less** than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service:** 4 (5%) - **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Telecare:** 2 (2%) - **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Children's:** 1 (1%) – **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Short Breaks:** zero (0%) - **seven less** than the previous quarter
- **SCAS - General:** zero (0%) – **five less** than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency:** zero (0%) – **one less** than the previous quarter

4.3 Q1 Compliments Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



During the quarter, the City has been experiencing the impact of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic, therefore we wouldn't have expected to see as many customers taking the time to offer their feedback. It is therefore of significance that our **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation Services** saw a near **four-fold increase** in the number of compliments received, when compared against figures for the previous reporting period; and around a third of Service Areas services saw an increase or equivalent number of compliments received during the quarter, with the remainder seeing slight reductions.

4.4 Q1 Compliments Breakdown - Synopsis

Praise during the quarter was extensive, highlights of which included:

- **Supported Living** – 'well done to all staff for their dedication and commitment to customers'
- **Recovery at Home / Farnborough Court** – thanks for the 'excellent care' provided by the team
- **Reablement** – 'Thank you for the fabulous service provided'
- **Community Equipment Service** – thanks for 'the amazing response' provided by team members
- **Telecare** – appreciation of the 'wonderful' service provided by staff
- **Children's** – thanks for the 'excellent work' of the team

4.5 Customer Satisfaction Consultations

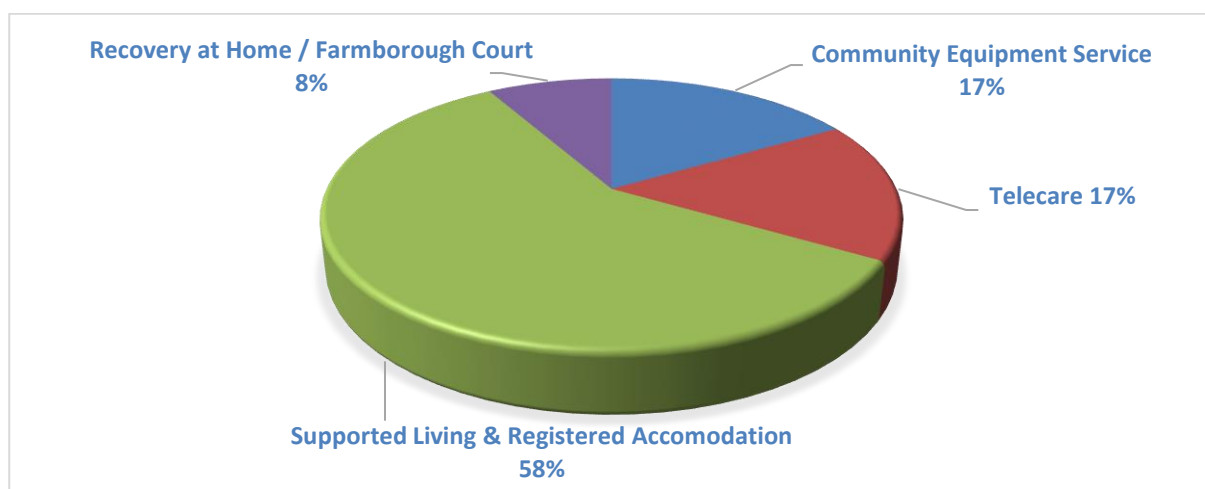
It is of note that Supported Living Services also received 11 positive responses from customers and their families via proactive customer satisfaction consultations during the reporting period.

5 COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 It is of note, that despite this report covering the beginning and initial peak of the Pandemic, only **12** complaints were received by the Company from **1st April to 30th June 2020**, representing **29% less** than had been recorded over the previous period (Quarter 4 - 2019/20) and **58% less** than vs. Quarter 3 (2019/20) figures.

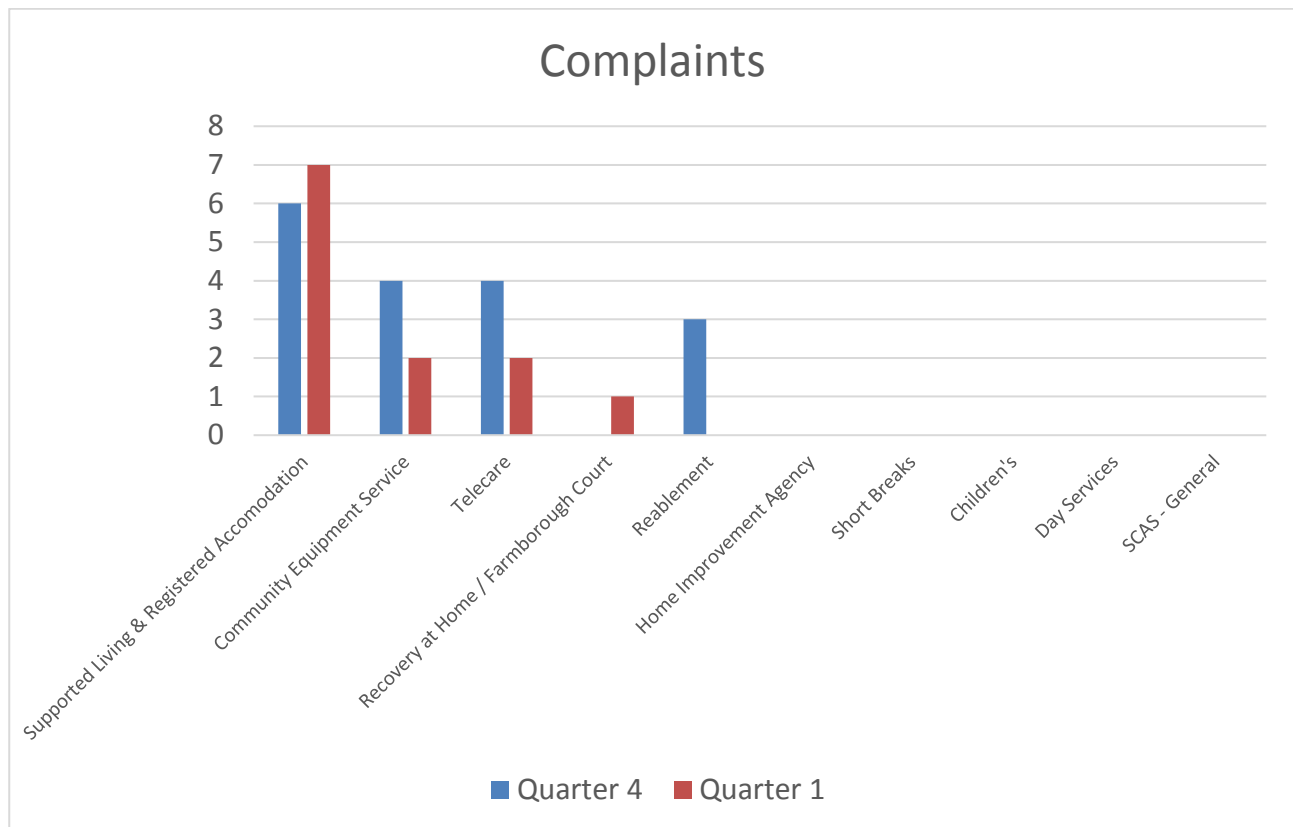
5.2 Q1 Complaints Breakdown – Distribution

Complaints received during Quarter 1 were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation:** 7 (58%) - **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service:** 2 (17%) - **two less** than the previous quarter
- **Telecare:** 2 (17%) - **two less** than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home / Farmborough Court:** 1 (8%) - **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Reablement:** zero - **three less** than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency:** zero – **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Short Break:** zero – **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Children's:** zero - **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Day Services:** zero - **no change** from the previous quarter
- **SCAS - General:** zero - **no change** from the previous quarter

5.3 Q1 Complaints Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



It is of note that around 80% of Service Areas either received zero complaints or significantly less complaints than seen during the previous quarter, with only two Service Areas noting a slight increase for the period.

Also of note was that our **Reablement Service saw zero complaints** during the period (down three for the previous quarter), and the number of complaints received by our **Telecare and Community Equipment Services** were both seen to have **decreased by 50%**.

And of particular significance, when compared with figures for the same quarter for the previous year, our **Community Equipment Service** was noted to have achieved a **sixteen fold decrease** in the number of complaints received.

However it is worth bearing in mind that due to the impact of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic the Company would not have expected to see as many customers taking the time to offer their feedback.

5.4 Q1 Complaints Breakdown - Resolution

Of the complaints received during the period, 8 (66%) were to be resolved locally utilising the Company's Step 1 - Local Resolution complaints procedures and 4 (33%) to be resolved formally using the Company's Step 2 - Formal Resolution complaints procedure.

6 COVID-19 REPORTING

- 6.1 Throughout the reporting period the company have continued to operate within the scope of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedures, despite the temporary suspension of complaints clinics at the peak of the pandemic.
- 6.2 Complaints clinics are now being reinitiated using MS Teams in order to ensure social distancing is observed.

7 OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.1 Just prior to the pandemic the Company successfully completed a thorough review of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedures.
- 7.2 The review of our Whistleblowing Policy, originally scheduled for Quarter 1 of 2020/2021 but delayed due to the Pandemic, is expected to be completed during the next reporting period, at which time it is planned that the company will relaunch both Policy documents across the Company and will also introduce our new Tell-Us-What-You-Think@sunderlandcareandsupport.co.uk and Speak Up Speak-Up@sunderlandcareandsupport.co.uk e-mail channels to stakeholders.
- 7.3 It is of note that during the previous reporting period Sunderland City Council's Complaints Team had supported SCAS to access Complaints Management training, led by the LGO, that would, but for the Pandemic, have been delivered during the Quarter. It is hoped that this opportunity will be made available again in the future.

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the scrutiny annual report 2019/20 that is to be presented to Council at a future date.

2. Background

- 2.1 As in previous municipal years the annual report will be a single combined report of all four scrutiny committees. The annual report will outline the development in the scrutiny function and provide snapshots of the outcomes achieved during the last 12 months.

3. Current position

- 3.1 The proposed report is attached at appendix 1 for member's consideration. The report provides a brief overview of some of the main work undertaken by the committees during 2019/20. It should be noted that the report is written from the perspective of the respective Chair of the Committee reflecting over the year.

- 3.2 The annual report is divided into a number of chapters including:

- Foreword
- Scrutiny Arrangements
- Individual Committee Pages
- The Year Ahead
- Scrutiny on a Page.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The scrutiny committees have delivered another set of ambitious work programmes in 2019/20, which is reflected in the annual report. The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee has worked well with Council Directorates, stakeholders and partner organisations to deliver the work programme and the committees have tackled a number of key issues throughout the year and looked to work with officers and stakeholders to provide solutions and improvements to services delivered across the city.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 That Members comment on the content and make final approval of the Annual Report 19/20.

6. Glossary

n/a

Contact Officer: Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer
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nigel.cummings@sunderland.gov.uk

FOREWORD

In this, my first year as the Chair of Scrutiny, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the Scrutiny Annual Report. The report provides an overview of the work of scrutiny during 2019/20 and sets out the contribution it has made to the good governance of the Council. It also looks at the how the scrutiny function will remain fit for purpose for the year ahead and the challenges we face moving into the future.

Once again it has been a highly challenging year for scrutiny and indeed the Council as a whole. Local authorities across the country continue to operate within an environment of austerity and financial constraint, while demand for their services continues to grow. With the Council and our partners required to deliver ever greater efficiencies and financial savings, the need for robust, evidence based scrutiny becomes ever more pressing. To help meet these demands we have continued to adapt and improve the scrutiny process. Central to this has been the introduction of a system of quarterly performance monitoring which has provided a more detailed and comprehensive approach to overseeing the quality of service delivery. This should provide a sound foundation for monitoring future service improvement and ensure that the Council has, and maintains a scrutiny function which is current, fit for purpose and contributes to the delivery of the city's priorities.

Another priority for scrutiny has been to monitor children's services within the city and the progress being made by Together with Children. This has involved a robust and rigorous challenge to performance delivery and service provision to ensure that everything possible is being done to safeguard young and vulnerable people. I am sure that this robust challenge will continue in the year ahead.

Scrutiny has also overseen the delivery and impact of a range of regeneration projects taking place in the city including the development of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park, the work of Siglion and the development of the VAUX site. We have also looked at the positive economic impact of major events held in the city during the year including the Airshow and the Sunderland Illuminations and met with the North East Local Economic Partnership and the North East England Chamber Commerce on the economic opportunities and challenges facing the city in the years ahead.

Sunderland continues to be involved in a number of joint scrutiny arrangements in relation to health provision across the area. Sunderland and South Tyneside Councils, and now Durham County Council, continue to meet on a regular basis in relation to the Path to Excellence programme which is now progressing through phase two. Members are also actively involved in the joint arrangements that cover the North East and North Cumbria looking at the Integrated Care Partnerships and Integrated Care Systems. These joint arrangements remain of key importance over the coming year as both are concerned with service reconfiguration and development, particularly of how services are provided and delivered across Sunderland and the North East.

Scrutiny in Sunderland has also made a significant contribution to regional scrutiny arrangements. Throughout the year, we have represented the Council on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee which looks at matters of

significant importance to residents across the region, focusing particularly on economic development and transport issues.

In conclusion, these are very difficult times for the Council and local government. No doubt, the next twelve months will bring further challenges. However I do believe that with the cooperation of fellow members, partners and the support of our officers we will rise to meet these challenges in the year ahead.

On a personal note I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the members, officers and partners who have contributed and supported scrutiny during the year.

Councillor Doris MacKnight
Chair of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS IN SUNDERLAND

The democratic governance arrangements in Sunderland consists of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Secretary, five Executive Portfolio holders and five Deputy Cabinet members. The decisions of the Cabinet are held to account by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and three thematic Scrutiny Committees. In addition, there are five local Area Committees and Place and People Boards.

What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny aims to ensure that public services and policies best meet the needs of the residents of the city. It does this through:

- Policy review and development;
- Holding the Council's Executive and its partners to account;
- Investigating issues of local concern; and
- Working with partners to improve services to the local area.

The Scrutiny Model

During 2015/16 the Chair of Scrutiny commissioned an independent review of the scrutiny function in Sunderland, which was subsequently conducted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny with the full cooperation of elected members and key stakeholders. The outcome of this review resulted in a comprehensive remodelling of the scrutiny structure and the formation of one formal, overarching Scrutiny Coordinating Committee and three themed scrutiny committees; namely the Children Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee, the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

How does scrutiny make a difference?

Scrutiny ensures that decision-making processes are clear and accessible to the public and that the people taking decisions are held accountable for those decisions.

On a regular basis the scrutiny function will add value by investigative questioning of witnesses on the issues within the council's policy framework. The impact of the work of scrutiny will also be evidenced over time by the implementation of its recommendations.

The monitoring of delivery of scrutiny's recommendations over a period time builds up a portfolio of evidence of scrutiny's role in service improvement.

SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Chair: Cllr Doris MacKnight

Vice-Chair: Cllr Paula Hunt

Committee Members: Darryl Dixon, Bob Francis, Juliana Heron, Niall Hodson, Keith Jenkins, Fiona Miller, Robert Oliver, Pat Smith, Mel Speding, Dorothy Trueman, Doris Turner and Susan Watson.

The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee remains the overarching committee for the scrutiny function in Sunderland and I am pleased to be able to present the annual report on the work of this Committee. A key theme of the work programme is around the Council's budget proposals. The Committee remains focused on scrutinising, monitoring and providing comment on the council budget, capital programme and medium-term financial strategy.

Budget proposals remain difficult with the continued financial pressures facing the Council. However, the Committee recognised that there was an ambitious capital programme for the City, and a number of issues were raised in relation to some of these projects and schemes. Scrutiny of the Budget provides the opportunity for Members to seek clarity and reassurances around the proposals that are to be recommended to Council when the budget is set.

The quarterly performance reports remain an integral part of the committee's work programme and continue to provide an overview of council performance for the committee. Members remain committed to monitoring the progress against the Council's key priorities. Consideration of the performance reports by scrutiny members has led to further requested information on households affected by the benefits cap, foodbank usage, recycling targets and NEET figures.

The Committee continues to receive a quarterly compliments, complaints and feedback report. Members see this as a significant monitoring mechanism of the council's performance in terms of services that the council provides to residents and the local population. It is important to understand the trends and themes in terms of complaints which can help to address performance issues and identify key training or resource requirements. It is also important to recognise where services perform well and through the compliments section of the report, areas of good practice are identified.

Sunderland City Council remains committed to strategic planning, openness and accountability and over the years Corporate Plans have provided the strategic direction required. This year the council has developed a City Plan 'Sunderland 2019-2030' covering the key challenges and vision for the City, based across the key three themes of dynamic, healthy and vibrant city.

Members discussed the City Plan extensively when it was brought before the Committee in September 2019. The Committee recommended that any decision was deferred by Cabinet and Council to allow the Committee further opportunity to consider the amended timeline within the plan.

Both the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive attended the next meeting, of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, and provided the detailed reasoning behind the various amendments to the City Plan timeline. This provided comprehension and clarity for the Committee on the issues raised previously

and then the report progressed through Cabinet and Council. This is a leading example of the Committee's critical friend role and the healthy relationship that exists between scrutiny and cabinet. It also highlights the robust challenge offered by scrutiny in not simply endorsing reports unless Members are fully satisfied with the contents.

The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty to produce an annual report with analysis of the level and changes in the patterns of crime and disorder. The report is presented annually to the committee and was presented in July 2019. The committee discussed topical issues ranging from domestic abuse through to community cohesion and modern-day slavery.

The Committee also received a breakdown of recorded crime statistics for Sunderland during 2018/19 financial year and welcomed a representative from Northumbria Police to the meeting. This allowed Members to look in greater detail at the Sunderland crime figures including for violent crime, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour. Analysis of this kind is particularly useful for Members in providing an indication of the overall picture and trends in relation to recorded crime in Sunderland.

The Communities and Local Government Select Committee undertook a review of the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny in local authorities. This review considered a broad range of evidence from a variety of sources. Guidance following the review was delayed but eventually published in May 2019. The guidance highlighted a number of specific areas that directly contributed towards the effectiveness of scrutiny. These ranged from practical advice on items such as the importance of work programming to the less tangible and harder to influence, such as organisational culture.

In considering the new guidance, the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, recognised that a number of the elements detailed in the guidance were already in operation in Sunderland. It was also agreed that the Scrutiny Handbook, a useful reference tool for scrutiny members, would be updated to reflect the new guidance from Government. The Members also acknowledged that dedicated scrutiny officers also provided support to scrutiny members and can assist on any issue related to the operation and role of the scrutiny committees.

The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee has completed another comprehensive work programme that has seen committee members monitor and challenge council performance, budgets and complaints. I am sure the committee will continue to undertake its role with the same enthusiasm and professionalism throughout 2020/21. This only leaves me to thank all my scrutiny colleagues, council officers and partners for their support, hard work and dedication during the year.

Councillor Doris MacKnight
Chair of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chair: Cllr Pat Smith

Vice Chair: Cllr Bob Francis

Committee Members: Councillors Margaret Crosby, Paula Hunt, Pam Mann, Joshua McKeith, Fiona Miller, Claire Rowntree, Alex Samuels, Lynda Scanlan, Philip Tye, Karen Wood.

Co-opted Members: Ms Ann Blakey (Roman Catholic Diocese) and Ms Jacqui Graham (Church of England Diocese)

During the year the Committee has focused much of its work on monitoring the progress being made in improving the delivery of children's services in the city following the outcome of a re-inspection of services by Ofsted in July 2018.

This has been achieved by a variety of means. The Committee has received regular monitoring reports on the performance of Together for Children and reviewed progress across a suite of key performance indicators. Central to the success of this process has been the quality of the information and data provided and the Committee has sought to ensure that performance reports are focused, timely and in a form that allows an informed judgement to be made.

Another means of overseeing improvement has been to monitor the progress being made in implementing the TfC Learning and Development Plan which has recently been refreshed. It is hoped that this should help provide a clear framework for improving the delivery of children's services into the future.

Based on the information provided in these reports, the Committee has focused on several key areas of improvement including the operation of the "front door" of children's services. To this end, Members visited the Sandhill Centre to receive a detailed presentation on the operation of the new MASH system as well as a demonstration of the Liquid Logic IT system.

There is no doubt as to the challenging environment within which children's services operates in the city given the increasing demand for services and the financial constraints on the resources available. Nevertheless, backed by the actions being taken by Together for Children and the Council, the Committee looks forward to seeing demonstrable improvements in children's services in the year ahead.

Last year the Committee raised a number of concerns relating to the increase in exclusions at a number of schools in the city and the significant variations that exists from school to school. This year, members have taken the opportunity to visit a local school in order to see at first hand the kinds of measures being taken to reduce school exclusions and improve educational attainment.

An on-going problem for the city has been the relatively high numbers of young people not in education, employment or work (NEET). To this end we received a report on the measures being taken to combat this problem. Clearly this is a difficult issue to address particularly in the current economic climate. We feel that it will only be through effective joint working by partner agencies that concrete and lasting progress can be made.

During the year, the Committee received updates on the parenting offer in the city. We heard about the range of improvements that are planned to make more effective use of the resources available and we look forward to these improvements making a significant impact on the quality and timeliness of service delivery.

The Committee has met with a range of partner organisations in order to review the progress being made on the safeguarding of children. The Independent Chair of the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board took us through the progress being made by the Safeguarding Board and the challenges they face in the year ahead.

The Committee also received updates on the action being taken to reduce the risk of child sexual exploitation and the numbers of missing children in the city. The Committee agreed to receive further updates on this issue in the year ahead. A report was also received on the services available to support young people and families who experience domestic abuse in the home.

A major priority of the Committee has been to make sure that we, and indeed the Council as a whole, listen to the voice of young people and consider their views on the delivery of the services impacting upon them. During the year representatives from the Sunderland Youth Parliament have again attended meetings of the Committee and I feel that they have made a very positive and significant contribution to our meetings.

Clearly, the year has been an extremely challenging and demanding one for the Committee, though I hope positive and productive for those involved. I would like to thank all the members of the Committee for their contributions and to thank all the officers and witnesses who gave up their time to attend and provide insights into the services they provide and the challenges they face.

Councillor Pat Smith
Chair of the Children Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chair: Cllr Doris Turner

Vice Chair: Cllr Melanie Thornton

Committee Members: Councillors: James Blackburn, William Blackett, Michael Dixon, Heather Fagan, Stephen Foster, Julia Jackson, Keith Jenkins, Christine Marshall and Tony Taylor.

During the year, a key priority for the Committee has been to monitor the progress being made to improve the economic prosperity of the city and deliver the many regeneration initiatives either planned or underway.

The Committee was consulted on the Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2023. A key strategic document, the Plan will provide the overarching framework for shaping the development and growth in the city in the years ahead. The Committee welcomed the exciting developments contained in the Plan and stressed the importance of ensuring that there sufficient infrastructure in place to accommodate the new housing planned for the city, including roads links, public transport, schools, health and leisure facilities.

The Committee was also consulted on the range of Supplementary Planning documents which have been developed to provide detailed planning guidance building upon policies contained in the Development Plan. support the delivery of the Core Strategy.

In terms of the regeneration of the city, the Committee has continued to monitor the progress being made by Siglion on the delivery of their plans. It is pleasing that regeneration of the Vaux site is now progressing and should deliver help to deliver high quality office accommodation together with residential, retail and leisure use.

The Committee received an update on the progress being made in relation to the Council's housing strategy. This included the measures being taken to increase housing growth and maximise choice of housing, make the best use of existing housing stock and support vulnerable people to access housing. The session also considered the action being taken to reduce the number of empty properties in the city and tackle the issue of homelessness.

Also, in relation to housing, the Committee considered the range of measures available in the Council's private sector housing enforcement policy and the ways in which these can improve the quality of private rented sector in the city; a sector making up around 26% of the city's housing stock.

The Committee also received an update on the work of the private sector led Business Improvement District (BID) and heard about the initiatives planned to encourage footfall and vibrancy in the city centre including a programme of events and improvements to the local environment.

At the start of the year, the Committee received an update from Sunderland Culture on the progress being made on the Sunderland Cultural Strategy; a seven year programme to develop Sunderland's creative economy, raise the profile and reputation of the city, promote health and well-being and help improve social cohesion. The Committee also heard about the economic impact

of a series of major events held in the city during 2019; including the Sunderland Airshow and the Sunderland Illuminations and Festival of Light both of which made a considerable contribution to the local economy.

In setting its work programme for the year, the Committee felt that it was important to hear more about the views of the business sector on the economic opportunities and challenges facing the city. Jonathan Walker Assistant Director of the North East Chamber of Commerce noted that the local economy was by and large performing well and was particularly strong in the advanced manufacturing, engineering and digital sectors. However, he felt that the chief areas of risk lay in the uncertainty and risk surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union and the nationwide down turn in the high street retail sector. As with many other areas of the country, more needed to be done to improve the city's skills base and levels of productivity to prevent these being a constraint on future economic growth. This theme was reiterated Richard Baker from the North East Local Economic Partnership who outlined the measures being taken to improve the overall economic performance of the north east region and the progress being made on the Government's Industrial Strategy.

Another major project being undertaken in the city is the development of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP). Comprising 260,000 sq. metres of business space on a 100-hectare site, the IAMP will have a massive impact on the city and region creating around 5,200 jobs and bringing in around £300m of private investment over the next ten years. Again, the Committee heard about the very encouraging progress being made and the considerable long term impact.

Following on from last year's work programme, the Committee also received an update on city's three business centres – the Evolve Business Centre, Sunderland Software Centre and the Washington Business Centre. These act to encourage growth in expanding areas of the economy, such as IT and software and help to diversify the local economy as a whole. The Committee heard about the measures being taken to improve the operation and efficiency of the centres.

All in all, it has been a very busy and productive year for the Committee. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Committee and everyone else involved for their hard work and commitment.

Councillor Doris Turner
Chair of the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chair: Cllr Darryl Dixon

Vice-Chair: Cllr Jack Cunningham

Committee Members: Councillors Michael Butler, Ronny Davison, Michael Essl, Juliana Heron, Shirley Leadbitter, Neil MacKnight, Pam Mann, Barbara McClennan, Dominic McDonough and Stephen O'Brien.

I am very pleased to be able to report on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee following another very busy year. The Committee have delivered an ambitious work programme that has seen discussion and challenge on a range of topics and issues.

One of the major pieces of work undertaken by the Committee was in relation to oral health in Sunderland. The review aimed to look at the state of oral health in Sunderland and the current interventions available to improve oral health in the local population. The review was conducted over an extensive 6-month period and involved over 20 witnesses giving evidence to the committee. This included representatives from Public Health England, Health Education England, British Fluoridation Society, UK Freedom From Fluoride Alliance and local and regional dental professionals.

The Committee acknowledged that oral health was extremely important in terms of eating, talking and being an influencing factor in our social lives, careers and relationships. Members also identified poor oral health being linked to gum disease, heart disease, premature birth and even knee arthritis. Sunderland continues to perform poorly compared with neighbouring authority areas. The Committee's review recognised that an oral health strategy for the city was key in determining interventions and the promotion of clear and concise oral health messages.

As part of the review we looked at several interventions including water fluoridation, where there were arguments fully supporting the use of Community Water Fluoridation Schemes as a way of addressing the inequalities in oral health. The Committee also recognised a number of conflicting arguments against its use on grounds of safety and the removal of choice for the population.

The Committee have put forward a series of recommendations from this review that aim to help support the improvement and promotion of oral health across Sunderland.

Following the changes to maternity services at Sunderland Royal Hospital, as part of the Path to Excellence programme, Members were interested to see how services were being delivered since the implementation of the revised service model. The Committee invited staff from the obstetrics and gynaecology department of the South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust to provide this update.

The committee heard that the scale of the change had been challenging but induction processes, staff forums and external assessments had helped staff adapt to the changes. Members also looked at birth rates in both hospitals and the benefits of the new maternity hub. An important aspect of the scrutiny function is its monitoring role on service developments, particularly those that

they have been actively involved in scrutinising. The Committee are clear on the importance of the continued monitoring of revised services to ensure that services changes are performing as expected and any issues are being addressed.

The Committee has continued to receive regular progress updates on the care and support provider market, providing a clear picture of current and on-going issues within the care home market in Sunderland. Members have discussed issues ranging from domestic abuse services, future service demands and independent advocacy service. As Members, we continue to build our knowledge and understanding of the key issues facing the sector and continue to seek assurances on how the Council works with partners and providers to tackle key challenges.

The previous annual report centred on the revision of urgent care services and the committee have continued to monitor the mobilisation phase throughout the year. Members have received updates on the recovery at home service, the extended access service and the urgent treatment centre implementation. Members raised issues around car parking, travel and transport and the operation of the 111 service. In particular, concerns were raised around minor illness and GP slots not being made available at Houghton and that patients were being referred elsewhere. The Committee is waiting for an update on urgent care services where this issue will be addressed in detail.

With any service reconfiguration or development that scrutiny becomes involved with it is a vital aspect that Members remain committed to the monitoring of the implementation of the proposed changes. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has a history of providing robust monitoring and providing the requisite challenge where appropriate to ensure that services are delivered as expected. Urgent care will remain a focus of the committee's work programme as we move forward into 2020/21.

The All Together Better Alliance remains a key focus for the Committee since coming into operation on 1 April 2019. While this alliance is not an organisation, but a new way of working together, it is responsible for Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) £240 million 'Out of Hospital' contracts. Members raised questions on a number of issues including access to mental health services, pharmacy access, medical optimisation and the recruitment and retention of GPs. The Committee continues to monitor the performance of the All Together Better Alliance as part of its ongoing work programme arrangements.

Sunderland CCG also refreshed their General Practice Commissioning Strategy during the year this was to reflect changes both locally and nationally in the healthcare system. Members discussed the recruitment and retention of GP's in Sunderland and the relative success of the 'Golden Hello' package. Members also acknowledged the improvement in patient satisfaction levels in relation to getting appointments and the overall patient experience. Initiatives such as Primary Care Networks and social prescribing were also identified as important in helping to relieve the pressure on GP practices. Members of the Committee welcomed the refresh to the GP Commissioning Strategy and its importance to maintaining and developing General Practice within Sunderland.

The variety of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee work programme has again been evident through this report. Further challenges lie ahead and

the impacts of Integrated Care Systems, Integrated Care Partnerships and the Path to Excellence Phase 2 means that change and service development will continue to be at the forefront of the Committee's work.

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is committed to developing relationships and working in collaboration with all major health partners across the region. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members, officers and partners who have contributed to the work of the committee over the year. It is only through this continued commitment that the Committee can look at issues in such detail, and the Committee will ensure that this is maintained in the coming year.

Councillor Darryl Dixon
Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

THE YEAR AHEAD

Overview and scrutiny is an integral part of the Council's governance and decision-making structure contributing to the Council's budgetary and policy making function as well as holding the executive to account for its actions. This report provides an opportunity to reflect on the experiences for the last year and recognise the challenges we face in the year ahead.

Clearly, the next few years will continue to be challenging for the Council; operating as it does in an environment of diminishing resources and increasing demand for services. This represents a major challenge for us all. For scrutiny it is important that we help the Council to make the best use of the resources available and ensure that frontline services are still delivered to the highest possible standards. This will not be easy. However, I feel it is our duty as elected representatives of the city to continue to do everything in our power to help protect our residents from the difficulties that face us.

Another issue of growing importance will be how we can best go about ensuring accountability and a high standard of service from our commissioned services. For this we will also need to work more closely with our partners and outside bodies to help ensure that as far as possible we safeguard vital services. I feel that this is an area where further development is required but that we now have the firm foundations from which to go forward.

Scrutiny will also continue to play an active role in the changing delivery of health services across Sunderland and the region. It is certainly an area that will continue to be determined by financial, social and environmental factors that will continue to drive change in the sector. We will continue to monitor and challenge health partners through our own Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee with South Tyneside and also regionally through the North East Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. Through these joint arrangements we are able to represent the concerns and needs of the Sunderland population and ensure that Sunderland residents views are represented and considered in looking at service reconfigurations.

As part of the development of scrutiny we will be looking to ensure that Committee work programmes are more focussed and directed at the key issues facing the city and its residents. We will therefore be looking to monitor the progress being made in implementing the Council's new City Plan for 2019-2030 and the measures being taken to make Sunderland a more dynamic, healthy and vibrant city. A key to this will be our ability to work closely and collaboratively with our partners and make the most of the resources available in the city.

Once again, I would like place on record our thanks to everyone who contributed to the work of scrutiny over the last twelve months and look forward to having another productive year ahead.

SCRUTINY ON A PAGE

The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, the three thematic scrutiny committees, North East Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee (NECA) and the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) tackle a large range of issues over a municipal year. In order to fully appreciate the variety and breadth of the subjects covered. Below is an extensive, though not exhaustive, summary of the work of scrutiny in Sunderland.

Adult Safeguarding Board	Public Health Annual Report
All Together Better Alliance	Public Space Protection Orders
Budget Planning Framework	Recorded Crime Stats -
2020/21 and Financial Strategy	Sunderland
Business Centres	Refresh of GP Strategy
Capital Programme 2020/21 to	Revenue Budget
2023/24	Review of Decision Making (NECA)
Care and Support Annual Report	Role of Clinical Senate in Service
CCG Operational Plan 2019/20	Change (JHOSC)
Children's Services Complaints	Safer Sunderland Partnership
Children's Social Care	Siglion Update
City Plan	Strategic Economic Plan (NECA)
Collection Fund 2019/20	Sunderland BID
Compliments, Complaints &	Sunderland Cultural Strategy
Feedback	Travel and Transport (JHOSC)
Improvement Activity and Updates	Treasury Management Policy and
Industrial Strategy	Strategy 2020/21
Child Sexual Exploitation/Missing	Together for Children Business
Children	Plan
Cross Border Taxi Licensing	Urgent Care Mobilisation Update
End of Life Care	Voice of the Child
Enforcement	
Early Help Parenting Provision	
Food Law	
GP Inspection Annual Report	
Healthwatch Annual Report	
Integrated Care Systems	
Local Plan – Core Strategy	
Major Events	
Managing the Market	
Maternity Services	
NHS Performance	
NECA Budget Proposals (NECA)	
North East Ambulance Service	
North East England Chamber of	
Commerce	
Ofsted Improvement Plan	
Oral Health in Sunderland Review	
Performance Management	
Private Sector Housing	
Procurement Strategy Update	
Provisional Revenue Support	
Settlement	
Enforcement Policy	

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT
COORDINATOR****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider and agree a work programme for the Committee for the remainder of municipal year 2020/21.

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme is designed to set out the key issues to be addressed by the Committee during the year and provide it with a timetable of work. The Committee itself is responsible for setting its own work programme.
- 2.2 To be most effective, the work programme should provide a basis and framework for the work of the Committee, while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to any important issues that emerge during the course of the year. The work programme is therefore intended to be a working document that the Committee can develop and refer to throughout the year.
- 2.3 In order to ensure that the Committee is able to undertake all of its business and respond to emerging issues, there will be scope for additional meetings or visits not detailed in the work programme.
- 2.4 The remit of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee covers the following:-
- To review and scrutinise the functions of the Council relating in particular to the budget, corporate plan, external assessments, performance monitoring, quality standards and value for money, property and facilities management, information technology, organisational development, workforce strategy, governance, customer service and communications. To act as the designated scrutiny committee for statutory purposes for crime and disorder and flood risk.*
- 2.5 The work programme should reflect the remit of the Committee and the need to balance its responsibility for undertaking scrutiny, performance management and policy review (where necessary). In accordance with the independent review of the scrutiny function there will be an increasing emphasis on accountability and performance management in the composition of the work programme for the year ahead.
- 2.6 The work programme should also reflect and be aligned to the key priorities of the Council as set out in documents such as the City Plan, reflect issues highlighted following external assessments and issues raised during the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee development session held on 30 July 2020.

3. DETERMINING THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Topics for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme will vary from single issue items for consideration such as policy and performance reports through to regular updates on issues that the committee have adopted a more focused monitoring role.
- 3.2 The table below summarises the relevant single item issues which are likely to be a regular feature of the work programme for 2020/21. The table also summaries a number of issues and topics that members of the committee have discussed at its recent development session. These items will be programmed into the work programme at relevant dates in discussion with the appropriate officers.

Regular Work Programme Items	
Performance Management (Quarterly)	To receive performance management information on a quarterly basis based around three key priorities of City, People and Council.
Compliments, Complaints and Feedback (Quarterly)	To receive a quarterly report detailing the compliments, complaints and feedback received by the Council in relation to the services it provides.
Council Budget Reports	To review and scrutinise the various budget reports before agreement by Cabinet and Full Council.
Covid-19 Updates	Updates in relation to the impacts and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic will be incorporated into existing reports including finance, performance and complaints reports.
Scrutiny Coordinating Committee and the three thematic scrutiny committee work programmes (Monthly)	To receive the committee's work programme outlining future meetings of the committee and the items scheduled for those meetings. Also to receive the three thematic scrutiny committees work programmes as part of the coordinating role of the committee.
28 Day Notice of Key Decisions (Monthly)	To consider the Council's 28 Day Notice of Key Decisions which contains matters which are likely to be the subject of a key decision to be taken by the executive, a committee of the executive, individual members of the executive, officers, area committees or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an executive function during the period covered by the plan.

Single Item (Items to be scheduled when dates known)	
Safer Sunderland Partnership	To receive the annual report from the Safer Sunderland Partnership outlining the previous year's work and the priorities for 2020/21. Also to include an addendum on the collective impacts of Covid-19.
City Plan	To receive updates and monitor the progress and development of the City Plan, including as a result of Covid-19 actions and recovery.
New Ways of Working	A look at new ways of working, including the positives and negatives, and how the Covid-19 pandemic has driven the organisation to work in different ways. The Committee will also look at how this will assist with the move to the new City Hall.
Impact of Covid-19 on partner organisations	The Committee will look to invite key partners from across the city to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on organisations that are fundamental to the City both now and going forward.

- 3.3 A draft Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020/21 is attached as **Appendix 1** which incorporates, where relevant, the items above.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the work programme is a 'living' document and can be amended throughout the course of the municipal year. Any Elected Member can add an item of business to an agenda for consideration (Protocol 1 within the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook outlines this process).
- 3.5 The Committee also has a coordinating role to avoid duplication, make best use of resources and to provide a corporate overview of the scrutiny function. As such the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee will also receive, on a monthly basis, the work programmes of the three thematic Scrutiny Committees. The initial draft work programmes of the thematic scrutiny committees are also attached for consideration.

4. Dedicated Scrutiny Budget

- 4.1 A small budgetary provision of £15,000 per annum is available to the Scrutiny Committees to deliver the agreed Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes. The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee will monitor the scrutiny budget on a regular basis through reports received at this committee.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee consider and agrees the draft work programme for 2020/21 and incorporates emerging issues as and when they arise throughout the forthcoming year.
- 5.2 That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee considers and notes the work programmes of the thematic Scrutiny Committees as attached.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Scrutiny Agendas and Minutes

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SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

REASON FOR INCLUSION		25 JUNE 20 D/L 15 JUNE 20	10 SEPTEMBER 20 D/L 31 AUG 20	8 OCTOBER 20 D/L 28 SEPT 20	5 NOVEMBER 20 D/L 26 OCT 20	3 DECEMBER 20 D/L 23 NOV 20	14 JANUARY 21 D/L 4 JAN 21	11 FEBRUARY 21 D/L 1 FEB 21	11 MARCH 21 D/L 1 MARCH 21	15 APRIL 21 D/L 5 APRIL 21
Policy Framework / Cabinet Referrals and Responses		Revenue budget Outturn 20/21 (Jon Ritchie)	First Revenue Budget Review 20/21 (Jon Ritchie)		Budget Planning Framework 2021/22 and Financial Strategy (Jon Ritchie/Paul Wilson)		Revenue Budget update and provisional revenue support settlement (Jon Ritchie/Paul Wilson)			
Scrutiny Business		Covid-19 Update (Sarah Reed/Jon Ritchie)	Annual Report (N Cummings)	Hate Crime (Jessica May) Safer Sunderland Partnership Annual Report (Stuart Douglass)						Annual Report (N Cummings)
Performance / Service Improvement			Compliments, Complaints & Feedback Annual Report (Marie Johnston) Performance Management Q1 (Liz St Louis)			Performance Management Q2 (Liz St Louis) Compliments, Complaints & Feedback (Marie Johnston)			Performance Management Q3 (Liz St Louis) Compliments, Complaints & Feedback (Marie Johnston)	
Consultation / Information & Awareness Raising		Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20	Notice of Key Decisions Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20

Work Programme Items to be scheduled:
City Plan Update
New Ways of Working
Impact of Covid-19 Partner Organisations

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

REASON FOR INCLUSION		1 JULY 20 D/L:19 June 20	2 SEPTEMBER 20 D/L:21 August 20	30 SEPTEMBER 20 D/L:18 Sept 20	28 OCTOBER 20 D/L:16 Oct 20	25 NOVEMBER 20 D/L:13 Nov 20	6 JANUARY 21 D/L:23 Dec 20	3 FEBRUARY 21 D/L:22 Jan 21	10 MARCH 21 D/L:26 Feb 21	14 APRIL 21 D/L:2 April 21
Policy Framework / Cabinet Referrals and Responses										
Scrutiny Business		Covid-19 Update (Sunderland City Council, CCG & NHS FT) Draft Health Inequalities Strategy (Julie Parker-Walton)	Covid-19 Update (Sunderland City Council, CCG & NHS FT)	Covid-19 Update (tbc) Winter Preparedness (G King/Public Health) Flu immunisation Programme (G Gibson)	Covid-19 Update (Sunderland City Council, CCG & NHS FT) Engaging with the Public (Sunderland CCG)	Covid-19 Update (Sunderland City Council, CCG & NHS FT) All Together Better Alliance (Sunderland CCG)	Covid-19 Update (Sunderland City Council, CCG & NHS FT) Care and Support Annual Report (Sunderland Care and Support)	North East Ambulance Service (M Cotton) NHS FT Merger Update (NHS FT) Integrated Care Systems Update (Sunderland CCG)	MH Strategy (Sunderland CCG) Managing the Market (G King) Annual Report (N Cummings)	
Performance / Service Improvement										
Consultation/ Information & Awareness Raising	Notice of Key Decisions	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21

Items to be scheduled

Ophthalmology

Path to Excellence Phase 1 & 2 Updates

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

REASON FOR INCLUSION	7 JULY 20	8 SEPTEMBER 20	6 OCTOBER 20	3 NOVEMBER 20	1 DECEMBER 20	12 JANUARY 21	11 FEBRUARY 21	10 MARCH 21	7 APRIL 21
Policy Framework/ Cabinet Referrals and Responses			Homes of Multiple Occupation SPD Scoping Report (Catherine Auld) Riverside SPD (Catherine Auld)		Allocations and Descriptions Plan (Catherine Auld)				Annual Report (Jim Diamond)
Scrutiny Business	Covid 19 Business Support (Catherine Auld) Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor – Update (Mark Jackson)	Annual Road Safety Report (Mark Jackson) Work Programme - Consideration of Draft 20-21 (JD)	International Strategy (Catherine Auld)	Low Carbon Framework (Catherine Auld) Covid 19 Business Support Grants – Final Position (Catherine Auld)	Sunderland Chamber of Commerce – Update Sunderland Business Improvement District (Sharon Appleby)	Housing Strategy – Update (Graham Scanlan) Environmental Services – Update (Colin Curtis)	Siglion Update (Helen Townsend) International Advanced Manufacturing Park (Mark Jackson)	Sunderland Cultural Sector/Events (Victoria French) City Hall (Peter McIntyre)	Business Centres – Update (Catherine Auld) Sunderland Rail Station – Update (Mark Jackson) Local Flood Authority Update (Mark Jackson)
Consultation Information and Awareness Raising	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme of Committee – Proposed Process (JD)	Notice of Key Decisions	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21

NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS'
SUPPORT COORDINATOR****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28-day period from 17 August 2020.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Holding the Executive to account is one of the main functions of Scrutiny. One of the ways that this can be achieved is by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Notice of Key Decisions) and deciding whether Scrutiny can add value in advance of the decision being made. This does not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.2 To this end, the most recent version of the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions is included on the agenda of this Committee. The Notice of Key Decisions for the 28-day period from 17 August 2020 is attached marked **Appendix 1**.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In considering the Notice of Key Decisions, Members are asked to consider only those issues where the Scrutiny Committee could make a contribution which would add value prior to the decision being taken.
- 3.2 In the event of Members having any queries that cannot be dealt with directly in the meeting, a response will be sought from the relevant Directorate.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To consider the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28-day period from 17 August 2020 at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Agenda

Contact Officer : Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer
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The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice is given of the following proposed Key Decisions (whether proposed to be taken in public or in private) and of Executive Decisions including key decisions) intended to be considered in a private meeting:-

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter*	Address to obtain further information
200813/492	To approve the procurement of contractors to undertake Seaburn Infrastructure Works	Cabinet	Y	15 September 2020	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200604/484	To approve the proposed Better Care Fund arrangements with Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group for the period 2020-2021.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 31 October 2020.	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
170927/212	To approve in principle the establishment of a new police led Road Safety Partnership (Northumbria Road Safety Partnership) embracing the Northumbria Force Area.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter*	Address to obtain further information
190823/385	To approve the proposed Governance Arrangements for the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing (CESAM) and related matters.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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190906/402	To consider expansion proposals by an existing Council tenant in respect of a strategic property and the associated capital funding and revised lease term proposals.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200810/491	To procure a Letting Agent at Hillthorn Business Park.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 31 October 2020.	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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200813/493	To approve the Triggering of pre-emption rights to acquire HCA interests in Sunnyside and disposal of land to facilitate regeneration proposals.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200813/494	To approve the establishment of a funding mechanism for the acquisition residential properties.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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200813/495	Approval to consult upon the Development Management Scoping Report Supplementary Planning Document	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200813/496	Approval to consult upon the revised Riverside Draft Supplementary Planning Document.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200813/497	Approval to consult upon the draft Homes in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document.	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 15 September to 30 November 2020.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
181024/312	To receive an update report on the Regional Adoption Agency proposals and to agree the next steps	Cabinet	Y	During the period from 13 October to 31 December 2020.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

Note; Some of the documents listed may not be available if they are subject to an exemption, prohibition or restriction on disclosure. Further documents relevant to the matters to be decided can be submitted to the decision-maker. If you wish to request details of those documents (if any) as they become available, or to submit representations about a proposal to hold a meeting in private, you should contact Governance Services at the address below.

Subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of documents submitted to the decision-maker can also be obtained from the Governance Services team PO Box 100, Civic Centre, Sunderland, or by email to committees@sunderland.gov.uk

***Other documents relevant to the matter may be submitted to the decision maker and requests for details of these documents should be submitted to Governance Services at the address given above.**

Who will decide;

Councillor Graeme Miller – Leader; Councillor Michael Mordey – Deputy Leader; Councillor Paul Stewart – Cabinet Secretary; Councillor Louise Farthing – Children, Learning and Skills; Councillor Geoffrey Walker – Healthy City; Councillor John Kelly – Vibrant City; Councillor Rebecca Atkinson – Dynamic City.

This is the membership of Cabinet as at the date of this notice. Any changes will be specified on a supplementary notice.

Elaine Waugh,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

17 August 2020