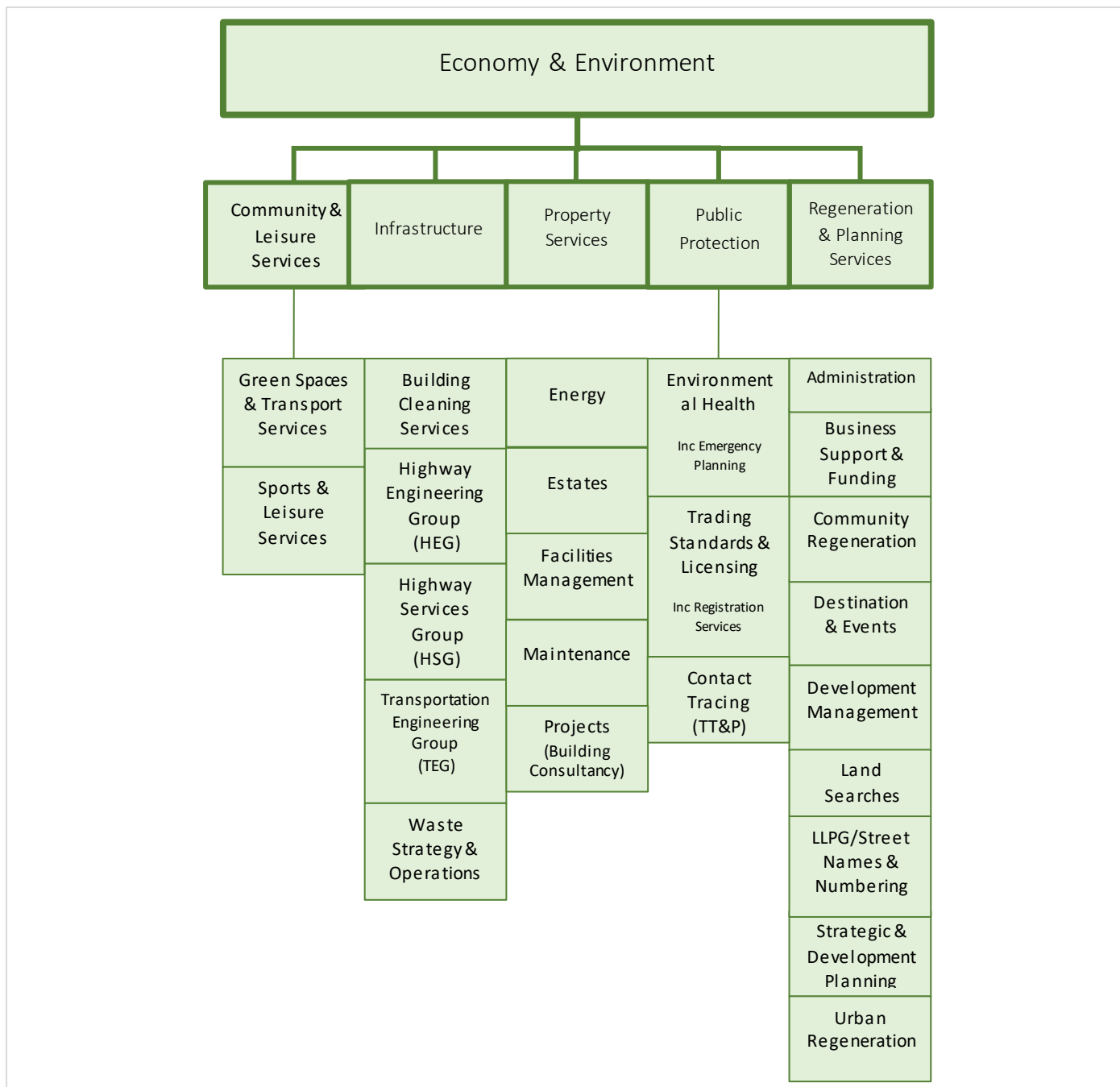


Diagram of Directorate and Service Framework



Brief description of Directorate and Service Framework

There are: 5 Key Services, 24 Service Departments, 58 Service Groups/Teams delivering ~83 Service Provisions which has approximately 334 Core Service Functions, 2075 Staff Headcount (1152 FTEs) and approximately £44M Nett Revenue Budget

2. Number of complaints by Stage Type, Service, and Targets Met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	231	201	87.01%
Stage 2	20	17	85.00%
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	48	46	95.83%
Totals	299	264	88.29%

Table showing how the complaints were received

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Contact Centre	3	0	0
Email	123	18	37
Letter	2	0	3
On-line	90	1	5
Other	1	0	0
Telephone	12	1	3
Totals	231	20	48

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	136	123	90.44%
Infrastructure	62	53	85.48%
Property	1	0	0%
Public Protection	19	15	78.95%
Regeneration & Planning	11	8	75.00%
Other - Combined	2	2	100%
Totals	231	201	87.01%

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	2	2	100%
Infrastructure	1	1	100%
Property	0	0	N/A
Public Protection	3	3	100%
Regeneration & Planning	14	11	78.57%
Other - Combined	0	0	N/A
Totals	20	17	85.00%

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	24	24	100%
Infrastructure	14	14	100%
Property	1	1	100%
Public Protection	5	4	80.00%
Regeneration & Planning	4	3	75.00%
Other - Combined	0	0	N/A
Totals	48	46	95.83%

More detailed information on the above corporate complaints data, is currently maintained, by the Directors Secretary on a dedicated database.

Where target response times were not met, it has been identified that generally, it was due to lack of resources, some miscommunication amongst staff, diversion or redeployment of officers due to Covid constraints, and overall workload pressures amongst staff.

The Director's PA is providing training to all staff which covers a wide range of topics. One of which will be in relation to compliance procedures and ways to avoid missing the deadline dates. It is anticipated that after this training is rolled out the compliance target times will improve.

3. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

List of key specific types, or themes, of repetitive, or pertinent complaints received during this reporting period.

Between April 2021 & March 2022.

Most to least complaints -

- Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste-Missed Collections
- Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste-Other
- Other matters
- Parking
- Highway maintenance works
- Planning-General
- Cleansing
- General Weed Control-Grounds Maintenance
- CA Sites
- Anti-social behaviours- Neighbours
- Trees
- Delays in responses
- Delays in service delivery
- Illicit Tipping
- Poor communications
- Bulky Waste
- Drains-Flooding
- Footpath Quality
- Street Lighting
- Dog Bins
- Park maintenance-cleanliness
- Grass Cutting
- Litter Bins
- Dog Fouling
- Road Closures-Traffic Lights

The type or themes identified above, have been extracted from the following table which shows the incoming number of complaints by specific service sectors or teams during this reporting period.

Service Group or Team	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Green Spaces and Transport Services	34
Sport & Leisure Services	2
Waste Strategy & Operations	125
Engineering Projects Group	3
Highways Operations Group	55
Transportation Engineering	18
Building Consultancy	0
Corporate Property	3
Facilities Management	0
Divisional Support Unit	0
Environmental Health	26
Trading Standards & Licensing	1
Building Control	0
Business Support and Funding	0
Community Regeneration	0

Destination and Events	1
Development Control	0
Planning Administration	28
Strategic Planning	0
Urban Renewal	0
Other - Combined	3
Totals	299

IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS - INFRASTRUCTURE

TRENDS
Parking Issues incl. Illegal/Dangerous Parking, Parking Permits - 17 in total of which 3 progressed to Stage 2.
Examples
Stage 1 Illegal Parking at the side of property. The complainant has requested assistance with this by means of bollards to be erected.
Stage 1 & Stage 2 Parking along Rosemont Avenue during school hours - complained several times before
Stage 1 Regular misuse of permit parking bay in residential areas in Caerphilly Town Centre
Stage 1 Parking and blocking off a turn point
Stage 1 Bargoed Town parking ongoing issues with parking and parking tickets
Stage 1 Parking Issues - Lisburn Road, Ystrad Mynach
Stage 1 Volume of traffic parking in street at drop off and pick up times for the two local schools
Stage 1 Dangerous parking in street.

Action Taken to prevent re-occurrence: We will continue to enforce the residents bays in Ystrad Mynach. However, we cannot issue penalty charge notices to vehicles displaying a 'visitors permit' as we are unable to prove whom they may or may not be visiting.

IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS - PLANNING & REGENERATION

TRENDS
<p>The Complaints received for Planning & Regeneration are harder to define as they cover a very broad area and are categorised on spreadsheet as Planning-General. However, queries regarding Planning Applications/Objections/Building Regs are common and I have listed some examples received. It is worth noting that some complaints cross over Planning Enforcement Complaints that have been submitted/or are subsequently dealt with as Planning Enforcement Complaints which follows a separate process.</p>
Examples
St 2 Developer may not have built bungalow in accordance with planning or buildings regs.
St 2 Objection to planning permission granted for a new build adjacent to home.
St 1 and escalated to St 2 Planning permission for decking and now receiving threatening enforcement notice regarding the removal of the decking
St 1 Chartered Architect appointed to assist with Planning Applications to resolve issue at premises

IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS – WASTE STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

TRENDS
<p>Missed waste collections - 3 progressed to Stage 2 However, queries regarding missed collections are common within the service area and I have listed some examples received. Waste Operations service near 80,000 properties within the borough on fortnightly collections for refuse and weekly collections for recycling, organic food and waste. It is worth noting that whilst some complaints may seem repetitive, in relation to the percentage of properties serviced this is an extremely small percentage. In terms of the remedial actions undertaken, investigations are undertaken for each instance and judged on their merits. Any staff failings are identified, the staff spoken to and if found at fault they would be given a verbal notification. Further failings would be addressed in a stepped process such as written note for file, followed by disciplinary steps for repeated failings. Investigation would be carried out in relation to accessibility as a common theme for complaint turns out to be inability to access areas due to indiscriminate parking or other access issues. Again these are treated on a case by case basis and any identification of failings on behalf of the Driver or team are addressed in a similar process as described.</p>
Examples
Stage 1 - Rubbish bin not being taken by the crew as it's not in the correct location. The complainant had his bin stolen on a couple of occasions from the rear so now puts his bin out with the neighbour's bin opposite

Stage 1 - Poor service on a regular basis in respect of garden waste and also recycling. Also a lack of response regarding a tree query and not receiving a response until it was chased a couple of times
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2 CHI13933 - Continuous non collection of green waste
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2 CHI14505 - Non collection of assisted refuse and recycling on numerous occasions
Stage1 escalated to Stage 2 CHI13861 - Continuous non collection of recycling - driver refuses to drive up street
Stage 1 - missed refuse collection - continuous non collection of refuse - report several times

IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS - GREEN SPACES & TRANSPORT SERVICES

Perhaps line up and box each matter off so that they don't get mixed up

Trends Identified	Total Number of Complaints	Examples	Actions put in place to prevent reoccurrence
Delays in responses	5	<p>Lack of due care and attention to the children's play area and numerous emails been ignored regarding this</p> <p>Contact CRM service on 26th April 2021 and yet to receive contact from relevant team. Sent numerous follow up emails and every time get a response saying its been passed to the tree cutting team. Waiting almost 4 months</p> <p>No update received on rights of way service requests and phone queries about disabled right of way access x 2</p> <p>Lack of response from tree surgeon in connection with a beech tree</p>	<p>Delay in service provision</p> <p>Holding response carried out via telephone - visit was carried out - written response was required as logged as a Stage 1 complaint</p> <p>Inspection of the site was required, also inspection of hardcopy file held in the council offices at Bargoed. Attempts to combine site visits where possible to be efficient with time, this took a little time on top of other investigations which were ongoing through legal route. This was systemic issue requiring action plan</p> <p>Complaint withdrawn as local Councillor obtained the information on behalf of complainant.</p>

Other matters	6	<p>Funeral Service</p> <p>Ongoing issues with allotment behaviour</p> <p>Bedwellty Cemetery -</p> <p>Trespass on the Sanctuary Wildlife reserve, particularly by representatives of the Local Authority CCBC</p>	<p>Staff advised that they must strictly adhere to policies to ensure a consistent level of service and to avoid a reoccurrence.</p> <p>Clarity / accuracy / timeliness of information</p> <p>All staff advised that they must strictly adhere to policies to ensure a consistent level of service and to avoid a reoccurrence.</p>
Trees	15	<p>Foliage overgrowth - overgrown tree hitting slates off the roof</p> <p>Overhanging trees and branches falling off into back garden</p> <p>Tree outside property causing pavement to lift x 2 - Reported previously - no response sent for the stage 1 and escalated to stage 2.</p> <p>Tree branches needing to be cut as overhanging preventing ambulance etc to get through x 2</p> <p>Trees - need to be cut back</p> <p>Trees adjacent to the property - dangerous - bee complaining since May and no inspection or response</p> <p>Trees on council land next to complainant property and the damage they are causing x 2 - complained numerous times</p> <p>Trees at Heol Ysgubor not being</p>	<p>Officers to ensure target times are strictly adhered to prevent a reoccurrence albeit - member of staff spoke to complainant and works were completed in timely manner to resolve the complaint, it was the follow up formal response that was delayed.</p> <p>Delay in service provision - during covid</p> <p>Officers to ensure complainants are to be kept updated should works be delayed - More robust system in place now in terms of monitoring complaints and ensuring they are completed within compliance dates</p> <p>Trees are pending re-inspection. Prioritise Stage 1 complaints as soon as practicable / Officers to chase land holding departments when quotes for works are provided for works to ensure they are completed by the target date</p> <p>Delay in service provision - during covid</p> <p>Due to number of priority enquiries sometimes being beyond our currently available resources</p> <p>Issues taking precedence and the number of priority enquiries</p>

		cut Complainant upset and distressed following damage to a family members headstone in Gelligaer Cemetery from the trees in the recent storm.	sometimes being beyond our currently available resources Received a high volume of enquiries concerning trees on council held land in recent times and have quite limited resources available to respond to those queries in a timely manner. Office / Contractors conduct with public including sensitivity / empathy of staff / Politeness
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During 2021/22 34 complaints were recorded in relation to Green Spaces services, of which 12 (35%) were upheld. 2 complaints were upheld in relation to funeral/cemetery services and staff were reminded that they must strictly adhere to policies to ensure a consistent level of service and to avoid a recurrence. The topic that attracted the highest number of complaints was trees (15), of which 4 were upheld. In the main these complaints related to delay in service provision, this being a consequence of the number of priority enquiries sometimes being beyond available resources, with Covid absences having an impact as well. In response to lessons learned from the upheld complaints Officers are to ensure complainants are to be kept updated should works be delayed. Additionally, a more robust system is in place now in terms of monitoring complaints and ensuring they are completed within compliance dates. The service is also exploring allocating a Technical Officer post to assist with the management and monitoring of service requests.

IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS – PUBLIC PROTECTION

Trends Identified	Total Number of Complaints	Examples	Actions put in place to prevent reoccurrence
Other matters	5	Complaint about Environmental Health Officer New build houses being built - contractors burning items making toxic fumes Quality of work - Officer failed to secure drain lid causing a dog to get his let stuck Several complaints made regarding next door neighbour - noise, lighting etc x 2 - same complainant	Staff conduct with public - sensitivity /empathy of staff / politeness Staff conduct with public - sensitivity /empathy of staff / politeness Officer reminded to check drain lids are put back safely after treatment Officer had missed deadline due to misreading the compliance date - Council policies to be followed. We now have a more robust system in place when monitoring complaints, ensuring they are followed up in a timely manner and responded to within the compliance date

<p>Poor communication</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Covid test incorrectly communicated positive to a resident due to a light house lab error on the test result</p> <p>TTP - Conflicting information regarding self-isolation</p> <p>Information rights concern - we acted on a written complaint received however it was not made by the citizen Not dealing with personal information correctly</p> <p>Length of time taken to respond to issues raised re noise complaint</p> <p>Track & Trace phone call</p>	<p>Lessons learnt around the need for staff to ensure they check the CRM for multiple cases and merge when found before contacting the citizen. Staff to investigate thoroughly using various pieces of information from the citizen before any contact is made</p> <p>Extremely busy period with COVID</p> <p>Based around call handling with difficult citizens feedback has been given and training arranged for the advisor involved in this case. All staff to receive refresher training around handling difficult calls. A working group has been set up to look into adding more prompts and tools to the teams call handbook.</p>
<p>Illicit tipping</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>Illicit tipping</p> <p>Fly Tipping / complaint against member of staff not doing enough to prevent fly tipping / rubbish dumped outside property causing rats</p> <p>Residents in street dropping cigarette ends - letters already sent but still happening</p>	<p>Area of land belonged to a third party who have apologised and now looking to action.</p> <p>Letter issued / more like a repeat service request so no lessons learned</p>
<p>Anti-social behaviours neighbours</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Dog walked without lead and is approaching all dogs it passes menacingly x 2</p> <p>Noise Complaint / Noise and parking around licensed hospitality venues</p> <p>Poor management of odour / noise from residents</p> <p>History of environmental issues - smoke - harassment etc</p>	<p>Policies / relevant legislation followed</p> <p>Policies / relevant legislation followed</p>

During 2021/22 27 complaints were recorded in relation to Public Protection services, of which 7 (26%) were upheld. Poor communication was a feature of 6 complaints, of which 2 were upheld and these both related to Contact Tracing. Lessons learned as a consequence included reminders to staff regarding the need to ensure that they check the database for multiple cases before contacting the citizen, and provision of refresher training around handling difficult calls. In terms of topic of complaint, the most complaints (6) were received about anti-social behaviour/nuisance neighbours, but none of these were upheld, perhaps reflecting the challenges of meeting complainants' expectations in such cases.

4. Number of complaints by Category

Table showing complaints by category.

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	6
2 Decision Making	17
3 Delay in Service Provision	118
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	17
5a Following Council Policies	43
5b Following relevant Legislation	-
6 Accessibility of Services	13
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	10
8 Quality of Work	75
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11. Combination of Categories (Non-specific)	0
Totals	299

5. Number of complaints by outcome and lessons learned

Table showing complaints by outcome.

Outcome Data	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Upheld	100
Not Upheld	199
Totals	299

The following tables shows more information regarding the complaints counts above, that were, Upheld, Not Upheld, by Stage and by Service Area.

Services – Stage 1	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	58	78
Infrastructure	16	46
Property	0	1
Public Protection	7	12
Regeneration & Planning	1	10
Other - Combined	1	1
Totals	83	148

Services – Stage 2	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	0	2
Infrastructure	0	1
Property	0	0
Public Protection	0	3
Regeneration & Planning	0	14
Other - Combined	0	0
Totals	0	20

Service – Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	10	14
Infrastructure	6	8
Property	1	0
Public Protection	0	5
Regeneration & Planning	0	4
Other - Combined	0	0
Totals	17	31

Main area is Community and Leisure with 58 Stage 1 and 10 Esc 1 to 2 complaints upheld – any themes trends analysis of action to be taken going forward together with monitoring

List of lessons learned. The table below comments on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

*Please note, below is a table showing some examples of 'Lessons Learned' that has been fed-back from services and the complaint respondents, during 2021/22.

There is currently no formal process in place to feedback this information to the central administrators for 'lessons learned' by the service providers. However, through numerous service management structures and reporting arrangements, any specific issues, or matters that need executive decisions, policy, practice, or service delivery changes, these are dealt with through those respective service areas and their respective forums, and not through the central complaints administration.

Nature of complaint	Lessons learned	Category
Overgrown tree hitting slates off the roof	Officers to ensure target times are strictly adhered to prevent a reoccurrence albeit the complainant was contacted verbally and we undertook works in a timely manner to resolve the complaint – it was the follow up with a formal response that was unfortunately delayed. Officers were reminded to ensure target times are strictly adhered to prevent a reoccurrence.	8 Quality of Work
Complaint that Test Trace and Protect gave conflicting information regarding self-isolation to an individual and family	It was identified that staff need to ensure they check the CRM for multiple cases and merge when found before contacting the citizen. Staff need to investigate thoroughly using various pieces of information from the citizen before any contact is made.	1 Collaborative Working
Resurfacing of walkways in Hanbury Street, Glan-y-Nant, and proposals to develop BRU school, Hanbury Street which includes changes to play park and field (not currently part of the BRU).	Greater clarity on the maps issued to residents. Briefings between staff should include details of the scheme and wider details, so that the information can be given to residents.	2 Decision Making
Family member was receiving palliative care and not receiving collections for assisted collection service	To continue to fulfil our duty to empty bins regularly and deliver ancillary elements of the service where resources are available noting that we are also endeavouring to recruit staff to supplement present workforce numbers.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Continuous non collection of recycling.	Commit to further service improvement given the resources available and endeavour to get support from other service areas noting that we have requested support from civil enforcement on this occasion.	8 Quality of Work
Lack of street cleansing	Site inspections of the area need to be conducted more often by Supervisor. Problems with the operatives work previously. Meeting with operative in the near future following her return to work. Of at present with COVID. Meeting will be	3 Delay in Service Provision

	looked at frequency she is in certain problem areas.	
Highway safety - request for signpost to be removed as blocking driveway	ensure that the information required to make informed decisions is gathered by Officers prior to providing information to the public.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Service provided by schools transport very poor and would like to discuss with someone	We will review the information available to parents on the Council's website.	8 Quality of Work
Parking Issues - Lisburn Road, Ystrad Mynach	we will continue to enforce the residents permit parking bays in Ystrad Mynach. However, we cannot issue penalty charge notices to vehicles displaying a 'visitors permit' as we are unable to prove whom they may or may not be visiting.	5 Following Council Policies/relevant Legislation
Missed refuse collections - reported many times and complaints are getting ignored and not resolved	Enhance communications with the workforce and continue to deliver service improvement.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Missed food waste and uncollected recycling.	Staff to thoroughly check all cul-de-sacs and parking areas for bins obscured by parked cars.	3 Delay in Service Provision

At present, staff focus, and prioritisation, is to 'respond to and resolving incoming complaints and any opportunities to change or improve service delivery to prevent reoccurrences, is, wherever possible, dealt with through normal business operations.

Current complaints data collection, monitoring, and general reporting, is operated through a central administration process, capturing only limited intelligence. Whereas the actual complaints are dealt with at service level, by a multitude of officers, and it is currently reliant on the services themselves, to learn from the incoming complaints and take appropriate action as deemed necessary thereafter.

6. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	0
Disability	11
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	0
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
Totals	11

Examples of Disability Complaints are

Details of Complaint	Service Area	Lessons Learned?	Does the Complaint relate to Equalities or the Welsh Language?
Crew blocking road with returned bins - resident unable to park and is disabled. Complained in 2018 and also had a recent stage 1.	Community & Leisure		Disability
Dispute regarding accessibility for disabled access on national cycle network routes	Infrastructure		Disability
complaint related , planning conditions, health & safety and staff conduct	Regeneration & Planning	Virtual Meetings audible in the background of calls with the public can be perceived as unprofessional. However, staff advised not to take external calls when attending virtual meetings.	Disability
Missed waste collections for over a year, residents leaving waste bags in rear lane he is disabled and needs access to rear gate.	Community & Leisure	missed collections and wrong information given to complainant from the Contact Centre	Disability
Dispute regarding accessibility for disabled access on national cycle network routes	Infrastructure		Disability
Treatment she received from a member of staff when visiting to use a Civic Amenity Site	Community & Leisure		Disability
Problems with assisted collection service	Community & Leisure	strive for continuous service improvement and ensure that statutory obligations are met whilst endeavouring to maintain ancillary elements of the service at this most challenging of times.	Disability
had to go 4 houses down to retrieve my Wheelie Bin, this a regular occurrence but today one of the boys employed by your council laughed and said look at her she don't look happy. I'm disabled and have difficulties walking and I felt totally humiliated by these young lads	Community & Leisure		Disability

<p>Planning conditions, health & safety and conduct of a member of staff</p>	<p>Regeneration & Planning</p>	<p>Virtual Meetings audible in the background of calls with the public can be perceived as unprofessional. However Staff advised not to take external calls when attending virtual meetings.</p>	<p>Disability</p>
<p>Disabled car parking in Heolddu Leisure Centre - Residents using spaces displaying no badge using up all the spaces</p>	<p>Community & Leisure</p>		<p>Disability</p>

7. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Identify how many referrals to the Ombudsman and list and append any relevant supplementary information here, namely, points to note, or an example data set.

Reference/Service Area	Outcome/Decision	Details of Early Resolution/recommendation
OMB1 – CCTV	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB2 – Environment	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB3 – Planning	Premature - Not Investigating	Complaint was referred, back to Council to investigate
OMB4 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB5 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB6 – Property	Premature - Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB7 – Engineers	Premature Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB8 – Planning	Not Investigating	Early Resolution – To provide response and apologise. This was already done prior to receiving the ombudsman's recommendation
OMB9 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB10 – Transport	Not Investigating	Complaint was referred, back to Council to investigate
OMB11 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB12 – Planning	Premature - Not Investigating	Complaint was referred, back to Council to investigate
OMB13 – Highways	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB14 – Waste	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB15 – Waste	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB16 – Highways	Premature – Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB17 – Highways	Premature – Not Investigating Out of Time & Out of Jurisdiction	No Further Action
OMB18 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB19 – Waste	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB20 – Planning	Not Investigating Partly out of time	No Further Action
OMB21 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB22 - Property	Premature – Not Investigating	Complaint was referred, back to Council to investigate as stage 2 complaint
OMB23 – Environment	Premature – Not Investigating	Complaint was referred, back to Council to investigate
OMB24 – Parks	Premature – Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB25 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB26 – Planning	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB27 – Traffic	Not Investigating	No Further Action
OMB28 – Property	Not Investigating	Early Resolution – Apologise for delay and waive fee for preparation of lease. The Early Resolution was accepted and an apology was provided and fee waived

8. Directors Summary – Overall Assessment and Evaluation.

Summary of Findings.

During this reporting year, it has become more noticeable of the challenges facing our services with regards to the directorate's complexity of frontline service deliveries, its aging and deteriorating community infrastructure, some aging vehicles, plant and equipment, as well as the difficulties with maintaining appropriate staffing compliments (the workforce).

The organisation is still in the throes of the Covid pandemic recovery period, whereby many safety constraints were imposed over the past two years, which, also hindered expected service delivery performance levels. However, generally, services have performed well given those circumstances.

Legislation and public awareness, are and have in recent years, been placing higher expectations and pressures on our local authority, despite having had approximately 12 years of austerity and many medium-term plan financial cuts to services (~£14M budget reductions).

Although the directorate, by nature of its frontline facing and direct contact with the public continues to strive for quality and effective service delivery, our resources and infrastructure limitations will always create 'stumbling blocks'. For example, our maintenance requirements for waste collection vehicles being hindered by recruitment and retention difficulties in the HGV maintenance sector across local authorities and the private sector. Another example is the clarity of and difference between statutory versus non-statutory functions that the public expect to be delivered.

Each service area within the directorate currently has established Divisional Management Team (DMT's) structures, as well as a Senior Management Team (SMT) whereby the content and issues faced by such intelligence as the complaints system and other direct contact public intelligence, can readily be discussed, and follow up decisions and actions can be addressed. This would include any changes to working practices, staff awareness sessions, disciplines and consideration of any policy reviews as needed.

It should be noted, that when reading statistics in this type of report, proportionality and complexities must also be a considered factor, to ensure the appropriate perspective and messages are understood (see Section 1 and Section 2). Notable examples include the fact that the Council performs circa 9.75 million waste and recycling collections every year and the number of missed collections is an extremely small percentage of this total. In addition, several complaints relate to objections to decisions taken in accordance with Council policy (E.G. Planning). However, that is not to say that the Directorate isn't keen to learn from its complaints and complaint trend data.

The biggest challenges faced by our services, is, clarity and full understanding of public concerns, issues, and expected outcomes, whereby, we can then respond swiftly and take every opportunity to put in place appropriate actions to curtail repeat complaints, which is somewhat challenging at times, within legislative controls and limiting resources. Our new model of complaint capture (see final bullet point below) will also enable more accurate trend analysis and allow the Directorate senior management team to focus on areas that are identified by this trend analysis.

Most resolutions are expected to be addressed at and within the respective service delivery area, whereby escalations of more complex situations are expected to be brought to the senior executive panels for further consideration in a timely manner.

An extract from the overall Annual Directorate Performance Assessment states:

What have we learned?

- Despite all the challenges faced by our communities our front-line service staff have been exemplary in seamlessly continuing to deliver their services throughout the pandemic.
- Staff are our most valuable-asset and retaining good, experienced staff while being able to recruit when required is one of the most significant risks currently faced by the organisation.

- The recruitment and retention matters caused by market conditions and disparity in pay grades is now affecting the ability of many services to deliver and maintain services at previous, expected levels and prioritisation therefore must take place.
- Central Government grant funding and other initiatives with relatively short turn round times are causing greater pressures in the system making prioritisation more important.
- Despite challenging conditions linked to resources and market conditions, expectation levels of the public and certain members remain challenging and, in some cases, unrealistic.
- The positives relating to flexible, agile, hybrid and blended approaches to operational service delivery will be maintained going forward.
- The capture of service requests and complaints is in the process of being improved linked to streamlined "one front door" access to Council services and evaluation of this new model will be critical over the next 12 months.

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