



# **Annual Corporate Complaints & Compliments Report**

**2022-23**

### **1. Purpose of this Report**

- 1.1 This report details performance on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The report highlights complaints, comments and compliments received from the public and provides the latest position of the key performance indicators.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that complaints are a valuable resource, helping us to understand the needs and concerns of members of the public and to improve services.

### **2. Our Complaints Procedure**

#### **2.1 Stage 1 Complaints**

- 2.1.1 To begin with, complaints will be dealt with by the Service Department concerned and hopefully resolved.
- 2.1.2 The Service Department will aim to provide a response to the complaint within 10 working days.

#### **2.2 Stage 2 Complaints**

- 2.2.1 If the Service Department has not responded within 10 working days without good reason, or a complainant remains dissatisfied, then the complaint will be referred to the Corporate Complaints Team.
- 2.2.2 The Complaints Team will investigate the complaint on behalf of the Chief Executive.
- 2.2.3 The complaint will be logged and the complainant will receive a response within 20 working days. Sometimes it may take longer, but the complainant will be kept informed if this is likely to be the case.

#### **2.3 Public Services Ombudsman (Wales)**

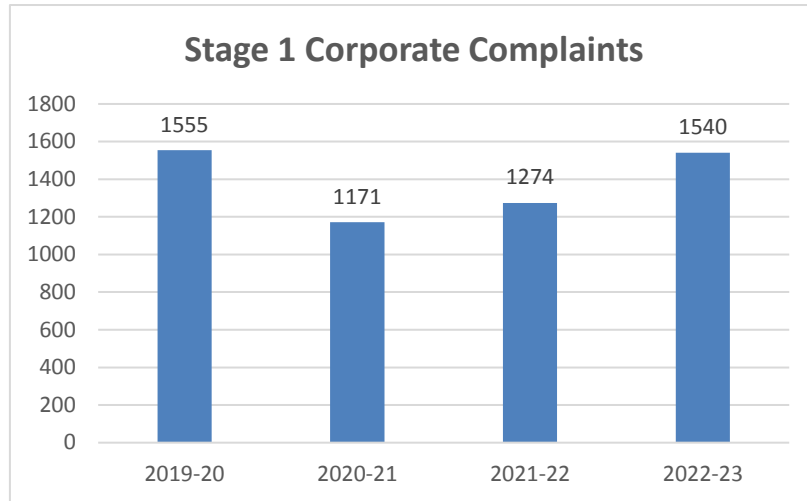
- 2.3.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint having pursued it through the various stages with the Council, the complainant may wish to refer the matter to the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales).

#### **2.4 Requests for Service**

- 2.4.1 A request for service is not a complaint (e.g., a request for service could be a request to repair an unlit lamp post, or missed bin collection). A complaint would only arise should the request for service not be properly dealt with.

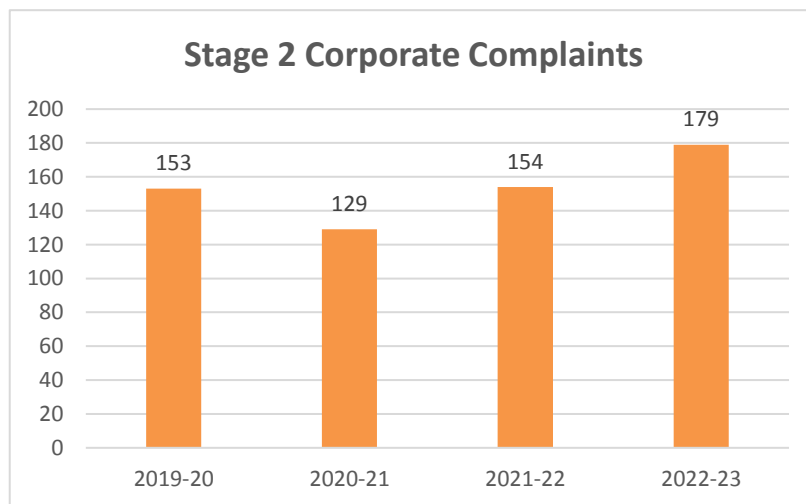
**3. Corporate Complaints to Swansea Council 2022-23**

3.1 A total of **1,540** Stage 1 corporate complaints were recorded for 2022-23. This is a 20.9% increase on the previous year when 1,274 were recorded.

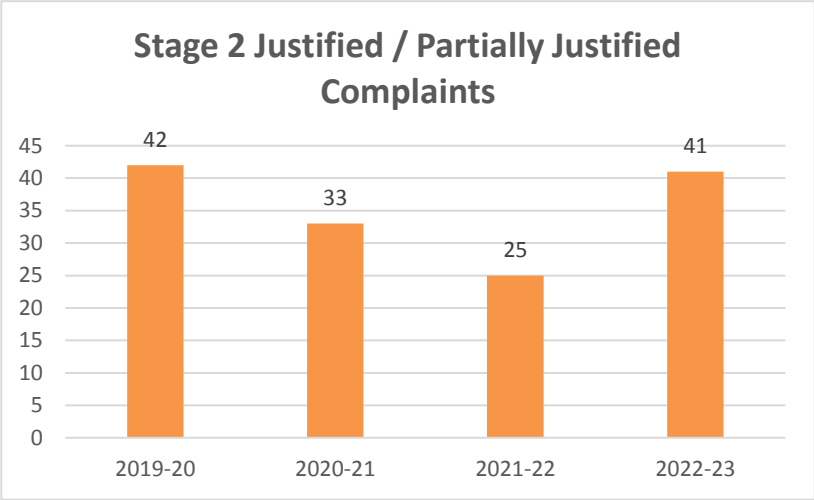


3.2 A total of **467 (30.3%)** Stage 1 complaints were justified, which is a 15.3% increase on the 405 justified the previous year.

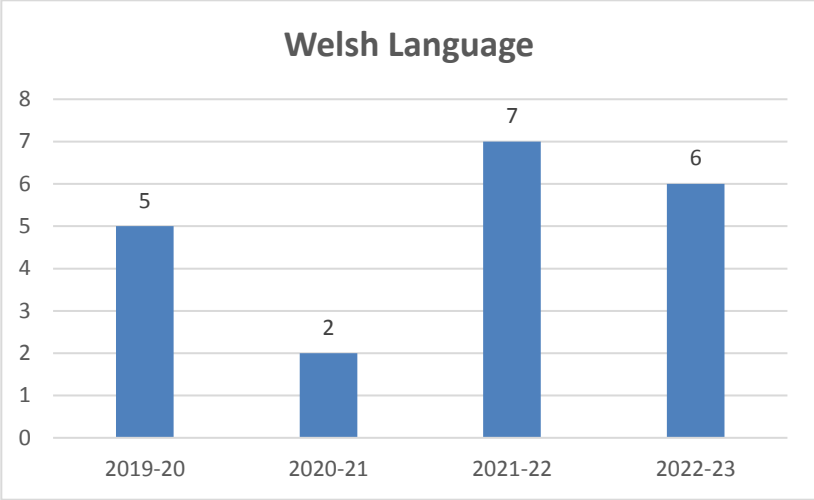
3.3 A total of **179** Stage 2 corporate complaints were recorded for 2022-23. This is a 16% increase on the previous year when 154 were recorded.



3.4 Of all the stage 2 complaints received, **41** were justified or partially justified compared with 25 for the previous year.



3.5 There were 6 Welsh Language complaints received in 2022-23 compared with 7 received in 2021-22.



#### 4. Complaints Breakdown by Service for Swansea Council 2022-23

4.1 The table below shows the stage 1 and stage 2 corporate complaints by service area. Corporate Building & Property Services, Highways & Transportation, Housing & Public Protection, and Waste Management & Parks are the Council's main frontline service areas and further detail around these services is provided at section 8 later in the report.

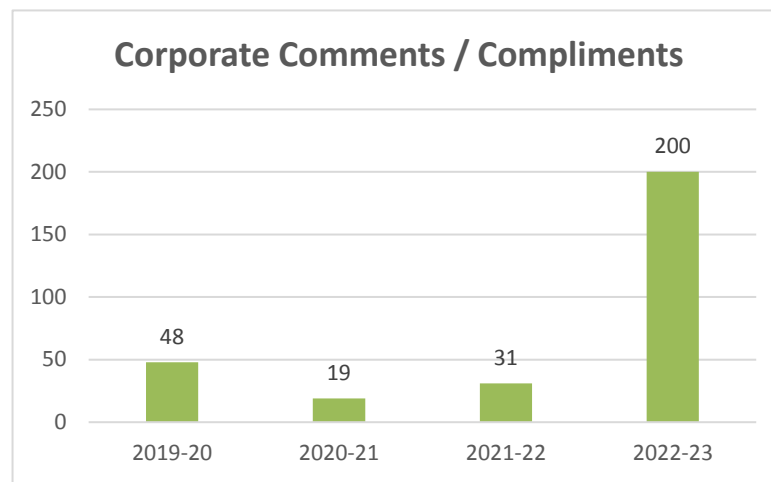
Service Area	Stage 1 Complaints 2022/23	Stage 2 Complaints 2022/23	Request for Service 2022/23
Commercial Services	0	0	0
Communications & Cust. Engagement	29	1	3
Corporate Building & Property Serv.	336	44	64
Cultural Services	78	6	24
Economic Regeneration & Planning	49	21	19
Education	33	3	18
Financial Services	61	8	79
Highways & Transportation	322	38	226
Housing & Public Protection	278	47	162
HR & Organisational Development	3	0	11
Digital & Customer Services	2	0	0
Legal & Democratic Services	15	1	20
Poverty, Wellbeing & Communities	0	0	0
Waste Management & Parks	334	10	222
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>848</b>

4.2 This can be compared with stage 1 and stage 2 complaints for the previous year 2021-22:

Service Area	Stage 1 Complaints 2021/22	Stage 2 Complaints 2021/22	Request for Service 2021/22
Commercial Services	0	0	0
Communications & Cust. Engagement	45	2	19
Corporate Building & Property Serv.	170	16	47
Cultural Services	44	6	18
Economic Regeneration & Planning	54	19	25
Education	21	3	21
Financial Services	43	6	54
Highways & Transportation	277	55	279
Housing & Public Protection	260	32	153
HR & Organisational Development	3	0	5
Digital & Customer Services	1	0	1
Legal & Democratic Services	11	2	18
Poverty, Wellbeing & Communities	0	0	0
Waste Management & Parks	345	13	211
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>851</b>

## 5. Compliments Breakdown by Service for Swansea Council 2022-23

- 5.1 When positive comments and compliments are received from the public they are acknowledged and forwarded to the Head of Service for the relevant service area. A selection of those compliments are then highlighted for the staff newsletter. This has a positive impact on staff morale and allows departments to recognise good practices.
- 5.2 In 2022-23 the Council received **200** compliments compared with 31 the previous year. This increase is largely down to reporting changes as not all compliments were logged.



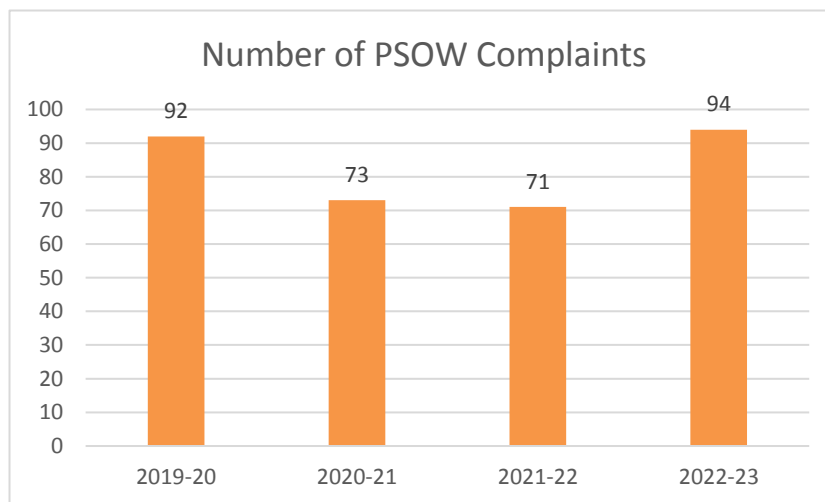
- 5.3 The breakdown of compliments by service area is shown in the table below with Cultural Services, Highways & Transportation, Housing and Public Protection and Waste Management & Parks receiving the most positive comments and compliments.

Service Area	Comments / Compliments 2021/22	Comments / Compliments 2022/23
Commercial Services	0	0
Communications & Customer Engagement	3	3
Corporate Building & Property Services	2	35
Cultural Services	5	26
Economic Regeneration & Planning	0	1
Education	0	2
Financial Services	1	4
Highways & Transportation	4	20
Housing & Public Protection	4	19
HR & Organisational Development	0	1
Digital & Customer Services	0	0
Legal & Democratic Services	1	1
Poverty, Wellbeing & Communities	0	0
Waste Management & Parks	11	88
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>200</b>

**6. Complaints Closed by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2022-23**

6.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) publishes the annual letters to all Councils on its website. The letter highlights activities undertaken by the Ombudsman’s office during the year and the Council’s performance.

6.2 In 2022-23 the Ombudsman received **94** complaints and closed **99** cases relating to Swansea Council (71 in 2021-22), which represents 6% of Swansea Council’s overall complaints and 9% of all complaints received across Wales. The table below shows complaints over the past four years.



6.3 The table below highlights the reasons for closing the 99 complaints:

Considered by the Ombudsman to be ‘out of jurisdiction’	29
Considered to be premature because the Council’s Complaints procedures had not been exhausted	28
Cases closed where the Ombudsman was satisfied by the actions the Council had taken	32
Cases closed by Voluntary Settlement. These are redress proposals which enable a case to be closed without a full investigation, e.g. providing and apology, changing ways of working, and/or financial redress	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99</b>

6.4 Of the 99 complaints received and closed, 24% (23) complaints related to Housing. These were across a range of issues with no particular trend. Housing has seen an increase in complaints due to clearing the Covid backlog of internal repairs, and the transition period to the new Oracle Field Services system.

6.5 Of the 99 complaints received and closed, only ten complaints required intervention. All of these reached an early resolution / voluntary settlement and these related to:

- Eight Corporate Complaints including: the Contact Centre (1), Housing Repairs (4), Rats (1), Council tax (1), and Housing (1)
- Two Social Services including: Child and Family (1), Adult Services (1).

## 7. Learning from Complaints

7.1 Swansea Council uses complaints, comments, and compliments from the public to continuously improve processes and services.

7.2 Complaints via the Ombudsman are discussed with Heads of Service and the relevant Principal Officer. The Complaints Officer responds to the PSOW on the actions undertaken by Swansea Council and any lessons learned. Once actions were completed, the complaint is closed on the system, recording the outcome and any lessons learned.

7.3 The Complaints Service receives an Internal Audit every three years to ensure it is undertaking its functions correctly. The internal audit of Complaints began at the end of 2022-23 and concluded in 2023-24 with the overall assurance level of substantial.

## 8. Complaints by Service Area

8.1 The charts included for each area compares performance across the last four years.

### 8.2 Corporate Building & Property Services

8.2.1 The chart below shows that Corporate Building & Property Services complaints across the board compared with the previous year. Requests for service relate to first time requests that were not complaints.

8.2.2 The general reason for the rise in Corporate Building & Property Services complaints during 2022-23 is mostly due to increased demand, clearing the Covid backlog of internal housing repairs, and the transition period from the old Orchard repairs system to the new Oracle Field Services.

8.2.3 Timescales on complaints handling has significantly improved since the new complaints system was introduced.

8.2.4 Building Services complete in excess of 70,000 repairs annually, so the number of complaints received 380 (stage 1 and 2) equates to 0.54%.

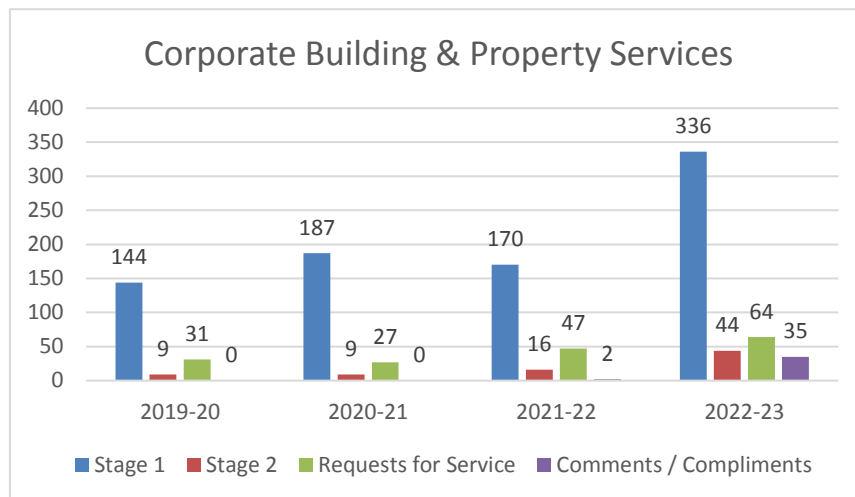
8.2.5 Examples of the compliments received:

*"I just wanted to compliment the boys who were sent to my property at X to do some painting work. The boys did a brilliant job I'm really impressed."*



*Think their names were A and B and also their boss D who was such a nice guy, great to talk to and very helpful with questions I had. I would highly recommend them.”*

*“I have just had a young lad out to fix my outside door. He worked non-stop and was so polite and well mannered. It gives you faith in the Council workers, but to be honest I can’t remember getting a bad worker. He asked me if I needed more help or if there was anything he could do for me. It is nice to have our young this nice and hard working”.*



	Stage 1 Complaints Closed Within Timescales				Complaints Outcome	
	10 Working Days	After 10 Working Days but within 3 Months	After 3 Months but within 6 Months	After 6 Months	Upheld	Not Upheld
<b>2021-22</b>	89	24	3	0	51	56
<b>2022-23</b>	136	69	20	5	137	85

**8.3 Waste Management, Parks & Cleansing**

8.3.1 The chart below shows that Waste Management, Parks & Cleansing stage 1 and stage 2 complaints reduced compared with the previous year. Stage 2 complaints have reduced each year for the past four years. Requests for service relate to first time requests that were not complaints.

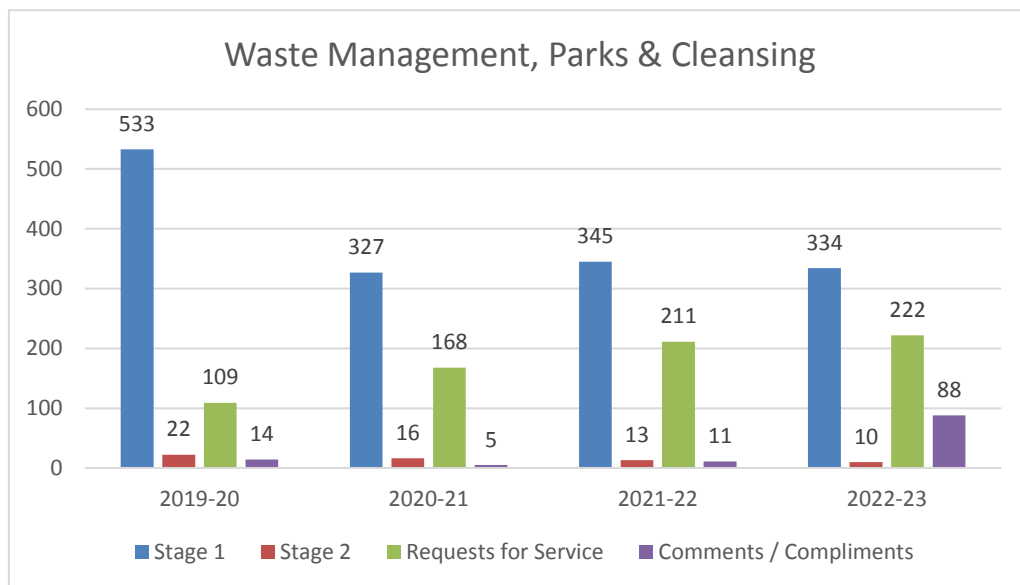
8.3.2 Generally, the complaints mostly relate to missed collections.

8.3.3 Timescales on complaints handling has significantly improved since the new complaints system was introduced.

8.3.4 Examples of the compliments received:

*“We are all too fond of complaining when things go wrong but I want to give praise to the person responsible for the maintenance of Tir Canol playing fields. I have used them for 40 years and they are looking the best they ever have. He obviously takes pride in his work and is a credit to you.”*

*“Thank you for my beautiful hanging basket delivered today, it is fabulous”.*



	Stage 1 Complaints Closed Within Timescales				Complaints Outcome	
	10 Working Days	After 10 Working Days but within 3 Months	After 3 Months but within 6 Months	After 6 Months	Upheld	Not Upheld
<b>2021-22</b>	263	23	1	0	179	99
<b>2022-23</b>	248	30	0	0	167	100

8.4 **Highways & Transportation**

8.4.1 The chart below shows Highways & Transportation stage 1 complaints increased compared with the previous year. However, stage 2 complaints were the lowest for the past four years. Requests for service relate to first time requests that were not complaints.

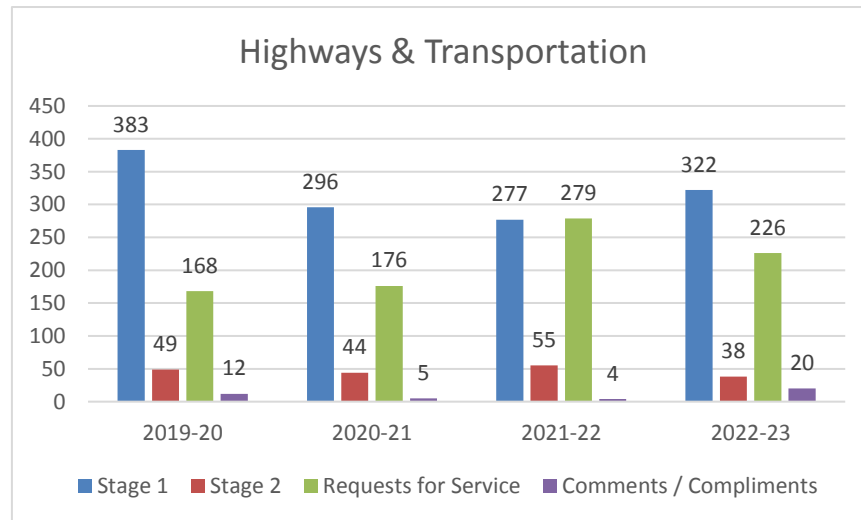
8.4.2 There are no overall trends, several complaints were received relating to parking tickets.

8.4.3 Timescales on complaints handling has significantly improved since the new complaints system was introduced.

8.4.4 Examples of the compliments received:

*“Hi there, I'd like to thank your pothole team for your prompt service, well done to all involved many thanks X.”*

*“I reported a streetlight not working in Killay and within a couple of days it has been repaired. I am very impressed with this speed and efficiency.”*



	Stage 1 Complaints Closed Within Timescales				Complaints Outcome	
	10 Working Days	After 10 Working Days but within 3 Months	After 3 Months but within 6 Months	After 6 Months	Upheld	Not Upheld
<b>2021-22</b>	206	51	4	0	69	174
<b>2022-23</b>	242	25	0	0	61	176

8.5 **Housing & Public Protection**

8.5.1 The chart below shows Housing & Public Protection stage 1 and stage 2 complaints increased during 2022-23 compared with the previous year.

8.5.2 Requests for service and positive comments and compliments also increased.

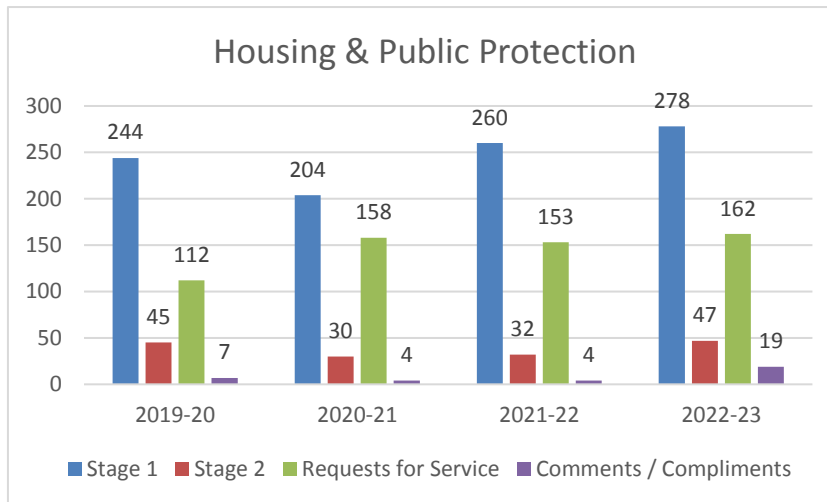
8.5.3 There are no overall trends across the complaints.

8.5.4 Timescales on complaints handling has significantly improved since the new complaints system was introduced

8.5.5 Examples of the compliments received:

*“The Environmental Health Team, Specifically Empty Property Officer and Pest Control, exceptionally high level of service and care which impacted on my property and my wellbeing.”*

*“Town Centre AHO – Mr X underwent lifesaving surgery over the weekend. His sister called to thank us for the care we displayed towards her brother”.*



	Stage 1 Complaints Closed Within Timescales				Complaints Outcome	
	10 Working Days	After 10 Working Days but within 3 Months	After 3 Months but within 6 Months	After 6 Months	Upheld	Not Upheld
<b>2021-22</b>	180	29	2	0	48	113
<b>2022-23</b>	203	22	0	0	55	151

9. Key Performance Indicators

9.1 The table below shows overall performance on responding to complaints within the timescales stipulated in the Council’s Corporate Complaints Policy.

9.2 The response times, particularly on Stage 1 corporate complaints, has significantly improved since the new complaints system went live in July 2023.

Key Performance Indicator	Comment / Management Actions
<b>65.4%</b> (1,008 of 1,540) of stage one corporate complaints	Building Services responded to 37.2% (125) complaints within 10 working days. These delays are due to many repairs involving complex elements and

## Appendix A

<p>responded to within 10 clear working days</p>	<p>take more than 10 days to resolve i.e. Disrepair claims where tenants will not allow repairs to be completed as instructed by their claims lawyer. Access issues where appointments being made to complete the work are either not being kept or are arranged beyond the 10 days as requested by the tenant.</p> <p>22/23 Stage 1 justified 467 (30.3%)</p> <p>21/22 Stage 1 justified 405 (31.8%)</p>
<p><b>77.6%</b> (139 of 179) of stage two corporate complaints responded to within 20 clear working days, or within any extension agreed with the customer.</p>	<p>One case relates to a request to move a pelican crossing in a Ward and was delayed due to a by-election.</p> <p>One case was not responded to as the tenant was waiting to decant so that work could be carried out on property.</p> <p>One case picked up by Social Services complaints officer was not responded to.</p> <p>Between July and December, several delayed due to workload and sickness within the Complaints team.</p> <p>22/23 Stage 2 justified 41 (22.9%)</p> <p>21/22 Stage 2 justified 25 (16.23%)</p>