

6**Leicestershire
County Council****SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 12 JULY 2021****CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT
2020/2021****MINUTE EXTRACT**

The Commission received a report of the Director of Corporate Resources on Corporate Complaints and Compliments for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) A Member questioned whether the Local Government Ombudsmen (LGO) might restrict workflow and if so, what effect this might have on residents seeking further redress of their complaints. The Director advised that it was currently understood the LGO would not restrict workflow but would instead undertake more lower level assessments at the triage stage of referral. This was to ensure their resources were targeted at those cases where more in depth assessment was warranted, where a finding of fault was more likely and where action could be taken to address this. Assurance was provided that internally the Council's processes had been changed to include a second review stage. This was not required but intended to make sure all avenues to resolve a matter internally had been exhausted before referral to the LGO;
- (ii) The increased number of complaints relating to home to school transport were noted, but it was acknowledged that this was exacerbated by the late issuing of guidance by the Government on how Councils were expected to deliver this service in a Covid safe way. Members agreed that the Council had done all it could in the short time available to respond to resident's needs, including the secondment of additional staff, but that this had not been possible for all those affected in time for the start of the academic year;
- (iii) It was acknowledged that complaints around the Council's waste transfer sites were targeted towards the arrangements and implementation of the new booking system which had been introduced because of Covid. It was highlighted that this process would not continue once restrictions had been removed;
- (iv) A question was asked whether an assessment had been undertaken on whether the temporary restrictions on the use of waste sites had resulted in an increase in fly-tipping. A fellow Member confirmed that a correlation exercise had been undertaken by the Environment and Transport Department last year and this had not identified any link between the

reduced ability to use the Council's residual household waste facilities and fly tipping;

- (v) Members were pleased that the number of grass cutting complaints had fallen and suggested that this stemmed from the reprioritisation of green and environmental issues;
- (vi) Complaints relating to highway works were focused on smaller, non-urgent repairs and whilst resources had been increased to begin to address such issues, there was still a need to better manage residents' expectations;
- (vii) It was accepted that generally people were less likely to write in to report when they were pleased with a service and it was suggested that the 255 compliments received were likely only a small fraction of those who had been at least satisfied with services provided. Members welcomed the Council's continued approach to use complaints received as a constructive way of seeking to improve service delivery;
- (viii) A Member questioned the proportion of complaints raised by a single person. It was noted that inevitably there were some individuals with more than one complaint, but these were each captured separately unless they related to a particular theme and so grouped and managed together.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided be noted and that the now comments made be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 20th July 2021