Cambridge City Council

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2025 - 26

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Cambridge City Council's Annual Customer Feedback Report - Introduction

Every year Cambridge City Council publishes an Annual Customer Feedback Report, which gives an overview of the complaints and compliments the Council has received and how we have dealt with them (though we do not publish names or other personal details of people who have complained).

Cambridge City Council welcomes customer feedback, to help us to identify and address problems for customers, and to improve our services. This report shows how we have increased customer feedback about services and how we are responding to complaints.

Why we produce this report

- To learn from our mistakes so that we can improve our services.
- To encourage people who have cause to complain to make comments and suggestions to help us make these improvements.
- To be transparent about the complaints we've received, how we've responded to them and what we've done to try to put things right.
- To publicise and explain our complaints process.

Our Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

A complaint can be wide-ranging, but can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided, or lack of action by the Council, or its staff. This can include failure to achieve specific standards of service.

It should be highlighted that issues brought to the Council for the first time, are dealt with as a request for service and so are not processed as a formal complaint. However, service requests can then escalate into a stage 1 complaint if the customer remains unsatisfied. This may occur from delays in response or dissatisfaction with staff behaviour or policies.

Customers complain to the Council if they:

- Are unhappy about something we have or haven't done.
- Are not satisfied with the way a member of staff has treated them.
- Are not happy with the way a councillor has treated them.

Cambridge City Council has a two stage complaints process:

Stage One: An issue raised by a complainant which is escalated beyond a service request for the first time.
Stage Two: Internal review of a complaint where the complainant is unsatisfied with the response to their initial complaint or the way in which the complaint has been handled, and they wish for their complaint to be considered further.

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or Housing Ombudsman is the final stage - the person affected must have gone through our internal complaints process before going to the LGO or Housing Ombudsman for an independent review.

Complaints to Cambridge City Council in 2024-25: summary

Total number of complaints received

In 2025-26, the total number of complaints received was 959, which is an increase of 104 cases (12%) from the previous year's total of 855. When put into context with the amount of service requests and contacts made to the Council, (225,000), this accounts for less than 0.1% of contact received resulting in a formal complaint.

Proportion resolved at stage 1 and stage 2

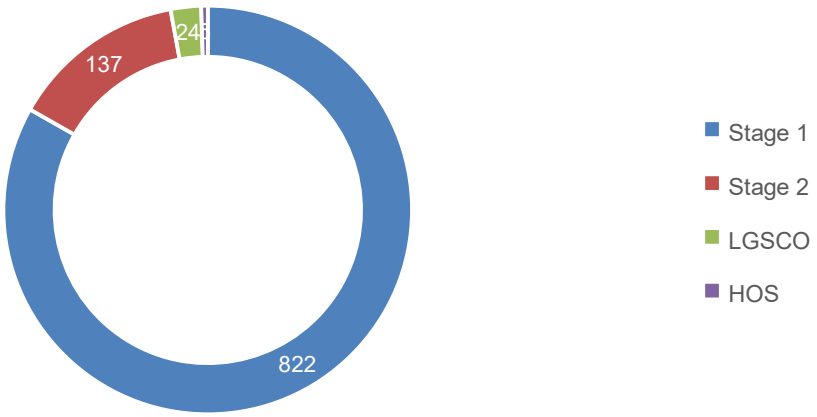
Of those 959 complaints, 86% (822) were resolved successfully at the first stage without need for escalation. This compares with 86% in 2024-25, and 90% in 2023-24.

137 complaints were escalated to stage two, which is 19 more than in the previous year.

Proportion resolved within the target timescale

Across all complaints submitted at both stages, 75% were resolved within the target time of ten working days. This represents a decrease on recent years, where 80% were responded to within time in 2024-25, and 72% in 2023-24. While the target is for 85% of cases to be answered within the target timeframe, several high-volume service areas exceeded this expectation. Greater Cambridge Shared Waste, City Homes, and Customer Services all responded to over 90% of cases within target time, with City Homes and Customer Services achieving 100% resolution.

Fig 1. Total Complaints received, by resolution stage



Stage 1	Stage 2	LGSCO	HOS
822	137	24	-

Overview of complaint trends

331 (34%) of all complaints received by the Council were for the Housing Assets and Maintenance service, with the majority relating to Responsive Repairs (240). This is an increase from 264 complaints overall in the previous year. Other services that saw increases were Housing Advice whose complaints rose from 57 to 83, and Community Safety (Environmental Health) who saw their complaints rise from 16 to 34.

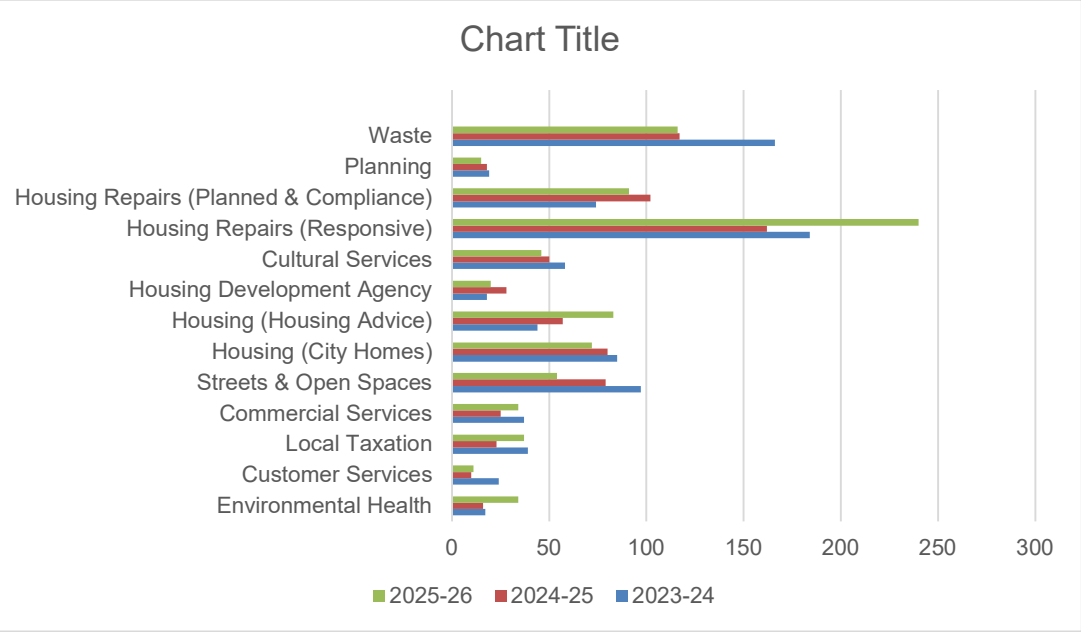
As with previous years, Housing Maintenance and Asset, and the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service received the greatest volumes of complaints.

Responsive Repairs service saw the highest volume of complaints overall. With an increase of 78 more complaints compared to 2024-25. This increase was driven primarily by ongoing repairs backlogs, which led to delays and increased tenant dissatisfaction. This was compounded by sustained high demand for damp and mould cases following the introduction of Awaab's Law, with greater public awareness increasing both reporting levels and scrutiny of landlord response times. Service disruption during the transition to a new Damp and Mould contractor further impacted delivery timescales and customer communication, contributing to an increase of complaints to the service.

The majority of services across the Council saw either the volume of complaints received remain in line with the previous year, or slight increases. Customer Services, Shared Waste and Planning all saw their totals stay relatively close to last year. Other increases were in Environmental Health, Housing Advice, Local Taxation and Commercial Services, with the sharpest rises being in Environmental Health and Housing Advice.

The increase in Environmental Health was due to the expansion of the team to include Public Safety and Anti-Social behaviour, as complaints for that service were reported within a different service area last year. The rise in Housing Advice cases was because *wait for Dawn*

A visual comparison of complaints by higher volume services can be seen below.



Service	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Environmental Health	17	16	34
Customer Services	24	10	11
Local Taxation	39	23	37
Commercial Services	37	25	34
Streets & Open Spaces	97	79	78
Housing (City Homes)	85	80	72
Housing (Housing Advice)	44	57	83
Housing Development Agency	18	28	20
Cultural Services	58	50	46
Housing Repairs (Responsive)	184	162	240
Housing Repairs (Planned & Compliance)	74	102	91
Planning	19	18	15
Waste	166	117	116

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman

24 complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman. Of these, two cases were progressed to be investigated by the LGSCO, and one was upheld. 11 cases were closed following initial enquiries, and a further 11 were outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

In comparison, South Cambridgeshire District Council had 10 complaints raised to the LGSCO, 1 was investigated and upheld, 7 were closed following initial enquiries, and 2 were outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

The Housing Ombudsman Service report for 2025-26 has not yet been distributed to the Council for inclusion in this report.

Reporting, monitoring and driving service improvement

The City Council's managers work hard to understand the reasons for the complaints, and where a consistent theme or issue has been established, they have taken action to prevent the poor service that triggered those complaints from being repeated. We continue to focus on delivering high quality services to all residents and customers and welcome all feedback on our services and suggestions for improvement.

The Lead Complaints Officer has continued to review data on a regular basis to establish themes and trends. This data is reported on a quarterly basis to Service Managers to prompt reflection on what services need to do to improve, change or prevent a reoccurrence. Attention is focused on responding appropriately to complaints first time and providing outcomes to resolve complaints for residents. This reporting has led to some constructive discussions with Senior Management, and as a result we have been able to take feedback and apply it across many areas of the complaints process. An example of this was creating a template which guides the Admin Officer through everything that is required to be included in a complaint acknowledgement. This has increased the quality of acknowledgements being sent at both stages and ensures compliance with Ombudsman codes of practice.

Persistent and Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

Sometimes when pursuing their complaint, complainants can become unreasonably persistent in a way that can hinder the way their complaint is investigated. This can include excessive repeat contact, which is not necessarily abusive or aggressive. In 2025-26 it was not necessary to impose restrictions on any customers. Any restrictions are made in line with the persistent and unreasonably persistent complainants policy.

Reporting on complaints about Council Policy

Where a complainant raises a complaint about a Council Policy, this will still be responded to under the complaints policy. If the complainant wishes to give general feedback or have a policy explained further, the Council will respond to this as an enquiry for service, and provide an explanation or rationale behind the policy.

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with how the Council reached the decision on the policy, or feel that an injustice has been caused by a policy, this would be investigated as a complaint. These complaints will then be considered when reviewing policies in future.

LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

The Council continues to assess our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Service code of practice annually. Our complaints policy and handling guidance is based upon the code laid out by the Housing Ombudsman Service which is mandatory for all its members to follow.

Following our annual submission in July 2025 the Housing Ombudsman Service identified five areas where the complaints policy should be revised further. These were:

- Removing a paragraph in section 2.2 of the policy relating to Housing disrepair claims. The wording made the policy confusing for residents wishing to pursue a disrepair claim, and highlighted in an earlier section of the policy that disrepair claims would only be refused if legal proceedings had begun
- Changing the language in section 4.2.1 which relates to incorporating additional complaints from the same resident into one complaint. The wording was amended to make clear that any new related additional issues would be treated as part of the stage 1 response, unless the stage 1 response had already been issued. If it had, the new issues would be treated as a new stage 1 complaint.
- Section 4.2.1 mentioned that we would ask residents why they felt their complaint remained unresolved and what they seek as an outcome from escalating to stage 2. Whilst this was only done to guide the Council at stage 2, it created a barrier where residents may have felt they had to answer these questions to escalate their case. This wording was removed as residents are not required to give reasons to escalate their complaint.
- Wording in section 4.2.1 amended to ensure residents know their complaints are logged as well as acknowledged at stage 2, and Council templates amended to reflect this.
- Amending the wording in section 4.2.2 to explain that a response at stage 2 would be provided within 20 working days. The Council policy states 10 working days at stage 2, which the Ombudsman acknowledged is within their expectations, but it was not clear that a final response would be sent within the 20 working day timeline.

After making these amendments, the Housing Ombudsman Service reviewed the Council's policy again, and advised that they were satisfied with our compliance with their code of practice at the end of February.

Complaints System Development

The Business Improvement Team within Customer Support have been developing a new module to the Council's complaints system. This system is designed to give customers a better journey and reduce frustration by signposting potential complainants to alternative avenues if their complaint is not within our jurisdiction. Since implementing in February, the system has identified and signposted 74 out of 293 cases to either the correct authority, or to raise a request for service if they had not already done so. This has been an improvement on the customers journey as it meant the customer was able to get to the right place to report their issue immediately rather than having to wait for the Council to contact them to signpost them to the correct route for resolution.

How complaints were received

Year	Email	Web	Telephone	Face to Face	Letter
2025-26	**9%**	**85%**	**5%**	**<1%**	**<1%**
2024-25	**9%**	**84%**	**6%**	**<1%**	**<1%**
2023-24	7%	86%	5%	<1%	1%

The majority of complaints were received via a digital channel, predominantly via customers submitting their complaints themselves. 88% of complaints were logged by members of the public using the web form to report directly into the Council's Complaints Tracker, which is a slight increase from 84% last year.

The face-to-face customer service staff have continued to assist customers to self-serve using digital options. Seven complaints were submitted using this contact method, which is an increase of three compared to last year.

Compliments

In 2025-26 the Council received 87 compliments across all services via Case Tracker, which is a minor increase of 11 compared to 76 received in 2024-25.

However, some frontline services found that compliments were received directly to operatives or officers from residents. These have been mentioned in the service-by-service summaries where available.

Streets & Open Spaces received the highest number of compliments with 29. The majority relating to satisfactory completion of works, and complimens for staff members.

Officers are encouraged during training to formally record compliments as well as complaints, as managers had mentioned more than once that the number of compliments formally recorded was lower than expected. This is evidenced by only four compliments being formally registered on the case monitoring system, however a larger amount are received directly by Customer Services staff anecdotally following calls or appointments, and also via the customer satisfaction system.

Customer Satisfaction Feedback System

Customer Support (Customer Services) operate a system to measure how satisfied customers were following their interactions with the team. Customers calling from a mobile number are automatically sent a text message at the conclusion of their call, unless they opt out. The message contains a link to a survey to leave feedback on the experience they had with the advisor who served them.

The Business Improvement team analyse the feedback gathered within these forms to identify potential improvements to the Customer Service offering within the centre.

Telephone	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Apr	Total	Percentage
Positive	285	244	242	273	241	278	282	264	201	203	205	275	**2993**	**82%**
Negative	61	51	43	72	58	68	50	56	33	41	53	57	**643**	**18%**

A link to the survey is also included within the signature for all emails that leave the Council's contact centre system, and there is a console in reception for customers to provide feedback, however the response rate for these channels is very low.

Email	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Apr	Total	Percentage
Positive	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	0	2	4	4	26	63%
Negative	0	0	2	0	4	2	0	2	2	0	3	0	15	37%

F2F	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Apr	Total	Percentage
Positive	1	0	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	10	100%
Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%

Clarissa Norman, Customer Services Operations Manager:

In 2025 – 2026 we received 3687 customer satisfaction surveys compared to 3004 last year, an increase of 23%, all but 51 related to the contact centre.

2993, or 82%, of customers were satisfied with the service they had received from the advisor which is a slight decrease from 2024-2025 (85%). Customers identified Advisors in their feedback, and many gave heartfelt praise for the help and solutions the team gave them. The reduction in satisfaction can be attributed to longer wait times across the year due to the service having 6 simultaneous vacancies in the summer of 2025 and additional vacancies/absences throughout the year.

Managers in Customer Services review dissatisfied reports and their findings are that only 4.5% of all customer responses about the level of customer service provided by the advisor were justified. In these cases Managers addressed them with the Advisor, putting support or coaching in place as appropriate.

6% of dissatisfied reports were found to be unwarranted when investigated, managers found that customers responded negatively when the team are following process or were not able to meet their expectations.

Approximately 4% of respondents were dissatisfied with back-office teams processes or response times. This feedback is passed on to service managers for their consideration.

The feedback we are receiving is allowing us to better identify knowledge gaps/training needs for the team, improve our processes and update websites/information sources to give customers a better experience. In the past year as a result of feedback, we have:

- Changed a configuration in the contact centre system to improve call routing for all customers
- New hold music is being sourced
- Rectified issues in the parking permit process
- Updated broken web pages (exercise referral)
- Updated bulky collection web page with information about neighbourhood clean up's
- Improved signage in reception

Digital Options:

The customer satisfaction survey asks customers about their awareness of our digital options and why they chose to call/email/visit Customer Services.

In 2025 – 2026, 56% of customers stated they were aware of our digital options, in 2024-2025 the percentage was 52%.

Customers reasons for calling:						
Year	Easier to Call	Prefer to speak to a person	Online not working/not available	Following up previous contact	Emergency	Other
2024 - 2025	16.8%	47.4%	19%	9.1%	7.7%	0
2025-26	4.8%	58%	16.1%	11.1%	2.3%	7.7%

Since we started gathering customer feedback our analysis has shown that over 50% of customers say that they are aware of digital options but still call the Council to speak to an advisor.

This feedback makes it clear that customers prefer to/ comment that it is easier to call and speak to an advisor - 58% of customers told us this was why they telephoned despite having knowledge of our Digital options, which has increased further from 47.4% in the previous year.

Online options not working or not available has reduced slightly to 16.1% from 20% of calls where customers knew about digital options.

Service-by-Service Complaint Trends and Management Response

Each council department reviews the complaints and compliments it receives on a quarterly basis. This enables services to identify if there are any trends in the types of complaint being made or the services that complaints are being made about. As a result, changes can be made to services and how they are provided.

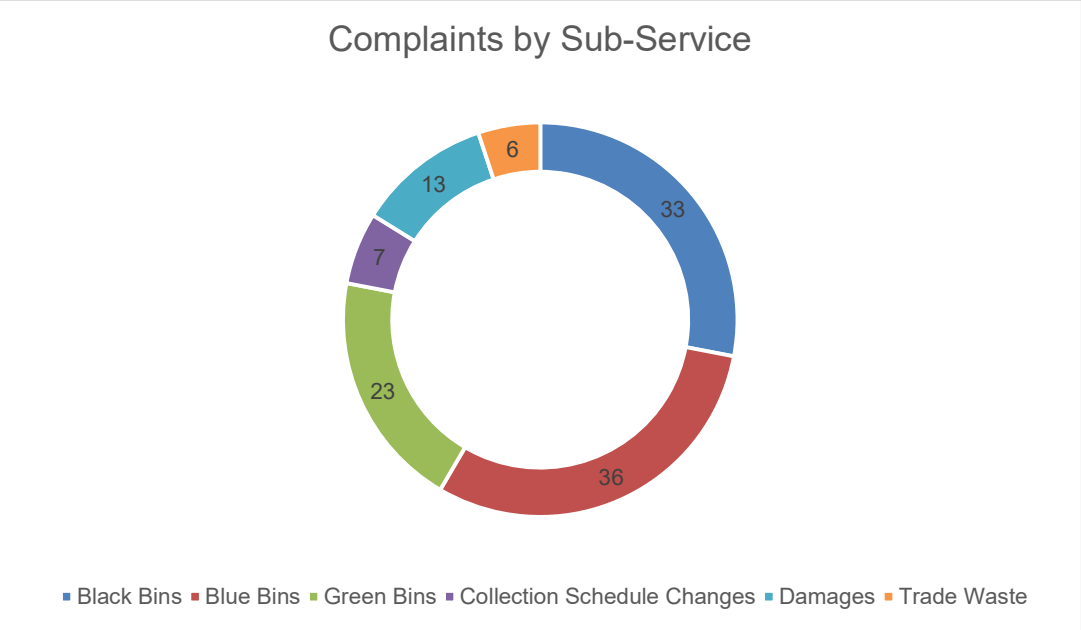
The next section of this report details comments from Services who have seen a significant number of complaints on actions they have taken to prevent, improve or change as a result of the feedback received in previous years. The total figure in the first column is the sum of Stage 1 and 2 complaints.

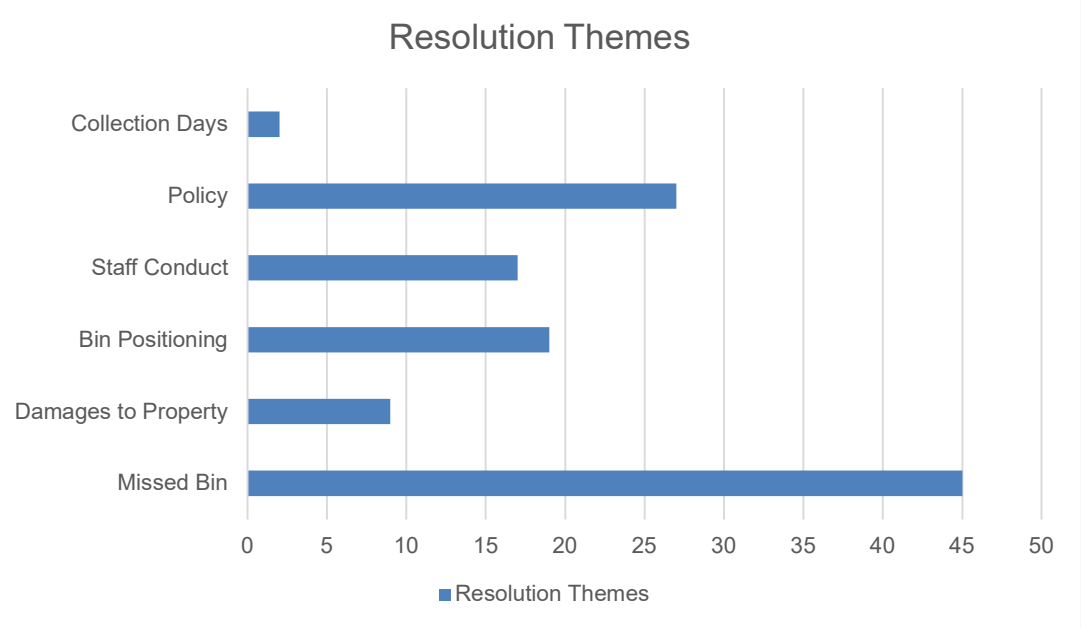
Complaints by sub-service are identified in the pie chart, this is how a service is broken down into the individual service request areas within. The bar graph displays resolution themes, or where these themes are too diffused and a trend cannot be identified, the bars will display root causes.

A resolution theme is the service specific content of the complaint (missed bin for example), whereas a root cause is a reason for the complaint which is generic across all services (service delivery failure).

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service

Waste	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	**118**	**111**	**7**	**92%**	**7**
2024-25	117	111	6	92%	7
2023-24	166	159	7	93%	5





Greater Cambridge Shared Waste: Service Comments

Natalie Thomas, on behalf of Bode Esan, Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service:

During 2025/26, the Shared Waste Service managed approximately 807,429 domestic collections per month, with households receiving an average of three bin collections per fortnight. The introduction of Wave 1 of the domestic food waste service from 27 January to March 2026 added the potential for a further 17,580 weekly collections, equating to approximately 79,110 additional collections per month during the initial nine week rollout period.

At present, the food waste service is achieving a 53% participation rate among properties that have received the new containers. It is anticipated that this figure will continue to rise as residents become more familiar with the new arrangements and expectations.

Approximately 37% of all monthly bin collections take place within the city area. Despite increasing demand and service expansion, the Shared Waste Service has maintained a consistently high performance level, achieving an average successful collection rate of 99.92%.

Over the course of 2025/26, the service also saw the addition of 1,121 new properties (excluding flats). Based on an average of three bins per household, this has resulted in approximately 3,363 additional collections per fortnight compared with the previous year.

Complaint volumes increased during the year, rising from 115 to 205 cases, while the proportion of responses issued within the target timeframe decreased slightly to 95.1%. The largest category of complaints remained missed bin collections, accounting for 36.5% of all complaints, although this represents a reduction compared with the previous reporting period. Of these missed collection complaints, 34.6% were assessed as unjustified or not upheld. Common issues included residents disputing crew reports, bins being only partially emptied, and repeat missed collections.

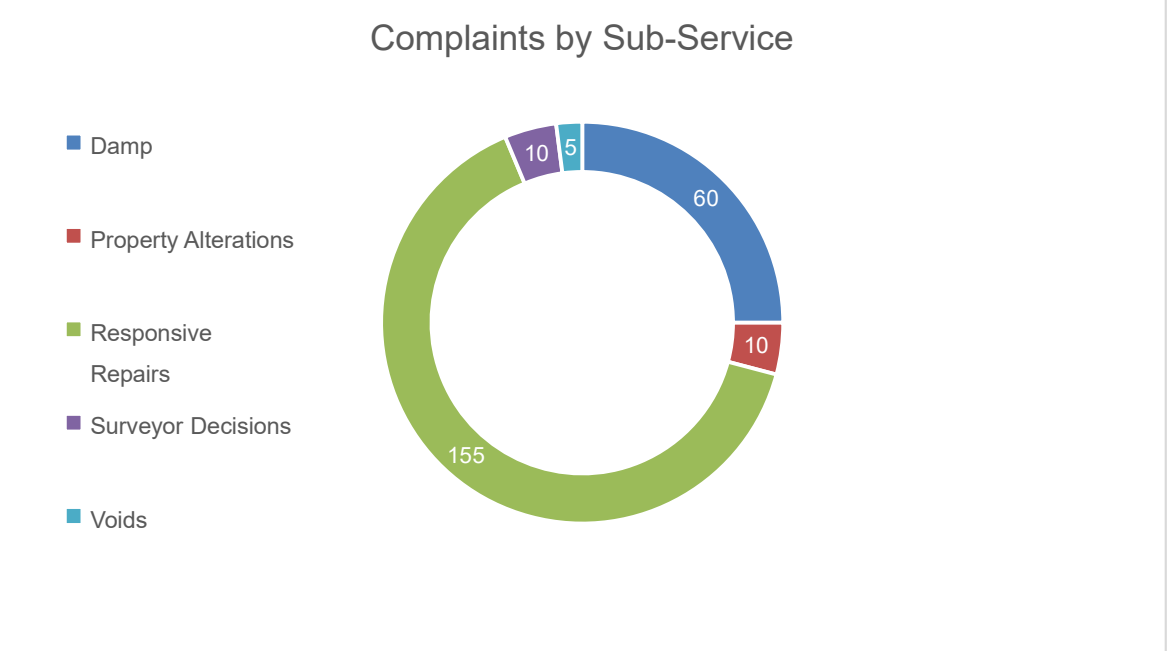
Other notable complaint categories included repeat missed collections (22%), assisted collections (7.3%), and disputed crew reports (2%). Complaints relating to assisted collections remained broadly in line with the previous reporting period and mainly concerned service delivery issues and repeated missed collections at eligible properties.

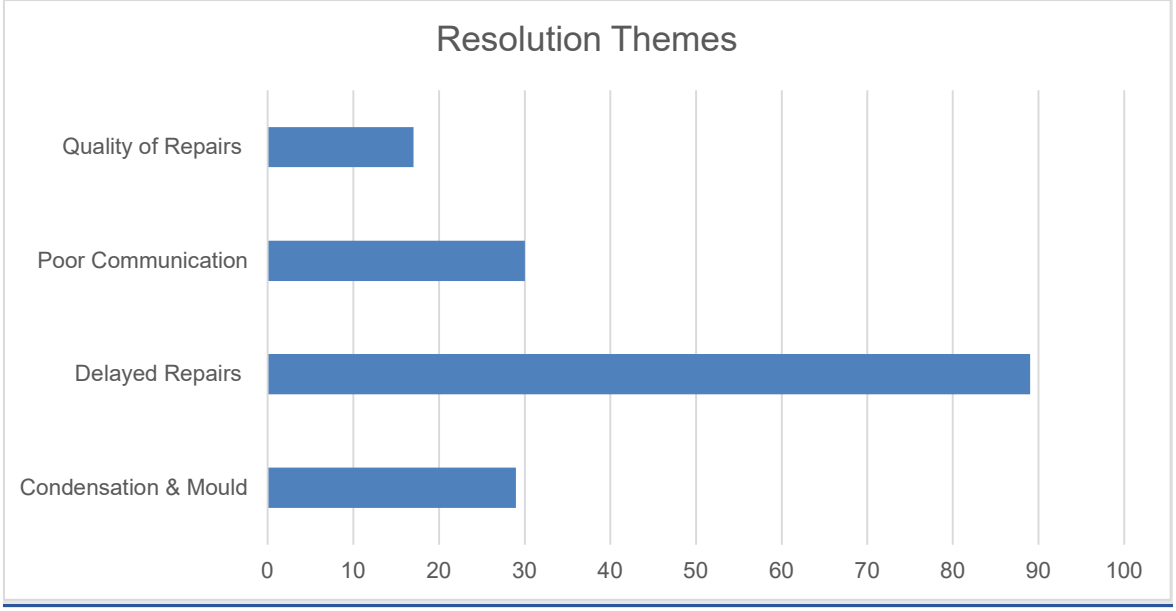
Of the 205 complaints logged, six related specifically to the new food waste service introduced in January. These complaints concerned both the policies associated with the service and reports of missed food waste collections.

Overall, the report highlights a service that continues to perform at a very high operational level despite increased demand, service growth, and the introduction of new collection arrangements. While complaint volumes have risen, performance remains strong, and many of the issues identified reflect the challenges of service expansion and changing collection requirements.

Housing Maintenance: Responsive Repairs

Responsivde Repairs	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	240	201	39	68%	14
2024-25	*192*	*142*	*20*	*86%*	*9*
2023-24	*184*	*164*	*20*	*46%*	





Housing Assets & Maintenance - Service Comments

Brigitte Wilson, Delivery Assurance Manager & Senior Operations Manager

Over the past year, Housing Maintenance has experienced increased service demand and operational pressures, reflected in higher complaint volumes, increased Stage 2 escalations, and reduced performance against response targets compared to 2024/25. During 2025/26, the service completed over 15,200 repairs across both in-house teams and external contractors, with 240 complaints received, representing 1.58% of completed repairs.

Complaint volumes were influenced by repairs backlogs, increased tenant expectations and challenge regarding repair outcomes, and continued high demand for damp and mould cases following the implementation of Awaab's Law. Increased public awareness of the legislation has resulted in greater reporting and scrutiny of landlord response times and remedial actions.

The transition to a new Damp and Mould contractor during October 2025 also created short-term service disruption at a key regulatory point, with mobilisation taking longer than anticipated and impacting delivery timescales and customer communication. Internal capacity and system constraints further affected the service's ability to consistently provide timely updates and manage tenant expectations.

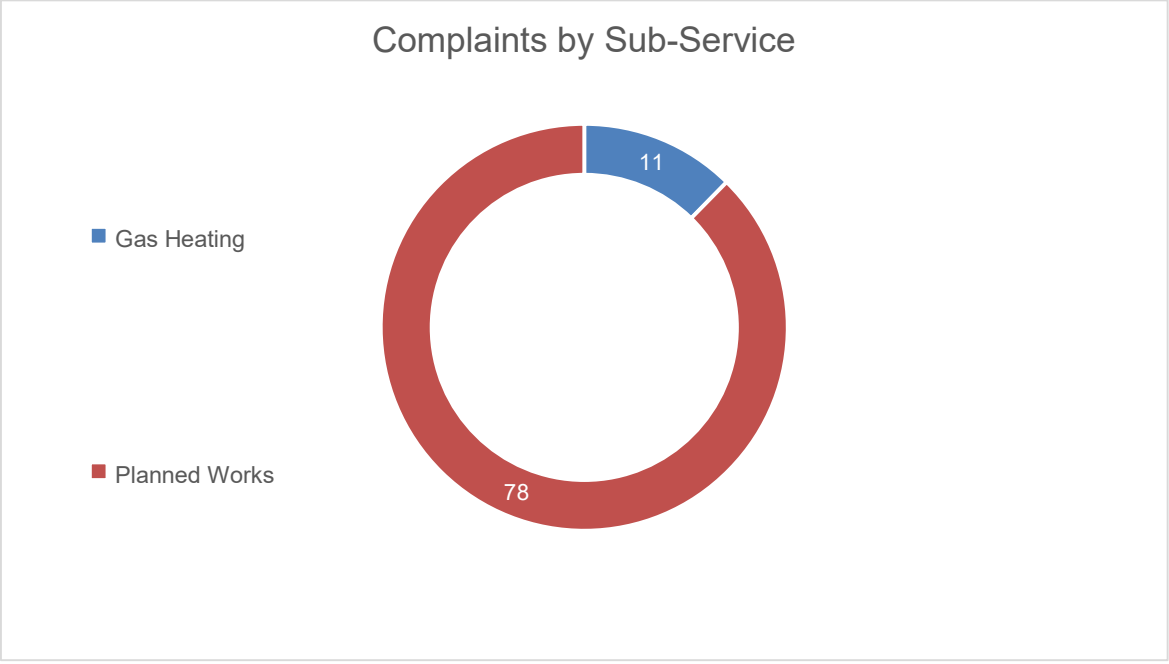
In response, the service has strengthened contract management and performance oversight arrangements, improved monitoring of backlogs and complex cases, and undertaken recruitment activity to improve operational resilience and administrative capacity.

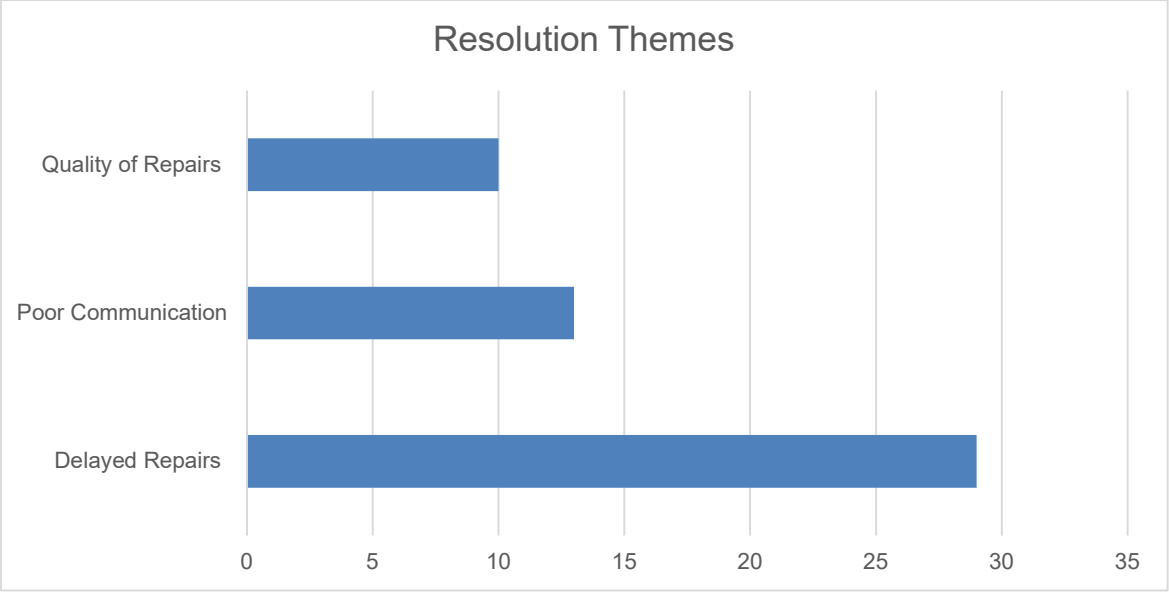
Looking ahead, the Council is preparing to procure new general repairs contracts with strengthened SLAs, KPIs and accountability measures. Improvements are also being progressed for tenant communications and to internal systems and processes.

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Housing Maintenance: Planned Works & Compliance

Planned Works & Compliance	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	**91**	**79**	**12**	**39%**	**3**
2024-25	100	84	16	56%	1
2023-24	*74*	*66*	*8*	*64%*	*2*





Planned Works & Compliance - Service Comments

Will Barfield, Asset Manager:

The Asset Management Team, in City Services Group are responsible for planned building maintenance and investment in the Council's housing stock and other buildings.

The Risk and Compliance team are responsible for ensuring building compliance for all building types, including gas servicing, electrical testing, asbestos management, fire risk assessment and legionella testing.

We carry out an annual programme of planned maintenance work across the Council's 7,600 homes, 1,200 leases, operational buildings, car parks and commercial properties. During the year 2025/2026 we completed over 2,500 planned maintenance jobs, 1,700 planned maintenance service inspections, 15,000 plus compliance -related inspections, and over 1,000 surveys and inspections to help us plan works and record the condition of property.

In 2025/2026 the total number of complaints was 91, a small reduction compared to 2024/2025. The number of complaints represents a small percentage of all services provided. The Council invested over £23m in the delivery of planned maintenance and compliance services in 2025/2026.

Many of our complaints are about things done by external contractors who are carrying our work for the Council – for example failing to keep people informed or not completing work as soon as expected. We collect customer satisfaction feedback from tenants who have received planned maintenance work, and this shows a consistent high level of customer satisfaction with maintenance work

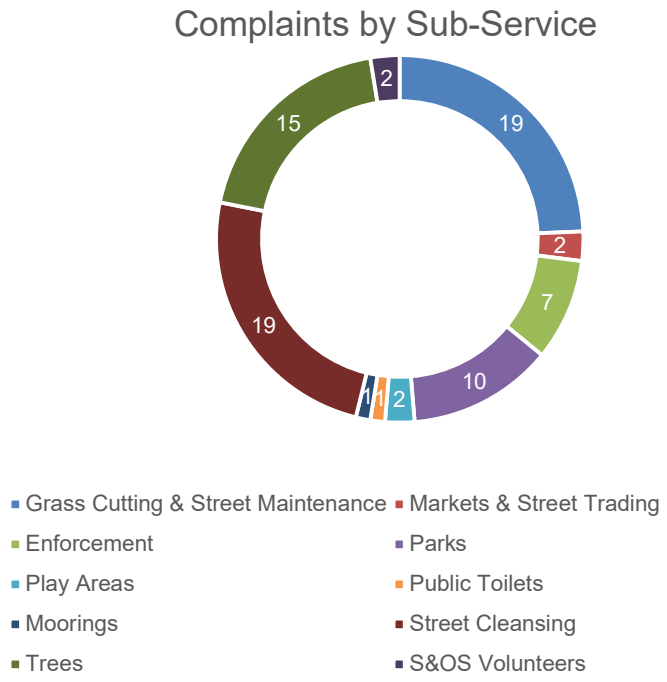
Where there are complaints about work carried out by contractors, we follow this up at contract meetings and expect the contractor to help resolve the situation, to ensure we minimise complaints in future.

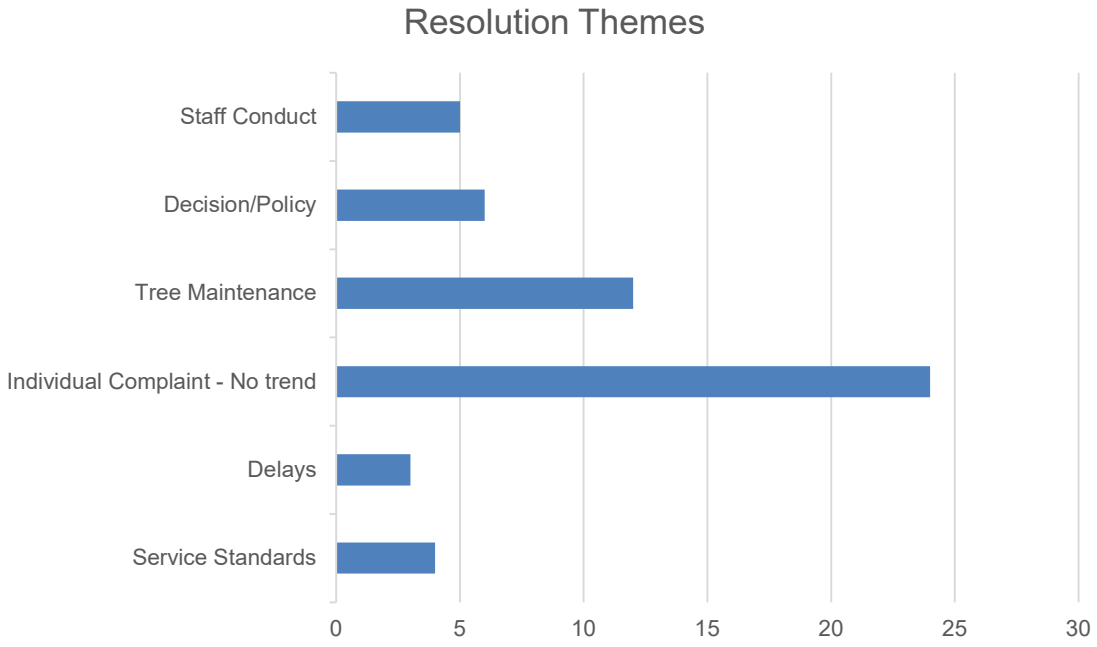
In some cases there are delays between maintenance work being ordered, and work being completed and contractors not keeping residents informed. In 2026/27 we are introducing new performance measures to monitor the time between survey and installation of doors and windows to address this.

The number of complaints resolved in target time fell in 2025/2026. This is partly due to staff resourcing issues and the volume of work. The increased work demand has resulted in approval of four new full-time posts who will join the team in 2026/2027.

Streets & Open Spaces

Streets & Open Spaces	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	78	70	8	69%	26
2024-25	*79*	*71*	*8*	*82%*	*13*
2023-24	*97*	*88*	*9*	*78%*	*21*





Streets & Open Spaces – Themes & Trends

Tony Stead, Business Improvement Manager:

Streets & Open Spaces received 78 complaints, which broadly consistent with the previous year (79 cases). This represents around 8% of the total 959 complaints received by the Council. The majority of complaints were managed at Stage 1, with just under 10% progressing to Stage 2, which remains broadly in line with last year's split, 70 Stage 1 and 8 Stage 2 compared to 71 Stage 1 and 8 Stage 2 previously.

The most common reasons for complaint were street cleansing, grass cutting, parks and open spaces, and tree maintenance, which make up the majority of complaints to the service and reflect the high-contact, visible nature of the service. A significant number of complaints were categorised as individual complaints, which is in line with previous years, and can be expected of a service that operates in the community where individuals complain about issues which may not be widespread.

In terms of root causes, the most frequently identified related to service failure, representing a substantial proportion of complaints, particularly in relation to missed or unsatisfactory services such as cleansing, grounds maintenance, or enforcement activity. This is again to be expected due to the nature of the service being delivered.

A small number of complaints related to procedures and planned works, especially in relation to tree maintenance and grounds works, where customer expectations may differ from operational approaches

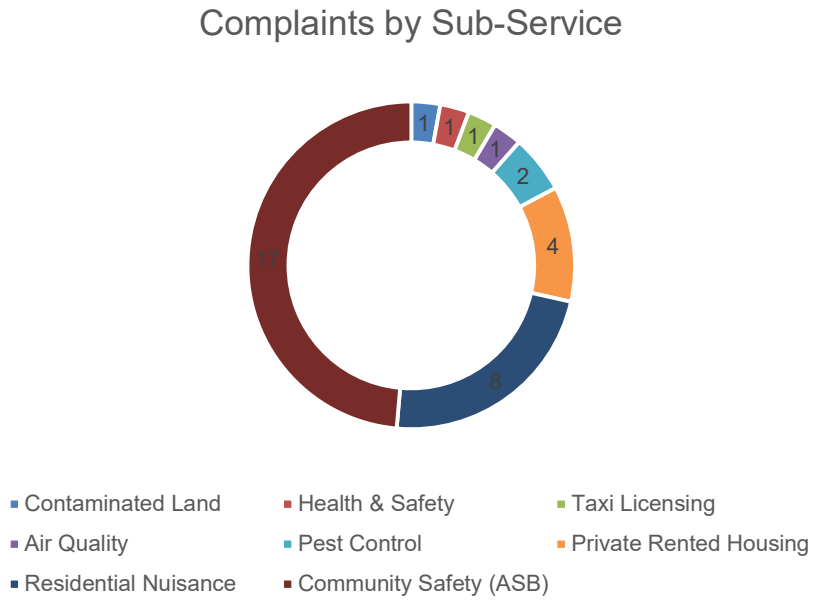
The main actions coming out of complaints were advice/information being given (28 cases), apologies offered (14 cases) and follow-on service being provided (11 cases).

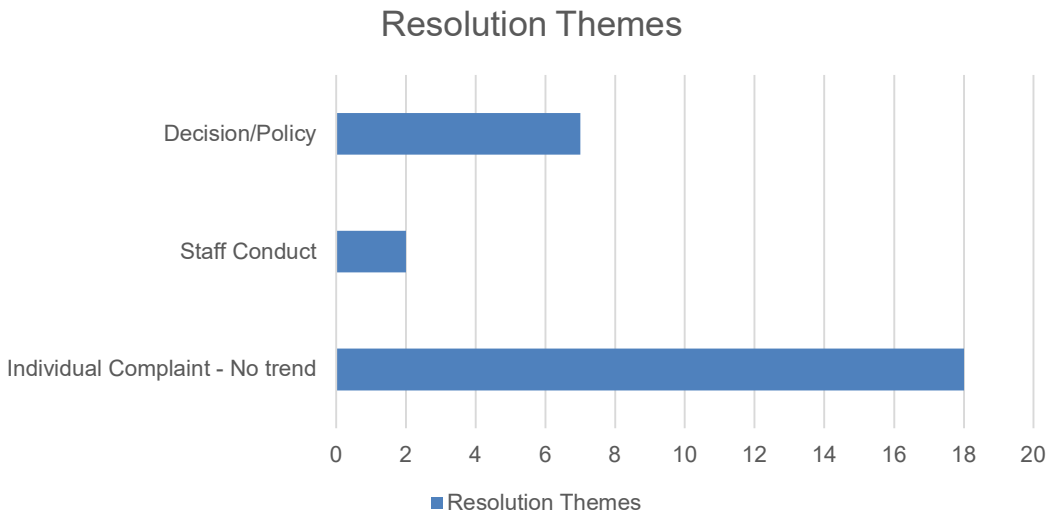
Performance against timescales was down to 69% from last year's 82%.

The service received 26 compliments via the customer feedback system which is double the amount received in the previous year.

Environmental Health and Public Safety

Environmental Health	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	35	32	3	69%	3
2024-25	*16*	*14*	*2*	*88%*	
2023-24	*17*	*16*	*1*	*82%*	





Environmental Health and Public Safety - Service Comments

Yvonne O'Donnell, Strategic Environmental Health and Public Safety Lead:

Environmental Health and Public Safety Team employs c52 staff and is responsible for taxi and premises licensing, food safety, health and safety and infectious disease control. The service also provides technical input to Planning on all aspects of EH, including air quality, noise and contamination. It also provides services to improve the private rented sector through education, enforcement, licensing of houses in multiple occupation and bringing empty homes back into use and energy efficiency. It also provides a pest control service. In 2025 /26 the Public Safety Team was transferred over the EH which amalgamated the ASB and Public Realm Enforcement Teams

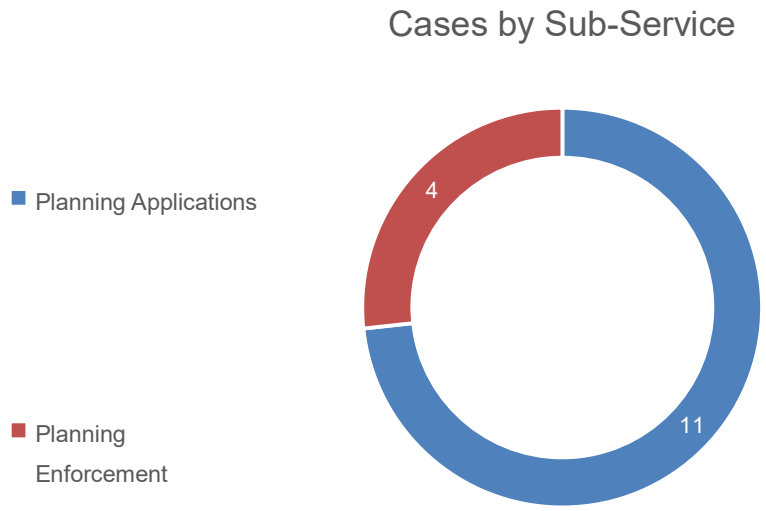
Over the course of 2025/26, the EH&PS has delivered the following services:

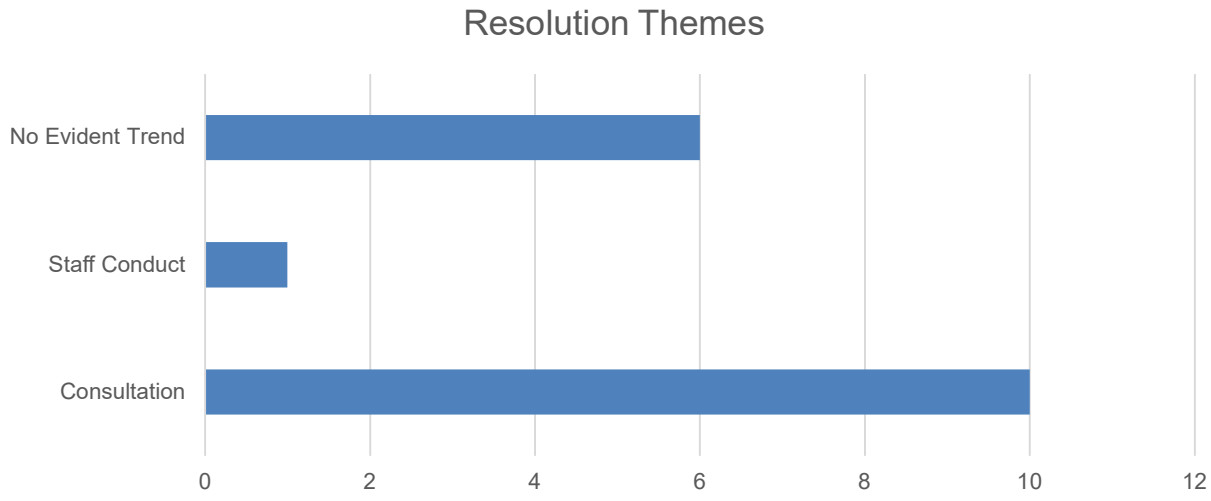
- 693 Private Sector Housing Inspections
- 26 Empty Homes brought back into use
- 653 Food Safety Inspections
- 28 Licensing Inspections
- 500 Pest Control cases
- 938 Planning consultations
- 1626 Licensing Applications processed
- 3073 Service Requests, for EH including housing food safety health and safety licensing, taxis, noise nuisance
- 848 reports of ASB
- 629 Service requests for Public Realm Enforcement

Despite the scale of operation and associated customer contact, as outlined above, the EH&PS service received a total of just 35 complaints in 2025/26, which is an increase from the previous years since the team has expanding to take on ASB and Public Realm enforcement . Of the 35 cases received, the service areas with the three highest numbers of cases were respectively: ASB (17) Noise (8) and Private Rented Housing (4). These figures are not considered significant and an analysis of each of the associated cases shows there was no particular complaint type or underlying causal theme.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

Planning	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	15	12	3	93%	-
2024-25	*18*	*14*	*4*	*83%*	*-*
2023-24	*22*	*17*	*5*	*68%*	*1*





Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service – Themes & Trends

Tony Stead, Business Improvement Manager:

Overall, Planning & Building Control received a lower volume of complaints compared to the previous year (15 compared to 18). The majority of complaints were handled at Stage 1, with only a small number progressing to Stage 2.

The most common subjects of complaint were Planning applications and consultation processes, which account for the majority of cases, particularly around how decisions are made and communicated. There were also a small number of complaints relating to planning enforcement.

Resolution themes included general communication issues and delays, particularly where customers disagree with planning outcomes or consultation processes.

Poor communication appears as a recurring secondary theme, particularly in relation to updates and response clarity.

The majority of complaints were resolved at Stage 1, consistent with organisational performance, with a reduced number of Stage 2 cases compared to the previous year, indicating improved early resolution. Outcomes were typically advice/information provided or not upheld, reflecting that many complaints relate to customer disagreement with planning decisions rather than service failure, with some cases resulting in apologies or upheld outcomes where communication issues were identified.

Performance against timescales was good and broadly in line with corporate performance, with an improvement compared to last year (from 83% within target to 93% this year).

Customer Services

Customer Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	**11**	**10**	**1**	**100%**	**1**
2024-25	10	9	1	100%	3
2023-24	*24*	*22*	*2*	*100%*	*2*

Service comments

Clarissa Norman, Customer Services Operations Manager:

In 2025-2026 Customer services handled in excess of 185,000 contacts via telephone, email and face to face and received 11 complaints, one more than in 2024 -2025. Complaints continue to be very low in relation to the amount of contacts the team receive, 0.006%.

The low numbers of complaints can be attributed to the training and coaching Customer Service Advisors receive and the positive behaviours they demonstrate when assisting customers; Customer Service Managers acting responsively on customer feedback and taking actions to remedy or mitigate any negative feedback received from customers, including passing any feedback that relates to back-office processes to the appropriate service manager for them to act on.

The Service continues to send customer satisfaction surveys to every customer that has contact with the team. The survey is attached to email footers, is available on a tablet in reception and is also texted to all customers who speak to an advisor. In 2024-2025 85% of customers said that they were satisfied with the service they received. In 2025 – 2026 Customer satisfaction was 82%

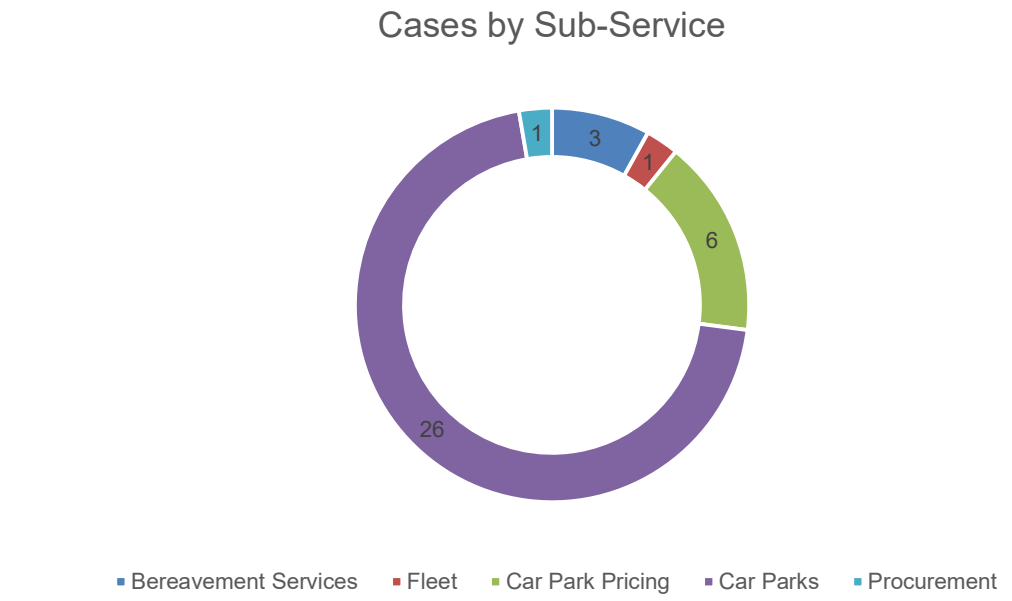
For the fifth year running 100% of complaints received in Customer Services were responded to within target and for the second year, only one complaint was escalated to stage 2.

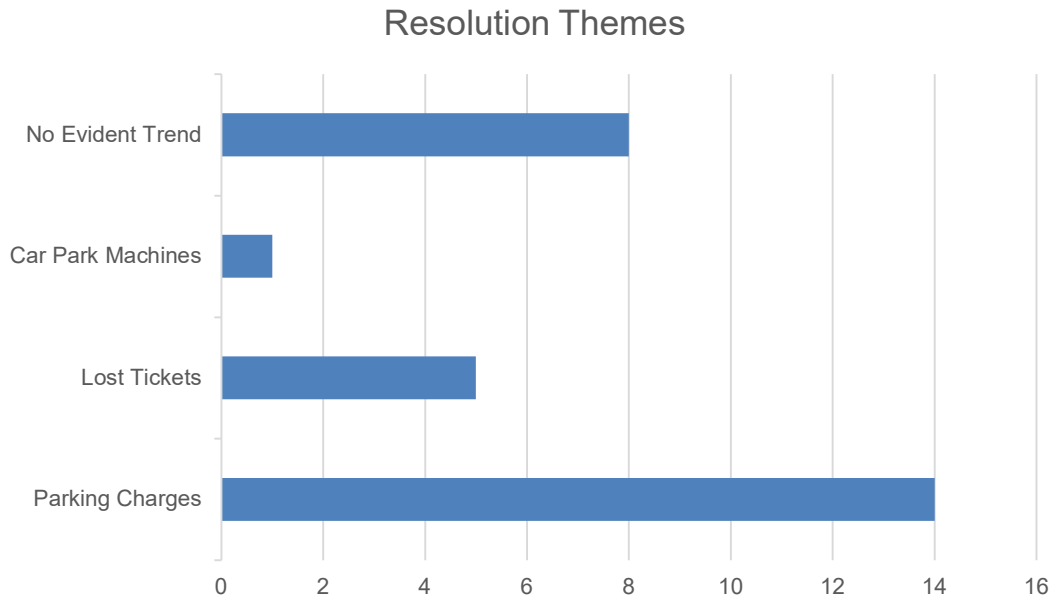
In 2025-2026, 54% of the complaints submitted were not upheld, 36% were upheld and 10% were partially upheld, with only one complaint being escalated to stage 2 this indicates that customer service managers are listening and acting on complaints/feedback effectively.

With the number of complaints received, trends could not be identified.

Commercial Services

Commercial Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	36	29	7	54%	-
2024-25	*25*	*19*	*6*	*48%*	-
2023-24	*37*	*26*	*11*	*78%*	*5*





Commercial Services – Themes & Trends analysis

Tony Stead, Business Improvement Manager

The data indicates that complaints continue to be predominantly associated with Parking Services, with only a small number relating to Bereavement Services and other Commercial Services areas.

Key themes

The majority of complaints relate to car parking charges, including a recurring issue concerning lost ticket charges, which remains a consistent source of dissatisfaction.
A smaller number of complaints relate to car park cleanliness, machine issues, and isolated service concerns, though these do not represent significant trends.
There are also a number of cases categorised as non-CCC or non-actionable, suggesting some customer expectations fall outside of service responsibility.

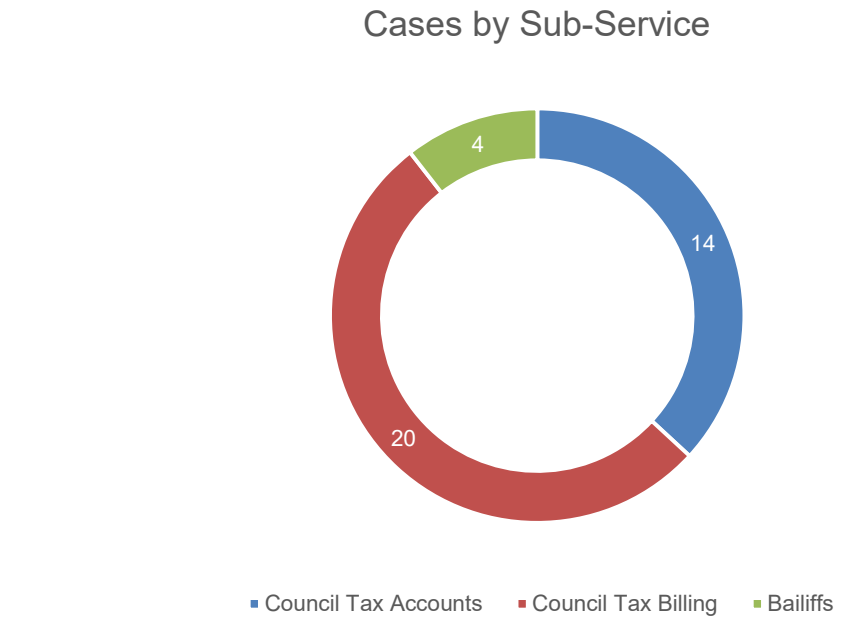
Decisions and policies are the primary root cause of complaints, accounting for the largest proportion of cases. This reflects challenges in customer acceptance or understanding of charging structures and associated rules. Secondary causes include delays and communication issues, though these appear less frequent and no trend can be established across these cases. A very small number of complaints relate to service delivery failures or procedural issues, indicating that operational performance is not a concern.

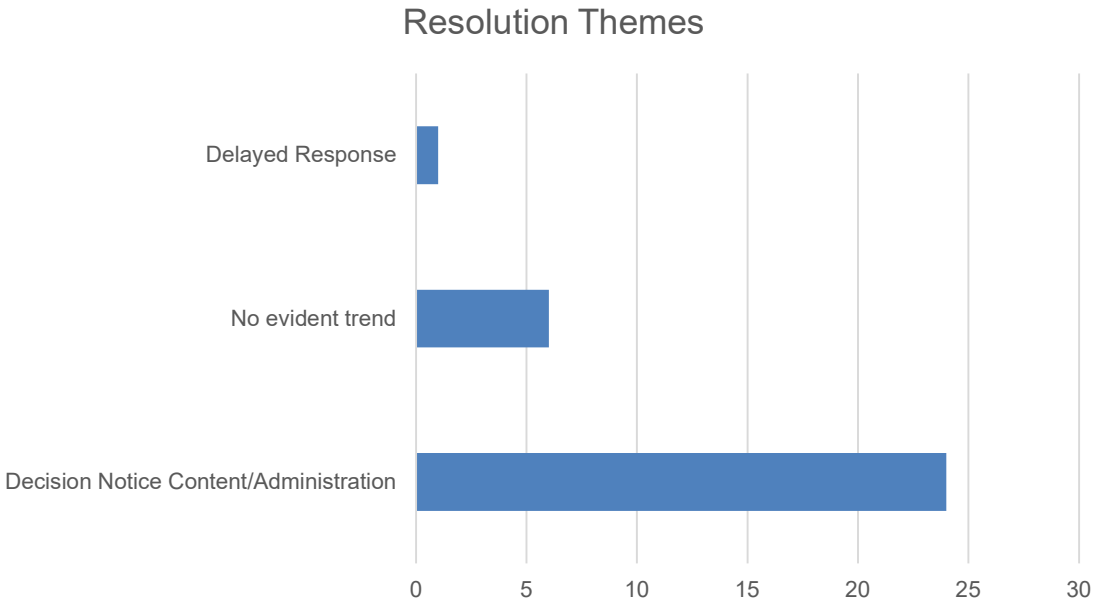
The majority of complaints were resolved at Stage 1, with only a limited number escalating to Stage 2. Outcomes were typically advice/information provided or no further action required, with some instances of financial redress or apologies where appropriate.

The data suggests that complaints are largely driven by policy-related dissatisfaction rather than service failure. Recurring themes around charges and lost ticket processes indicate an opportunity to improve communication, transparency, and customer understanding. Continued focus on clear messaging and early resolution is likely to reduce escalation and improve overall customer experience.

Local Taxation

Council Tax	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	38	35	3	84%	2
2024-25	23	20	3	96%	5
2023-24	*39*	*39*	-	*100%*	*2*





Local Taxation – Themes & Trends Analysis

Tony Stead, Business Improvement Manager:

Council Tax Services received 38 complaints in 2025-26. The majority of cases were resolved at Stage 1, with only a small proportion escalating to Stage 2, indicating that complaints are generally being resolved at the first stage.

The most common subjects of complaint were Council Tax billing and decision notices, with complaint themes focusing on accuracy, clarity, and understanding of bills, as well as disputes over liability or charges.

Delays and accessibility issues – including difficulty contacting the service, response times, and dissatisfaction with the speed of resolution

Other, less frequent themes include bailiff activity, online system challenges, and customer dissatisfaction with service delivery, though these are so few in numbers we cannot establish a trend across these complaints.

The main root causes for complaints across the service related to decisions or policies. A significant proportion of complaints were raised from customers disagreeing with how the Council made decisions, particularly around billing, recovery, and liability.

Delays and poor communication were a secondary factor, and highlighted dissatisfaction where customers felt unable to access timely or clear information

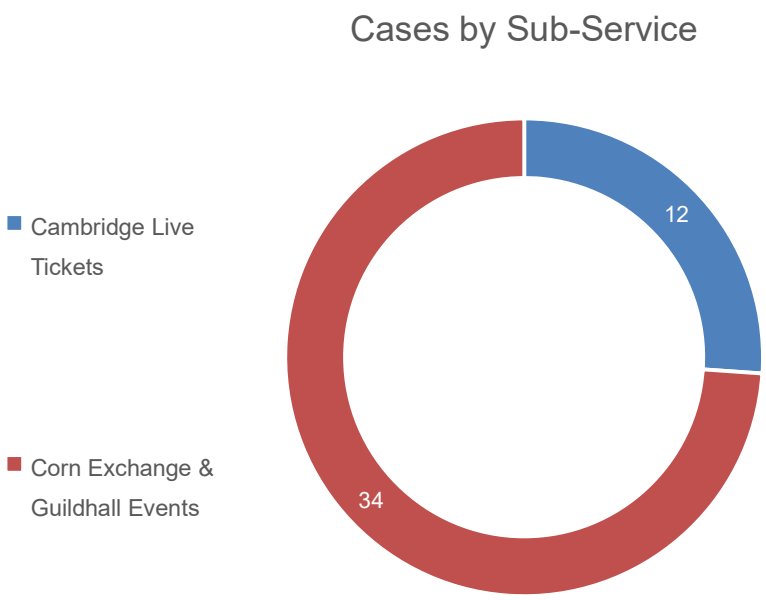
The majority of complaints resulted in advice or information being provided, reinforcing that many issues relate to customer understanding rather than service failure. A notable proportion resulted in apologies, particularly where delays or communication issues were identified.

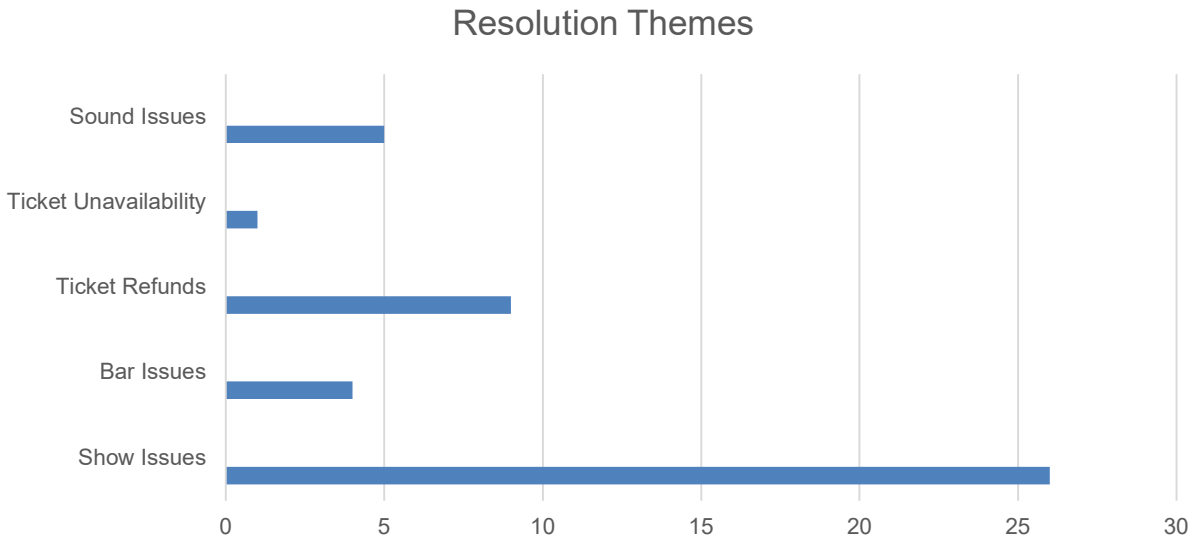
There are multiple “not upheld” outcomes, particularly where decisions are policy-based, further supporting the trend that complaints are often rooted in customer disagreement rather than error

84% of responses to complaints were delivered within the target 10 working days. Although this is high, there was a slight decrease when compared to last year, particularly at Stage 1, indicating some inconsistency in performance.

Cultural Services

Cultural Service	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	46	38	8	78%	2
2024-25	*50*	*45*	*5*	*58%*	*3*
2023-24	*58*	*51*	*7*	*36%*	*3*





Cultural Services – Themes & Trends Analysis

Tony Stead, Business Improvement Manager:

Overall, Cultural Services 46 complaints, down from 50 in the previous year. The majority of complaints were handled at Stage 1, with 8 progressing to Stage 2.

The most common subjects of complaint were show-related issues, including sound quality and restricted views, which form a key theme across multiple cases. Ticketing and refunds, including dissatisfaction with availability, booking issues, or refund processes were also highlighted. A small number of cases related to experiences with audience members and the experience at the Corn Exchange, including behaviour of other attendees and bar-related concerns.

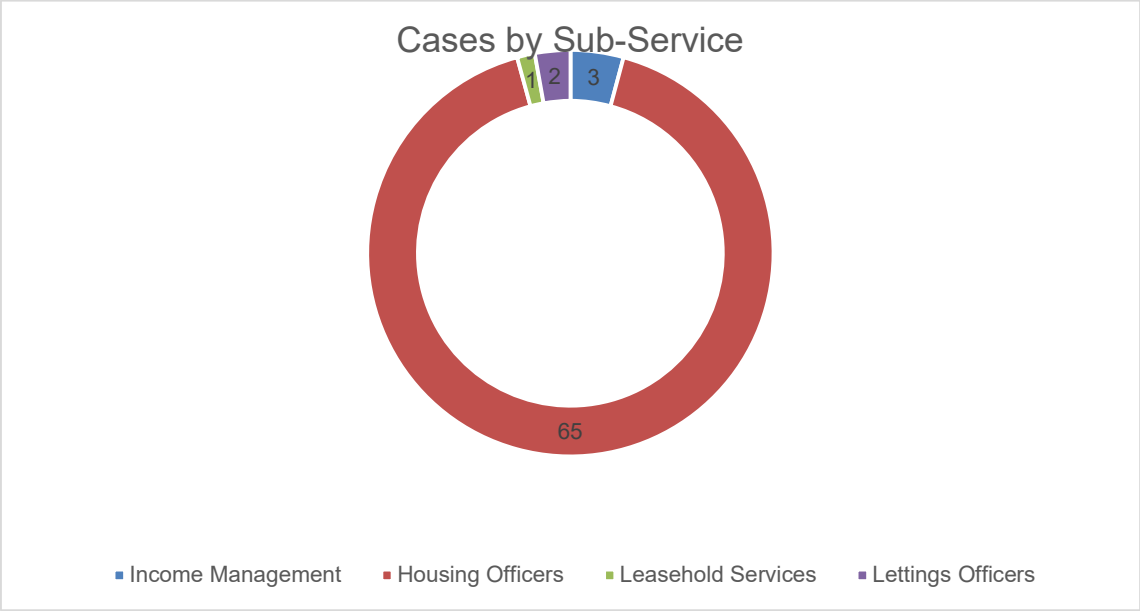
In terms of root causes, the most frequently identified were customer experience factors such as sound quality, seating and audience behaviour, which often fell outside of the service control. Alongside these, a number of third-party (contractor) issues were recorded, which particularly related to technical delivery (such as sound provided by non-venue staff). There were a small number of cases linked to communication issues and policies, particularly around refunds and ticketing terms

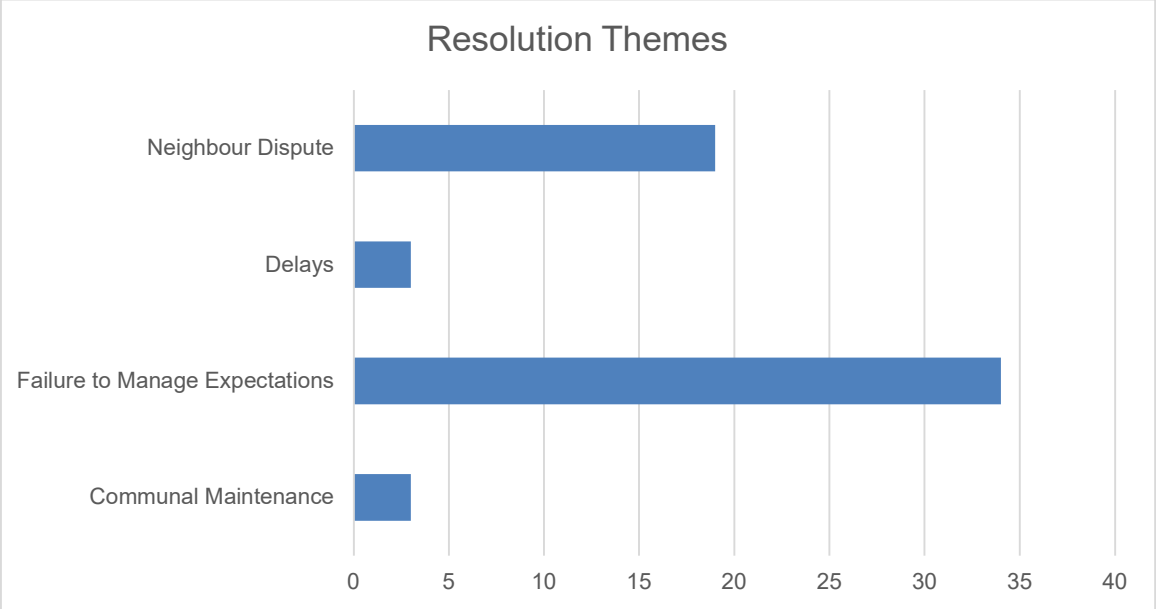
The majority of outcomes recorded were apologies, with smaller numbers resolved through advice/information being given, reviewing communication, or in a small number of cases, issuing ticket refunds.

Performance against timescales was mixed, with a combination of responses within target and a number of missed deadlines, particularly in Stage 2 cases.

Housing Management (City Homes)

Housing Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	72	57	15	100%	4
2024-25	*80*	*67*	*13*	*96%*	*2*
2023-24	*85*	*74*	*11*	*89%*	*3*





Housing Management (City Homes) – Service Comments

Anna Hill, Strategic Housing Management Lead:

We observed a reduction in the number of complaints received by City Homes during 2025–2026 compared to the previous two years. However, the top two complaint themes remain unchanged:

- Neighbour Disputes – 19%
- Failure to Manage Expectations – 34%

It's important to note that the overall number of complaints remains low relative to the size of our customer base. With a combined housing stock of 8,873 tenants and leaseholders, only 0.8% of customers submitted a complaint, compared to 0.9% in 2024-2025. We resolved 100% of complaints within target.

Of the complaints received:

- 17 were upheld
- 16 were partially upheld
- 39 were not upheld

14 complaints relating to the failure to manage customer expectations were upheld or partially upheld, but only one complaint relating to a neighbour dispute was upheld.

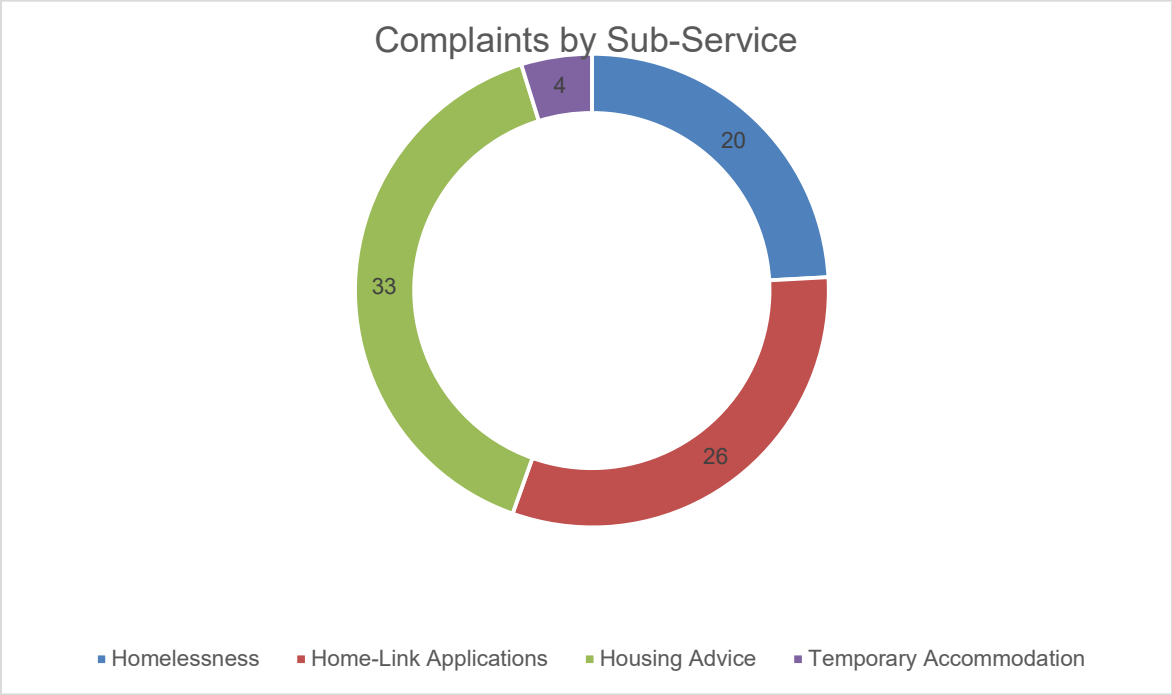
We experienced unforeseen significant resource issues in the team during 2025-2026, which impacted our ability to manager customer's expectations. To prevent this happening again in the future, it was agreed in the budget setting process to increase the resource in the team during 2026-2027.

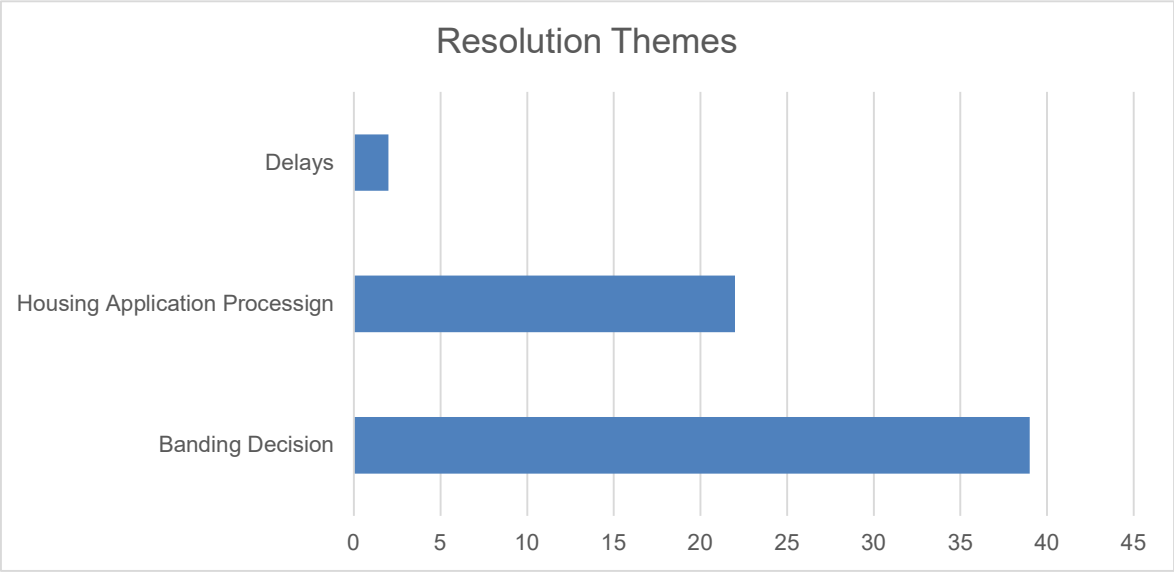
Some of the key recommendations for improvement are:

- Continue targeted feedback and coaching for staff involved in upheld complaints
- Ensure robust training is provided to new members of staff recruited

Housing Needs & Options Services

Housing Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	83	59	24	83%	-
2024-25	*53*	*42*	*11*	*85%*	*23*
2023-24	*44*	*40*	*4*	*87%*	*8*





Housing Needs & Options Services – Service Comments

Simon Hunt, Housing Services Manager:

The number of complaints received increased by 53% from 53 to 83. The proportion of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 increased slightly from 21% to 28%.

It should also be noted that we received 23 compliments about the service in 2024/25, compared to 8 the previous year.

83% of complaints were responded to within target, which is a slight decrease compared to performance for last year.

Within the context of service delivery, the Housing Advice team supported over 2,500 customers in the past year across both housing advice and homelessness cases. When viewed against this volume, the cumulative number of complaints represents approximately 2% of customers. Similarly, for Home-Link, with around 2,500 applicants on the housing register, the 26 complaints received equate to roughly 1% of applicants. This provides important context, indicating that while complaints have increased, they remain proportionally low relative to demand.

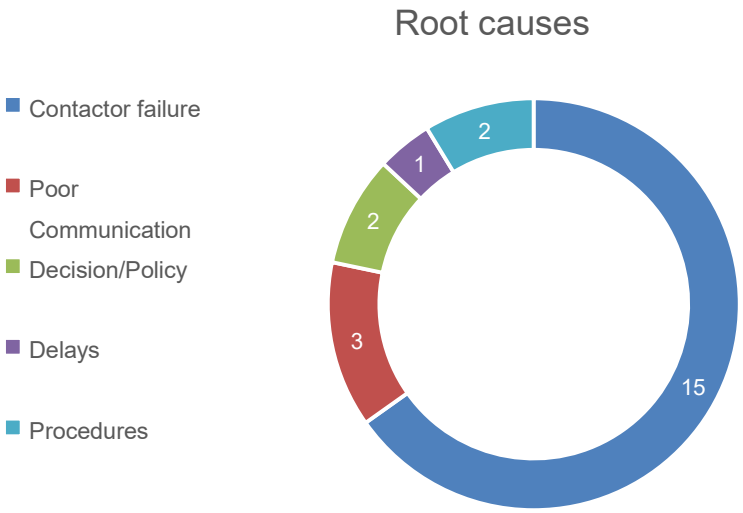
In terms of the reported rise in complaints, particularly within Housing Advice, it is possible that this reflects how cases are recorded rather than a distinct increase in service issues. Homelessness and Housing Advice are often closely linked in practice, and there may be some interchangeability in how complaints are logged on Tracker. As a result, complaints relating to homelessness cases may also be contributing to the apparent increase under the 'Housing Advice' category.

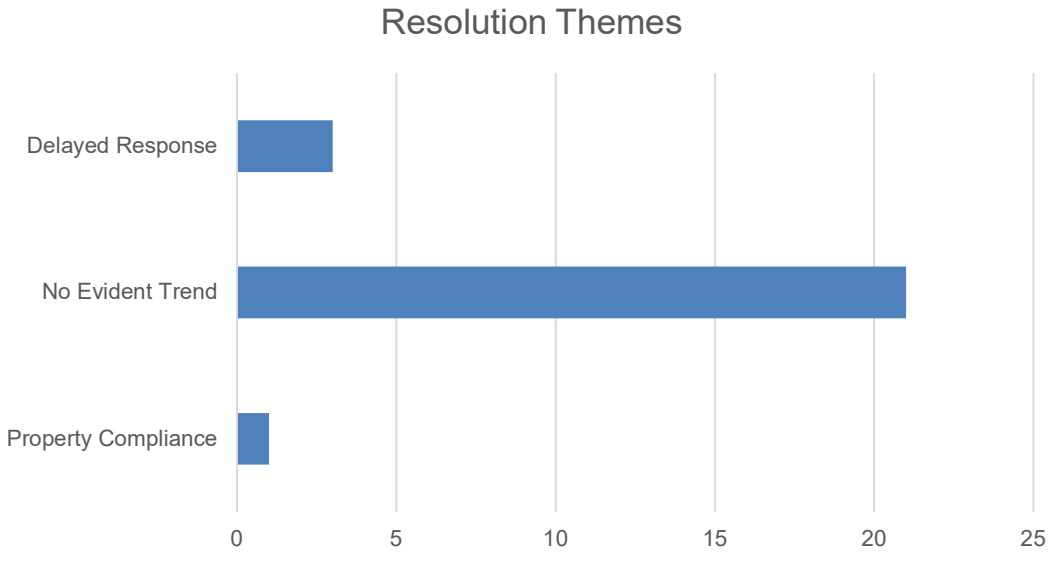
Alongside this, there has been an observable shift in the nature of complaints received over the past year. Anecdotally, the service has seen more complaints that appear to be drafted using AI tools. These are often identifiable through consistent formatting, similar phring, and the inclusion of standardised expectations, remedies, and references to legislation. In some cases, the legislation cited is not directly relevant to the complaint, suggesting it may have been generated as part of a more generalised AI-assisted approach to raising concerns about access to social housing.

Taken together, this may indicate that the increased use of AI is empowering customers to feel more informed and confident in submitting complaints, which could be contributing to the overall rise observed

Housing Development Agency

HDA	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2025-26	21	18	3	95%	-
2024-25	28	20	8	79%	-
2023-24	*18*	*15*	*3*	*50%*	-





Housing Development Agency – Themes & Trends

Tony Stead, Business Improvement Manager:

Overall, Housing Development Agency received a reduction in complaints compared to the previous year (21 compared to 28). The majority of complaints were handled at Stage 1, with only a small number progressing to Stage 2, representing a notable decrease in escalation compared to last year (3 compared to 8).

The majority of complaints made to the service were classed as general individual complaints with no evident trend, indicating issues remain largely case-specific. Other themes included property issues, communication concerns and delays, though these were limited in number.

In terms of root causes, the most frequently identified were third-party (contractor) failure, although a small number of cases also related to poor communication and delays.

Outcomes were typically advice and information provided, with some instances of service improvement actions and apologies where appropriate. Performance against timescales was consistently good and improved compared to last year (95% compared to 79%).

The following services have not been reported on in detail due to the low number of complaints raised within them. However, a brief summary of performance is provided.

Commercial Property Services

Property Services received one stage one complaint and two stage two complaints. All three complaints were resolved within their target dates.

Elections

One stage one complaint was received relating to Elections this year. It was resolved within target.

Housing Finance

Housing Finance received one stage one complaint. It was resolved within target.

Active Lifestyles

Two stage one complaints were received relating to the Active Lifestyles team. Both were responded to within the target time.

Estate Services (formerly Estate Champions)

Estate Services received 11 complaints this year. 8 at stage one, and 3 at stage 2. All of the stage one and 2 of the stage two complaints were resolved in time.

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit services received one complaint at stage one this year. It was resolved within the target time. This service received three compliments.

Information Governance

Two stage one cases were received relating to Information Governance this year. Both of the cases were resolved within the target time.

Finance

Finance received one complaint at stage two this year. It was not resolved within the target time.

Community Centres

Three complaints were received at stage one that related to Community Centres. One was resolved within the target time, and two were not.

Cambridge Home Improvement Agency

Six complaints were received at stage one for CHIA. Four of these were responded to within target time, and two were not.

Multi-Service Complaints

Multi-Service Complaints	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target
2025-26	44	34	10	80%
2024-25	*47*	*41*	*6*	*70%*
2023-24	*41*	*36*	*5*	*83%*

Multi-Service complaints tend to be more complex and involve more officer time to investigate, which in previous years has contributed to a low number of complaints responded to within target. This year the number of cases resolved within target has remained consistent with the previous two years which shows Officers are still handling these cases efficiently.

There were three fewer multi-service complaints in 2025-26 than in 2024-25.

This year the area with the highest number of multi-service complaints was City Homes with 25, compared to 17 in the previous year. Other high-volume areas involved in multi-service complaints are Housing Maintenance (11, up from 8), and Streets & Open Spaces (8, the same as last year). This is in-line with previous years, as Housing Maintenance & Assets complaints, and other community issues can often involve officers from the Housing service if the complaints concern decisions made by that service. The majority of the multi-service complaints involved a Housing Service as complaints had often been raised to a Housing Officer initially, but they have had to involve other services to find a resolution for the complainant. An increase in multi-service complaints being responded to within target shows that staff are working collaboratively to resolve cases which span multiple services.

The Customer Service Centre is often the first point of contact for the majority of services offered by the Council. We are still careful to differentiate where the complainant actually complains about the service they received from the CSC, or if they are just mentioning the fact they were in contact with them as part of the background to their complaint. There were only two Multi-Service complaints which were also unhappy with the service they had received from the CSC this year.

When a multi-service complaint is allocated, potential case owners from all services involved are contacted to establish a lead officer who will then co-ordinate an investigation and response, including input from all relevant services.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

If customers are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's office. The LGSCO investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies.

In 2025-26, 24 complaints about our services were raised with the ombudsman. Of these 24 complaints, 11 were outside of the ombudsman's jurisdiction, and a further 11 were assessed and closed. 2 cases were investigated, and both cases were upheld.

This is a slight increase on previous years. In 2024-25 there were 15 complaints raised with none investigated. The remaining 16 complaints were not investigated, with four being outside of jurisdiction. In 2023-24, 17 cases were raised, 1 was investigated and upheld.

Comparing to similarly sized councils by population for 2024/25, Norwich City Council had 39 complaints raised, 20 assessed and 4 investigated, which were all upheld. Oxford had 33 cases raised, 13 assessed, 3 investigated, all of which were upheld.

Department	No of Complaints Received	Decision
Benefits & Tax	1	1 Closed after initial enquiries
Housing	12	2 Incomplete/Invalid 4 Closed after initial enquiries 3 Referred for local resolution 3 Advice given
Corporate & Other Services	5	3 Closed after initial enquiries 1 Referred back for local resolution 1 Advice given
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	3	1 Upheld 2 Closed after initial enquiries
Planning & Development	2	1 Upheld 1 Incomplete/Invalid
Highways & Transport	1	1 Closed after initial enquiries
Total	**24**	2 Upheld 11 Closed after initial enquiries 4 Advice Given 4 Referred back for local resolution 3 Incomplete/Invalid

LGSCO Upheld Case summary

The LGSCO provides information on all cases submitted and investigated on their website. Summaries have been provided below, full information on each case can be found on the LGSCO website by searching for the reference number.

Planning Applications

Complaint: 24 016 034 – 15 June 2025

This complainant complained that the Council failed to properly consider their neighbour's planning application to develop their property, which is in a conservation area. The application included the installation of solar panels. The complainant highlighted that the Council failed to preserve the appearance of the traditional slate roof and they wanted the Council to revoke the planning permission and to have the solar panels removed.

The Ombudsman found there was a lack of explanation in some areas of the case officer's report when deciding on the planning application. There was also an error in describing the solar panels being proposed. However, the Ombudsman found this did not lead to a different outcome on the planning application which caused injustice to the complainant. This was because the fault we identified did not lead to development taking place that would have been refused had the fault not occurred. The Ombudsman say this because the solar panels had the benefit of permitted development, regardless of the planning decision.

There was also fault in the way the Council decided the Certificate of Lawfulness. However, this did not cause injustice, because it did not lead to a different outcome.

There were no suggested recommendations or remedial orders given to the Council.

Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation

Complaint: 25 004 824 – 15 June 2025

This complainant complained about the way the Council dealt with issues they had with their neighbour. The Council was allegedly at fault for delaying in responding to reports of antisocial behaviour, and failing to signpost the resident to the case review process.

The Ombudsman found that the Council had already accepted fault for delays in responding to the residents reports and in writing to other neighbours to ask if they had witnessed any anti-social behaviour. The Ombudsman noted that the Council had also already apologised and offered redress for personal injustice caused, which was deemed sufficient. The Ombudsman also found that when the resident expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of the ASB reports, the Council should have told the resident about the ASB case review process (formerly known as 'Community Trigger').

As a result of this complaint, the Ombudsman recommended that the Council send an apology to the resident. This action was completed.

Number of LGSCO cases, yearly comparisons

The below table shows the number of complaints referred to the LGSCO, against how many cases were investigated, and how many of those investigated were upheld.

Year	Total Enquiries Received	Cases Investigated	Cases Upheld
2025-26	**24**	**2**	**1**
2024-25	16	0	0
2023-24	17	1	1

Reasons to not investigate a complaint include the complaint not being made within 12 months of the issue occurring, complainants not providing sufficient information to allow the LGSCO to investigate, and in some cases, the complaint not being passed through the Council's complaints procedure first before escalation. In these instances, the LGSCO gives advice, and signpost complainants to sources of further information.

Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)

Alongside the LGSCO, customers can escalate their complaints regarding the Councils responsibilities as a landlord with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). The HOS investigate and determine cases in a similar way to the LGSCO, making recommendations or orders to remedy the complaint when fault is found. An order made by the HOS is an action that the Council must take and evidence demonstrating that the order has been completed must be submitted to the HOS. The HOS may also suggest recommendations in response to a complaint investigation, these are not mandatory for the Council to carry out.

When the HOS investigates a complaint, they can find fault in more than one issue and issue more than one order or recommendation as a remedy to the complaint. This is why in the report, the number of findings and orders is larger than the number of cases investigated.

Year	Number of Complaints	Number of Faults	Number of Orders	Number of Recommendations
2025-26	3	6	12	1
2024-25	5	9	14	2
2023-24	4	7	11	0

In 2025-26, 33 complaints were raised to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Of these, 3 were deemed complaints about our Housing related services that could be investigated by the Ombudsman. Of these 3 complaints, the Ombudsman found 6 faults. To remedy these complaints, 12 orders and 1 recommendation were made. The Council were not served with any Complaint Handling Failure Orders.

83% (5) findings related to maladministration by the Council. This is a slightly higher percentage than the 78% recorded from 2024-25, but a lower volume of actual maladministration findings. This year both the national rate of maladministration dropped from 71% to 62%, as well as the maladministration rate for similar sized landlords from 77% to 67%. This shows our rate of maladministration findings is still higher than both national averages. However, the number of cases received per 1000 homes was 3.7, which is lower than the average among similar sized landlords (5.4 complaints per 1000 homes).

33% (2) findings specifically related to Service Failure. This is higher than both the national average of 21% and the average for similar sized landlords, 22%, but lower than the 56% (5) reported last year. All other categories of findings were equal to, or below the national and similar sized landlords average.

In 2025 – 26 The Council paid £1,150 in compensation as a result of remedial orders and recommendations. Compared to £2,550 in 2024-25 and, £1,575 in 2023.

	Responsive Repairs	Managing Relations	Anti-Social Behaviour	Moving/Buying/Selling Home
2025-26	£125	£175*	£250	£600
2024 -25	£1700	£850*	£0	£0
2023-24	£800	£200	£375	£200

*A payment of £50 was made as a result of a recommendation. The Council paid £2,550 in compensation as a result of remedial orders and recommendations.

In past reports, the categories of compensation had different titles when reported by the Housing Ombudsman Service.
Responsive Repairs was known as Property Condition. Managing Relations was known as Complaint Handling. Moving/Buying/Selling Home was known as Estate Management.

As with previous years, the Housing Ombudsman Service were satisfied that 100% of remedial orders were complied with by the Council.

Complaints under the Councillors' Code of Conduct

Councillors must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct whenever they are conducting Council business, representing the Council or conducting the business of the office to which they were elected. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure high standards of ethics and conduct are maintained and that councillors treat everybody in an equal capacity and with respect, ensuring at all times that the integrity of the Council is not compromised in any way.

Complaints about councillors are considered initially by the Council's Monitoring Officer (who is also the Head of Legal Practice). When the Monitoring Officer receives a complaint about breach of the Code of Conduct, they consult one of two "Independent Persons" appointed by the Council. The role of the "Independent Persons" is to introduce external scrutiny of the complaints process. The Monitoring Officer can respond to a complaint, can commission a formal investigation or can refer it for consideration by the Council's Standards Sub-Committee. The Council's Standards Sub-Committee is made up of three Councillors.

Councillor Conduct Complaints, 2025-26

During 2025-26 there were four complaints about Councillors.

Of these cases one case proceeded to be investigated and was partially upheld. Two cases were dismissed. One case was not substantiated.

During 2024 -25 seven complaints were received about Councillors.

None of these complaints were passed for formal investigation with apologies provided in 2 instances, insufficient information to proceed in 1 instance and 3 complaints dismissed.

There were six complaints in both 2023-24 and four in 2022-2023. To find out more about the Council's Code of Conduct visit our website or contact the Council's Monitoring Officer Tom Lewis: tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org