

Report of the Head of Resources**COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PERFORMANCE – 1 OCTOBER 2013 TO 31 MARCH 2014****1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To inform the committee of the council's performance, including Wellingborough Norse, during the second half of the year in handling customer feedback. It also includes details on requests for information considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The report also includes complaints which have been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 1.2. This report relates to the council's priority of delivering an efficient and responsive service.

2 Executive summary

The council aims to fully respond to complaints within 12 working days. The performance for the year to 31 March 2014 against this target is 96% (92% to 31 March 2013). This does not include those complaints referred by the Ombudsman, as the Ombudsman dictates the response deadline for these.

3 Appendices

Appendix 1 – compliments received.
Appendix 2 – comments received.
Appendix 3 – complaints received.
Appendix 4 – Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulation requests received.

4 Proposed action:

The committee is invited to RESOLVE to note the report.

5 Background

- 5.1 Customer feedback is valued as a means to continuously review and improve the services offered by the council. This includes services delivered directly by council employees or through agency workers and contractors appointed by the council. The target to respond to complaints is 12 working days.
- 5.2 When a customer is dissatisfied with the council's response to their complaint, following a review by a more senior officer, they have a right of appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman. This report also contains details of complaints which have been received by the Ombudsman.

Depending on the circumstances, the Ombudsman will consider whether the council has had reasonable opportunity to investigate the complaint within its own procedures. If not, the Ombudsman will request this before carrying out his own investigation; these are identified in this report as referrals.

- 5.3 Compliments are considered as praise or expressions of satisfaction about any council activity, or about an employee or representative of the council. Comments are considered as observations which are neither critical nor complimentary, but include helpful suggestions for improving our services and our customer satisfaction.
- 5.4 Since its introduction in 2005, the Freedom of Information Act has instigated a culture change for authorities to represent a balance between greater openness and transparency of decision making and the need to protect information where disclosure would cause harm or otherwise be contrary to the public interest.

6 Discussion

Compliments

- 6.1 For this period, a total of 41 compliments have been received as follows, with further details attached at Appendix 1:

Service	Number of compliments received
Community	3
Environment (Wellingborough Norse)	32
Finance	1
Planning and Local Development	4
Resources	1
Total	41

- 6.2 When a compliment is received, it is shared with the principal manager, who acknowledges the feedback with the relevant individual or team.

Comments

- 6.3 For this period, a total of 20 comments were received as follows, with further details attached at Appendix 2:

Service	Number of comments received
Community	2
Environment (Wellingborough Norse)	14
Finance	0
Planning and Local Development	2
Resources	2
Total	20

Complaints

- 6.4 During the second half of the year the council received 79 complaints, of which 96% were responded to in full within 12 days. A summary of the complaints received for each service is detailed below, with further detail attached at Appendix 3:

Service	Number of complaints received	Completed	Within Target
Community	5	5	4
Environment (Wellingborough Norse)	52	52	52
Finance	17	17	15
Planning and Local Development	4	4	4
Resources	1	1	1
Total	79	79	76

- 6.5 For the same period in 2013-14 a total of 58 formal complaints were received, of which 91% were responded to within target. A summary of the complaints received is detailed below:

Service	Number of complaints received
Community	5
Environment	16
Finance	25
Planning and Local Development	7
Resources	5
Total	58

- 6.6 As a result of the 79 complaints received for this period of 2013-14, 64 (81%) were not upheld whereas others involved lessons being learnt and appropriate action taken. Comments from managers in relation to complaints received are included at Appendix 3.

- 6.7 The complaints received this period have highlighted that:

- (a) Environment (Wellingborough Norse) received the highest number of complaints, with 78% of these specifically in relation to ceasing the brown bin collection over the winter months. The remaining complaints were predominantly about refuse collections. The service responded appropriately and promptly to all complaints.
- (b) Finance received the second highest number of complaints this period, all of which related to the Revenue and Benefits service. This comes as no surprise considering the ongoing impact of the Welfare Reform changes, resulting in a significant increase in customer contact and demand and ultimately negative feedback. None of the 17 complaints were upheld.

- (c) There was no significant pattern with regard to the complaints for Planning and Local Development other than half related to planning matters and the other half to housing.
- (d) Three of the five complaints for Community related to the Waendel Leisure Centre.
- (e) Resources received one complaint.

Ombudsman

- 6.8 During this period, the council received one case that was investigated by the Ombudsman. This was in connection with a planning matter and it concluded that the council was not at fault in failing to notify the complainants of a planning application to develop a site near their home. The council properly considered the planning application including the impact on existing properties and residents' objections. There were no grounds to question the council's decision to grant planning permission.

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests

- 6.9 During the second half of the year the council received 293 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, 28 requests for information under Sections 29 and 35 of the Data Protection Act and 195 requests under the Environmental Information Regulations (a total of 517). There were two Data Subject Access requests.
- 6.10 Of the 517 requests received; 498 (96%) requests were completed within the statutory deadline.
- 6.11 A breakdown of the requests received per service area and the type of requester is attached at appendix 4. This summary excludes requests made under Section 29 of the Data Protection Act.
- 6.12 For the same period in 2012-13, the council received 189 requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 28 requests for information under Section 29 of the Data Protection Act and 166 requests under the Environmental Information Regulations. Of these 383 requests, 372 (97%) were answered within the statutory deadline.
- 6.13 In response to the continuing increase in requests for information, officers are beginning to publish information on our website, particularly where there are routine requests of the same or a similar nature. Examples of this include information on business rates and public funerals.

7 Legal powers

Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, Data Protection Act 1998.

8 Financial and value for money implications

- 8.1 Ombudsman investigations may recommend a local settlement by the council or prove maladministration by the council, which may lead to compensation being paid to the customer. In 2013-14, the council was not instructed to pay any compensation in response to complaints investigated by the Ombudsman.
- 8.2 There is the potential for the council to charge for the provision of information supplied under the Freedom of Information Act, should it exceed 18 hours work at £25 per hour, ie £450. Since the introduction of the Act, the council has not received any income as a result of a request for information, mainly because there is a duty to allow applicants to amend their enquiry so that it remains below the 18 hour threshold.

9 Risk analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Council proved negligent by the Ombudsman.	Potential compensation claim and negative reflection of the council.	Low.	Ensure heads of service investigate or scrutinise all complaints/potential Ombudsman referrals.
Confidential information provided in error in response to an FOI request.	Contrary to the Data Protection Act.	Low.	Suitably trained employees and legal guidance in case of doubt.
Not meeting statutory deadlines to respond to FOI requests.	Potential referral to Information Commissioner.	Medium.	Stringent recording and monitoring arrangements in place. Suitably trained employees and legal guidance available.
Council fails to take improvement opportunities identified by complaints.	Rising levels of dissatisfaction by customers.	Medium.	All feedback is measured by Organisational Development to identify lessons learnt and improvements required, as resources permit.

10 Implications for resources

Officer time and materials in carrying out investigations and for providing information for requests.

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

There are no implications for stronger and safer communities as a result of this report.

12 Implications for equalities

Monitoring customer feedback provides an important source of assurance that council services are fair, equitable and free from discrimination and harassment.

13 Author and contact officer

Karen Denton, Principal Organisational Development Manager.

14 Consultees

Heads of Service, Principal Managers.

15 Background papers

Electronic files and spreadsheets held in Organisational Development.

Line Number	Compliment	Service Area	Action Taken	Lessons Learnt
1	Member of staff in Human Resources going the extra mile.	Resources	Will mention at team meeting to acknowledge good customer service and employee achievement.	Consider this when processing future applicants.
2	Circus performance and enjoyment	Community	Feedback was extended to the Circus who confirmed they had also received compliments and were very happy with how the circus went.	Organising Officer also made aware of compliment and noted on event file.
3	Officer visit with Trading Standards and helpful and suggesting practical solutions to the problems.	Community	No action required. Compliment sent to Officer mentioned	Compliment relates to positive enforcement approach taken by Officer. This is an approach all officers are encouraged to take with compliant businesses in support of the Better Business For All Project.
4	Member of staff helpfulness in getting customer housed.	Planning and Local Development	A customer had been placed in a hotel by Social Services and did not feel that they were being helped and asked for assistance. A referral was made to a property and the application supported by the council and the customer was successful in securing accommodation.	N/a
5	Assistance received from officer in Council Tax.	Finance	Customer called in, in response to Council Tax reminders issued. Officer saw them and advised what was deemed to be the best course of action, which was to contact Benefits and set an arrangement for payment. Customer is in receipt of Council Tax Support.	Sometimes when we are just doing our job, it is being done well and it is appreciated by our customers.
6	Customer pleased with Planning decision and the speed of it.	Planning and Local Development	None but compliment noted.	N/a
7	Support and assistance provided for planning application.	Planning and Local Development	None but compliment noted.	N/a

8	Thanks for housing assistance.	Planning and Local Development	Customer was pregnant and in need of suitable accommodation. Assessing Officer was able to present a supportive case to Wellingborough Homes and client was successfully allocated a property.	N/a
9	Support provided to council partner for potential customer field base.	Community	Compliment passed on to officer.	N/a

Wellingborough Norse Compliments				
1	Customer very happy with the service of the green bin collection as extra bags and boxes left out with the green bin were all collected.	Environment	All compliments are shared with the manager of the team, mentioned at manager meetings and highlighted on employee notice boards.	The team do a good job. It is nice for someone to recognise this and make the effort to provide the positive feedback.
2	Customer wished to thank the Cemetery Team for the huge improvements that have been made to the general condition of Doddington Road Cemetery and also commend the team for maintaining it to such a high standard.	Environment		
3	Reported a fallen tree and very happy with the prompt service to remove the tree.	Environment		
4	Village resident was glad to see the footway being cleared of extensive weed growth and wished to say a good effort on the workers' part.	Environment		
5	Customer called to say a big thank you to two officers for helping sort out a missed assisted collection.	Environment		
6	Praise for garden clearance which was done when said and customer very happy with the service. The workers cleared everything away to a very good standard and customer advised they would not hesitate to recommend the service to others.	Environment		
7	Customer expressed thanks for their bin collection service. The team are always reliable and work so swiftly and efficiently. Customer often out dog walking when they are working in the village and they are always polite and friendly. Bins are left tidy and not stroon across the pavements, they do a great job.	Environment		
8	Customer wanted to say thank you for help with an event.	Environment		
9	Thanks for having the tipped materials removed quickly. Thanks also to the guys who did the clearing, they did a great job and customer was impressed.	Environment		
10	Sincere thanks to the Green Bin Team. Customer had a clear out and left extra bagged and boxed items beside their green bin as it was full. The team expertly disposed of all the items that had been left out and customer asked to pass on gratitude to the collection team involved.	Environment		
11	Thanks received for getting some of the footpath repaired and that it looks very nice.	Environment		

12	Huge thanks conveyed for our remarkable customer service professionalism regarding a fly tipping issue, which had been collected. Customer extremely grateful for our help.	Environment		
13	Customer called to say that the refuse service we provide is excellent and wanted to say a special thank you to the driver who always waves and gives the customer a 'thumbs-up". Customer lives alone and it really makes their day as they live alone.	Environment		
14	Customer sent a card thanking the staff for the good service.	Environment		
15	Customer called to praise an employee for their 'can do' attitude and complimented their polite and courteous manner toward them and their staff on site. This has resulted in the contract being renewed.	Environment		
16	Customer called to thank the refuse crews for emptying their recycling bin which had been contaminated by passers by.	Environment		
17	Thanks received for swiftly responding to a complaint regarding littering from a specific property.	Environment		
18	Email received from customer on behalf of residents saying how much better the new bins are and many thanks for the prompt and purposeful action.	Environment		
19	Resident called to thank a refuse/response employee for their polite and prompt service.	Environment		
20	Customer visited the Tithe Barn prior to an even and wished to advise it is a lovely venue and the employee present was really accommodating and gave them time to sort out how they would like the venue to look on the day.	Environment		
21	Customer wished to express their thanks to the team that cleared the fly-tipped waste that had been left in the entry way between two roads. A very prompt and professional job.	Environment		
22	Employee had attended a burial of ashes and a relative of the deceased called to say how well it went and how helpful the employee was, complimenting them on their interaction and helpfulness and very pleased with their manner.	Environment		
23	Customer call to advise they were very happy that we could assist, and wanted to pass their thanks to the officer for taking the call, and the quick response.	Environment		

24	Customer called to congratulate our mini-sweeper driver on doing a very thorough job.	Environment		
25	Email received by manager thanking for their usual excellent support and to pass on thanks to an employee for delivery litter-picking bags and then collecting the waste.	Environment		
26	Customer wished to say thank you to the litter pickers and road sweepers for a specific road and advise they do an excellent job.	Environment		
27	Customer wanted to praise operatives regarding the street cleaning in the village. Had never seen his road look as clean as it does after the clean up that morning.	Environment		
28	Thanks given for allowing a local voluntary organisation have a free market stall to raise funds.	Environment		
29	Email received notifying of a fallen tree blocking pavement and second email the following day giving thanks for dealing with the matter so promptly.	Environment		
30	Thanks received for a shiny new green bin complete with customer's house number painted on it. The deliverer also was kind enough to repaint the worn out numbers on the other two bins also, without even being asked. Excellent service, thank you very much.	Environment		
31	Customer emailed stating that the response team were very polite, friendly and commented on the excellent service that had been received.	Environment		
32	Customer emailed to say that the response team couldn't do enough to help and went over and above their roles to help the customer.	Environment		

Line number	Comments	Service Area	Action Taken	Lessons Learnt
1	Cost of street cleaning and potential use of those unemployed.	Resources	None possible: just noted	No
2	Request for Council Tax Rebate as road on estate has not been adopted and customer considered they are not getting the same service as other areas.	Community	Breakdown of council tax explained to customer and the inability to provide a rebate. Contact was made with the developer to support customer point about unadopted roads. Cleansing services commenced prior to adopted.	N/a
3	Lack of decoration and lights on the Christmas tree in the town	Planning and Local Development	Customer advised that there was a short interval between the tree being delivered and the lights being fitted and that the lights are on between specific times of the day.	N/a
4	Customer questioning the DC Leisure time table over the Christmas period.	Community	Technical problem with DC Leisure website meant it was not possible to see the holiday timetable. DC Leisure contacted and customer advised of error.	N/a
5	Lack of consideration for hospitals even though there is a lot of development in the town.	Planning and Local Development	Customer advised that BCW is guided by the NHS on the need and that organisations are consulted on these matters to ensure matters such as this can be highlighted.	N/a
6	Neglected verge in front of customer's property and requested either for it to be maintained, for them to maintain it themselves or be allowed to purchase it to take ownership of its maintenance.	Resources	Customer advised that the land is part of Highways and Wellingborough Norse were shortly due to maintain it.	N/a
Wellingborough Norse Comments				
1	Concern that weed spraying had not taken place in customer's area and that roads had not been swept.	Environment	Customer advised of weed spraying programme, timescale for completing this and reassured that all areas are treated equally.	Customers expectations about services cannot always be met in accordance with their needs.
2	Information about changes to the green waste collection service were insufficiently clear.	Environment	Communications Officer asked to review information on the web site. Wellingborough Norse asked to review distribution of information regarding waste collection calendar to residents.	Seek to continue to improve customer communications
3 to 13	Eleven comments were received from residents about the ceasing of the Brown Bin (Garden Waste) collection service over the winter months.	Environment	Residents advised of why service was being ceased and given information about alternative ways to dispose of garden waste.	Not always possible to meet resident expectations
14	Traffic build up early morning due to waste collection vehicle.	Environment	Customer advised that the schedule avoids the busiest time for the main road.	N/a

Line Number	Complaint Summary	Service Area	Upheld	Action Taken	Lessons Learnt
1	Planning and environmental issues connected to customer's property impacting on property sale.	Planning and Local Development	N	The issue was for the complainant to take up with the developer of the site who had not provided the council with adequate evidence that there was no contamination left on site.	No.
2	Elderly parent's benefit being stopped and poor customer service received.	Finance	Y	Benefit had been stopped due to notification from partner organisation and correct procedure followed. Customer advised of this. Officer who had allegedly provided poor customer service was made aware of feedback and an apology sent to customer.	Verify information passed from partner organisations.
3	Inadequate lighting inside the main hall at the Tithe Barn.	Resources	Y	Lampshades have been removed from light fittings to see if this makes any difference. Capital bid had already been submitted for general Tithe Barn improvements, including lighting.	No
4	Customer service by benefit staff member over the telephone.	Finance	N	Matter was investigated and this is a known issue as a result of the telephone system and high call volumes. Letter sent to customer explaining what had happened and with an apology.	There does not seem to be much really that went wrong in this instance. We do know that on occasions we do have issues with the phones.
5	Customer unhappy with planning decision.	Planning and Local Development	N	Letters sent to customer to explain planning process. Correspondence also via the MP.	No.
6	Conduct of the Bailiff's when visited customer's property regarding unpaid Council Tax.	Finance	N	Officer contacted the company that organised the Bailiff. Response sent to customer advising of Bailiff rights and rules they must adhere to. Due to nature of allegations, customer advised to put complaint in writing to organising company, as well as contacting the police due to the seriousness of claimants allegations.	Bailiff refuted all of the claims.
7	Length of time to adjust benefits.	Finance	Y	Claim was assessed in date order. Customer advised of this and apology for length of time taken.	We know that we have increased paper work and have tried to address this. We currently have a contractor working in Benefits.
8	Twice failed to respond to a request for information from the assessing officer.	Finance	N	Assessing officer confirmed that two responses had been sent. Both e-mails were issued within one day of the initial request for information.	Benefits section appears to be responding to customer's requests via the benefits e-mail account in a timely manner.

9	Error in processing change of circumstance for housing benefits.	Finance	Y	Case looked in to and identified that decision notice was not included in correspondence. Customer advised of this, decision notice sent and apology given to customer for the error and distress caused.	Just to ensure that all letters are printed and sent.
10	Complaint about employee.	Finance	N	No action. Customer informed benefits that their circumstances had changed, the assessment officer, in line with our procedures, suspended the claim and wrote out for further information.	N/A
11	Service received and the time taken by the council's contractor in clearing a mice infestation.	Community	N	The customer did not want the treatment continued so a partial refund was made along with a letter explaining the service provided and its limits.	There was no opportunity to rectify any issues as the complainant did not let us know of their dissatisfaction until they demanded a refund.
12	Injury sustained at Waendel Leisure Centre swimming pool. Disgusted with response and attitude from staff.	Community	Y	Issued raised with Contract manager, matter investigated in line with DC Leisure procedures. Customer given a free use gesture and an apology.	N/A
13	Dissatisfied with Housing Benefit assessment and outcome.	Finance	N	Matter investigated and no evidence found to support the complaint. The claimant was subsequently referred to the tribunal service as they did not agree with the decision.	None, all procedures had been followed.
14	Unable to find Safeguarding contact details via the council's website rather than NCC website.	Community	Y	Website was updated to improve access to information on safeguarding - direct links revised.	Regular review of website content and links is required although weekly broken links reports are produced and would have identified a fault.
15	Online booking faculties for Waendel Walk not working and lack of response to enquiry.	Community	Y	Online booking and contact service web link was repaired and customer advised and an apology given.	Technical error.
16	Poor opening hours and access to Waendel Leisure Centre swimming pool for people with school age children, due to lessons and other use.	Community	N	Letter sent from Contract Manager to explain the swimming programme and the competing needs. Gesture of free use offered to customer.	Private tutors to be asked to minimise disruption to other uses when delivering lessons.
17	Final notice received for outstanding Council Tax.	Finance	N	Customer had not revised their standing order for our new bankers so payments had not been received. Letter sent explaining why the final notice was correctly sent and advising that we had twice supplied our new details, whilst apologising for any inconvenience caused by our change of bankers.	None
18	Tenancy details not updated despite being advised several weeks beforehand.	Finance	Y	Customer had sent details for an account amendment in November and chased it up a couple of times. This was caught up in a backlog of work and had not been actioned. A letter was sent explaining this and with an apology for the delay.	Backlogs sometimes occur due to staffing levels.

19	Housing benefit application and questions being asked.	Finance	N	Explanation provided to customer as to why particular questions have to be asked in line with regulations.	None.
20	Poor customer service received at the offices.	Finance	Y	Complaint investigated and manager spoke with customer on several occasions in order to rectify the matter. Letter also sent to customer apologising for level of service.	Employee training need identified and refresher training arranged.
21	Cost of council budget consultation event in Swansgate shopping centre.	Finance	Y	Customer had picked up an out of date consultation leaflet from reception and attended the budget consultation with paperwork from the previous month's Council Tax Support Scheme consultation. The Head of Finance wrote to the customer and explained what had happened, apologised for the error and gave details of the consultation events and subsequent decisions.	Employees working in reception areas asked to ensure up to date consultation information is available and ended consultation documents removed.
22	Council Tax summons.	Finance	N	Customer did not respond to our communications warning them they would receive a summons and associated costs, until the summons was issued. A review of our procedures showed the customer's account had been progressed correctly and that they had received numerous letters asking them to contact us if they needed assistance.	None
23	Customer unhappy with the way their housing benefit and council tax support claim had been dealt with.	Finance	N	Customer stated that they had tried to provide information in relation to the accounts of their self-employed spouse but they were refused as it was too late in the day. Our records show that the customer was advised they would need to put their accounts in to order. Customer advised we would, however, treat their claim as if all information had been provided on their first visit.	Dealing with self-employed claimants can be complex. Guidance re-issued customer service advisors to always seek advice from assessors (which did happen in this case).
24	Day for housing benefit to be paid in to bank changed without customer being notified and resulted in them being given bank charges.	Finance	N	Customer advised that payments normally made on a Thursday or Friday and whilst generally made on a Thursday there was never a commitment for just that day and some would be made on a Friday.	None - payment information is included in notification letters.
25	Interest being added on to outstanding Council Tax owed.	Finance	N	Customer owes money dating back to 2004 but continue to repay at a low amount each month despite us asking for more. As they receive a charge each year the amount being paid does not clear the current charge and the residual balance therefore increases year on year. Complainant had asked for the balance to be written off, but we have refused as the charge is correct and valid. Letter sent explaining charge is correct and complainant must make an increased offer of payment to clear.	None

26	Lack of vetting by the council of prospective tenants for private landlords.	Planning and Local Development	N	Complainant was advised of the actual terms of the signed agreement that did not include the vetting of tenants by the council, only the opportunity to nominate clients with a grant for tenancy.	N/A
27	Confusion over withdrawing from an agreement with the council to nominate tenants to them (landlords incentive scheme) and at their request we terminated the agreement and raised an invoice for the repayment of the grant they had been given when signing up. The customer disputed they wished to withdraw.	Planning and Local Development	N	Letter sent to customer advising of their responsibilities as a landlord and duty to a tenant. An offer was made to assist both the landlord and tenant but the landlord changed their mind and was not being helpful to facilitate. An offer was made at the time to continue the council's agreement for the landlord incentive scheme if they could provide a correct assured short hold tenancy agreement.	Introduce more detailed vetting of landlords, produce a pack with details of the landlords incentive scheme, greater understanding of the LLS by officers and landlords.

Wellingborough Norse Complaints

1 to 39	Thirty nine residents complained about the ceasing of the Brown Bin (Garden Waste) collection service over the winter months.	Environment	N	Residents advised of why service was being ceased and given information about alternative ways to dispose of garden waste.	Not always possible to meet resident expectations.
40	Resident upset about the ceasing of the Brown Bin (Garden Waste) collection service over the winter months seeking additional brown bins or a skip to store surplus organic materials falling from trees.	Environment	N	Resident advised of why service was being ceased and given information about alternative ways to dispose of garden waste request for additional bins and/or a skip refused, referred to the parish council for request to have trees reduced.	Not always possible to meet resident expectations.
41	Delayed replacement of black bin.	Environment	Y	Delivery delayed due to workload. Call made to customer to apologise for delay and advised new bin would be delivered that day.	N/A
42	Glass and litter left following bin collection.	Environment	Y	The customer had already picked up the litter, so street cleansing was not required. The Supervisor spoke to the waste collection crew involved requesting they take more care in future.	N/A
43	Access blocked by refuse vehicle and customer unable to move their car.	Environment	N	Manager spoke to the team and then called the customer. The customer threatened to block the collection vehicle on the next collection day and wasn't very understanding to the situation. It was explained to the customer that where possible our teams will be accommodating, but on occasions they may need to block access for a short period of time.	Unable to meet customer expectations on all occasions.

44	Fixed Penalty Notice for dog fouling challenged.	Environment	N	Investigated by Wellingborough Norse and a senior officer at the council. Legal advice was sought and the FPN was rescinded.	None.
45	The need to provide certain personal information for an additional green bin and that this is provided to a "contractor" (Wellingborough Norse) rather than the council.	Environment	N	The partnership arrangement was explained to the customer. Although the customer still refused to provide all the information being asked, they did confirm enough information to enable the provision of an additional bin.	Customer did not understand the partnership working arrangement between BCW and Wellingborough Norse.
46	Waste collection vehicles mounting the kerb due to parked vehicles, causing damage to the verge.	Environment	Y	Customer had previously reported this issue to Wellingborough Norse and was advised we would investigate, speak to the owners of the vehicles to resolve the issue and contact the County Council regarding repair. Complainant was advised that this would take time, and a telephone message was later left for complainant to update them on progress.	Inconsiderate parking often causes problems for waste collection. We are trying to prevent further damage at this location before looking at reinstating the verge. The customer has been asked to be patient while we try to achieve this.
47	Missed bin collection being a recurring problem.	Environment	N	Customer contacted the same day as the complaint was made and advised of collection problems due to building works and vehicles in that area which prevented access. Customer was advised to present additional waste on their next collection day.	We need to improve communications and customer understanding of some of the access difficulties experienced by the waste collection teams.
48	Use of weed killer in recreational parks.	Environment	N	Customer was advised of the reasons behind the use of weed killer, that it was not dangerous to animals when used correctly and the time of year chosen to prevent damage to invertebrate life.	N/A
49	Litter around the Tithe Barn area.	Environment	Y	Customer was advised that Norse cleansing teams have areas which they aim to cover at least once a week on a schedule. We also carry out education and enforcement on litter to help prevent this problem. Norse directed the town centre cleanser to service out more frequently to four around Tithe	N/A
50	Delay in providing replacement black bin.	Environment	Y	Customer was called and explained that there had been an increase in demand. Apology given for delay. When new stock arrived, delivery was arranged and the customer was advised. Manager called customer to check delivery had been made.	N/A

51	Green bin had not been emptied and customer was on assisted collection.	Environment	N	Customer advised that crew had attended but the gate was locked, despite previous issues with this and customer notified. Crew returned to empty to the bin and letter sent to customer reminding of the need to leave their gate unlocked on collection day.	N/A
52	Additional black bin no longer authorised for animal waste.	Environment	N	Letter sent to customer advising of change in policy in 2006.	N/A

**Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations
Breakdown of Requests 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2014**

Service	Number of Requests	Answered within statutory deadline	Over 20 days
Community	52	51	1
Environment	9	8	1
Finance	78	74	4
Planning and Local Development	236	229	7
Resources (Inc. ICT)	39	32	7
Non BCW*	74	74	0
Total	488	468	20

*Of the non Borough Council of Wellingborough requests, 56 were for information held by Northamptonshire County Council.

Requester Breakdown

Requester	Number	%
General Public	79	16
Business Representative	276	57
Media	61	13
Charity	1	0
Local Government	5	1
Researcher (including Students)	59	12
MP	6	1
Trade Union	1	0
Total	488	100