

Introduction

A new Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy document has been created to provide detailed information for Officers & Members when dealing with complaints, comments and compliments. The document is scheduled for Portfolio Holder approval in December 2009, but it has been suggested by a number of Members that some brief guidance on Member complaint handling is provided in the interim.

Definitions

Complaint - A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the District Council and its staff, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.

Comment - A comment can be described as a volunteered personal opinion or belief, feedback or remark expressed by a customer. Unless specifically requested, there is not an automatic assumption that the Council will reply to comments. However, where it is felt appropriate or where the customer indicates they expect a reply, this should be sent within 10 working days.

Compliment - A compliment is defined as a customer statement of positive recognition or praise for a Member, Officer or service.

Complaints Process

The Council should endeavour to resolve problems at the time they are brought to attention. Where this is not possible the formal complaints procedure should be applied.

Exceptions

- The complaints process cannot be used to complain about the conduct of Councillors or the merits of a formal decision taken by Councillors.
- Where statutory procedures are in place, complainants should use these procedures to pursue their complaint.
- The complaints process excludes complaints made by our supplies, partners and other public authorities regarding our business relationships.

The complaints process has a three stage structure. Stage one and two complaints are investigated by the Council, stage three complaints are investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Members & Officers should pass all complaints to the Customer Services Coordinator for registration & acknowledgement

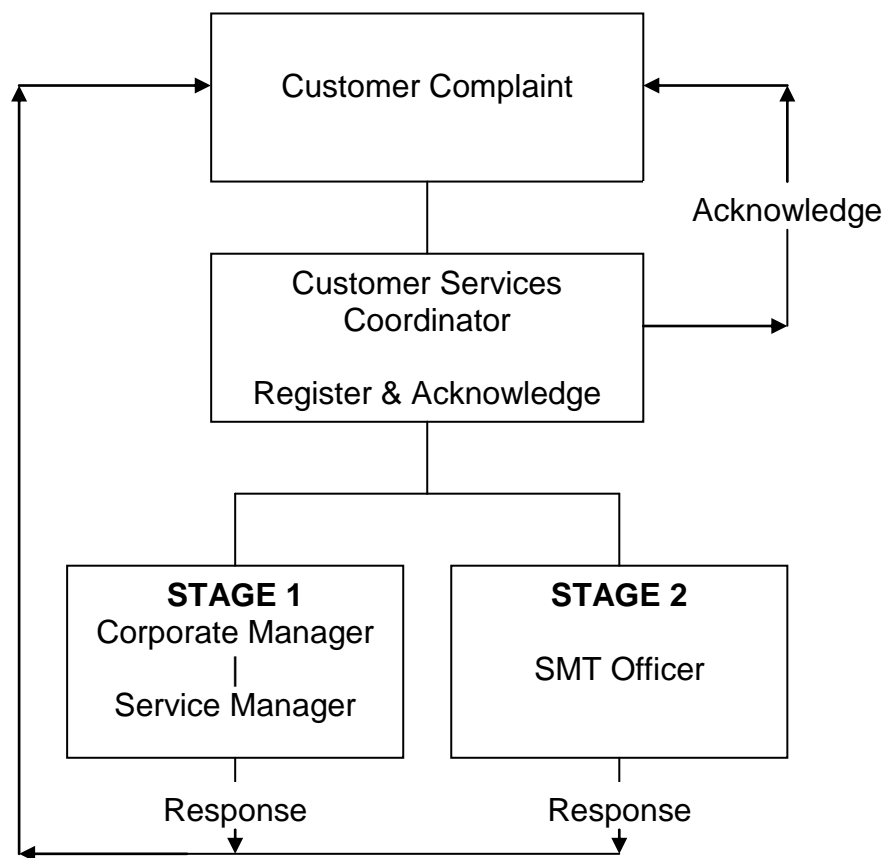
Paul Knight – Customer Services Coordinator
complaints@scamb.gov.uk or www.scamb.gov.uk/complaints or 01954 713309

Stage one - Registered complaints will be passed to the appropriate Corporate Manager, who will review the complaint and either respond personally or arrange for the appropriate Service Manager to respond (within 10 working days).

Stage two – A complaint will enter stage two of the process if the complainant advises that they are dissatisfied with the result of stage one. In exceptional circumstances a complaint may be escalated to stage two in the first instance. Registered complaints will be passed to the appropriate SMT member, who will review the complaint and respond personally (within 20 working days).

Stage three - If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two complaint they may wish to enter stage three of the complaints process and contact the Local Government Ombudsman directly.

Stage 1 & 2 Complaints Flowchart



Stage 3 Local Government Ombudsman Complaints Flowchart

