



Voice of the Customer Report

Quarter 3 2024/25

October 2024 – December 2024

Report Contents

Introduction	3
Customer Feedback and Demand Overview	4
Operational & Commercial Services	6
Planning, Regeneration & Communities	10
Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services	13
Corporate Services	17
Chief Executive	19
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints	20
Customer Satisfaction	21
Customer Demand	22
Appendix 1 – Customer Feedback by Service	25

Introduction

This Voice of the Customer report covers the quarter 3 period from October 2024 to December 2024.

It contains information on all customer feedback received including compliments, comments, and complaints, broken down by director service area. Information on upheld complaints is included, along with learning and improvement actions that have been identified through customer feedback received, customer satisfaction survey responses and complaint investigations that have taken place.

There is a section that covers complaints that have been referred to, investigated and decided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The report also includes information on customer satisfaction, analysing satisfaction levels and the responses that have been received for customer satisfaction surveys sent out to recent users of the main customer facing services.

There is a section at the end of the report that covers customer demand data across various contact channels including telephone calls received by the customer contact centre, face to face contact, website usage, service requests received, and the number of payments received.

In comparison to the previous quarter 3 period:

- Customer demand has increased in all areas, including the number of visitors to the Guildhall to access support in person, telephone calls and service requests received.
- The volume of calls received by the contact centre and the number of eforms received has increased.
- There was an increase in the number of automated customer payments.
- Positive customer feedback received has increased in quarter 3.
- The number of complaints received decreased by 4, there was a small decrease in the number of comments received and a smaller percentage of complaints were upheld.
- Customer satisfaction increased by 9%.
- A new customer contact centre was implemented on the 12th November 2024, more information on this is included later in this report.

For more information or to discuss this report further please contact:

Natalie Kostiuk – Customer Experience Manager

Natalie.kostiuk@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Please send any customer feedback received to – experience@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Customer Feedback and Demand Overview

Quarter 3 (October to December)	2024/25	2023/24	Difference
Compliments	433	317	up 116
Comments	17	19	down 2
Complaints	30	34	down 4
Upheld Complaints	6 (20%)	8 (24%)	down 2 (4%)
Average complaint response time	7.6 days	8.5 days	down 0.9 days
Customer Satisfaction	91%	82%	up 9%
Telephone Calls (Contact Centre)	16,354	14,918	up 1,436
Visitors to the Guildhall	10,997	9,568	up 1,429

In [Appendix 1](#) you can find a table that shows a breakdown of customer feedback received by each individual service (Compliments, Comments and Complaints).

Compliments

The number of compliments received has increased by 116 when compared to the previous year. The main customer facing services received the highest number of compliments as they deal with a larger number of customers daily (Waste Services, Street Cleansing, Planning and Development, Trees and Conservation, Revenues (Council Tax), Trinity Arts Centre, Benefits, Home Choices and Customer Services).

More detail on compliments received by each service is included later in this report.

Complaints

The number of complaints received has decreased by 4 in comparison to the previous year. Waste services received the highest number of complaints, which is to be expected given they serve over 45,600 properties.

More detail on complaints received by each service is included later in this report.

Average response time for complaints

In quarter 3, the average complaint response time decreased by 0.9 days compared to the previous year from 8.5 days to 7.6 days. The target for response is 14 calendar days, this was reduced from 21 calendar days from the 1st April 2024, in line with new Progress and Delivery measures agreed by members.

There were 2 complaints in quarter 3 that took over 14 calendar days to respond to. These were in relation to Food Health and Safety and Waste Services; the Food Health and Safety response was delayed due to the amount of information that needed to be examined as several departments had been involved. The Waste Services complaint took longer than usual to resolve, this complaint required a thorough investigation and resulted in a compensation payment that had to be processed via finance.

Upheld complaints

Fault was identified in 6 of the 30 complaints that were investigated so 6 complaints were upheld during quarter 3, this is a decrease compared to the previous year when 8 complaints were upheld.

Where fault has occurred the issues have been examined to identify if any learning can take place or if any service improvements are required.

More detail on learning and improvement actions for individual services is included later in this report.

Comments

The number of comments received has decreased by 2 compared to the previous year.

Waste Services received the highest number of comments, these were in relation to various matters but mainly changes to sack recycling collections in the Southwest Ward of Gainsborough.

More detail on comments received by each service is included later in this report.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has increased by 9% compared to the previous year from 82% to 91%. Satisfaction has steadily increased since the new CRM system has been used for waste service and street cleansing requests.

More information on customer satisfaction is included later in this report.

Learning and Improvements

Learning and improvements that have been identified and implemented during quarter 3 are detailed in the sections below.

Customer Demand

There has been an increase in customer demand across all areas during quarter 3 with more service requests received and an increase in demand for face to face services compared to the previous year. Visitor numbers to the Guildhall have increased dramatically in 2024/25, and although most of the customers that attend in person are accessing services provided by our tenants, there is still an initial interaction with the WLDC Customer Services team.

The number of eforms received has increased with online forms and telephone remaining the preferred methods of contact for 85% of customers.

There has been an increase in the number of calls received by the contact centre (Customer Services, Revenues (Council Tax) and Benefits calls along with a decrease in the number of abandoned calls.

The number of payments received has increased but there has been a small decrease in the number of self-service payments compared to last year.

More information can be found in the [Customer Demand](#) section of this report.

Operational & Commercial Services

	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Upheld Complaints
Arts and Leisure	9	0	0	
Building Control	2	0	0	
Cemetery	0	0	0	
Crematorium	3	0	0	
Customer Experience	8	0	0	
Customer Services	65	0	0	
Street Cleansing	35	0	1	1 upheld
Waste Services	180	9	13	5 upheld
Totals	302	9	14	6 upheld

Compliments

Waste Services, Street Cleansing and Customer Services received a high number of compliments in quarter 3 which is to be expected as they are some of the main customer facing services.

Customers have complimented Waste Services on the service provided, several messages of praise have been received from customers that experienced issues over the Christmas period, they were thankful that their problems were resolved, with missed bins being returned for quickly. A lovely message of thanks has been received from a customer for the crews that wave to their young grandson and say hi when they pass their house, commenting on how it's a highlight of their week. Several messages have been received praising the bulky waste collection service, commenting on how useful it is and how efficiently and quietly crews carry out the collections. A lot of positive feedback was also received via customer satisfaction surveys.

Customers have complimented Customer Services for the excellent service provided over the telephone, via email and face to face in the Council's reception. Customers have highlighted how helpful, friendly and knowledgeable officers have been when dealing with their enquiries, often in distressing times which has put their minds at ease. Thanks has been received from other teams in the Council for assistance provided by the Customer Services team including assisting with call taking and helping out others when needed. Many customers mention officers personally when they submit positive feedback, and every team member has been complimented on the service they provide. A lot of positive feedback was also received via customer satisfaction surveys.

Compliments for Street Cleansing include messages of thanks for the quick removal of flytipping and for the provision of an efficient house clearance service. A Parish Council has praised the work that the Street Cleansing team do in a local village. Thanks has also been received for the provision of litter picking equipment and sacks. A lot of positive feedback was also received via customer satisfaction surveys.

The Trinity Arts Centre (TAC) received messages of thanks from various groups and customers that have used the centre, a message of thanks was received from a band that had played there and commented on how helpful and polite staff were and how good the

venue is. Praise was also received from customers who were very impressed with all staff working at TAC. Several 5 Star Google reviews have also been received from customers visiting TAC to watch shows, with a customer stating that they love the centre, praising the events on offer and the staff that work there.

The Customer Experience team received several compliments and messages of thanks for prompt and comprehensive responses sent in relation to customer feedback received and for keeping customers updated on the progress of their enquiries.

Building Control have received messages of thanks for their assistance and swift effective response.

The Crematorium has received compliments on how helpful staff have been, how excellent the service provided is and a thank you card was received thanking staff for the kindness and cooperation shown to funeral attendees.

Complaints

13 complaints were received for Waste Services, these included complaints regarding a failed bulky waste collection, the behaviour and conduct of waste operatives, assisted collections not being completed correctly, bins not being returned to boundaries, and inconsistencies in waste collections amongst other matters.

5 of these complaints were upheld, a complaint was upheld as there were inconsistencies in the way the crews were accepting and rejecting bins, crews were reminded of the policies and the importance of consistency in all waste collections.

Another complaint was upheld as a waste crew had inadvertently left waste debris behind on the road after they had completed their bin collections and did not clear it away, it was left for residents to clear and dispose of.

2 complaints were upheld that related to bins not being returned to the property boundary, one of these was an assisted collection.

Another complaint was upheld which resulted in a financial payment being made to replace a parcel that had been accidentally taken and disposed of on collection day. The card and paper recycling bin had not been presented, however, as it was a change of collection day over the Christmas period and the bin was not kept far away from the normal presentation point the crews were being helpful and they took it and emptied it, assuming that the resident had not realised the day had changed. This resulted in a complaint with evidence to show that a parcel had been left in the bin by a delivery company. Because the bin had not been presented, and there was evidence to show that the bin is normally presented away from where the crew took it from that day a payment was made to replace the parcel that was taken.

A complaint received for Street Cleansing was upheld, this complaint was in relation to a flytipping report, the customer reported it twice and, on both occasions, they received a confirmation email to advise them that it had been removed. It had not been removed and was still there when the customer checked again. An error had been made by the crew, they had marked the report as completed when they should have marked it as needing further attention due to it being in a ditch and unsafe to retrieve. The customer received an apology and an explanation, and the Street Cleansing Manager arranged for the flytipping to be removed in a way that was safe to do so.

Comments

9 comments were received for Waste Services, the majority of these were in relation to recent changes made in the South West Ward of Gainsborough to waste collections, with paper and card no longer being collected separately for recycling, this was because the recycling company could not accept waste in plastic sacks. Customers were disappointed with the change as it was reducing recycling and enquired why they could not have bins in areas where they have sack collections.

Comments were also received about bins not being returned to the property boundary after collection and garden waste collection days not showing on an online bin collection calendar.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction surveys were sent to Waste Services and Street Cleansing customers. 367 responses were received for these services.

17 of the responses were in relation to the Big Bin Clear Out service, all 17 customers were satisfied with their experience. Comments have been received regarding the ease of booking, prompt delivery and collection of the bins, the level of communication received, how friendly and helpful the attending crews have been along with how useful and helpful the service is.

38 of the comments submitted with completed surveys referred to the customers interaction with the Customer Services team when they were making a request for a waste or street cleansing service. Customers have rated the service received as 5 stars and have commented on how helpful, knowledgeable, friendly and professional officers have been. Customers have shown appreciation for being listened to and understood and for how officers have advised them on and led them through making their request for a service.

Low scores have been received for Waste Services with comments regarding the length of time services have taken to be delivered, mess left behind by waste crews after they have attended a property, repeated missed bins and failed bulky collections.

High scores have been received with comments regarding how promptly and efficiently services have been carried out, many of the responses relating to the bulky waste service praise how helpful the service is and how pleasant and friendly the attending crews have been. Several comments have been received regarding how good communication has been and how customers appreciate being kept informed in relation to their reports and requests.

55 surveys were completed for Street Cleansing, low scores have been received with comments relating to instances where litter or fly tipping has not been removed in a timely manner, and there are some instances where customers have stated that their requests have not been completed despite being advised that they had been. This has been discussed with the Street Cleansing Manager as it has also been highlighted through an upheld complaint which is detailed above and below in the learning and improvement section.

The majority of customers provided high satisfaction scores and submitted comments in relation to how quickly requests and reports have been actioned including flytipping removal, street cleansing requests and requests relating to full litter and dog bins. Several comments have been made regarding the level of communication received with customers appreciating how they were kept informed in relation to their reports and requests.

Where low scores have been provided the customer interaction has been examined to establish if any follow up action is required, and feedback has been provided to the team in question.

Learning and Improvements

Street Cleansing and CRM (flytipping requests)

A complaint was received regarding flytipping that had not been removed despite the customer putting in 2 requests and receiving an email to say that it had been cleared twice but it was still there. This was discussed with the Street Cleansing Manager, the crew had marked CRM incorrectly, they should have marked it as having an issue rather than being completed, they could not get it because it was in a deep ditch and was not safe to do so.

When looking at CRM the choices for crews are limited, they can either choose completed or issue, if they choose issue, it gives some options but not enough, its either not located, located but on private land and some other options - Simon Smoothey is speaking to IT regarding getting some more options added to CRM for reasons why there are issues with the collection of fly tips and has spoken to the crews about ensuring CRM records are updated accurately.

Bulky collection reminders

A complaint was received regarding a failed bulky collection that was not completed as the gate was locked, the complaint was not upheld but improvements were identified. When examining the reminders that are sent the day before the bulky collection is due to take place, they did not explain again that the items need to be outside and accessible, not behind a locked gate, door or covered up etc.

Changes were made to the bulky reminder emails that get sent out to explain that the items need to be outside and accessible, not behind a locked gate, door or covered up etc.

LGSCO Complaints

There were no complaints referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for these service areas in quarter 3.

Planning, Regeneration & Communities

Sally Grindrod-Smith

	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Upheld Complaints
Communities	6	0	0	
Disabled Facilities Grants	2	0	1	
Energy	0	0	0	
Growth and Regeneration	2	0	0	
Home Choices	2	0	1	
Planning and Development, Trees and Conservation	74	0	2	
Tourism	0	0	0	
Wellbeing and Health	0	0	0	
Totals	86	0	4	

Compliments

Planning and Development, Trees and Conservation received a high number of compliments in quarter 3, officers have been thanked for their assistance and advice in relation to planning applications and enquiries. Applicants and agents have appreciated quick positive responses and decisions and have praised the knowledge levels of officers. Several officers have been named personally in compliments that have been received and messages of thanks have been received from other teams across the Council for cross service working and information sharing which in turn improves the overall customer experience.

The Tree Officer has received several compliments thanking them for their helpful advice, clarification, reassurance and prompt detailed responses.

The Communities team have received messages of thanks for various different aspects of the service they provide. The safeguarding co-ordinator has been praised for refresher training they delivered to internal staff and external partners. The team have been thanked for advice and grant funding provided to various residents and community groups. Thanks has also been received from a local school for a careers fair and business breakfast that officers facilitated, they appreciate the positive impact these events have on their students.

The DFG service has received messages of thanks from customers who have had works carried out in their homes, complimenting the improvements that have been made to their lives and praising the contractors that carried out the work.

The Growth and Regeneration team have received messages of praise for assisting local businesses, by providing advice and guidance on how they can grow and move their businesses forward.

Home Choices have received messages of thanks for their support and assistance in finding new homes for customers in need, they have helped customers have positive hope for the future.

Complaints

2 complaints were received for Planning and Development, Trees and Conservation, neither of them was upheld.

A complaint was received regarding the new planning portal, the customer had experienced problems when trying to search for applications online and questioned the need for registering an online account. The technical team could not replicate the issues that were being experienced so the complaint was not upheld, the customer was provided with advice and guidance on how to use the new portal and they were advised that an online account was only needed for making comments on a planning application.

Another complaint was received that was in relation to a retrospective planning application, the customer claimed that the neighbour's extension encroached onto their property and that it should not have been given permission. The complaint was not upheld as it related to matters of land ownership and damage to the property which are civil matters that the Council are not able to assist with.

1 complaint was received for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) service, this was in relation to the length of time taken for agreed adaptations to be completed. It was found that the delays in the process had been due to the property being a listed building and they could not have been avoided. Undertaking adaptations is a lengthy process, the addition of the complexity of the property being a listed building meant that the works took much longer than they would do normally as planning permission was needed to be sought at various points throughout the process. The complaint was not upheld.

1 complaint was received for Home Choices, this was in relation to how long it had taken to find a suitable property. The customer had experienced delays in the process because a property advertised with a wetroom did not state that the wetroom was on the first floor. The property ended up not being suitable and this caused a delay. The advertisement was not published by WLDC, so the complaint was not upheld. Officers liaised with the agency that published the advert advising them that they need to ensure that more specific detail is included on advertisements for available properties.

Comments

No comments were received for these services in quarter 3.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys were sent to Planning and Development, Trees and Conservation customers. 24 responses were received in total.

There were 5 low scores, all of these were submitted with comments regarding long timescales and the speed of service. These customers felt that the service could have been provided more quickly and efficiently.

High scores have been received with comments praising how quickly decisions have been reached, and often well within regulated timeframes. Several comments have been received that mention how good the level of communication has been, and officers have been praised for their professionalism, co-operation, courtesy and efficiency.

Where low scores have been provided the customer interaction has been examined to establish if any follow up action is required, and feedback has been provided to the team in question.

Learning and Improvements

No learning or improvement actions were identified in quarter 3 for these service areas.

LGSCO Complaints

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decided not to investigate a complaint recently referred to them in relation to Planning and Development.

The complaint was regarding a historical planning application decision, a formal complaint was responded to in May 2023, feedback was provided to the LGSCO that it appeared this complaint had been referred to them out of time.

The LGSCO decided not to investigate this complaint about the way the Council decided to approve a planning application because the complaint did not meet the tests in their Assessment Code on how they decide which complaints to investigate. They deemed the complaint as being late and there were no good reasons to exercise their discretion to investigate it.

Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services

Nova Roberts

	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Upheld Complaints
Benefits	2	0	0	
Community Safety	8	0	0	
Environmental Protection	3	0	2	
Food, Health and Safety	2	0	1	
Housing Enforcement	2	0	0	
Licensing	14	0	2	
Local Land Charges	1	0	0	
Planning Enforcement	4	0	2	
Public Health Funerals	0	0	0	
Revenues (Council tax)	8	4	1	
System Development	0	0	0	
Totals	44	4	8	

Compliments

Licensing received thanks for providing a helpful service and messages have been received from customers that have dealt with the team for many years, praising the consistent service and advice provided by officers.

Customers have thanked and complimented the Revenues (Council Tax) team for their help and assistance, often in difficult times, and for making their lives a bit easier. The team have been praised for their understanding, kindness and patience when dealing with customers and for how quickly their requests have been processed.

Community Safety received several compliments via 5 star customer satisfaction survey responses, customers have praised the quick and efficient service received and how friendly officers have been when dealing with them. Thanks was received for how an abandoned vehicle was dealt with, the customer appreciated officers understanding, clear explanation of the process and for carrying out the actions required to resolve the problem.

The Planning Enforcement team received compliments via 5 star customer satisfaction survey responses, customers commented on excellent communication and how they were kept informed throughout the process.

Environmental Protection have received praise for their assistance, advice and interventions. Customers have appreciated the attention paid to their concerns and that officers have contacted them to discuss their concerns further.

The Benefits team received a letter of thanks from the Head of DWP Performance Development Team (which are very rare) who recognised their good performance. The letter thanked the team and gave recognition for their excellent performance in Housing Benefit (HB) processing, VEP (verifying earnings & pensions), HB Award Accuracy initiative and overpayment recovery.

The Food Health and Safety team received compliments regarding their communication, helpfulness, knowledge and the friendly service provided.

The Housing Enforcement team received a message of thanks for their prompt reply and a customer praised an officer for the advice and assistance they had provided in relation to a vermin infestation issue.

Local Land Charges received a message of thanks for an officer's prompt reply.

Complaints

2 complaints were received for Planning Enforcement, they were not upheld.

A complaint was received regarding a decision not to consider enforcement action in relation to a boundary wall, that was too high, that had been erected several years ago. Since it was brought to the Council's attention planning applications had been submitted to regularise the breach, so enforcement action was not considered. The most recent case examination concluded that it was not expedient to take formal action in relation to the height of the wall and on further consideration it appeared that the wall was now immune from enforcement action as a period of 4 years had now lapsed since it was first constructed. There was also the fact that the height of the wall at 1.8m could have been deemed to be Permitted Development as this allows for walls up to 2 metres in height as long as it was not next to a public highway/footpath, did not form a boundary with a listed building, and where Permitted Development rights had not been removed. The complaint was not upheld but a learning opportunity arose from the complaint investigation (see Learning and Improvements below).

A complaint was received regarding a decision not to consider enforcement action in relation to a change of use situation where a previous private residence was now being used as a holiday let. The planning application for the change of use had been refused but the applicants were now appealing to the Planning Inspectorate. As the appeal could be successful in overturning the Council's decision to refuse permission, leading to permission for the change potentially being granted by the Planning Inspectorate it was decided that it would not be an efficient use of resources to re-visit the matter until the appeal decision is known. The complaint was not upheld.

2 complaints were received for Environmental Protection, they were not upheld.

A complaint was received from a customer who had received a letter advising them that a complaint had been received regarding excessive dog barking at their property. The customer was not happy with the letter received. The complaint was not upheld as it is correct process to inform a perpetrator that a complaint has been received against them, this is done in all cases in order to allow the perpetrator to make contact to discuss the complaint if they wish and also give them the opportunity to minimise whatever has led to the complaint before further action is considered.

A complaint was received regarding a decision made to close a customer's case without further investigation. The case was in relation to a noise complaint but when the evidence was examined there was no evidence to suggest that there was an issue of noise constituting a statutory nuisance that would warrant further action being taken. The decision was made in line with Council procedures, so the complaint was not upheld.

2 complaints were received for Licensing, they were not upheld.

Both of these complaints were in relation to the same visit that officers had made to a resident to discuss issues that were occurring in their residential area. The customer was dissatisfied with the conversations that had taken place and the way officers conducted themselves. The investigation found no fault in the officer's actions or conduct, and the complaints were not upheld.

1 complaint was received for Food Health and Safety. It was in relation to the number of visits made to a business recently, the business owner claimed that they were being harassed by the Council. The investigation found that there had been several visits made, but these had all been carried out following reports received that needed further investigation. The complaint was not upheld as all actions and visits had been carried out in line with Council process.

1 complaint was received for Revenues (Council Tax), it was in relation to bailiff action that was taking place due to nonpayment of council tax. The customer complained that they had not been made aware that the debt had reached the bailiff stage. The investigation found that court and reminder letters had been posted to the last known address as per the Councils process, so the complaint was not upheld.

Comments

4 comments were received for Revenues (Council Tax), these were in relation to issues experienced by customers when trying to make a payment and complete forms online. A comment was received regarding problems experienced when attempting to call the service for assistance.

A comment was also received regarding exemptions for empty homes council tax, the customer was frustrated as they could not have the 2 months empty homes exemption on a property that they had recently purchased to rent out, this was because the property had already benefitted from this (the 2 months exemption applies to the property not the owner).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys were sent to Licensing, Planning Enforcement, Housing Enforcement, Community Safety, Environmental Protection and Food Health and Safety customers. 47 responses were received for these services. The majority of the responses received for these services rated the service received as either excellent or good.

Licensing received only 5 star ratings with comments regarding how easy it was to access the service, how promptly responses were received and how professional and helpful staff have been.

The majority of survey responses received for Planning Enforcement were 4 and 5 star ratings with comments submitted regarding how good the communication was, how quickly queries and complaints were dealt with and how well customers were kept informed.

The majority of survey responses received for Housing Enforcement were 4 and 5 star ratings with comments submitted regarding how helpful the case officer was and how promptly a response was received.

The majority of survey responses received for Community Safety were 5 star ratings with comments submitted regarding how quickly concerns were responded to and how friendly and keen to help the case officer was.

The Food Health and Safety team received two 5 star ratings, comments were received in relation to staff communication, knowledge of subject, positivity and helpfulness.

Where low scores have been provided the customer interaction has been examined to establish if any follow up action is required, and feedback has been provided to the team in question.

Learning and Improvements

Licensing - and all other officer visits to resident properties
<p>A complaint was received regarding how an officer conducted themselves during a meeting with a resident. No fault was identified in terms of the complaint received however, to protect officers and to keep record/evidence of visits or meetings with residents etc it is recommended that body cams are used by officers going forward where necessary.</p> <p>Recommendation to be considered - Use bodycams that record constantly when visits or meetings are taking place with residents, this will help with evidence records and will protect our officers.</p>
Planning Enforcement
<p>A complaint received regarding lack of action found that opinion changed over time, and we ultimately decided not to take action as it was not expedient. This should have been the decision from the outset. The complaint was not upheld but a learning opportunity arose from the complaint investigation.</p> <p>It was recognised that the Council's position on this matter altered during this case, and the officers involved were advised that there needs to be additional thought given to avoid conflicting situations such as this occurring in the future. Whilst the decision whether or not to take enforcement action remains discretionary and the end result may well have been the same, there is an opportunity to ensure that decisions relating to expediency are taken at a much earlier stage in the process, and for these to be fully considered and communicated at the appropriate point in time.</p>

LGSCO Complaints

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decided not to investigate a complaint referred to them in relation to Housing Benefits. The customer had recently moved into the WLDC area and was dissatisfied with the amount of Housing Benefit they were able to claim.

The LGSCO decided not to investigate this complaint because there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council. There was nothing to suggest fault in the way the Council responded to the complainant and no indication of fault in the amount of Housing Benefit it awarded. As such there was no reason to start an investigation. Further, they cannot tell the Council to increase the Housing Benefit, and the Council has already offered additional support.

Corporate Services

Emma Foy

	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Upheld Complaints
Communications Team	0	0	0	
Electoral Services	0	0	0	
Financial Creditors and Debtors	1	0	0	
HR	0	0	0	
Member and Support Services	0	0	0	
PA and FOI Team	0	0	0	
Property Services	0	0	1	
Totals	1	0	1	

Compliments

The finance team received a compliment and message of thanks for their work in ensuring that a contractor was paid on time.

Complaints

1 complaint was received for Property Services, this was in relation to a customer who put money into the car parking machine but did not receive a printed ticket. When they first enquired about getting their money back, they experienced difficulties, the issue was then resolved through liaising with the Property and Assets Team Manager. The complaint was not upheld.

Comments

No comments were received for these services in quarter 3.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction surveys are not used for these services currently as they are mainly internal customer facing services.

Learning and Improvements

Car Parking - fines issued when ticket has been paid for

A complaint was received where a customer had received a parking ticket when their paid for ticket had blown out of view from the windscreen. The customer had appealed but still had to pay the £25 fine - this should have been cancelled on appeal when evidence of a paid ticket was provided. This complaint was classed as out of scope as a partner agency administers parking fine appeals on our behalf.

When discussed with the parking officer it was found that this should not have happened, if an appeal is made and a paid ticket is evidenced then the fine should be cancelled. The parking officer has fed this back to the partner that administers parking fines on our behalf and the customer has been refunded the £25 paid.

LGSCO Complaints

A complaint was referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) that related to car parking, the complainant had received and paid a fine but complained about the information available on display in WLDC car parks.

The LGSCO decided not to investigate the complaint about the operation of a parking payment machine and the information provided by the Council because the complainant could have appealed to the tribunal and because there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.

Chief Executive

Ian Knowles

	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Upheld Complaints
Internal Confidential Issues	0	0	0	
Management Team	0	0	0	
WLDC Council in General	0	0	0	
Totals	0	0	0	

Compliments

No compliments were received for these services in quarter 3.

Complaints

No complaints were received during quarter 3 for these service areas.

Comments

No comments were received in quarter 3 for these services.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction surveys are not used for these services currently as they are not customer facing services.

Learning and Improvements

No learning or improvement actions were identified in quarter 3 for these service areas.

LGSCO Complaints

There were no complaints referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for these service areas in quarter 3.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints

Complaints referred to the LGSCO during Qu3	2
Complaints investigated by the LGSCO during Qu3	0
Complaints not investigated by the LGSCO during Qu3	3
Complaints decided by the LGSCO during Qu3	0

During quarter 3, 2 new complaints were referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The 2 complaints were in relation to Benefits and Car Parking. The LGSCO decided, after initial enquiries were made with us, not to investigate the 2 complaints referred to them.

Another complaint, in relation to Planning and Development that was in the initial enquiry stages during the previous quarter was not investigated further by the LGSCO.

More detailed information regarding these complaints is included within the sections above.

Customer Satisfaction

Quarter 3	Surveys Sent	Responses received	Satisfaction Score
October	916	174	89%
November	816	139	94%
December	716	125	90%
Totals	2448	438	91%

There has been an increase in customer satisfaction compared to the previous quarter 3 period, satisfaction has increased by 9% from 82% to 91%.

More detail on comments received through customer satisfaction surveys for each service is included in the sections above.

During quarter 3 satisfaction surveys were sent to customers that had received a service from these departments: Waste Services, Street Cleansing, Licensing, Environmental Protection, Planning Enforcement and Planning and Development, Food Health and Safety, Housing Enforcement and Community Safety.

The 438 responses received in quarter 3 were made up of responses from these services:

Service Area	Responses
Anti-Social Behaviour	7
Food Health and Safety	2
Housing Enforcement	3
Licensing	12
Planning and Development	24
Planning Enforcement	7
Public Protection	16
Street Cleansing	55
Waste Services	312







The table below shows the number of 1 to 5 star ratings that were received. 4 and 5 star ratings are used to calculate the overall satisfaction score %.

Customers are asked to rate the service received from 1 Star (Poor) to 5 Stars (Excellent):

Number of 1 star ratings	21
Number of 2 star ratings	9
Number of 3 star ratings	11
Number of 4 star ratings	47
Number of 5 star ratings	350

If a customer rates the service received as 1-3 stars, they are asked how their experience could have been improved, if a customer rates the service received as 4-5 stars, they are asked what we did well. Where low scores have been provided the customer interaction has been examined to establish if any follow up action is required, and feedback has been provided to the team in question.

Customer Demand

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,229 service requests were received in total • This is an increase of over 300 compared to last year • Online forms and telephone were the preferred methods of contact for 85% of customers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,997 customers attended the Guildhall for a face to face service • 2,121 of these were WLDC customers, 8,876 were not, but WLDC officers are still involved in the initial interaction with all guildhall visitors • This is an increase overall of over 1,000 customers compared to last year • The increase has occurred from DWP seeing more customers on a face to face appointment basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements were made to the contact centre during quarter 3, changes were implemented on 12th November 2024 • 16,354 telephone calls were received by the contact centre which includes customer services, revenues (council tax) and benefits • 92% of them were answered, 8% were abandoned • This is an increase of 1,436 calls compared to last year when 14,918 calls were received by the contact centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way we monitor visitors to the WLDC website has altered since the start of the 2024/25 period. • This report will include these numbers again for 2025/26 when we have assurance that the data is accurate. • The main pages visited by customers in quarter 3 were Planning and Development, Waste, Revenues (Council Tax, Council News and how to contact the Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,949 Eforms were submitted in total • This is an increase of 300 compared to last year • 73% were completed by the customer themselves online • The main services requested via Eforms were Waste, Revenues (Council Tax) and Customer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120,505 payments were taken in total • This is an increase of 2,500 compared to last year • After direct debits have been deducted it is calculated that 61% of the payments were made using self-service, 10% were processed by staff and 29% were automated payments • Self-service payments have decrease slightly compared to last year

Improvements being made to the ways customers can contact the Council for assistance



New customer contact centre implementation

In March 2024, the Council began its journey in sourcing a new digital Contact Centre solution. The focus during this procurement exercise was on acquiring a system that would seek to improve the choice of access and experience of both our front-line staff receiving customer contacts, and of course, our customers.

In August 2024, following a thorough procurement exercise West Lindsey District Council was pleased to announce a contract had been successfully awarded, and work commenced to design, develop, configure, and implement the new digital cloud-based system.

As of 9am on Tuesday 12th November 2024 customers contacting us on our main telephone number, benefits and revenues, as well as Trinity Arts Centre telephone numbers, experienced the new system. There are a variety of improvements including a voice response system seeking to understand the intent of the customer when contacting us.

The way in which the system interprets customer intent is important to continuous improvement efforts.

The new system allows better reporting and more informative reporting that will enable us to easily identify ways the service can be improved.

Phase 1 has focussed on telephone contact, Phase 2 is due to commence in quarter 4, this will focus on the other ways that customers make contact with us.

Reporting information from the new system will be included in Voice of the Customer reports from April 2025 onwards, when more detailed information around customer contact and demand is available.

During quarter 3 from October 2024 to December 2024 the customer services team handled 8,923 incoming calls via the Council's main contact centre which the telephone number 01427 676676 routes to. The table below shows how many of these calls related to each WLDC service or external agency:

WLDC Service or External Agency Required	Number of calls received	% of all calls received
Revenues (Council Tax)	2595	29.08%
Operational Services (Waste)	1888	21.16%
Home Choices	982	11.01%
Planning	613	6.87%
Customer Services	452	5.07%
Trinity Arts Centre and Leisure	368	4.12%
Building Control	276	3.09%
LCC	263	2.95%
Benefits	217	2.43%
Licensing	204	2.29%
Housing and Enforcement	177	1.98%
Environmental Protection	176	1.97%
Assets and Property	153	1.71%
External	90	1.01%
Communities	77	0.86%
Energy Advice	51	Less than 1%
Homes, Health & Wellbeing	42	Less than 1%
Anti-Social Behaviour	38	Less than 1%
Food, Health and Safety	37	Less than 1%
Electoral Registration	31	Less than 1%
ICT	31	Less than 1%
CAB	24	Less than 1%
Member and Support Services	19	Less than 1%
JCP	18	Less than 1%
CEX	13	Less than 1%
Land Charges	13	Less than 1%
Projects and Growth	13	Less than 1%
Human Resources	12	Less than 1%
Town Council	12	Less than 1%
Communications	10	Less than 1%
System Development	10	Less than 1%
Finance	9	Less than 1%
Managed Estates	3	Less than 1%
VCS	3	Less than 1%
Lea Fields Crematorium	1	Less than 1%
Procurement	1	Less than 1%
RAF Scampton	1	Less than 1%
Total	8923	

Appendix 1 – Customer Feedback by Service

Quarter 3 2024/25	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Upheld Complaints
Arts and Leisure	9	0	0	
Benefits	2	0	0	
Building Control	2	0	0	
Cemetery	0	0	0	
Communications Team	0	0	0	
Communities	6	0	0	
Community Safety	8	0	0	
Crematorium	3	0	0	
Customer Experience	8	0	0	
Customer Services	65	0	0	
Disabled Facilities Grants	2	0	1	
Electoral Services	0	0	0	
Energy	0	0	0	
Environmental Protection	3	0	2	
Financial Creditors and Debtors	1	0	0	
Food, Health and Safety	2	0	1	
Growth and Regeneration	2	0	0	
Home Choices	2	0	1	
Housing Enforcement	2	0	0	
HR	0	0	0	
Internal Confidential Issues	0	0	0	
Licensing	14	0	2	
Local Land Charges	1	0	0	
Management Team	0	0	0	
Member and Support Services	0	0	0	
PA and FOI Team	0	0	0	
Planning and Development, Trees and Conservation	74	0	2	
Planning Enforcement	4	0	2	
Property Services	0	0	1	
Public Health Funerals	0	0	0	
Revenues (Council tax)	8	4	1	
Street Cleansing	35	0	1	1 upheld
System Development	0	0	0	
Tourism	0	0	0	
Waste Services	180	9	13	5 upheld
Wellbeing and Health	0	0	0	
WLDC Council in General	0	0	0	
Out of Scope	0	4	3	
Totals	433	17	30	6 upheld