



## **Oversight and Governance**

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Published 24 September 2019

## **PERFORMANCE, FINANCE AND CUSTOMER FOCUS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 2 October 2019  
2.00 pm  
Warspite Room, Council House

### **Members:**

Councillor Kelly, Chair

Councillor Winter, Vice Chair

Councillors Corvid, Derrick, Hendy, Mrs Johnson, Vincent, Ms Watkin and Wigen.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

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### **Tracey Lee**

Chief Executive

## **Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **1. Apologies**

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Councillors.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

### **3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2019.

### **4. Chair's Urgent Business**

To receive reports on business which in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

### **5. Mapping of Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committees (Pages 9 - 10)**

### **6. Street Services (To Follow)**

### **7. Climate Emergency/Carbon Reduction Plan (internal perspective) (Verbal Report)**

### **8. Revenue Monitoring - Month Five (Pages 11 - 30)**

### **9. Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2018/19 (Pages 31 - 100)**

### **10. Work Programme (Pages 101 - 104)**

### **11. Tracking Decisions (Pages 105 - 106)**

## **Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Wednesday 24 July 2019**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Kelly, in the Chair.

Councillor Winter, Vice Chair.

Councillors Derrick, Mrs Johnson, Murphy, Singh, Vincent, Ms Watkin and Wigen.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Hendy.

Also in attendance: Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance), Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development), Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety), Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services), Peter Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager), Siân Millard (Oversight and Governance Manager), Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor) and Amelia Boulter (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 6.19 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

61. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in accordance with the code of conduct.

62. **Minutes**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019. The Committee highlighted that the minutes did not reflect the full debate around the year end position agenda item.

63. **Chair's Urgent Business**

The Chair on behalf of the Committee wished Jamie Sheldon a speedy recovery.

64. **Mapping of Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committees**

The Mapping of the Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committees would be a standing item on the agenda. For information and to be used as a reference against the Committee's terms of reference.

65. **Revenue Monitor 2019/20 - Month 2**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) and Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance) were present for this item and referred to the report in the agenda.

Councillor Lowry highlighted that officers were working hard to address the current overspend of £3.958m against a revenue budget of £185m. During this period also received a reduction in Government funding and were required to make savings of £11m. There continued to be pressures within the Children's Services and were lobbying Government as were a number of other local authorities on the increase of children in care. They were working towards having a sustainable council over the next 3 years.

The Chair reported that at the last meeting had agreed that this Committee would provide more challenge around the budget and would be presented with more detail on the areas of spending pressures and revenue generation. This would enable this Committee to provide suggestions and improvements so that we could add real value.

Councillor Lowry responded that he recalled an action from the meeting was for this Committee to receive additional budget savings plan which he had agreed to be forwarded to the Committee. This clearly has not been actioned but was happy for this to be provided. It was suggested that if the Committee has a particular line of enquiry to explore and would happy to provide that information.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- a. the pressures within Children's Services was a national problem and finances would become unquestionable which would result in cuts to public services to address this. The Leader and Chief Executive recently met with the Minister regarding the scale of the problems in Plymouth;
- b. following the meeting with the Minister they were asked to help create appropriate scheme similar to the BELWIN Scheme. BELWIN was an insurance type scheme to help local authorities primarily hit with a natural disaster that couldn't predict and Government would step in and assist financially. Officers have been tasked to look at a similar scheme with regard to the excessive costs in relation to the care packages outside of the norm then we could go to the Government with the evidence for extra financial support;
- c. over the last month extensive amount of work undertaken around the budget and have looked at every service on how we can be more efficient and hoped that over the next two weeks would have a definitive list that would improve the current position, drive out costs and maintain reserves and balances to an adequate and sustainable level;

- d. we share children's functions with Torbay and at the last Cabinet meeting, Councillor Laing (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) reported on the reconfiguration on Children's Services to drive out costs at both Plymouth and Torbay;
- e. it was further reported that information requested should be made available to Councillors, however, it would be down to the Councillor requesting the information to chase this with the relevant Cabinet Member;
- f. following the meeting with the Ministers that there was a sense that Government recognised that there were issues around the growing pressures around children in care but were unsure on how to solve it. It was further reported that there would be a comprehensive spending review before the summer and whether children services would get resolved as part of this review;
- g. it was unclear what grants would be received from Government and as a result were make a number of assumptions when looking at the budget for next year;
- h. there were unexpected costs for the clean-up of Mount Batten Beach., however, we do have contingencies for unexpected events but ultimately this would put pressure if something else happened;
- i. they have to balance the books and would like to give assurances that they do not go below the working balance of 5% but cannot promise what was beyond their control. They were looking to replace the deficit over the next three years. They wanted to assure the Committee that they were working hard to balance the books.

The Committee noted the Revenue Monitoring 2019/20 – Month 2 position and agreed that the Committee receive at the next meeting a more detailed explanation on the revenue streams and biggest areas of concerns for the Committee to further explore.

66. **Update on the Corporate Procurement Services**

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development) and Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance) were present for this item and referred to the report in the agenda.

Councillor Penberthy highlighted the importance of community wealth building and how we use strategic procurement to add to the growth agenda for Plymouth. Andrew Hardingham added that they were providing a framework within the Council to provide support around contract management. The Procurement Team were also looking at how to make it easier for local companies to bid for work at

the Council to increase the postcode spend thus adding to the growth agenda. They were also looking to pull together a Public Procurement Partnership to have a more joined up approach to shared procurement and commercial policies.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- a. the Procurement Team were focussing on reviewing existing contracts and refining processes to find further savings. It was reported that the spending figures within the Plymouth postcode for May 2019 was at 57.9% which was in excess of the target which was 55% however they noted that they were below the target for the year;
- b. despite the team achieving the target they have been running at a sub-optimal level. Positions have been offered for the Category Leads and Category Manager but the recruitment of the Head of Procurement had been challenging;
- c. with regard to moving to a shared service approach, it was stated that they were still in negotiations with partners and therefore could not discuss this matter further;
- d. OJEC would still apply if we left the European Union because we need to continue to deliver on international commitments on how we spend;
- e. a separate team sat within Economic Development looks at commercial leases and opportunities and are the experts in this area;
- f. they would be happy to undertake full member briefings but would be difficult to undertake on an on-going basis, however, they were looking to produce an annual report to share the key indicators and outcomes;
- g. they were looking to have a more proactive approach to procurement by building and shaping the market in the local area over the next 1 to 2 years;
- i. a great deal of work had been undertaken by the team whilst trying to recruit, it was reiterated to the Committee that the Head of Procurement position they were finding challenging to fill.

The Committee notes –

- I. the current activity and status around the Procurement Service, endorsing the proposed plans for the service is the right way forward for the Council, whilst acknowledging the challenges in advancing the changes; and

2. To be informed when the Head of Procurement position is filled.

(Councillor Murphy left part-way through this item.)

67. **Customer Experience Programme Update**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety), Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services) and Peter Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager) were present for this item and referred to the report in the agenda.

Councillor Jon Taylor reported that there was a need to empower and support communities and to provide financial sustainability to respond to the challenges but was important to emphasis the scale of the task.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- a. they were looking at how savings could be made whilst still providing good public services. They were moving away from the Customer Experience Programme to the Way We Work Programme focussing on how we work with customers, businesses and visitors. They were further refining the programme and looking at where generate savings could be generated;
- b. there was a need to maintain a way for our most vulnerable groups to continue to access services other than via digital and to share with customers when they arrive at First Stop that there were other methods to deal with their queries. The was a challenge on how we make savings whilst still making services accessible to those that need them the most;
- c. by making the digital experience accessible to more and promoting this in a positive way was a principle they wanted to work on. They need to learn from the customers the issues they face accessing public services and to take corrective action and to stop it happening again;
- d. they had removed the need to sign in to resolve an issues when using a computer/tablet. They were also exploring social media and using artificial intelligence to spot a compliant or a request, looking at speakers for those customers with disabilities to be able to talk into a speaker with their request. With regard to an app, they were expensive to maintain and would rather focus on simplifying the process.

Councillor Haydon invited members of this Committee to visit the Contact Centre and highlighted that the Contact Centre took over 12,000 calls last month with 49% of called answered under 1 minute with a majority of these calls relating to missed

bins and street services. However, a small cohort of people would continue to want face to face service and there was a need to get the basics right and to better communicate and manage expectations.

The Committee noted the progress made to deliver the changes through the Customer Experience programme and for Members to take the offer to visit the Contact Centre.

(Councillor Murphy was not present for this item.)

68. **Performance discussion**

Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services), Siân Millard (Oversight and Governance Manager) and Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor) were present for this item and provided the committee with the presentation attached.



Performance and  
Accountability System

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- a. they were working on creating headspace within the team to spot trends and to have the curiosity and ability to analyse particular information where there was something of interest;
- b. the 4 levels; City and Residents, Organisation and Residents, Service and Individual link together and the flow was good between the 4 levels. It was reported that some of the indicators had been running for a long period of time and were looking at the strategic direction to set the vision and to identify how best to measure moving forward;
- c. the team were moving into the deeper analysis phase and were confident with the indicators within the Corporate Plan. They were also responsible for the business planning and this had strengthened the performance. Change was always happening and the team want to do better and go deeper with the analysis;
- d. that there were some areas that were more open to change and the organisation had moved forward in a positive more engaging direction over the last 2 years. There was a push from the Corporate Management Team to move the Council to a performance management approach;
- e. that ultimate accountability stops with the Corporate Management Team which has the oversight. They were making improvements at action planning around looking at root causes



and implementing actions to rectify any issues;

- f. that the team act as business partners to help inform decisions around service delivery.

The Committee noted the Approach to Performance Management presentation.

(Councillor Murphy was not present for this item.)

69. **Work Programme**

The Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to schedule the following items –

- Parking (to include 1000 extra parking spaces and parking permits);
- Street Services End to End Review

A further suggestion was put forward for this Committee to look at Plastic Free City 2020. It was highlighted that it wasn't within the remit of this Committee to look at this, however, Councillor Winter with his remit as Britain's Ocean City Plastics Taskforce Chair, reported that the Council over the summer would be evaluating the Council's position with regard to becoming plastic free.

(Councillor Murphy was not present for this item.)

70. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee noted the progress made against the tracking decisions and noted that a request for Monthly Finance monitoring reports were requested but not received.

(Councillor Murphy was not present for this item.)

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# MAPPING OF CORPORATE PLAN TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES



Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Current Areas of Responsibility	Map to Corporate Plan Priorities <i>(some appear across more than one committee)</i>
Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change	<p>Relevant policies in the Plymouth Plan</p> <p>Response to Central Government's Policy Making</p> <p>Capital Programme</p> <p>Strategic Procurement</p> <p>Corporate Property</p> <p>Development planning</p> <p>Strategic Highways</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>Heart of the South West Productivity Plan</p> <p>Strategic Transport policies and strategies</p> <p>Cultural Infrastructure</p> <p>Climate change and sustainability</p> <p>Reviewing impact of Brexit on the city</p> <p>Proposing measures that Government should take to provide stability for the council and partners in light of Brexit</p> <p>Exploring powers could be devolved from the EU directly to local authorities</p> <p>Hear call-ins relevant to the role of the committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An efficient transport network</li> <li>• A broad range of homes</li> <li>• Economic growth that benefits as many people as possible</li> <li>• Quality jobs and valuable skills</li> <li>• A vibrant cultural offer</li> <li>• A green and sustainable city that cares about the environment</li> <li>• A strong voice for Plymouth regionally and nationally</li> <li>• A welcoming city</li> </ul>
Performance, Finance and Customer Focus	<p>Relevant policies in the Plymouth Plan</p> <p>Corporate Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Financial Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Annual Budget Setting Process</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Revenues and benefits</p> <p>Homelessness</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Human resources</p> <p>Audit and Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clean and tidy city</li> <li>• People feel safe in Plymouth</li> <li>• A welcoming city</li> <li>• Listening to our customers and communities</li> <li>• Motivated, skilled and engaged staff</li> <li>• Spending money wisely</li> <li>• Providing quality public services</li> </ul>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Current Areas of Responsibility	Map to Corporate Plan Priorities <i>(some appear across more than one committee)</i>
	<p>Transformation</p> <p>Bereavement Services and Register Office</p> <p>Community Safety</p> <p>Customer Services</p> <p>Street scene and Waste</p> <p>Parking</p> <p>Hear call-ins relevant to the role of the committee</p>	
Education and Children's Social Care	<p>Relevant policies in the Plymouth Plan</p> <p>Early Years Services</p> <p>Schools, colleges and other educational settings</p> <p>Child Poverty</p> <p>Special Education Needs, behaviour and attendance, narrowing the gap in outcomes</p> <p>Safeguarding Children</p> <p>Cared for children</p> <p>Youth offending</p> <p>Adoption and Fostering</p> <p>Corporate Parenting</p> <p>Hear call-ins relevant to the role of the committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved schools where pupils achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Keep children, young people and adults protected</li> <li>• Focus on prevention and early intervention</li> </ul>
Health and Adult Social Care	<p>Relevant policies in the Plymouth Plan</p> <p>Integrated Commissioning</p> <p>Hospital and community health services</p> <p>Dental services, pharmacy and NHS ophthalmic services;</p> <p>Public health services</p> <p>Adult Social Care Services</p> <p>Adult Safeguarding Services</p> <p>Hear call-ins relevant to the role of the committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep children, young people and adults protected</li> <li>• Focus on prevention and early intervention</li> <li>• Reduced health inequalities</li> <li>• A welcoming city</li> </ul>



Date of meeting: 02 October 2019

Title of Report: **Revenue Monitoring – Month Five**

Lead Member: Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance)

Lead Strategic Director: Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance)

Author: Paul Looby (Head of Financial Planning and Reporting)  
Hannah West (Finance Business Partner)

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Your Reference: PL/19

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

### Purpose of Report

This report outlines the finance monitoring position of the Council as at the end of August 2019.

The primary purpose of this report is to detail how the Council is delivering against its financial measures using its revenue resources.

As shown in Table I below, the projected revenue overspend is £3.318m against a revenue budget of £185.483m which is a variance of 1.80%. This needs to be read within the context of needing to deliver in excess of £17m of savings in 2019/20 on the back of balancing the 2018/19 revenue budget where £11m of net revenue reductions were successfully delivered.

**Table I: End of year revenue forecast**

	Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance £m
<b>Total General Fund Budget</b>	<b>185.483</b>	<b>188.801</b>	<b>3.318</b>

**Recommendations and Reasons**

I. That Scrutiny note the month five monitoring position.

**Alternative options considered and rejected**

None considered as it is a statutory requirement to report on the use of the Council's budget funds.

**Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan**

This report is fundamentally linked to delivering the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan. Allocating limited resources to key priorities will maximise the benefits to the residents of Plymouth.

**Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

Robust and accurate financial monitoring underpins the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Council's Medium Term Financial Forecast is updated regularly based on on-going monitoring information, both on a local and national context. Any adverse variations from the annual budget will place pressure on the MTFS going forward and require additional savings to be generated in future years.

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

No direct implications from the report.

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The reducing revenue and capital resources across the public sector has been identified as a key risk within our Strategic Risk register. The ability to deliver spending plans is paramount to ensuring the Council can achieve its objectives to be a Pioneering, Growing, Caring and Confident City

**Appendices**

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	MTEP – Savings 19-20							

**Background papers:**

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 20/09/2019											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Mark Lowry approved verbally Date approved: 20/09/2019											





## **AUGUST 2019 FINANCE MONITORING**

**Table 1: Revenue Monitoring Position**

Directorate	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	2019/20 Latest Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Year End Variation	Movement from Month 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Executive Office	6.458	(0.608)	5.850	5.850	0.000	0.000
Finance	22.564	(5.039)	17.525	17.942	0.417	0.000
Customer and Corporate	96.477	(81.149)	15.328	16.931	1.603	0.163
Children's Directorate	138.502	(91.812)	46.690	48.340	1.650	(0.400)
People Directorate	124.991	(38.013)	86.978	86.528	(0.450)	(0.200)
Office of the Director of Public Health	18.600	(19.018)	(0.418)	(0.418)	0.000	0.000
Place Directorate	80.747	(57.100)	23.647	23.745	0.098	0.052
Corporate Items	10.679	(20.796)	(10.117)	(10.117)	0.000	(0.250)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>499.018</b>	<b>(313.535)</b>	<b>185.483</b>	<b>188.801</b>	<b>3.318</b>	<b>(0.635)</b>

**Table 2: Plymouth Integrated Fund**

Plymouth Integrated Fund	2019/20 Budget	2019/20 Forecast	Year End Overspend / (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
New Devon CCG – Plymouth locality	461.504	461.504	0.000
Plymouth City Council *	253.894	255.694	1.800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>715.398</b>	<b>717.205</b>	<b>1.807</b>

The financial position above for the Plymouth Integrated Fund is for the 2019/20 month 3 position, and before any risk share.

\*This represents the net People Directorate budget plus the gross Public Health Commissioning budget (which is financed by a ring fenced Department of Health Grant).

**Table 3: Key Issues and Corrective Actions**

Issue	Variation £m	Management Corrective Action
<p><b>EXECUTIVE OFFICE</b></p> <p>Nil variance to report.</p> <p>It is worth noting there are pressures held within the budget which are being closely monitored.</p>	<p>0.000</p>	<p>Within the elections budget, management is undertaking all possible actions to maximise logistics efficiencies and generate in-year savings.</p> <p>The department is using vacancy management to off-set some of the pressure and as a result is carefully managing demand in terms of impact on capacity.</p> <p>Income generation is also being proactively sought with some success already at this point in the year of around £0.080m additional anticipated income from agreements made with third parties (income yet to be fully realised).</p>
<p><b>EXECUTIVE OFFICE – Legal</b></p> <p>There is currently a pressure, £0.189m, which is carry forward from 2018/19 and is being managed.</p> <p>£0.100m was to be achieved from a Service review as indicated in the MTFP and £0.089m is apportioned Transformation legacy savings</p>	<p>0.000</p>	<p>Plans will be put in place for a service review to deliver savings. Vacancy management, where capacity allows, will be used to supplement the achievement of the savings target.</p>

<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>The main budget pressures continue to be legacy savings and target savings for Treasury Management which are at risk.</p> <p>The directorate includes total efficiency savings of £3.050m of which £2.314m are for Treasury Management.</p>	<p>0.417</p>	<p>All opportunities are being explored to meet the Treasury Management savings target. This includes working with our Treasury Management Advisors to explore new and innovative opportunities e.g. rescheduling LOBSs if market conditions are favourable.</p> <p>We are developing plans to deliver the Legacy savings target of £0.417m. Any reductions will have a direct impact upon staffing levels which are already managing challenging vacancy management targets.</p>
<p><b>CUSTOMER and CORPORATE – Customer Services</b></p> <p>Pressure is due to lower housing rent subsidy.</p>	<p>0.163</p>	<p>It is being offset in part by the need for a lower Bad Debt provision and will continue to be closely monitored.</p>
<p><b>CUSTOMER and CORPORATE – Service Centre</b></p> <p>The budget pressure of £0.600m includes a £0.500m legacy saving.</p>	<p>0.600</p>	<p>CMT previously agreed to the transfer of other transactional services into the Service Centre. Benefits will be quantified in 2019/20. These can only be delivered by working in partnership and with co-operation from all service business areas.</p>
<p><b>CUSTOMER and CORPORATE – Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</b></p> <p>There is a legacy savings target of £0.050m.</p>	<p>0.000</p>	<p>This pressure will be managed through vacancy management.</p>
<p><b>CUSTOMER and CORPORATE – Departmental</b></p> <p>The budget includes legacy savings of £0.879m which are being reported as at risk of delivery.</p>	<p>0.500</p>	<p>Plans are continuing to be developed e.g. a review of management overheads across the directorate and other challenging decisions which will need further discussion. Therefore at this stage it is prudent to declare a pressure of £0.500m.</p>

<p><b>CUSTOMER and CORPORATE – Transformation</b></p>	<p>(0.160)</p>	<p>£0.160m of savings has been achieved mainly due to vacancies within the salaries budget within the Project Management Team. Further savings are expected to be made and will be shown next month.</p>
<p><b>CUSTOMER and CORPORATE – ICT Commissioned Service</b></p> <p>There are a number of budget pressures being reported. Several budgets are lower than required; Unitary Charge £0.720m, PADS £0.066m and Payroll £0.074m. Savings of £0.129m are shown against the financing charges for the way we work. Included in the £0.720m are identified additional savings of £0.184m. The DELT dividend is being forecast at £0.160m which is £0.270m lower than budget</p>	<p>0.500</p>	<p>Plans are continuing be developed to mitigate these pressures. At this stage £0.500 is declared as a forecast outturn budget pressure.</p>
<p><b>CHILDREN’S DIRECTORATE</b></p> <p>The Children Young People and Families Service are reporting a budget pressure of £2.803m at month 4.</p> <p>The cost of the care is particularly high due to the level of support needed to keep young people safe, such as specialist residential care placements with high levels of staffing and the need to place young people with complex needs in wrap around as no suitable placement is available.</p> <p>This increasing financial demand on Children’s Services is not just a local issue, but is seen nationally and is a culmination of</p>	<p>2.803</p>	<p>The following actions are in place to address the budget position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked After Children - only one point of contact for all new entrants;</li> <li>• Fortnightly placement review to ensure step down of high cost placements;</li> <li>• Review of staying put arrangements and financial remuneration;</li> <li>• Maximize contribution from partners including Health and Education;</li> <li>• Maximize local residential placements to avoid higher out of area costs.</li> </ul>

rising demand, complexity of care, rising costs and the availability of suitable placements.

#### **Month 4 Placements Dashboard**

In the first 4 months of the year we are seeing additional staffing support for children with complex wrap around packages, temporary accommodated plans to move these to residential settings within 3 months. Pressure identified at £0.561m but Step Down plan developed

#### **Additional Service costs**

£0.339m This is a mixture of additional resource costs and cost of borrowing, transport and Specialist Assessments, partly offset from savings in the Safeguarding Children's Board.

#### **Unidentified savings plans £1.628m**

Overall savings £6.258m, less plans in place £4.630m.

#### **Delivery plans at risk £1.304m**

Following a robust challenge by finance to the services, this is highlighting the risk against the overall delivery plan of £4.630 and comprises:-

	£m
Placement Review & Sufficiency	0.503
Fostering	0.248
End 3 End Review (E2ER)	0.411
EHTS&FD*	0.142

\* Early Help, Targeted Support and Front Door

(1.153)

Actions taking place against pressures:-

Under constant review for full mitigation

Senior Management will continue to review all items on the list and seek mitigation to cover in full

Initial indications of savings to be derived from commissioning

The Children's Programme Board is reflecting a current shortfall of £1.304m against the delivery plan target, however, this could change due to the ongoing work in fortnightly project meetings and placement reviews. The directorate are therefore holding the additional identified risk of £0.129m to reflect that progress continues against each work stream. This reporting position will be reviewed again for Quarter 2.

Fortnightly Programme Boards now in place plus additional resources within the directorate to ensure we maximise the savings, this is working well so far. This has resulted in placement reviews to step down and reduce placement costs contributing to the Placement Review & Sufficiency delivery plan.

<p><b>PEOPLE - Strategic Cooperative Commissioning</b></p> <p>The Strategic Commissioning service is forecasting a favourable variation of (£1.153m) at month 4, a change of (0.400m) from month 3. Since setting the budget, clients numbers in ASC have dropped, this is as a direct result of the work undertaken over the last year to deliver improvements in the management of the ASC front door, the implementation of a robust scheme of delegation and the close working arrangement with LWSW through budget containment meetings to address system pressures. This has resulted in a current underspend in expenditure, partly offset by a reduction of client contributions, as would be expected.</p> <p>However, the information coming out of Carefirst is continuing to show a small increase from the start of the year, which has been included as part of our forecast. This will continue to be reviewed closely, due to the demand led nature of the budget, as the position can change on a weekly basis.</p>	0.000	<p>Strategic Commissioning have been tasked with achieving savings of £4.765m, as well as £2.404m of savings brought forward from 2018/19 that were realised from one off savings and needed to be achieved in this financial year. At this time, it is thought that the full £7.169m will be achieved, however most of these will be achieved through one off savings again, which will cause further pressure in 2020/21.</p> <p>The development of the next phase of transformation is underway to support the delivery of sustainable savings during 20/21 and thus reduce the reliance on one off savings in future years.</p>
<p><b>PEOPLE – Community Connections</b></p> <p>Community Connections is reporting a (£0.450m) favourable variation at month 4, a change of (£0.200m) month 3. At this time, B&amp;B numbers are being reduced, from those reported during 2018/19, through the use of alternative placements secured in existing contracts. This is being achieved and maximised through partnership working with the Alliance.</p>	(0.450)	<p>The department has been tasked with achieving savings of £0.030m, as well as £0.228m of savings brought forward from 2018/19 that were realised from one off savings and needed to be achieved in this financial year. At this time, it is thought that the full £0.258m will be achieved, however most of these will be achieved through one off savings again, which will cause further pressure in 2020/21.</p> <p>The additional savings of £0.450m are targeted to support the overall Federated position.</p>

<p><b>People Management &amp; Support</b></p> <p>The People Management &amp; Support budget is currently forecast to balance to budget at year end however there is a pressure regarding the funding for the Director for Adults but this is hoped to be found through additional management savings during the year.</p>	0.000	
<p><b>Office of the Director of Public Health</b></p> <p>The budget for the Office of the Director of Public Health (ODPH) is forecasting to come in on budget for 2019/20. The budget is made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health, which is grant funded and forms part of the Integrated Fund;</li> <li>• Public Protection Service; and</li> <li>• Bereavement Services.</li> </ul> <p>There has been a reduction in the Public Health grant received in 2019/20 of £0.405m from the previous year, which will be contained by a variety of management actions, mainly around the contracts that are held within the department.</p> <p>The Public Protection service, funded from RSG and other income streams, are forecasting to spend to budget, however there will need to be reviews of spending across the service during the year to achieve this.</p>	0.000	<p>ODPH have been tasked with achieving an original savings target of £0.228m which, at this time, it is thought that will be fully achieved, whether through ongoing savings or one offs. There is also an additional £0.028m that has been added to the savings plan that there is currently no plan for how to achieve it.</p>

<p>The Bereavement Service is showing an increase in the numbers of cremations budgeted for at this point in the year, although any surpluses from this service are ring-fenced and cannot be counted towards any favourable variations for the Directorate.</p>		
<p><b>PLACE - Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SP&amp;I)</b></p> <p>The forecast SP&amp;I budget position shows a net £0.133m negative variation, which is a favourable variation since last month's report of £0.083m. This pressure is largely as a result of forecast shortfalls in planning application fees (£0.2m) and building regulation application fees (£0.021m). This adverse variation has been partly mitigated by forecasted salary related savings and underspends elsewhere within the department.</p>	<p>0.133</p>	<p>An early review of the department's Fees Policy has been instigated alongside proactive vacancy management arrangements. The SP&amp;I Senior Management Team will be reviewing options to reduce spending and increase income to move towards a balanced position. If required, areas of departmental activity may be stopped for the remaining part of the year if the next few months of monitoring do not show a significant improvement in the projected outturn position.</p>
<p><b>PLACE - Management Support</b></p> <p>The opening (£0.451m) efficiency target has been reduced by a permanent virement of £0.150m to Street Services.</p> <p>There are no specific actions in place to meet the remaining (£0.301m) currently</p>	<p>0.000</p>	<p>Overall Place monitoring on-going will need to contain Management efficiencies by reducing costs and potential income opportunities</p>
<p><b>PLACE - Economic Development</b></p>	<p>(0.180)</p>	<p>Efforts will continue to be taken to maximise income and reasonably contain costs.</p>



<p>Forecast income generation from Asset Investment Fund acquisitions have enabled a number of spend pressures within Economic Development to be met. This includes earmarking resources to meet a loss arising from the discovery of asbestos at the City Business Park, containing unavoidable commercial estate pressures, and delivering on political pledges.</p>		
<p><b>PLACE – GAME</b></p>	<p>0.000</p>	<p>Nil variance to report</p>
<p><b>PLACE - Street Services</b></p> <p><b>Street Scene &amp; Waste services:</b> Some additional staffing and operational costs relate to requirements to improve controls following health and safety executive interventions e.g. HAV increased staffing on grass cutting gangs, Weston Mill and Chelson Meadow recycling centres.</p> <p><b>Fleet and Garage:</b> Fleet are reporting to budget but have a risk of £0.034m. This relates to a £0.026m gap against a previous savings target, and a £0.008m pressure due to the requirement for a new fuel system. There is also a risk around their £0.050m additional savings target, although delivery plans are being worked on to help meet this that rely on client account savings.</p>	<p>0.145</p> <p>0.000</p>	<p>A detailed review of all Street Scene &amp; Waste budgets, including a coding/budget realignment is on-going, which will aid management of these budgets going forward.</p>

<p>Garage are forecasting to come in on budget. The Garage also has a £0.050m savings target that is being picked up in the aforementioned delivery plan.</p> <p><b>Highways and Car Parking:</b> Highways are currently forecasting to come in on budget, although there are risks around 19/20's additional car parking income target.</p>	0.000	
<b>CORPORATE ITEMS</b>	0.000	Nil variance to report.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.318</b>	

**MTFP Savings Targets Status**

2019/20		Plans in place	Savings at risk/no plan	RAG
Budget	Plus b/f (inc. py & other pressures)			

Grant Income						
Place	New Homes bonus	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	
Corporate Items	Better Care Fund Gain	4.111	4.111	4.111	0.000	
People	Grant shortfall		0.000		0.000	
People	Social Care Support Grant	2.194	2.194	2.194	0.000	
Corporate Items	Levy Account Surplus	0.881	0.881	0.881	0.000	
Corporate Items	Flexible use of capital receipts	-2.000	-2.000	-2.000	0.000	
Corporate Items	Use of S106 contributions (into base going forward)		0.000		0.000	
		<b>5.262</b>	<b>5.262</b>	<b>5.262</b>	<b>0.000</b>	

Income						
Place	Real time passenger information	-0.150	-0.150	-0.150	0.000	
Place	Contribution from passenger info reserve	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	
Place	Commercial Events	0.050	0.200	0.200	0.000	
Place	Additional Car Parking Income	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	
Place	Energy-Related Initiatives: Dividend from Ernesettle Solar Farm		0.000		0.000	
Place	Energy-Related Initiatives: Additional Capitalisation of Low Carbon Team Posts	-0.053	-0.053	-0.053	0.000	
Place	Asset Investment Fund	0.200	1.150	1.150	0.000	
		<b>0.297</b>	<b>1.397</b>	<b>1.397</b>	<b>0.000</b>	

Savings						
Chief Exec	Savings	0.044	0.074	0.074	0.000	
Chief Exec	Elections			0.000	0.000	
Chief Exec	Legal Department Transformation		0.189	0.000	0.189	
Place	ED Systems Review - moving towards cost neutrality	0.466	0.466	0.466	0.000	
Place	Additional Efficiencies		0.451	0.000	0.451	
Place	Vacancy Management Target		0.505	0.505	0.000	
People	ODPH Directorate	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.000	
People	Integrated Commissioning	4.765	7.169	7.169	0.000	

People	Community Connections	0.030	0.258	0.258	0.000
People	Children's Directorate	2.175	7.958	6.330	1.628
People	People directorate review		0.200	0.200	0.000
People	Vacancy Management Target		0.596	0.596	0.000
Corporate Services	Transformation Review/Further efficiency savings		0.879	0.150	0.729
Corporate Services	Systems Review – Community Facilities		0.033	0.033	0.000
Corporate Services	Further Efficiency Savings	0.351	0.351	0.000	0.351
Corporate Services	Fees & Charges in accordance with Policy		0.002	0.002	0.000
Corporate Services	Service Centre	0.100	0.600	0.000	0.600
Corporate Services	Review of Coroners arrangements		0.040	0.000	0.040
Corporate Services	Systems and IT infrastructure		1.185	1.185	0.000
Corporate Services	Human Resources and Organisation Development		0.050	0.050	0.000
Corporate Services	Vacancy Management Target		0.000	0.000	0.000
Finance	Revision to office cleaning arrangements (Soft FM)		0.000	0.000	0.000
Finance	Finance Transformation		0.273	0.273	0.000

Finance	Anti-Fraud Partnership with Devon Audit Partnership	0.025	0.075		0.075	
Finance	Fraud Detection	0.070	0.070		0.070	
Finance	Smart working	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.000	
Finance	Treasury Management Savings	1.522	2.314	1.500	0.814	
Finance	Administration & Facilities Management		0.000		0.000	
Corporate Items	Staff Travel		0.000		0.000	
Corporate Items	Savings to be realised from fees and charges, and more efficient operational business processes		0.250	0.250	0.000	
Corporate Items	Procurement		0.186	0.186	0.000	
Corporate Items	CST & Cross Cutting		0.080	0.080	0.000	
Corporate Items	Capitalisation	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.000	
Corporate Items	Pensions Deficit refinancing	1.448	1.448	1.448	0.000	
Corporate Items	Reduction in Reserve		0.223	0.223	0.000	
Corporate Items	Reduction in Working balances		0.234	0.234	0.000	
		<b>12.008</b>	<b>27.171</b>	<b>21.951</b>	<b>5.220</b>	ok
						0.000
		<b>17.567</b>	<b>33.830</b>	<b>28.610</b>	<b>5.220</b>	





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# Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	02 October 2019
Title of Report:	<b>Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2018/19</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety)
Lead Strategic Director:	Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services)
Author:	Helen Cocks
Contact Email:	<a href="mailto:helen.cocks@plymouth.gov.uk">helen.cocks@plymouth.gov.uk</a>
Your Reference:	HC/19
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

Every year the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) sends each council an annual review letter which outlines the Ombudsman's position in relation to complaints monitoring. The publication of the 2018/19 annual report provides an opportunity to review and discuss complaints that have been received about Plymouth during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

This briefing provides analysis of the LGSCO annual review data and presents an annual summary for Plymouth comparing our local statistics with the relative benchmarks. It also highlights the lessons learned, how individual teams and services have responded to LGSCO complaints and what the Council has done differently following LGSCO intervention.

After investigation, the LGSCO upheld 18 complaints of the 107 complaints they made decisions about in relation to Plymouth City Council.

## Recommendations and Reasons

1. To approve the Recommendations set out in paragraph 2.3 of this Report.
2. To note the progress made to date and approve the proposals set out in paragraph 2.4 of this Report.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The analysis and organisational learning contained within this paper will contribute towards corporate performance indicators: percentage of complaints resolved at first stage and percentage of complaints

resolved at second stage. This indicator sits within the 'How we will deliver' theme, supporting the council to provide quality public services and listening to our customers and communities.

### Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

No specific implications result from this report.

### Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

No specific implications result from this report.

### Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

None

### Appendices

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2018/19							
B	Decisions made by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 2018/19							
C	How to understand the categories in the breakdown tables on the LGSCO's Annual Review Letter 2018/19							
D	Remedies for those complaints upheld by the LGSCO following detailed investigation in 2018/19 for Plymouth							
E	Corporate and Statutory Complaints 2018/19							
F	Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2017/18							
G	Progress update on 2017/18 Recommendations							

H	LGSCO Annual Review Letter 201819								
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**Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Faye Hambleton, Service Director for Customer Services and Service Centre

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 20/08/2019

Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Sally Haydon

Date approved: 27/08/2019

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**APPENDIX A – Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2018/19**

**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publishes annual complaint statistics for councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. Plymouth's Annual Review Letter is found in Appendix H. This report in part provides an analysis of those statistics for Plymouth for 2018/19. This report also attempts to capture the lessons learned from the complaints.

**Complaint Statistics**

Peer group benchmarking is provided for each of the service areas. However, care is required in interpreting the data information in this report as the volume of complaints against an authority do not prove that it is a 'poor' or 'good' performing council. The LGSCO suggests that high volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. They also suggest that low complaint volumes can be a worrying sign that an organisation is not alive to user feedback, rather than always being an indicator that all is well.

**Organisational Learning**

Currently, the LGSCO sends complaints via the link officer, the Customer Liaison Manager, within the Customer Services Department. The complaint is then monitored centrally to ensure that the LGSCO receives the required responses in the timescales set with each case. Once a complaint is received it is disseminated into the relevant service area, where an investigation takes place and a response is formulated as well as remedial action undertaken. Once the LGSCO has concluded its involvement, responsibility for remedial action is held locally within each team/service where the complaint was upheld.

## 2 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD, KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 2.1 Complaints upheld summary

The table below provides summarised details for all LGSCO upheld complaints

Service	Complaint Description	Remedial Action	Changes and Learning	
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	1	Complaint received that the Council had failed to deal properly with charges for care (relating to deferred payment agreement).	Apology. Financial Redress £250. Offer a discretionary DPA. Procedure change in line with the guidance.	Relevant working practices have been updated.
	2	Complaint that the care provider (acting on behalf of the Council) did not follow its procedure properly. There was conflicting information in the Council's response to the complainant.	Apology. Financial Redress £500. Review procedures with the Care agency.	Meeting took place with the care agency to review the application of policy and communicate it to all staff. Learning was also shared across commissioned domiciliary care providers.
	3	Complaint that the Council is at fault as it failed to explain how an increase to payments was sufficient to meet their needs, underpaid direct payments and delayed in responding to requests for backdating of the increase in payments.	Apology. Financial Redress £100. Written explanation of Council's decision. Reimbursement for underpayment of direct payments. Correspondence and complaints procedures review.	A decision was made in April 2018 for all social care complaints to be investigated and responded to under the Livewell South West complaints process. This was implemented in May 2018. As the Council hold the statutory duty for social care functions it continues to monitor on a monthly basis and review learning from complaints regularly.
	4	Complaint received about the Council and its agent Livewell Southwest, care and support planning.	Apology. Financial Redress £150.	Letter with an apology has been sent to the complainant and redress payment has been made.
<b>Planning &amp; Development</b>	5	Complaint received that the Council has failed to properly enforce a planning obligation. The Council is at fault as it did not pay proper attention to the terms of the agreement.	Reconsider the case. Apology. Enforce the agreement if compliance does not occur. Update the sign erected on the site.	1. The Council's Enforcement Team is actively reviewing the case and the department are now also actively applying the new protocol of acting on dismissed appeals for retrospective developments within 28 days of the decision being received. 2. An apology was sent to the customer. 3. A letter has been sent advising the site management of the requirements of the agreement and reminding them that failing to comply will result in the Council's Legal

				Service being instructed to formally enforce it. 4. A sign has been requested to be erected. Regular visits will be made to the site by members of the Enforcement Team to ensure that this is being complied with.
<b>Highways and Transport</b>	6	Complaint received about the Council's decision to refuse a blue badge. The Council's assessments did not properly address the variable nature of complainant's condition or its impact.	Reconsider an application for a blue badge. Review assessment process.	Assessment process was reviewed and a new style assessment tool and assessment guidance for applicants has been implemented.
<b>Benefits and Tax</b>	7	Complaint received that the Council charged business rates on two units complainant rented. The Council was at fault in failing to contact the complainant to clarify the situation.	Apology. Cancel liability.	Letter with an apology has been sent to the complainant and they were advised that the account has been withdrawn. The balance for the period has been written off.
	8	Complaint about the way the Council dealt with the council tax account for a rental property the complainant owns, in particular its failure to use an address the complainant had provided for correspondence purposes.	Financial Redress £150. Review the learning from this complaint in terms of complaint handling and arrange to meet any identified training needs for relevant staff.	Training needs addressed. Website updated in relation to Council Tax appeals and complaints. Internal Council Tax Reference Guide has also been updated.
	9	The Council should not have passed the complainant's council tax debt to enforcement agents because it did not communicate with complainant's representative as directed.	Apology. Refund £309.31 enforcement and summons fees.	Apology and refund issued.
	10	Complaint received that the Council wrongly advised the complainant they could move from Universal Credit to Housing Benefit, this led to them losing benefit.	Financial Redress £100. Payment for lost housing costs £343.	Payments have been issued.
	11	The Council was at fault to send correspondence to the liable person about a Council Tax debt rather than to their representative who was authorised to handle their account.	Apology. Financial Redress £250. Update records.	Council Tax records have been updated with the correct information. Apology and payment issued.

<b>Environmental Services &amp; Public Protection &amp; Regulation</b>	12	Complaint received that the Council was wrong to charge the complainant to leave their waste at a recycling facility when its website said it could be done for free.	Apology. Financial Redress £100. Repayment of costs of the disposal £97.63. Policy review.	Waste Policy has been reviewed and website has been updated.
	13	Complaint received about the condition of a footpath.	None	Work requested by the complainant had been carried out before the Ombudsman had a chance to consider complaint.
<b>Housing</b>	14	Complaint received that the Council refused to use its discretion to release the complainant from a Disabled Facilities Grant agreement.	None	PCC has agreed the complainant does not have to repay the 2015 grant to allow them to move.
	15	Complaint received about the Council's handling of works carried out under a Disabled Facilities Grant. The Council was at fault as there was significant delay in completing the work.	Financial Redress £250	Payment has been issued. New working practices were already put in place.
<b>Corporate and Other Services</b>	16	Complaint received re: a single point of contact. The Council failed to follow its draft policy and did not properly explain how the complainant could appeal its decision.	None	Single point of contact processes to be communicated as part of the review of an Acceptable Behaviour Policy re: unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants.
<b>Education and Children's Services</b>	17	Complaint received that the Council was wrong to decide it should not fund transport to school. There was fault in how the Council considered both appeals from the complainant.	Arrange a new appeal hearing with new panel members. Amend the appeal section of School Transport Policy and its decision letter templates to reflect the guidance by the Department for Education.	School Transport Policy has been revised, letter templates and School Transport web-page have been updated.
	18	Complaint received that the Council refused to provide free home to school transport. The Council is at fault as it did not properly consider if circumstances.	Apology. Pay the cost of the bus fares. Review procedures.	Apology and payment of £139.74 has been made. Procedures have been reviewed.



## 2.2 Key Messages

The key messages from the analysis of the 2018/19 LGSCO Annual Review data are as follows:

- The Council implemented a two stage complaints process on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. One of the aims was to reduce the number of complaints being escalated to the LGSCO and a reduction has been achieved; 103 complaints in 18/19 compared to 127 complaints in 17/18.
- A decrease has also occurred in the number of complaints that required a detailed investigation by the LGSCO; 20 complaints in 18/19 compared to 26 in 17/18.
- There has been a significant increase in the upheld rate; only 20 complaints required a detailed investigation but of these 18 were upheld, giving an upheld rate of 90%. This compares with an upheld rate in 17/18 of 58%, when 15 complaints were upheld following 26 detailed investigations.
- 15 of the 18 complaints upheld had recommended remedial action from the LGSCO. PCC has achieved 100% compliance with the recommendations.
- Benefits & Tax saw a significant decrease in the total number of complaints received from 36 complaints escalated in 17/18 to 18 complaints escalated in 18/19. Environmental Services & Public Protection and Regulation, Housing and Planning & Development also experienced a decrease in the total number of complaints received in comparison to 2017/18.
- There has been a significant increase in complaints received about Corporate & Other Services: from four complaints in 17/18 to nine in 18/19, although, only one required a detailed investigation.

## 2.3 Recommendations

The majority of complaints that were upheld were due to the LGSCO finding fault in policy content or the application of policy. As a result the majority of lessons learned from these complaints, as identified in Section 2.1, included updating policy and/or procedure, how these are implemented by staff and how these are communicated with customers. Updates and improvements have been made in all cases and this has been recognised by the LGSCO as PCC achieved 100% compliance with the LGSCO's recommendations.

In addition to policy updates and communications, the following recommendations have been put together to ensure that PCC continues to learn from customer feedback and improve the customer experience. These recommendations all centre on improving service delivery, reducing failure demand and improving internal complaints handling:

1. Monitor performance against Service Standards
2. Provide guidance and training for staff undertaking investigations (Stage 1 and Stage 2)
3. Review, approve and communicate the Acceptable Behaviour Policy.

## 2.4 Progress update

The following activity has occurred to support delivery of the recommendations:

### **Recommendation 1 – Monitor performance against Service Standards**

Customer feedback is monitored regularly following recommendations from last years annual report (see Appendix G). CMT are provided with a monthly performance flash report and will now also be undertaking a quarterly 'deep dive' into the Top 3 complaints as part of quarterly performance monitoring.

A customer experience performance measure has been included in quarterly Corporate Plan performance monitoring. The measure provides a summary of performance against ten key service standards from across the Council, including processing a housing benefit claim, planning application or picking up a missed bin. An internal audit exercise has been undertaken to review the accuracy and integrity of these ten service standard measures; the outcome of this exercise is expected later this month.

There were more than 170 service standards included in business plans across the Council in the latest business planning cycle. The Customer Liaison Manager is undertaking a piece of work, working closely with the Performance and Risk Team, to identify how service areas are managing these services and whether their current systems are able to produce data to measure the standard of service. Service standards and customer feedback will also be a key data set for end to end service reviews as part of The Way We Work programme.

The Customer Liaison Team will continue to focus on improving the management of Statutory Complaints processes and will work with Adult Social Care and Childrens Services to ensure that lessons learned from customer feedback are used to support service improvements. These services are highlighted because:

- the volume of complaints escalated to the LGSCO for Adult Social Care and Education and Childrens Services has slowly been increasing in recent years, albeit the volumes are in line with, or below, the average numbers received by Council's in the CIPFA family group (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2)
- the upheld rate for statutory Childrens Social Care complaints has increased significantly this year despite a reduction in the volume of complaints received; the upheld rate for 18/19 was 62% (see Appendix E) in comparison to 40% in 17/18
- the upheld rate for statutory Adult Social Care complaints remains high (62%, see Appendix E) although recent improvements made to the complaints handling processes are still being embedded following recommendations from the LGSCO Annual Review 17/18 (see Appendix G).

**Recommendation 2** – Provide guidance and training for staff undertaking investigations (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

Improving the way we investigate complaints internally should lead to a decrease in the volume of complaints escalated to the LGSCO. Actions taken and ongoing work include;

- Council departments identified a Feedback Coordinator in 18/19 to facilitate the administration of customer feedback. A review of the impact of this role is being planned by the Customer Liaison Manager.
- The digital process for submitting customer feedback has been updated to include some validation; the customer is now required to submit their Stage 1 complaint case reference number. Departments have been reminded to check the validity of all Stage 2 complaints received but formal guidance will also be published and training offered where required. The Customer Liaison Manager has already started work to support departments who receive high volumes of Stage 2 complaints.
  - A community of practice across the Feedback Coordinator roles will be reinforced by establishing regular catch ups with the Customer Liaison Manager on a quarterly basis.
  - Programmes of change promote the importance of customer feedback in driving improvements to service delivery.

**Recommendation 3** – Review, approve and communicate the Acceptable Behaviour Policy.

A review of the Acceptable Behaviour Policy has been on hold so that it can be joined up as part of the community engagement developments within The Way We Work programme (the 'deal'). As the programme is still in development it is proposed to progress with the Acceptable Behaviour Policy review as an isolated piece of work following the LGSCO recommendation. A first draft will be put together in accordance with the guidance published by the LGSCO.

### **Other recommendations**

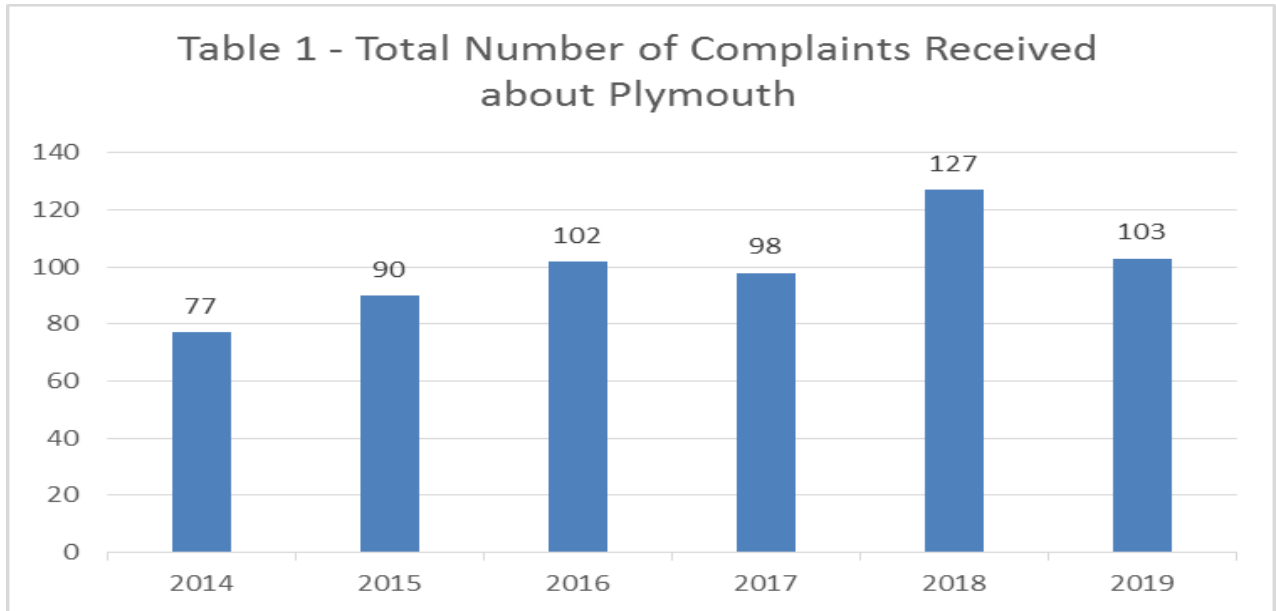
The Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2017/18 is included in Appendix F and a report on progress with the recommendations from 2017/18 is included at Appendix G.

### 3. COMPLAINT STATISTICS 2018/19 OVERALL PLYMOUTH RESULTS

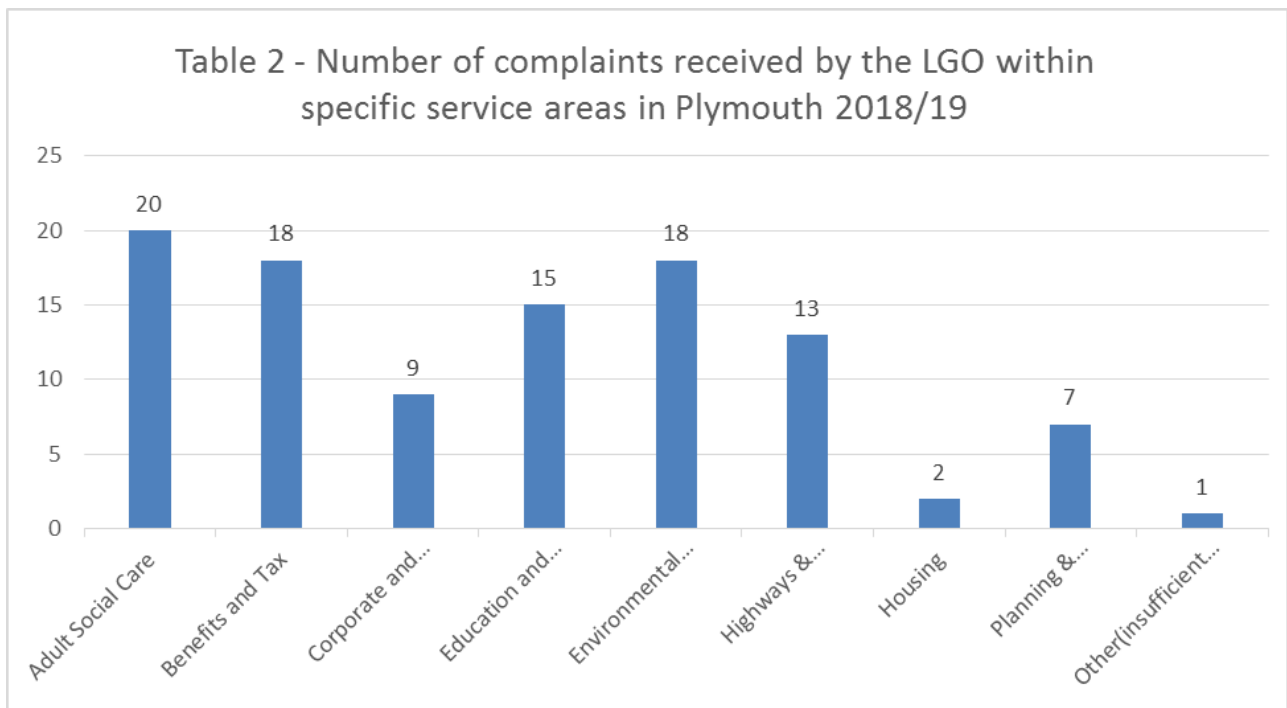
#### 3.1 Complaints received

It is important to note that not all complaints are decided in the same year that they are received. The number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 2018/19 was 103. The figures in this report mainly reflect the decisions made during 18/19 which totalled 107.

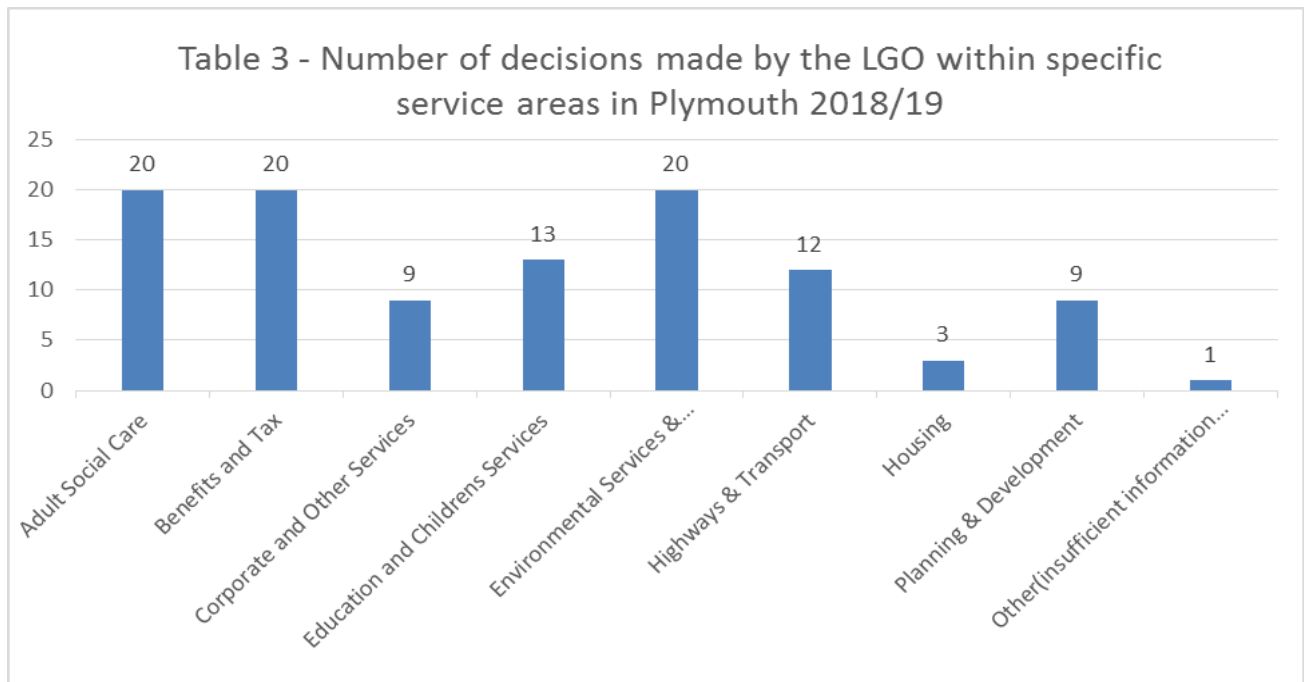
The table below shows the total number of complaints received by the LGSCO about Plymouth since 2014.



The table below shows the distribution of the complaints received within each of the specific service areas in 2018/19, totalling 103.



The table below shows the distribution of the complaint decisions made by the LGSCO for Plymouth within each of the specific service areas in 2018/19, totalling 107.



### 3.2 Complaint Decisions

A total of 107 decisions were made by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 2018/19; this is a decrease in comparison to the previous year when 121 decisions were made.

In 2018/19, of the complaints received for England where the LGSCO decided that a detailed investigation was required, 58% were upheld – this is known as the upheld rate. In Plymouth, the LGSCO conducted a detailed investigation into 20 complaints and of those 18 were upheld so the upheld rate is 90%. In comparison to 2017/18 data, where the upheld rate was 58%, PCC’s upheld rate has increased significantly and is much higher than the national upheld rate.

The LGSCO also provide an average upheld rate for similar authorities. Plymouth is included with other unitary authorities where the average upheld rate is 55%; meaning PCC has a much higher upheld rate than other unitary authorities. In fact, Plymouth has the second highest upheld rate in comparison with other unitary authorities. Plymouth has the sixth highest volume of decisions made and is placed 50<sup>th</sup> of all organisations in terms of overall volume of complaints received by the LGSCO.

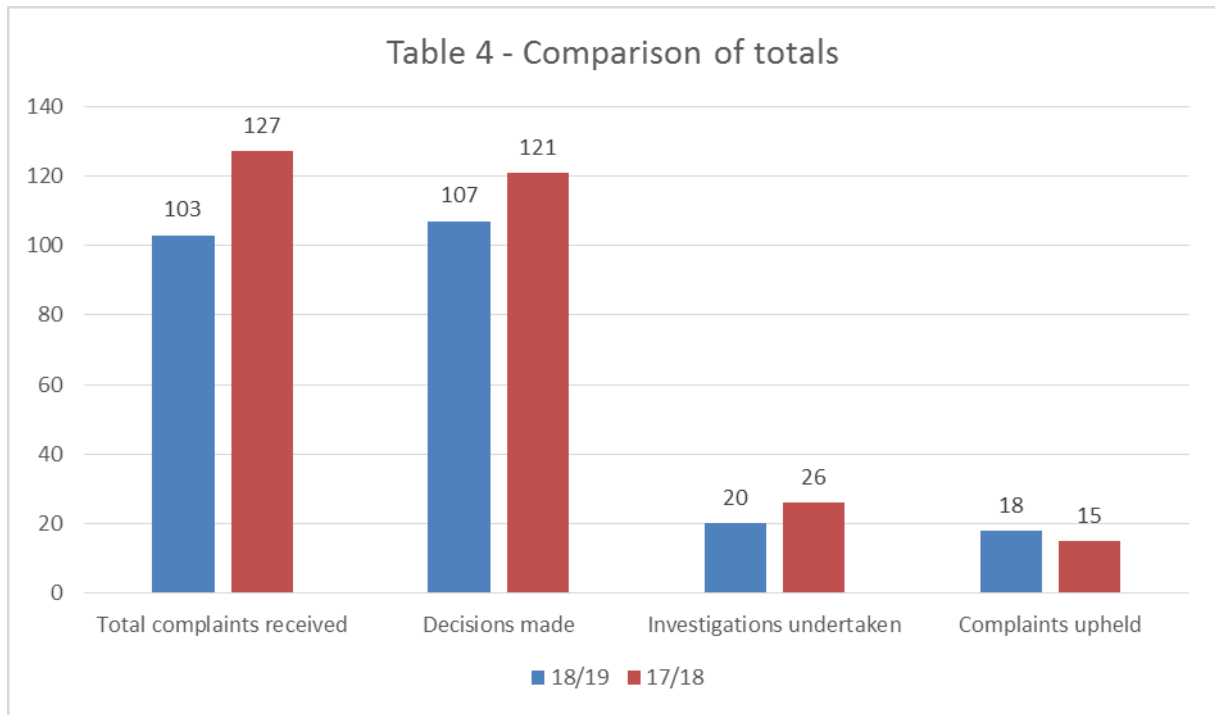
More detailed benchmarking has been undertaken and is covered in more detail in section 4 of this report.

If the upheld volume is compared to the total number of decisions made, the increase is much smaller;

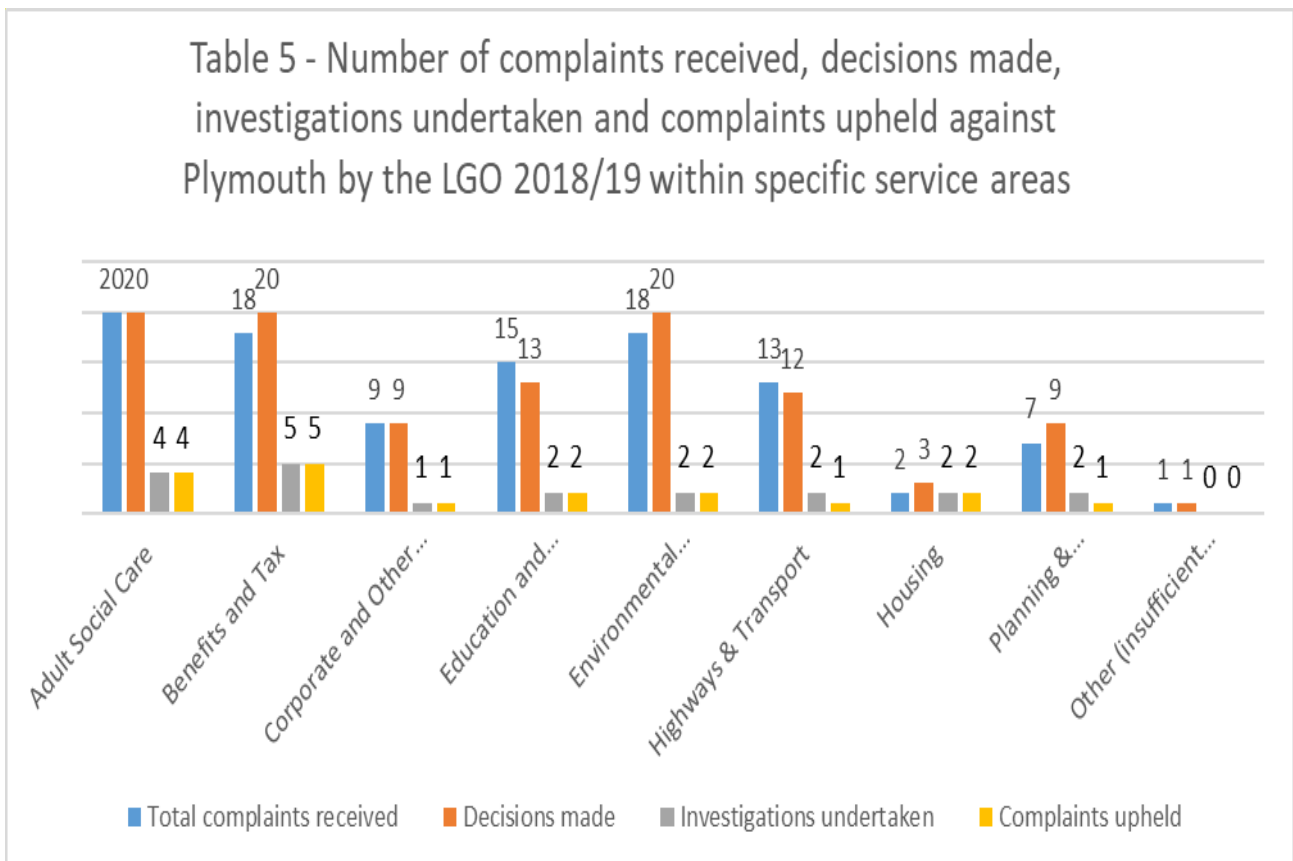
2018/19 18 complaints upheld of 107 decisions made (16.8%)

2017/18 15 complaints upheld of 121 decisions made (12.4%).

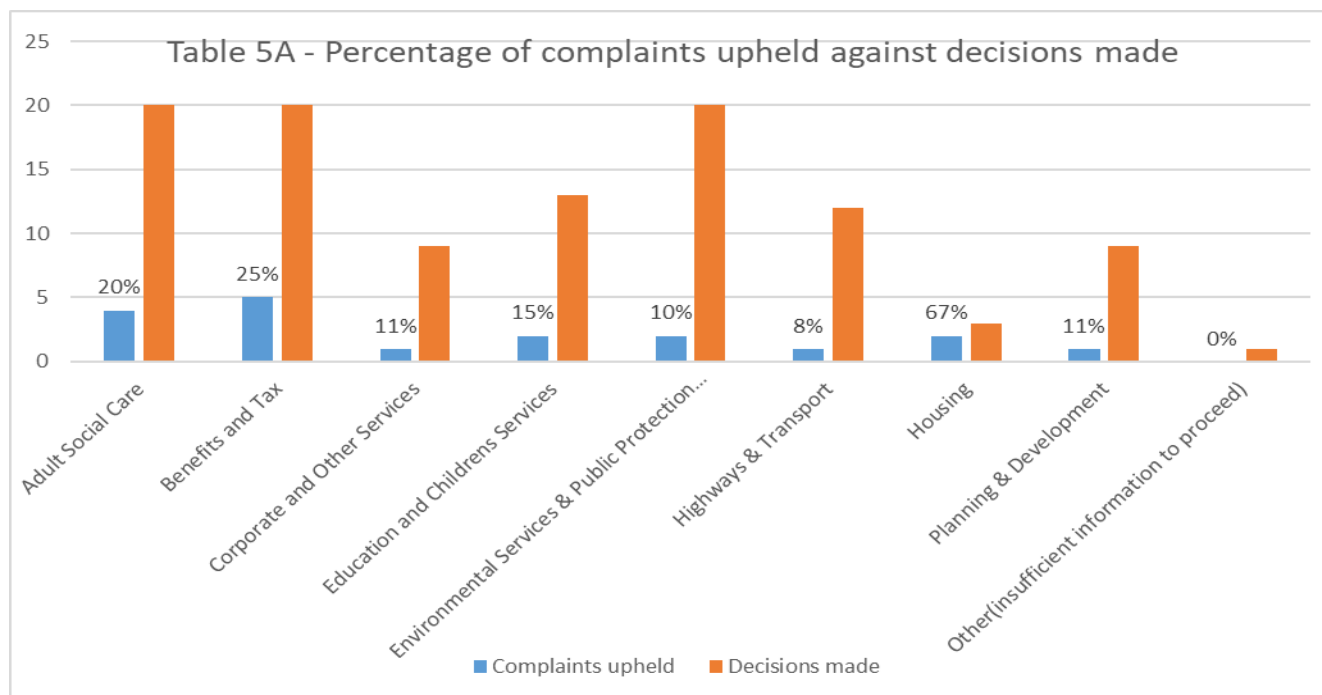
The table below shows the total numbers of complaints received, decisions made, detailed investigations undertaken and complaints upheld in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.



The table below shows the breakdown of the total numbers of complaints received, decisions made, detailed investigations undertaken and complaints upheld by service area for 18/19.



The upheld rate for PCC overall has already been identified as 90%. To consider this by department, the table above shows that all departments had 100% upheld rate except Highways and Transport and Planning and Development; these departments had 50% upheld rate. When the number of upheld complaints is compared to those where a decision was made the figures show a different picture; see the tables below.

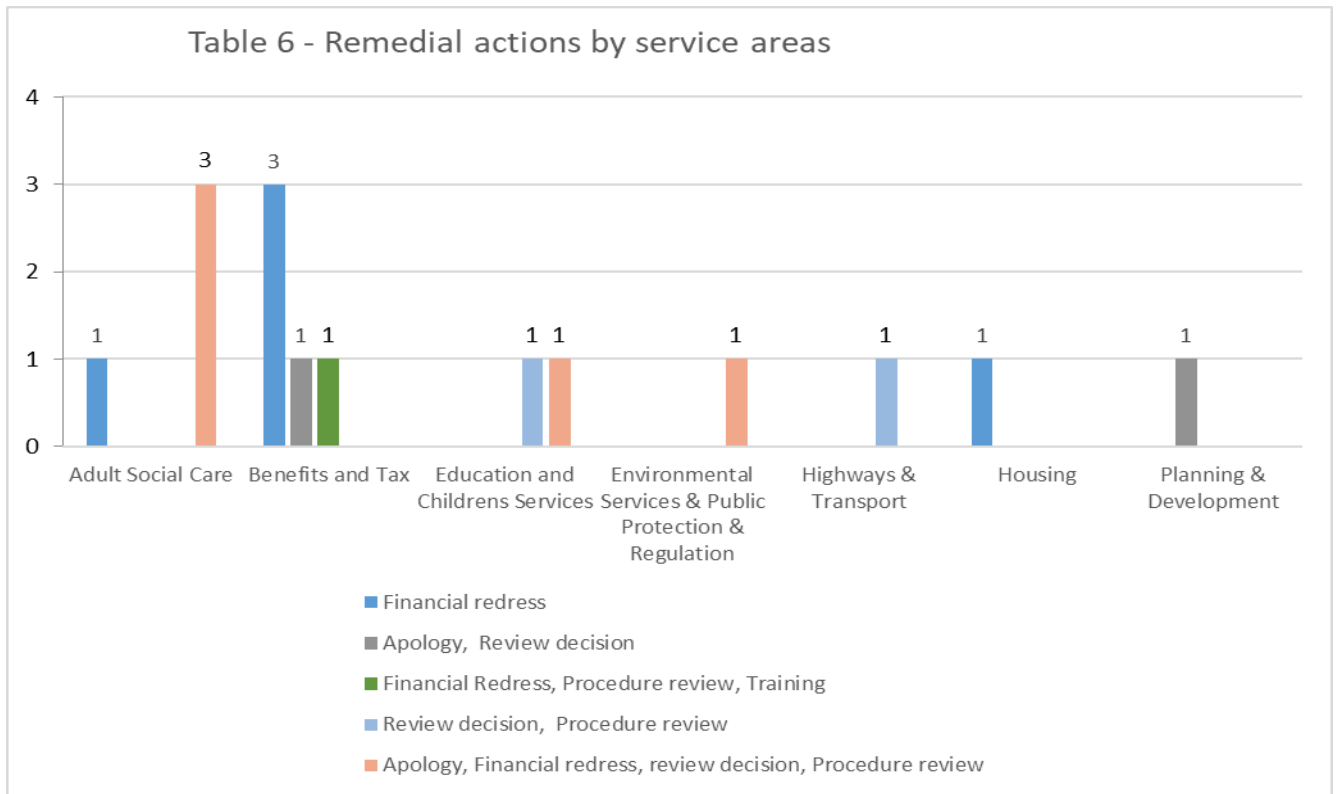


The table below benchmarks Plymouth's upheld rate against the upheld rate of Council's in the CIPFA benchmarking group.

Authority Name	Total complaints received	Volume of detailed investigations undertaken	Volume upheld	Upheld rate
Bolton	75	29	24	83%
Bury	65	16	6	38%
Calderdale	66	19	9	47%
Derby City	68	18	10	56%
Dudley	75	17	13	76%
Leeds	180	47	21	45%
Medway	76	26	13	50%
North East Lincolnshire UA	30	6	1	17%
North Tyneside	56	12	6	50%
Plymouth	107	20	18	90%
Rotherham	60	14	6	43%
St Helens	40	11	5	45%
Stockton-on-Tees	43	13	5	38%
Torbay	52	17	12	71%
Trafford	79	26	20	77%
Warrington	34	9	5	56%

The LGSCO publish upheld information by Council and do not provide a breakdown of the upheld complaints by department so we are unable to benchmark our upheld complaints in any more detail at this stage. Contact will be made with the LGSCO to request a breakdown by department in order for a benchmarking exercise to be undertaken. Benchmarking by complaint volumes is provided with the next section of this report (section 4).

The table below summarises the remedial action by service area as recommended by the LGSCO.



Appendix B provides more information around the 107 decisions made and outcomes of detailed investigations. Clarification of the categories of decisions made, as well as the remedies and outcomes, can be found in Appendix C.

Appendix D illustrates more detail on the remedial action recommended by the LGSCO following their detailed investigations. Lessons learned from each of the upheld complaints can be found in Section 2.1 and within Section 4 by each of the service area's.

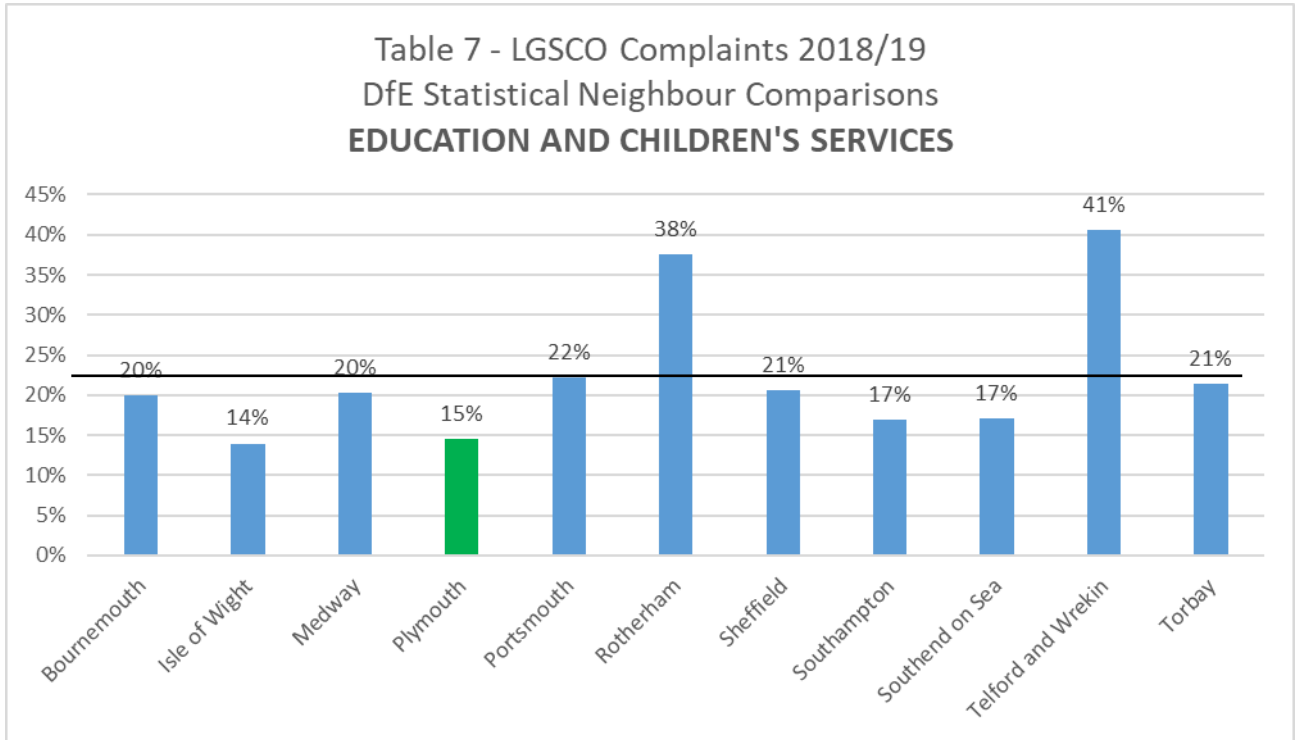
Appendix E shows the volumes and upheld rates of corporate and statutory complaints in comparison with LGSCO complaints.



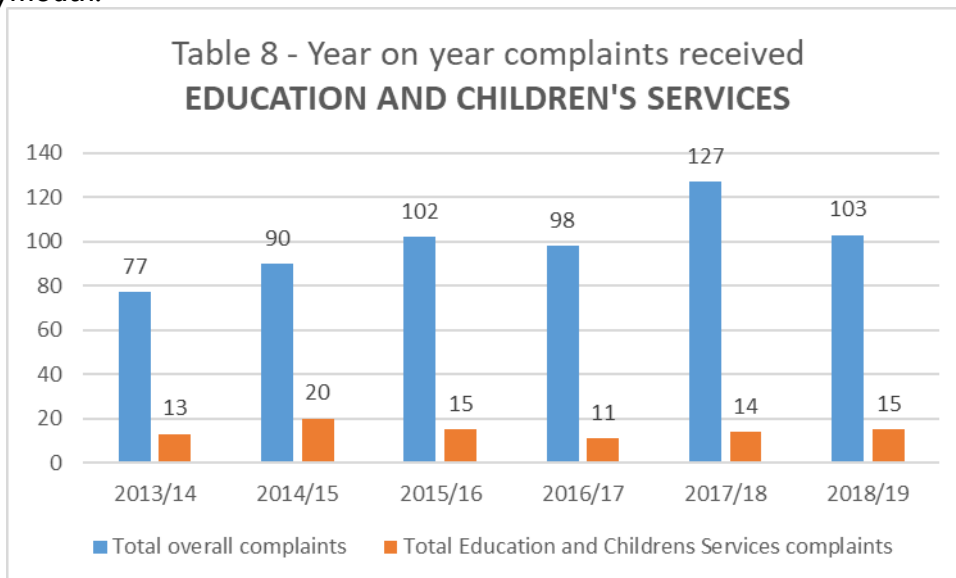
**4. ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FOR PLYMOUTH BY THE LGSCO**

**4.1 Education and Children’s Services**

The average amount of complaints received about Education and Children’s Services within the DfE benchmarking group is 14 (22% of total overall complaints received). Plymouth performs favourably with less complaints received than the statistical neighbour average.



In total the LGSCO received 15 complaints and enquiries relating to Education and Children’s Services in Plymouth.

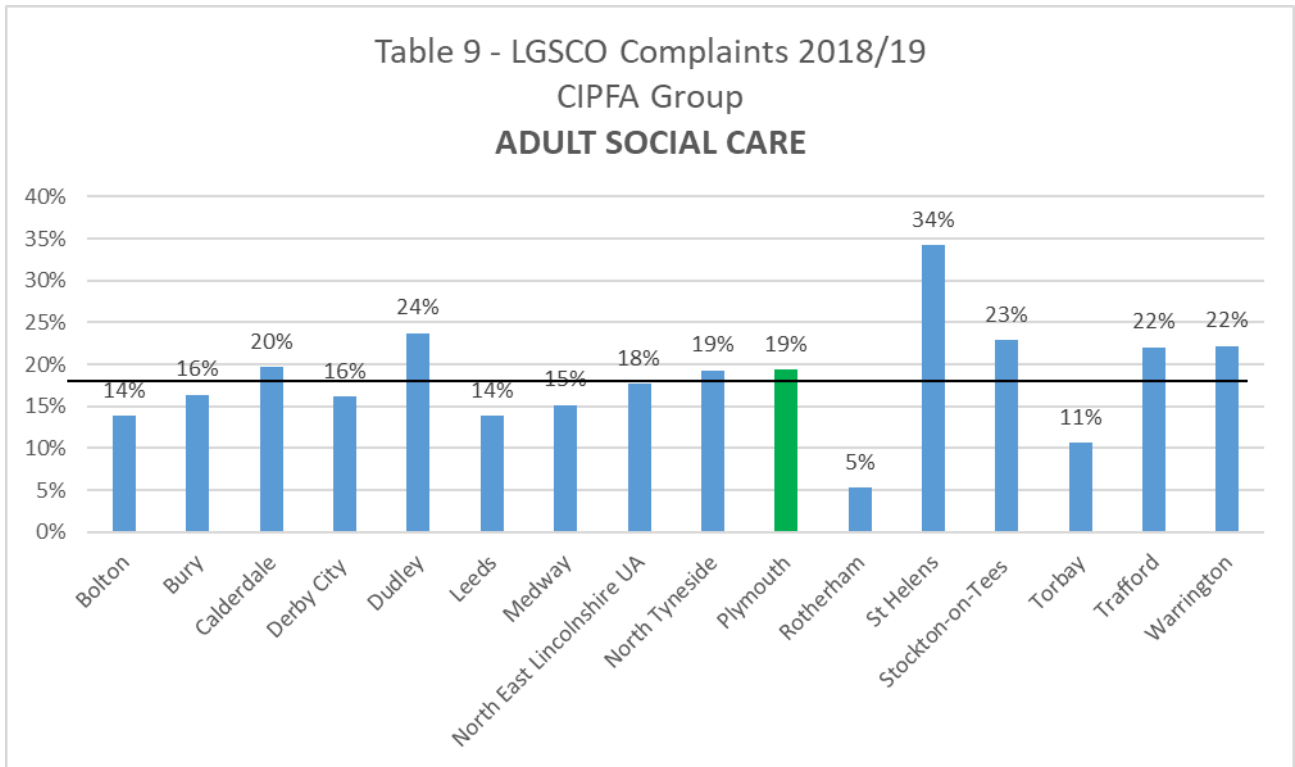


**UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

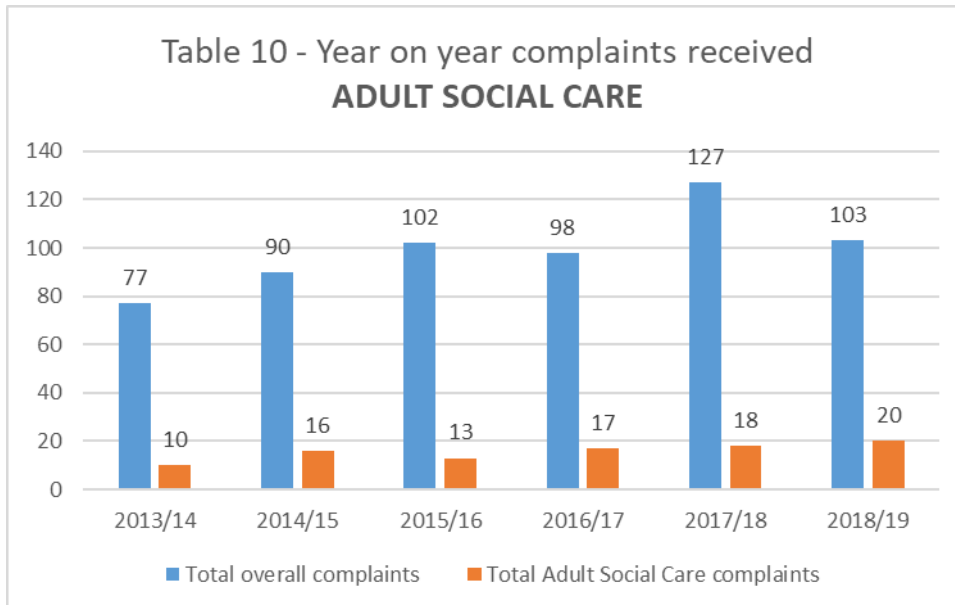
Of the 15 complaints received by the LGSCO, two were upheld. These two complaints were about School Transport and as a result policies and procedures have been updated.

### 4.2 Adult Social Care Services

The average complaints received about Adult Social Care Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 18% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs around the average against the family group.



In total Plymouth received 20 complaints and enquiries relating to Adult Social Care Services. This is the highest seen over recent years.

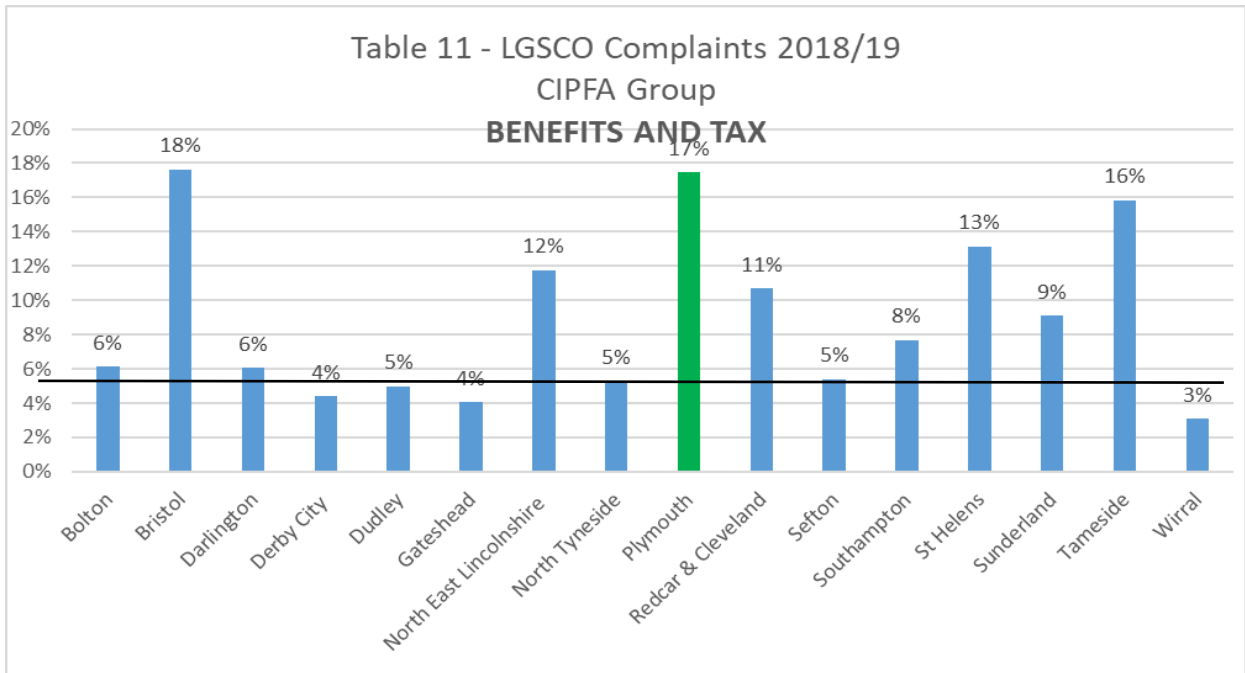


### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

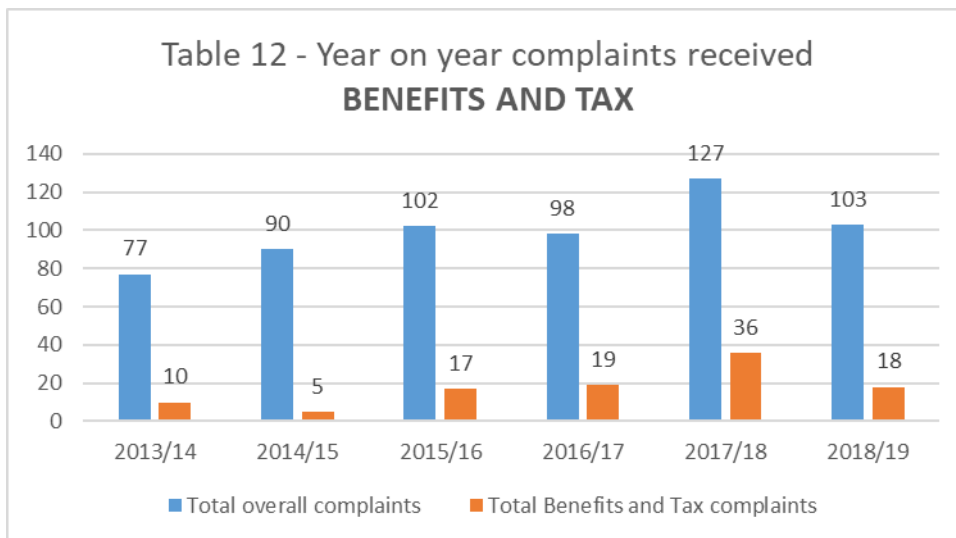
Of the 20 complaints received by the LGSCO, 4 were upheld. Following these cases Adult Social Care complaints handling, and the relevant policies and processes, have been reviewed and communicated to staff. Learning has also been shared across commissioned providers. Livewell South West now also share data on a monthly basis to ensure complaints handling processes are optimised.

### 4.3 Benefits and Tax Services

The average complaints received about Benefits and Tax Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 9% of total overall complaints. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average, with 17% of all complaints received relating to Benefits and Tax.



In total Plymouth received 18 complaints and enquiries relating to Benefits and Tax Services. This is a significant reduction in complaints escalated in comparison to last year which totalled 36.



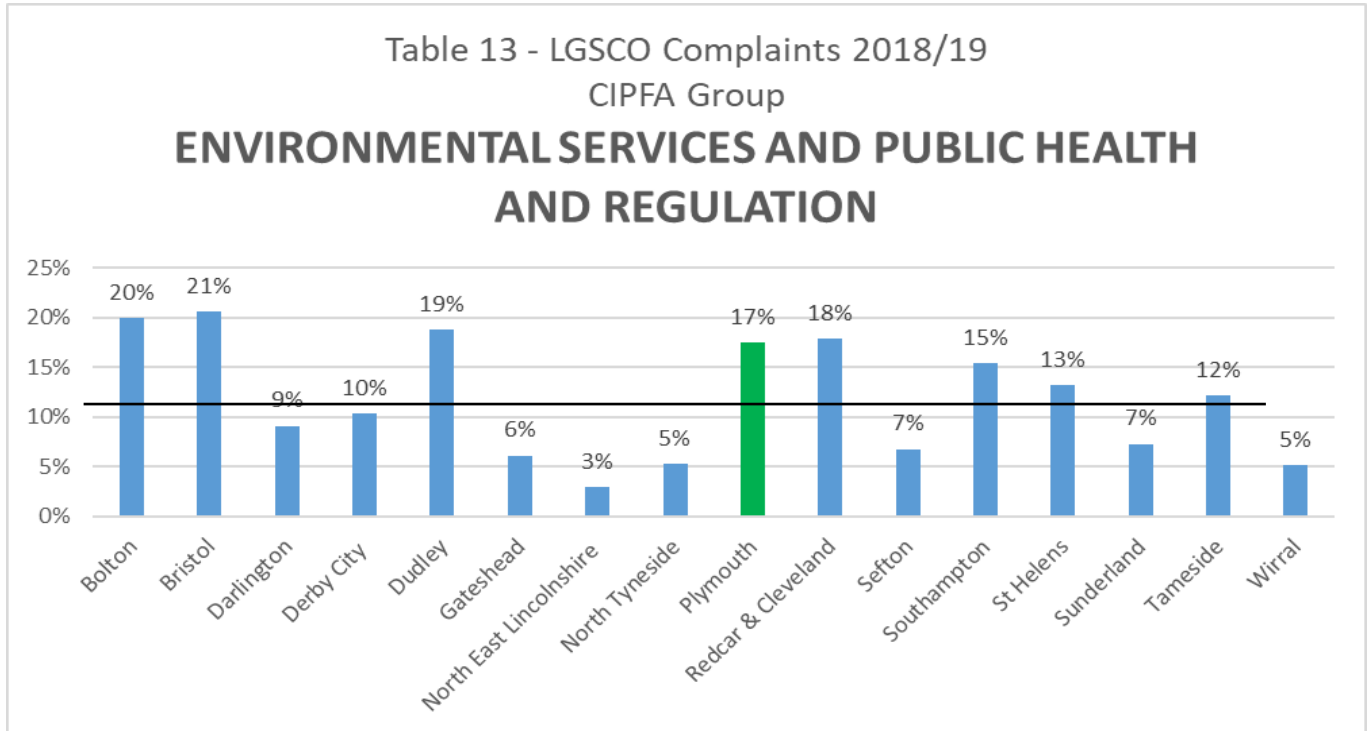
### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The upheld rate for complaints about Benefits and Tax Services is 25% which is higher than the average upheld rate across the CIPFA family group which stands at 13%.

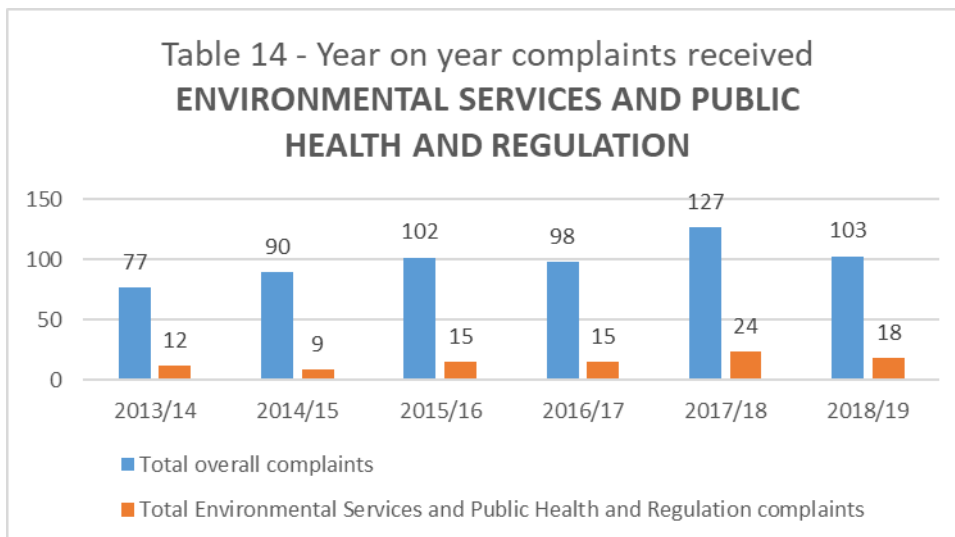
Of the 18 complaints received, five complaints were upheld by the LGSCO. Systems and information for customers have been updated as a result of these complaints as well as staff training being undertaken and guidance notes being updated.

#### 4.4 Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation

The average complaints received about Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 13% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received 18 complaints and enquiries relating to Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation Services. This is a reduction in comparison with the number of complaints escalated to the LGSCO last year which totalled 24.



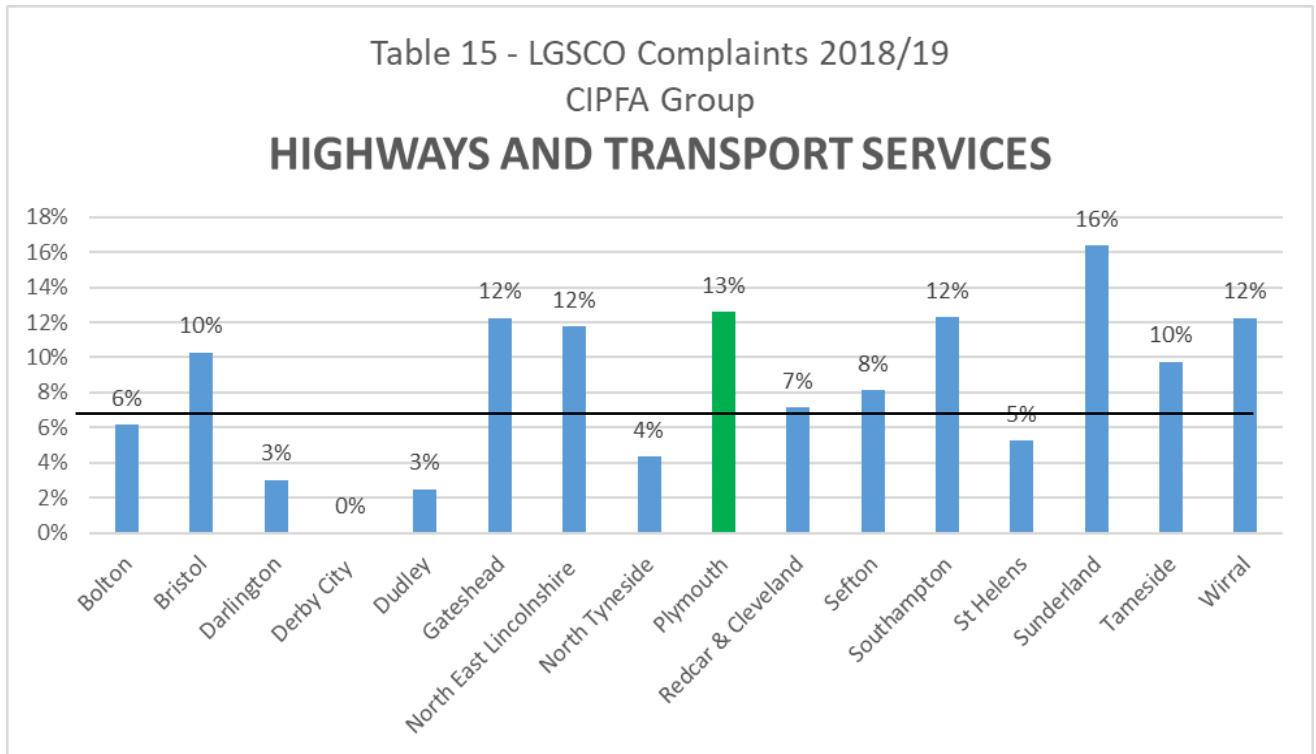
#### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The upheld rate for complaints about Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation complaints is 11% which is slightly higher than the average upheld rate across the group which is 8%.

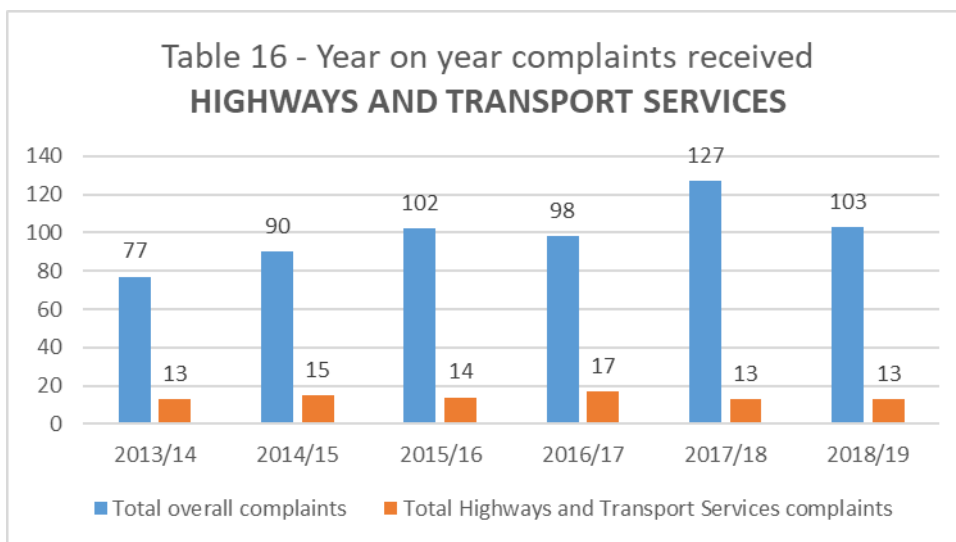
Of the 18 complaints received, two were upheld and related to a delay in service delivery and incorrect information on the website. The policy and website were updated as a result and works were completed by the relevant team.

### 4.5 Highways and Transport Services

The average complaints received about Highways and Transport Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 7% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received 13 complaints and enquiries relating to Highways and Transport Services.



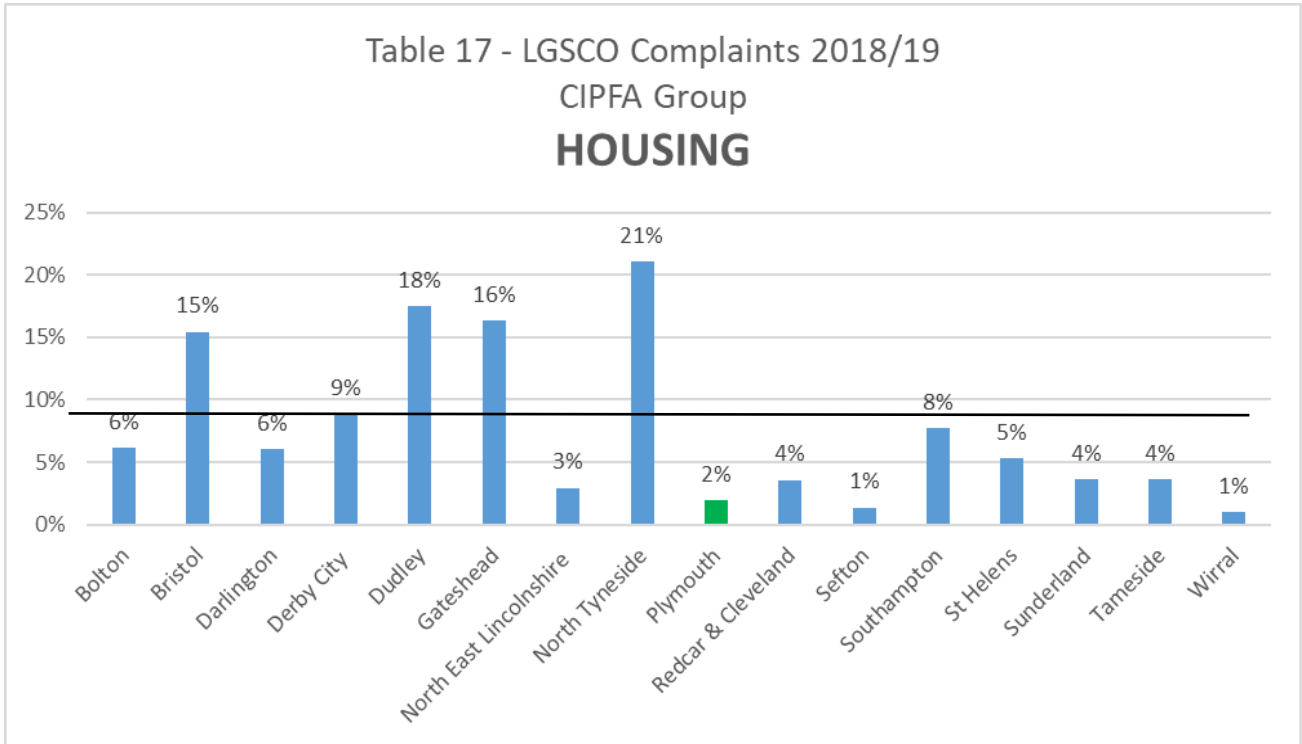
### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The upheld rate is 8% which is slightly higher than the average upheld rate across the group which is 6%.

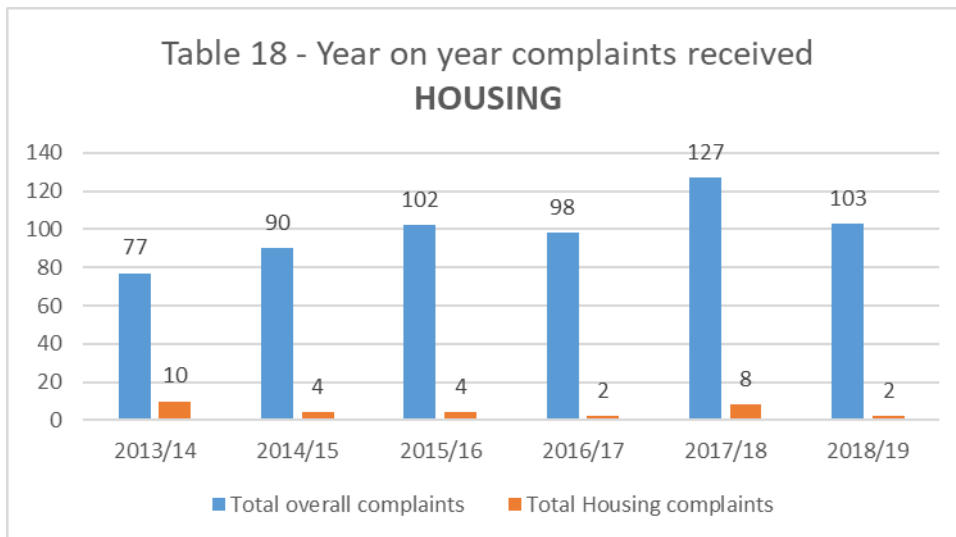
Of the 13 complaints received, one complaint was upheld by the LGSCO and related to the Blue Badge scheme. Lessons learned from the case have meant that the assessment process was reviewed and a new style assessment tool and assessment guidance for applicants has been implemented.

### 4.6 Housing Services

The average complaints received about Housing Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 9% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received two complaints and enquiries relating to Housing Services in 2018/19.

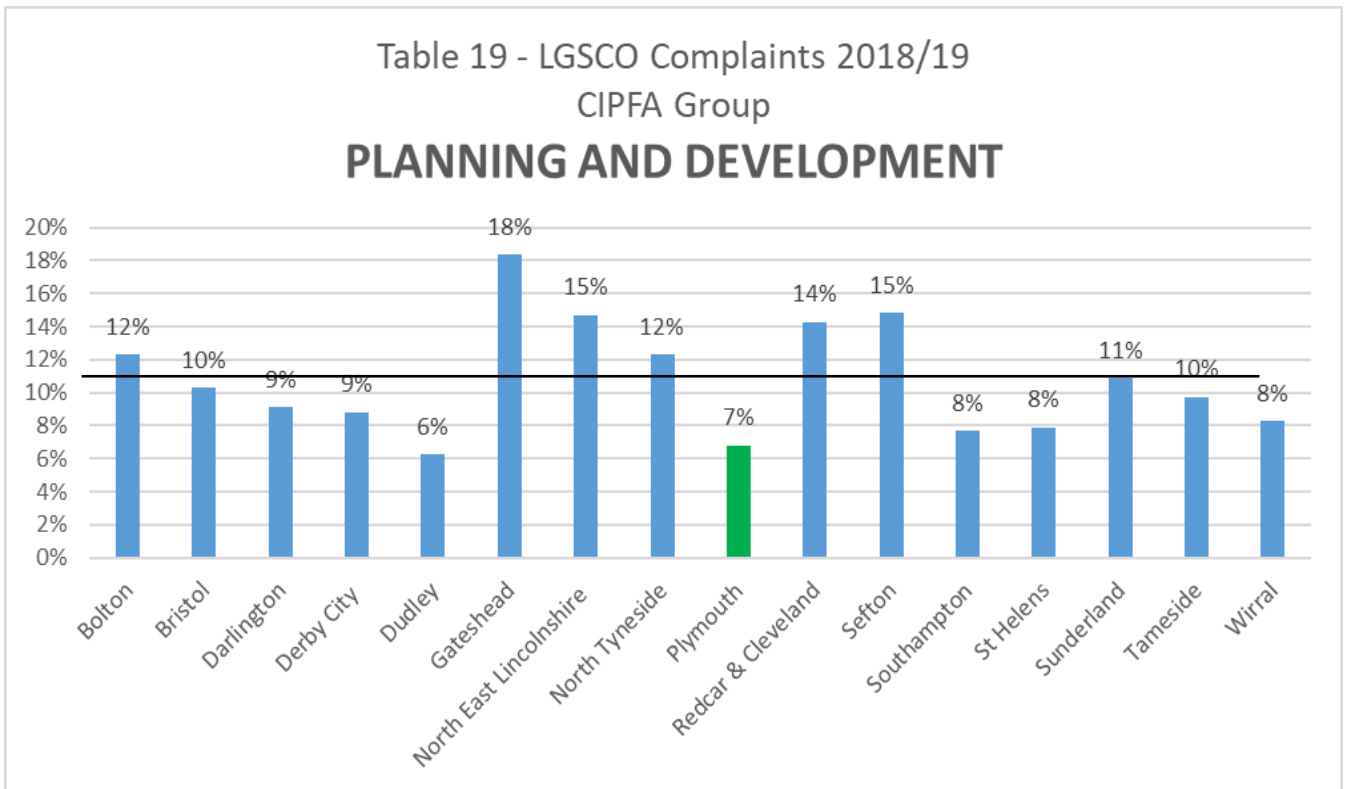


### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

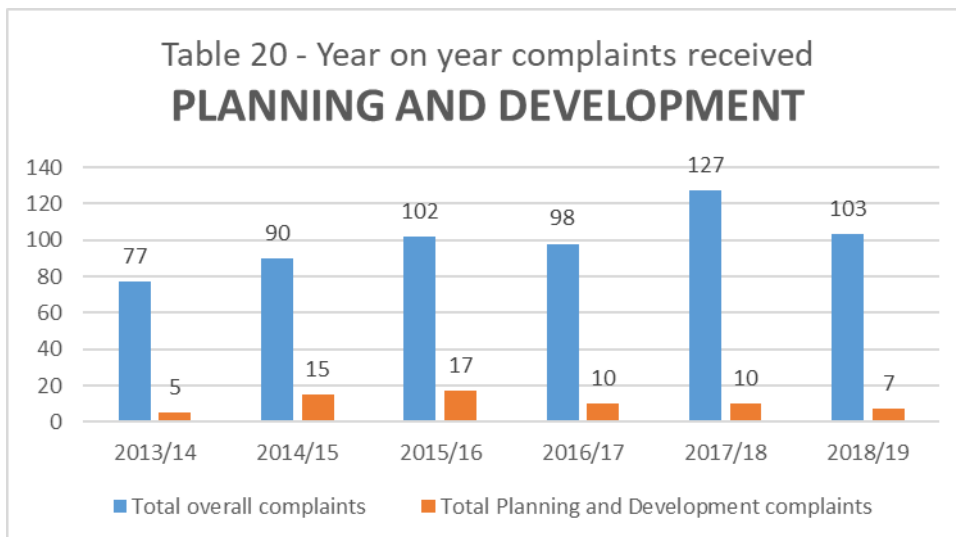
Of the two complaints received, two were upheld. Lessons learned from one of the cases resulted in working practices being updated.

**4.7 Planning and Development Services**

The average complaints received about Planning and Development Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 11% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received seven complaints and enquiries relating to Planning and Development Services in 2018/19. This is the lowest number received over the past five years.

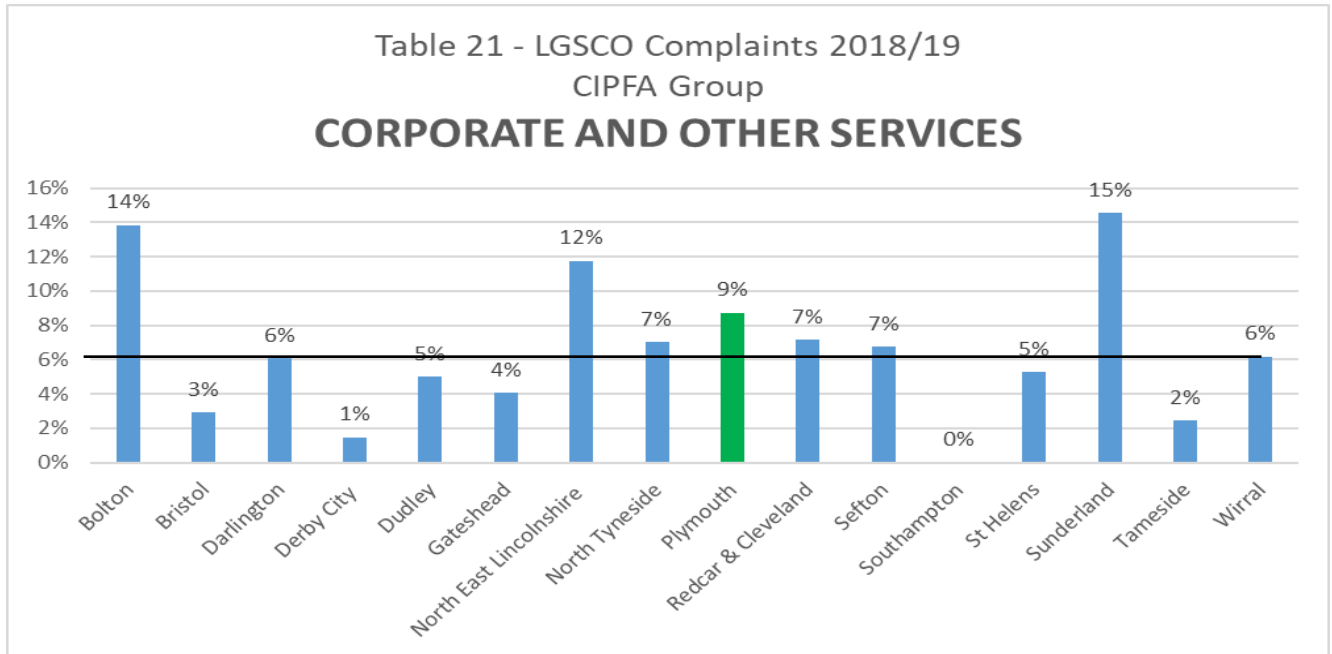


**UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

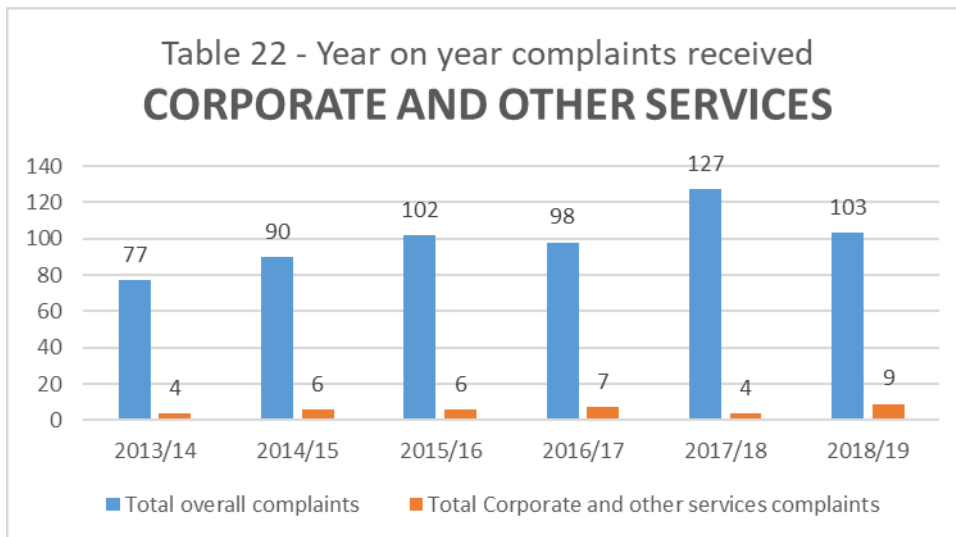
Of the seven complaints received, one was upheld and protocols have been put in place as a result.

### 4.8 Corporate Services

The average complaints received about Corporate and Other Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 6% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received nine complaints and enquiries relating to Corporate and Other Services in 2018/19. This is an increase on previous years.



### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The upheld rate is 11% which is lower than the average upheld rate across the group which is 19%. Of the nine complaints received, one was upheld. It is recommended that the Acceptable Behaviour Policy is reviewed, approved and communicated.



**APPENDIX B – Complaints received and decisions made by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 2018/19**

	Total complaints received	Decisions				Detailed investigations	
		Invalid or Incomplete	Advice Given	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld
Adult Social Care	20			9	6		4
Benefits and Tax	18			10	5		5
Corporate and Other Services	9			3	5		1
Education and Children's Services	15	2		6	3		2
Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation	18			13	5		2
Highways and Transport	13	1		2	8	1	1
Housing	2			1			2
Planning and Development	7		1	2	4	1	1
Other	1	1					
<b>2018/19 Totals</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>2017/18 Totals</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>15</i>

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## **APPENDIX C – How to understand the categories in the breakdown tables on the LGSCO’s Annual Review Letter 2018/19**

### **Decided cases**

The LGO report their decisions by the following outcomes:

- Invalid or incomplete. The LGO were not given enough information to consider the issue.
- Advice given. The LGO provided early advice or explained where to go for the right help.
- Referred back for local resolution. The LGO found the complaint was brought to them too early because the organisation involved was not given the chance to consider it first.
- Closed after initial enquiries. The LGO assessed the complaint but decided against completing a full investigation. This might be because the law says they’re not allowed to investigate it, or because it would not be an effective use of public funds if they did.
- Upheld. The LGO completed a detailed investigation and found evidence of fault, or they found the organisation accepted fault early on.
- Not upheld. The LGO completed a detailed investigation but did not find evidence of fault.

The uphold rate shows how often the LGO find organisations get things wrong. It is expressed as a percentage of the detailed investigations they complete.

### **Remedy and Compliance Outcomes**

When the LGO find fault in the way an organisation carries out its duties, they consider whether this caused an injustice to the person who was affected. If so, they make recommendations about what the organisation should do to put things right.

- Authority provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This is the number of cases in which the LGO decided that, while it did get things wrong, the organisation offered a satisfactory way to resolve it before the complaint came to them.
- Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations. These are cases where the LGO recommended a remedy to put things right for the person affected. Their recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault. The LGO monitor authorities to ensure they comply with their recommendations. The compliance rate records the percentage of cases where the organisation provided satisfactory evidence of their compliance with the recommendations.

Where the LGO provide the average uphold rate, satisfactory remedy rate and compliance rate of similar authorities, they group together the following types of authority to calculate the average rates:

- Metropolitan districts
- London boroughs
- Unitary authorities
- County councils
- District councils.

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**APPENDIX D – Remedies for those complaints upheld by the LGSCO in 2018/19 for Plymouth**

	Upheld	Remedies for those upheld							
		Financial redress	Decision reconsideration, Apology, Enforcement	Apology, Review decision	No further action	Apology, Financial redress	Financial Redress, Procedure Review, Training	Review decision, Procedure review	Apology, Financial redress, review decision, Procedure review
Adult Social Care	4					1			3
Benefits and Tax	5	1		1		2	1		
Corporate and Other Services	1				1				
Education and Children's Services	2							1	1
Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation	2				1				1
Highways and Transport	1							1	
Housing	2	1			1				
Planning and Development	1		1						
<b>2018/19 Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

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**APPENDIX E – Corporate and Statutory Complaints 2018/19**

The LGSCO only consider complaints that have already been through the authority’s complaints process. The following tables have been included to show complaint statistics from our corporate and statutory complaints processes in 2018/19.

The table below shows the number of corporate complaints closed in the Council’s digital platform, Firmstep, during 2018/19 and includes the number of complaints upheld with a percentage upheld rate.

	Children's Services	Executive Office	People	Place	Finance	ODPH	Transformation and Change	Customer and Corporate Services
<b>No. of Complaints Closed</b>	30	18	76	6058	21	114	470	72
<b>No. Upheld</b>	12	3	11	2994	6	20	190	31
<b>Upheld rate (%)</b>	40%	16.67%	14.47%	49.42%	28.57%	17.54%	40.43%	43.06%

The table below shows the number of statutory complaints closed during 2018/19 and includes the number of complaints upheld or partially upheld with a percentage upheld/partially upheld rate.

	Children's Social Care	Adults Social Care
<b>No. of Complaints closed</b>	92	194
<b>No. Upheld</b>	16	42
<b>No. Partially Upheld</b>	41	78
<b>Upheld/Partially Upheld rate (%)</b>	62%	62%

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**APPENDIX F – LGSCO ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

**PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL**

**Subject:** Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Annual Report 2017/18

**Committee:** Audit Committee

**Date:** 1 October 2018

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Sally Haydon

**CMT Member:** Andrew Hardingham  
(Interim Strategic Director for Transformation and Change)

**Author:** Helen Cocks, Customer Liaison Manager

**Contact details** Tel: 01752 304414  
email: helen.cocks@plymouth.gov.uk

**Ref:**

**Key Decision:** No

**Part:** 1

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**Purpose of the report:**

Every year the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) sends each council an annual review letter which outlines the Ombudsman's position in relation to complaints monitoring. The publication of the 2017/8 annual report provides an opportunity to review and discuss complaints that have been received about Plymouth during the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

After investigation, the LGSCO upheld only fifteen complaints of the one hundred and twenty one (12.4%) complaints they made decisions about in relation to Plymouth City Council. This is an improvement on the rate upheld for 2016/17 which was 14.7%.

This briefing provides analysis of the LGSCO annual review data and presents an annual summary for Plymouth comparing our local statistics with the relative benchmarks. It also highlights the lessons learned, how individual teams and services have responded to the LGSCO complaints and what our Council has done differently following LGSCO intervention.

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**The Corporate Plan:**

The analysis and organisational learning contained within this paper will contribute towards new corporate performance indicators: percentage of complaints resolved at first stage and percentage of complaints resolved at second stage. This indicator sits within the 'How we will deliver' theme, supporting the council to provide quality public services and listening to our customers and communities.

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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land:**

No specific financial implications result from the LGSCO report.

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**Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:**

None

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**Equality and Diversity**

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

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**Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:**

1. To approve the Recommendations set out in paragraph 2.3 of this Report.
  2. To note the progress made to date and approve the proposals set out in paragraph 2.4 of this Report.
- 

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

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**Published work / information:**

[Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Report 2018](#)

**Background papers:**

None

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**Sign off:**

Fin	akh.18 .19.99	Leg	ALT/ 3050 8	Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Andrew Hardingham, Interim Director for Transformation & Change													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

## **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publishes annual complaint statistics for councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. This report in part provides an analysis of those statistics for Plymouth for 2017/18. This report also attempts to capture the lessons learned from the complaints.

### **Complaint Statistics**

Peer group benchmarking is provided for each of the service area sections. However, care is required in interpreting the data information in this report as the volume of complaints against an authority do not prove that it is a 'poor' or 'good' performing council. The LGSCO suggests that that high volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. They also suggest that low complaint volumes can be a worrying sign that an organisation is not alive to user feedback, rather than always being an indicator that all is well.

### **Organisational Learning**

Currently, the LGSCO sends complaints via the link officer, the Customer Liaison Manager, within the Customer Services Department. The complaint is then monitored centrally to ensure that the LGSCO receives the required responses in the timescales set with each case. Once a complaint is received it is disseminated into the relevant service area, where an investigation takes place and a response is formulated as well as remedial action undertaken. Once the LGSCO has concluded its involvement, responsibility for remedial action is held locally within each team/service where the complaint was upheld.

## 2 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD, KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 2.1 Complaints upheld summary

The table below provides summarised details for all LGSCO upheld complaints

Service	Complaint Description	Remedial Action	Changes and Learning
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	1	Complaint received about failure to properly assess & meet care needs, or to assist in the moving to an alternative accommodation	Reassessment  A new SW was appointed and the assessment rescheduled (both client and LGO were fully updated when it became clear the original SW would be absent long term). The assessment took place, the client was switched to a commissioned service rather than direct payments due to the difficulties experienced in finding a suitable care provider. ASC complaints process reviewed and wef May 2018 all ASC complaints are investigated under a revised Livewell South West process. Improvements will be monitored and reviewed.
	2	Complaint received that the Council proposed reducing care and support following a reassessment of needs and delayed agreeing support plan. This caused distress and worry and incurred legal costs in challenging the Council's views.	Financial Redress £1539  An apology was issued and refund of legal costs. An additional payment was made to cover time, trouble and distress. The SW did not consider all medical information before proposing to reduce care and support package. The package was not reduced at any time during this dispute. Specifics of this case were followed up with supervision sessions.  ASC complaints process reviewed and wef May 2018 all ASC complaints are investigated under a revised Livewell South West process. Improvements will be monitored and reviewed.
	3	Complaint received re: delay in completing care assessment in 2015; Refused to allow Direct Payments to hire a personal assistant (PA), and did not explain the decision; Changed the Social Worker unnecessarily several times; Rejected request for two extra hours of care provision per day, and did not explain the decision; Failed to keep proper records, delay in responding to complaints.	Financial Redress £200  Fault found in relation to communication of reasoning to reject two additional hours and fully record its decision. There was also delay in responding and dealing with some of the complaint. An apology has been issued and a payment provided for the injustice occurred. ASC complaints process reviewed and wef May 2018 all ASC complaints are investigated under a revised Livewell South West process. Improvements will be monitored and reviewed.

<b>Planning &amp; Development</b>	4	Complaint received regarding rejection at the validation stage to an application for planning consent for the conversion of a neighbouring business unit to residential units in 2014; a. Publish all relevant information about the application on its website at the time; b. Refer to and consider all relevant planning policies in the officer's report; c. Take relevant information in to account when granting consent; d. Properly consider what insulation was needed to protect occupiers from noise created by his nightclub and ensure it was in place. As a result, the commercial viability has been affected.	Apology, Procedure change	Procedures have been changed as a result of the LGO decision; - Guidance on this matter has been written in the DM Manual and Team Managers have been informed not to sign off any decision notice that excludes a local validation requirement unless a clear justification is provided by the case officer as part of the officer report and / or through another written explanation. - Most responses are now gathered through the consultation cloud in IDOX so will be automatically uploaded on the website. However if a consultation response is provided through another source (e.g. email) then it is the responsibility of the case officer to ensure it is uploaded to the website. - Case officers have been informed to provide more comprehensive notes of site visits and to record these on IDOX. - Team managers will regularly remind staff of the importance of following the DM Manual.
<b>Benefits and Tax</b>	5	Complaint re: decision on liability for Council Tax and failure to update its database to reflect the customers desired billing address	Financial Redress £93.50	All staff members reminded of procedures with provision of additional training as required.
	6	Complaint received that the Council failed to inform customer of the terms of a payment arrangement for council tax arrears, before it referred the case to the enforcement agents.	Financial Redress £75	All staff members reminded of procedures with provision of additional training as required.
	7	Complaint received regarding the Council not responding to the complainant's contact about application to its emergency fund.	No further action required	Customer was on a single point of contact (SPOC) register. SPOC process to be reviewed.

		No injustice caused, as the Council no longer has an emergency fund.		
<b>Environment al Services &amp; Public Protection &amp; Regulation</b>	8	Complaint received, applied for an assisted bin collection, it took six months for the problem to be resolved. Considers that the current system is not user friendly for people with dementia.	Financial Redress £50, Procedure or policy change/review	A review of the assisted collection policy and the assessment process and the criteria for eligibility will be undertaken in light of the lessons learned from this case.
<b>Highways and Transport</b>	9	Complaint received that the Council wrongly decided eligibility for a parking permit following a change of use application.	Reassessment, Procedure or policy change/review	Parking Services has amended its policy so that residential properties that have parking permit exclusions can now be appealed where it can be demonstrated the change has not led to an increase in parking demand and/or that the scheme zone is undersubscribed.
<b>Housing</b>	10	Complaint received about the Council's handling of request for housing help in a potential eviction situation. Fault by the Council due to accumulation of significant rent and council tax arrears.	Financial Redress £600, Training	Frontline training was addressed. In April 2018 the service responded to new legislation and a new IT system which have changed the way the service is providing advice. Staff have been merged across Customer Services and Community Connections so that training and processes are managed and joined up.
	11	Discontinued this investigation because the Council has offered a satisfactory remedy for the complaint and that the person was wrongly charged for cleaning and other works carried out at their former temporary accommodation.	Apology	Property management for temporary accommodation provision e.g. maintenance or repairs/damage/license breaching etc is now undertaken by a property management company as a result of lessons learned regarding customer support and/or evidence collection.
<b>Education and Children's Services</b>	12	Fault found in the handling of this complaint re: PCCs refusal to agree to a request for investigation at stage 2 of the statutory children's complaints procedure.	Financial redress £150, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Procedure or policy change/review	The complaint has now been accepted at Stg2 and investigation is ongoing. Financial redress has been paid. Learning has been addressed with the team and a review of procedures are due to take place within 8 weeks.
	13	Fault found in the handling of this	Financial redress	The complaint has now been accepted at Stg2 and investigation is ongoing.

	complaint re: PCCs refusal to agree to a request for investigation at stage 2 of the statutory children's complaints procedure.	£150, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Procedure or policy change/review	Financial redress has been paid. Learning has been addressed with the team and a review of procedures are due to take place within 8 weeks.
14	Fault found in the handling of this complaint re: PCCs refusal to agree to a request for investigation at stage 2 of the statutory children's complaints procedure.	Financial redress £150, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Procedure or policy change/review	The complaint has now been accepted at Stg2 and investigation is ongoing. Financial redress has been paid. Learning has been addressed with the team and a review of procedures are due to take place within 8 weeks.
15	The Ombudsman found significant delays in the Council producing an Education Health and Care Plan. However, this has not caused an injustice, as education was available throughout the period and an appeal to Tribunal would not have resolved any concerns any earlier.	No further action required	The delay in finalising an Education, Health and Care Plan had been due to negotiation around the setting for provision. Plans are now finalised within the timescale of 20 weeks. Further negotiation then takes place to resolve the issues after the plan is finalised.

## 2.2 Key Messages

The key messages from the analysis of the 2017/18 LGSCO Annual Report data are as follows:

- Plymouth has seen an increase in the total number of complaints received by the LGSCO in comparison to the previous year; ninety eight complaints in 16/17 and one hundred and twenty seven complaints in 17/18.
- Whilst more complaints were received, we have seen a decrease in the number of complaints that require a detailed investigation by the LGSCO; 26% in 16/17 and 21% in 17/18.
- There was also a reduction in the upheld rate. The LGSCO upheld only fifteen complaints of the one hundred and twenty one (12.4%) complaints they made decisions about in relation to Plymouth City Council. This is an improvement on the rate upheld in 2016/17 which was 14.7%.
- Highways and Transport were the only area to show a decrease in total number of complaints in comparison to the 2016/17 report.
- There has been a significant increase in complaints received about Benefits and Tax; from nineteen complaints in 16/17 to thirty four in 17/18. Although, only five (14%) of the thirty four complaints required a detailed investigation which is a significant decrease in comparison with 16/17 which was 37%.
- Adult Social Care and Education and Children's Services account for 46% of the upheld complaints.
- The LGSCO has reported experiencing the Council to be very resistant to accepting fault despite clear and numerous failings in implementing the statutory children's complaints procedures.
- In response to the 2015/16 Annual Report, PCC implemented a two stage complaints process on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. This aimed to reduce the number of complaints being escalated to the LGSCO and signs are positive after an analysis of the first quarter of 2018/19. Between 1.04.2018 and 30.06.2018 the number of complaints requiring a decision from the LGSCO was four, this is a reduction in comparison with the first quarter of 2017/18 when twelve decisions were made. This position will be monitored throughout the remainder of the year.

## 2.3 Recommendations

As a result of the data analysed from the complaints escalated to LGSCO the following recommendations have been put together to ensure that PCC is learning lessons from customer feedback;

1. Address the comments made by the LGSCO in respect of statutory children's complaints procedures.
2. Work with Livewell South West to strengthen the complaints handling process and ensure lessons learned are driving service improvements across organisations in respect of Adult Social Care.
3. Work with Street Services to improve the customer experience (complaints are included in the LGSCO category Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation).



4. Further develop the monitoring of corporate performance in respect of customer feedback and ensure customer feedback is used to resolve any issues through the implementation of lessons learned.

## 2.4 Progress update

The following activity has occurred to support delivery of the recommendations:

**Recommendation 1** – Customer Liaison Manager is working to join up the activity undertaken in relation to complaints management across Council departments, particularly focusing on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of Feedback Coordinators, Investigating Officers and the use of complaints management systems. This includes working more closely with the Statutory Complaints Team, currently based in Finance, and ensuring monitoring and reporting processes are in place at the same standard as corporate complaints monitoring.

Children’s Social Care has seen a change in structure with a number of new managers appointed, resulting in investigations taking longer than expected and sometimes not as robustly as expected. The Statutory Complaints Team have provided some adhoc training to new managers and are currently developing a new training package, in conjunction with Heads of Service, to cover undertaking investigations and providing responses to complaints.

The Children’s Social Care complaint process has three stages. Should a complainant remain dissatisfied with their response at the first stage, they can request for their concerns to be escalated to a second stage. Stage 2 involves an external investigation being completed by an Investigating Officer and overseen by an Independent Person, this has a financial impact of approximately £4,000 per investigation. The Statutory Complaints Team Leader and Service Manager, or Head of Service, meet with any complainants suggesting dissatisfaction after stage 1 to try and reach a mutually satisfactory outcome and avoid moving to stage 2. In 2017/18, resolutions at informal meetings avoided £52,000 worth of stage 2 complaint costs.

**Recommendation 2** – The Customer Liaison Manager has been working with the Information Governance Manager, Complaints Team Leader and Head of Service to review current processes. A meeting has also been undertaken with the Livewell Southwest Complaints and Litigation Manager. This resulted in the design of a ‘to be’ process for managing Adult Social Care complaints, the role of the triage process on receipt of complaints, reporting requirements to ensure compliance with timescales, and an agreed regular meeting schedule for reviewing the process across the organisations.

**Recommendation 3** – A Street Services Modernisation Board meets monthly and has invited the Customer Liaison Manager to provide a key link between the service and customer services. This includes a focussed effort on setting customer expectations through consistency of messaging across the website, the contact centre/first stop shop and digital systems as well as updating policy wording, service standards and associated performance measures as the service modernises. Customer feedback, including complaints, is monitored on a monthly basis and a quarterly review was also considered at Place DMT. Street Services are using feedback to create hotspot mapping to help identify and realign issues as well as using learning from complaints. This has resulted in action being taken within the back office function to improve the quality and timeliness of responses to complaints, particularly at Stage 2.

**Recommendation 4** – Departmental Balanced Scorecards now include measures of;

- Number of complaints received

- % of complaints upheld
- % of complaints closed within timeframe
- Number of LGO complaints received
- Number of LGO decisions made.

Information is also provided in the narrative that details the stage 1 & 2 breakdown for the complaint's indicators.

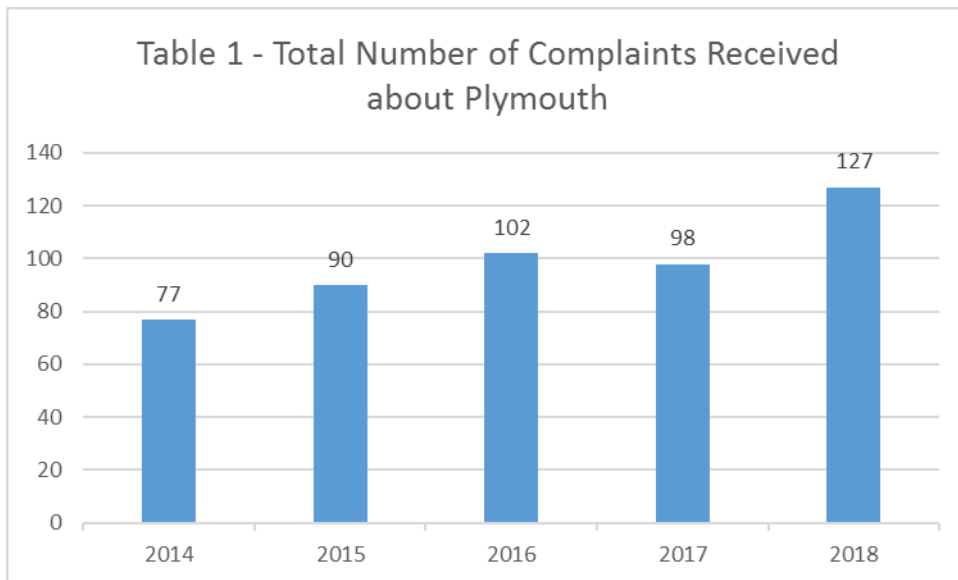
Whilst measures are important to understand our performance, a key focus will be placed on how services use customer feedback to resolve issues. Lessons learned from upheld complaints and customer feedback will be monitored at regular performance meetings and built into corporate quarterly performance monitoring. Each quarterly report will include complaints and any specific lessons learned from departments; quarter 1 monitoring included clarification of action being taken in Children's Social Care and Street Services as a result of customer feedback.

**3. COMPLAINT STATISTICS 2017/18 OVERALL PLYMOUTH RESULTS**

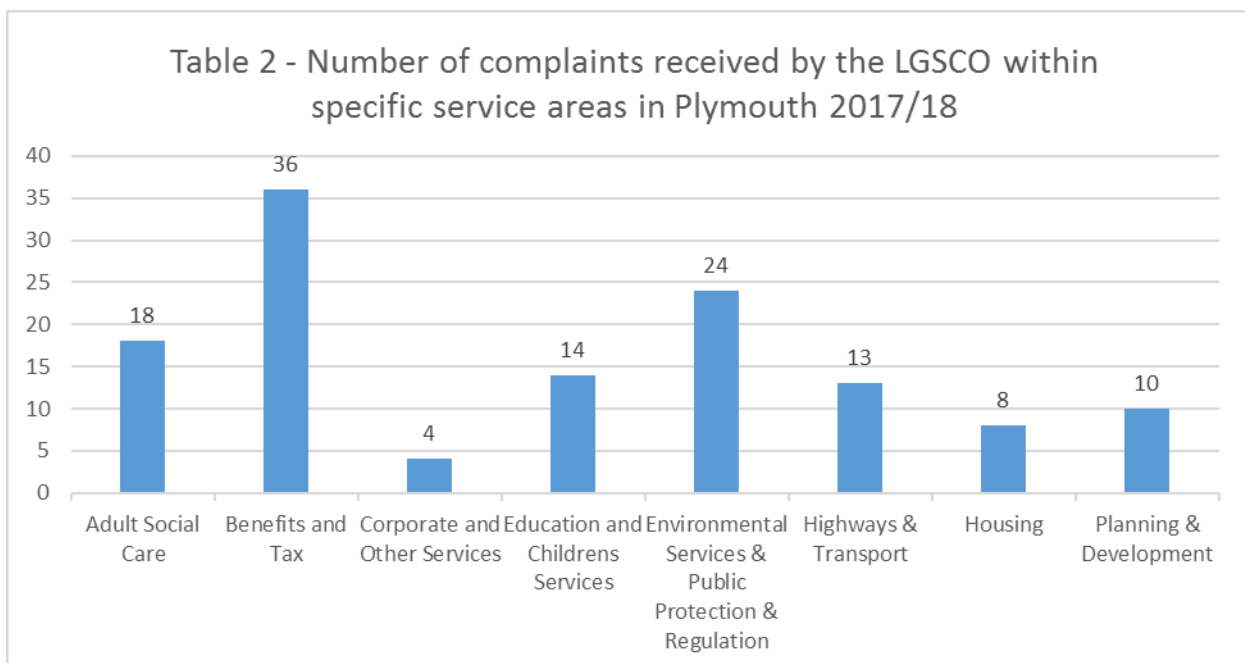
**3.1 Complaints received**

It is important to note that not all complaints are decided in the same year that they are received. The number of complaints received by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 2017/18 was one hundred and twenty seven. However figures in this report mainly reflect the decisions received during 17/18 which totalled one hundred and twenty one.

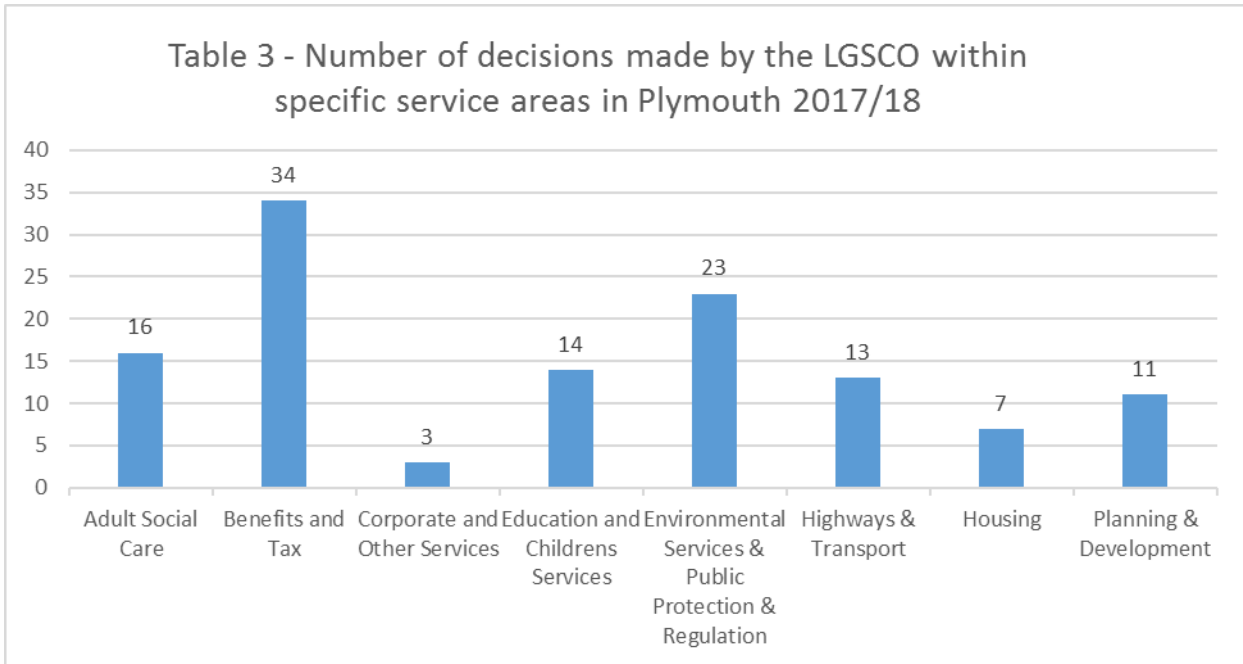
The table below shows the total number of complaints received by the LGSCO about Plymouth since 2014.



The table below shows the distribution of the complaints received within each of the specific service areas in 2017/18.



The table below shows the distribution of the complaint decisions made by the LGSCO for Plymouth within each of the specific service areas in 2017/18.



### 3.2 Complaint Decisions

A total of one hundred and twenty one decisions were made by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 17/18; this is an increase in comparison to the previous year when one hundred and two decisions were made, but this was likely to be the case given the increase in total number of complaints received.

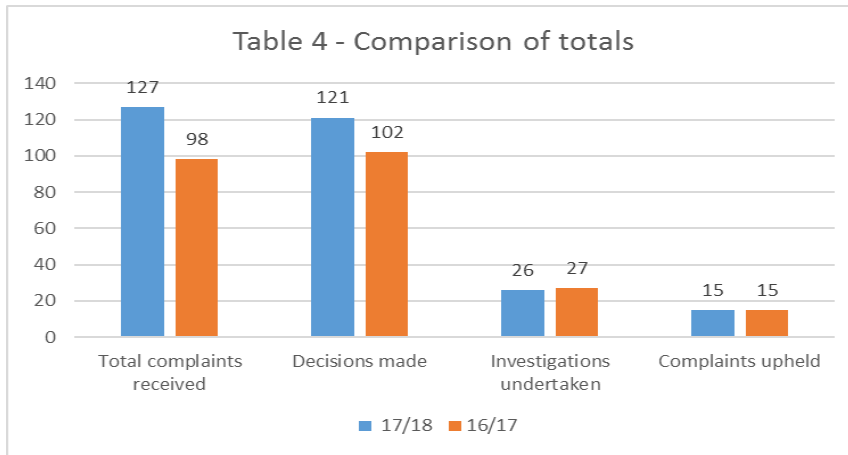
In 2017/18, of the complaints received for England, where a detailed investigation occurred, 57% were upheld – this is known as the upheld rate. In Plymouth, the LGSCO conducted a detailed investigation into twenty six complaints, of those fifteen were upheld so our upheld rate is 58%. In comparison to 2016/17 data, the upheld rate has increased by 2%.

When comparing the upheld rate to the total number of decisions made though, we have seen a decrease of almost 2.5% this year;

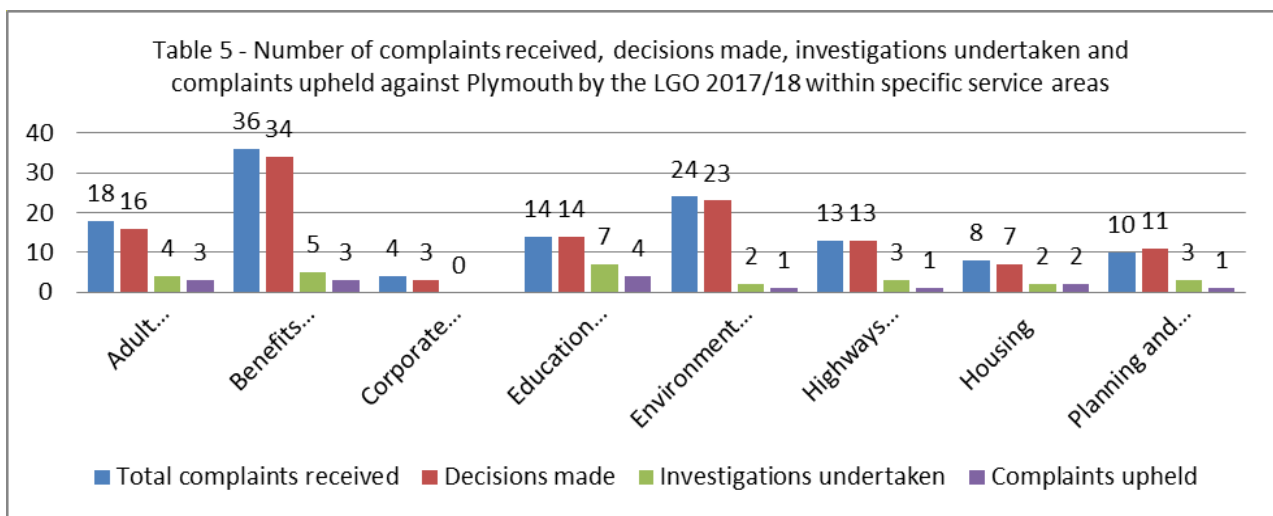
2016/17 fifteen complaints upheld of one hundred and two decisions made (14.7%)

2017/18 fifteen complaints upheld of one hundred and twenty one decisions made (12.4%).

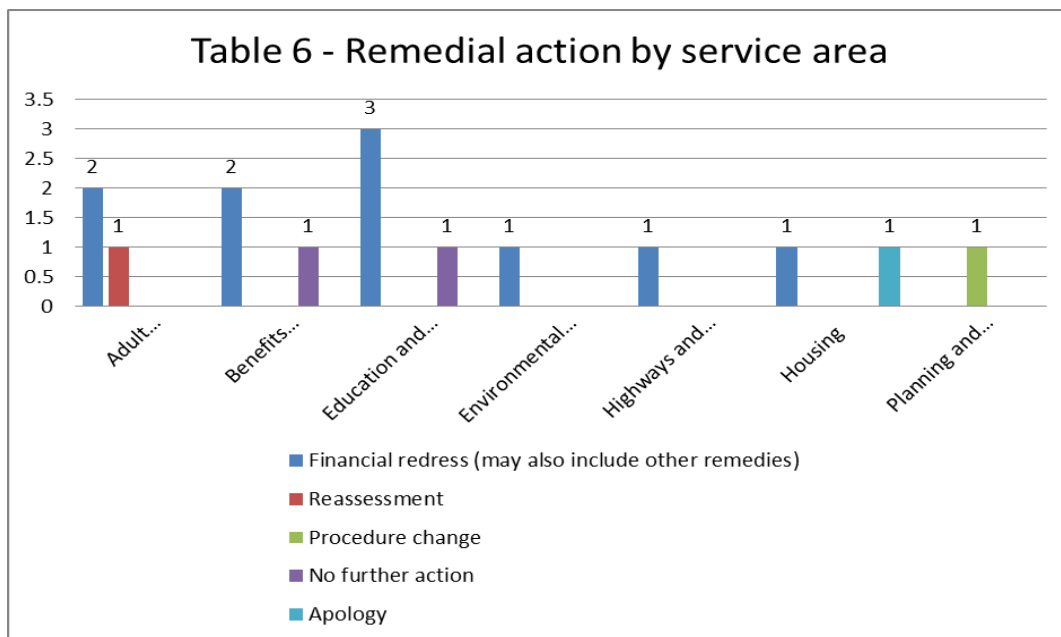
The table below shows the total numbers of complaints received, decisions made, detailed investigations undertaken and complaints upheld in both 16/17 and 17/18.



The table below shows the breakdown of the total numbers of complaints received, decisions made, detailed investigations undertaken and complaints upheld by service area for 17/18.



The table below shows the remedial action by service area as recommended by the LGSCO.



Appendix 1 provides more information around the one hundred and twenty one decisions made and outcomes of detailed investigations. Clarification of the categories of decisions made can be found in Appendix 2.

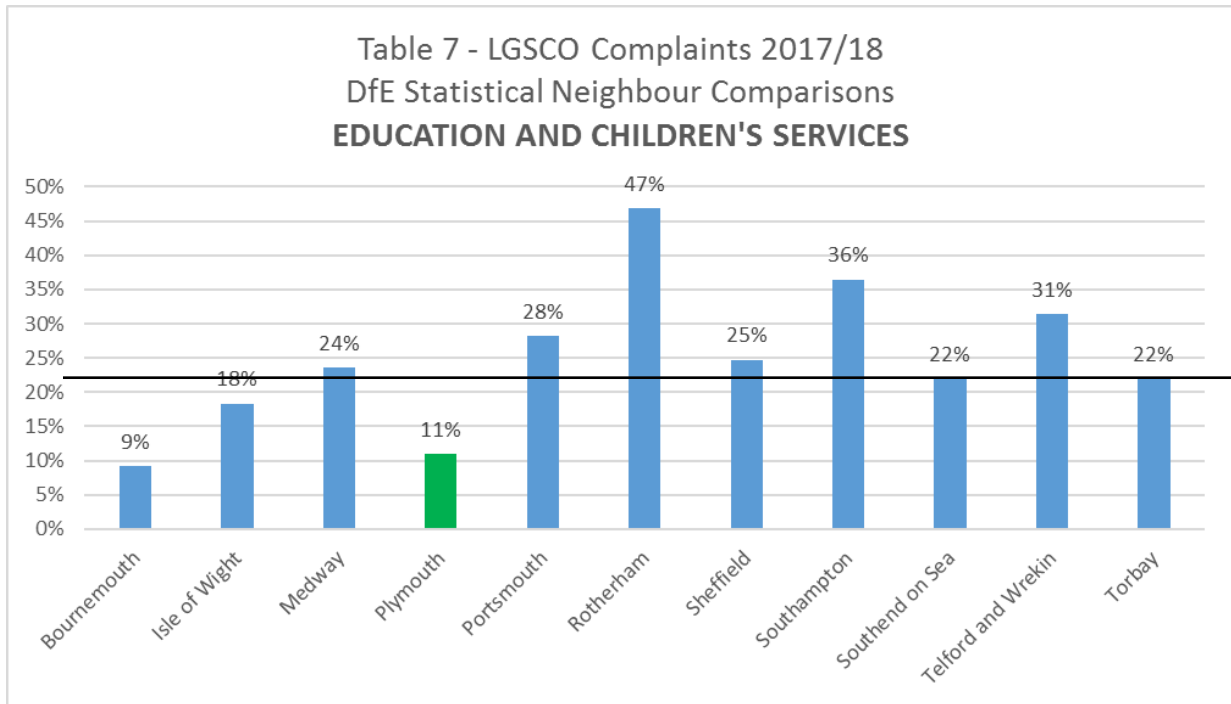
Appendix 3 illustrates the remedial action recommended by the LGSCO following their detailed investigations. Lessons learned from each of the upheld complaints can be found in the next section within each of the service area headings.

Appendix 4 shows the volumes and upheld rates of corporate and statutory complaints in comparison with LGSCO complaints.

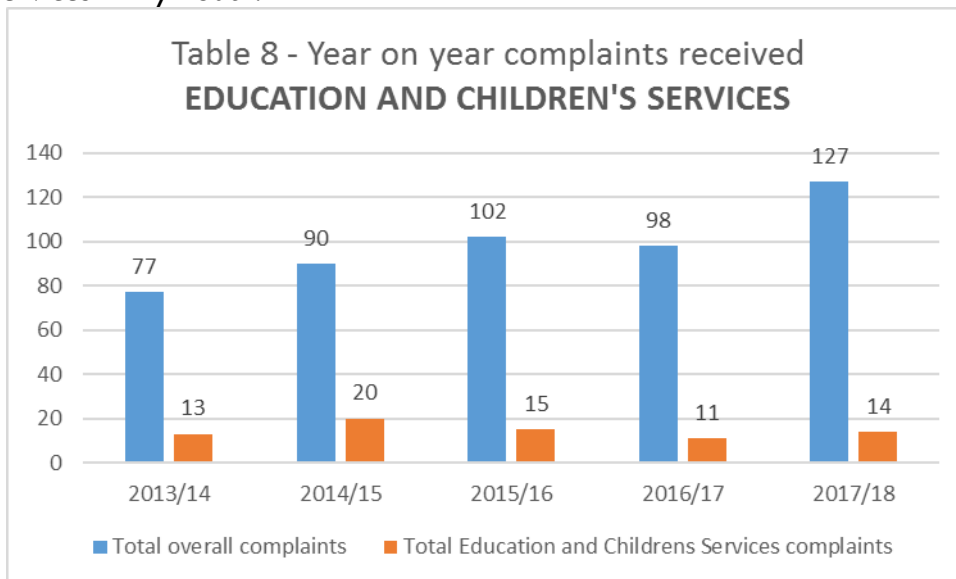
**4. ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FOR PLYMOUTH BY THE LGSCO**

**4.1 Education and Children’s Services**

The average amount of complaints received about Education and Children’s Services within the DfE benchmarking group is nineteen (25% of total overall complaints received). Plymouth performs favourably with less than the statistical neighbour average.



In total the LGSCO received fourteen complaints and enquiries relating to Education and Children’s Services in Plymouth.



**UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

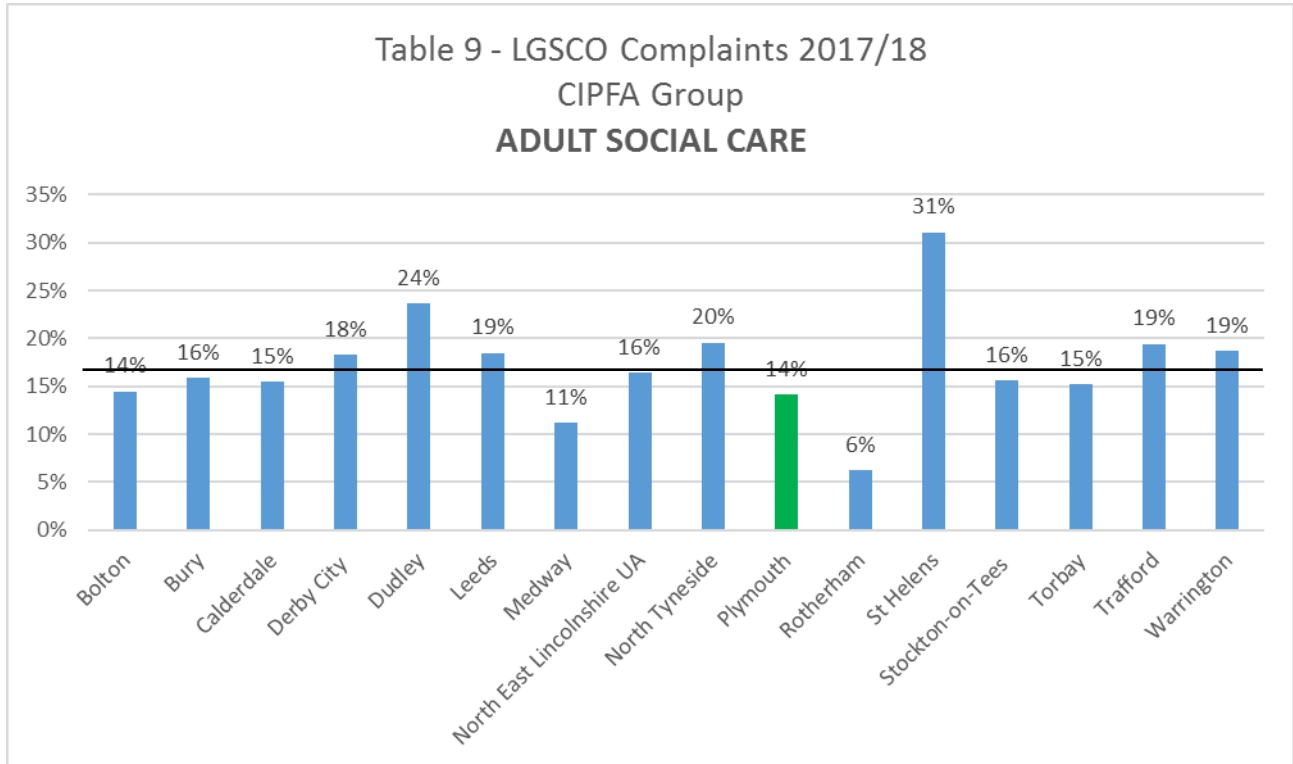
Of the fourteen complaints received by the LGSCO, four were upheld. Three related to referrals to stage 2 of the statutory Children’s Social Care complaints process and the Council was found to be at fault in respect of not moving the complaints into the second stage. The complaints have

all now been moved to stage 2 and as a result of lessons learned from these cases, a review of procedures will be undertaken.

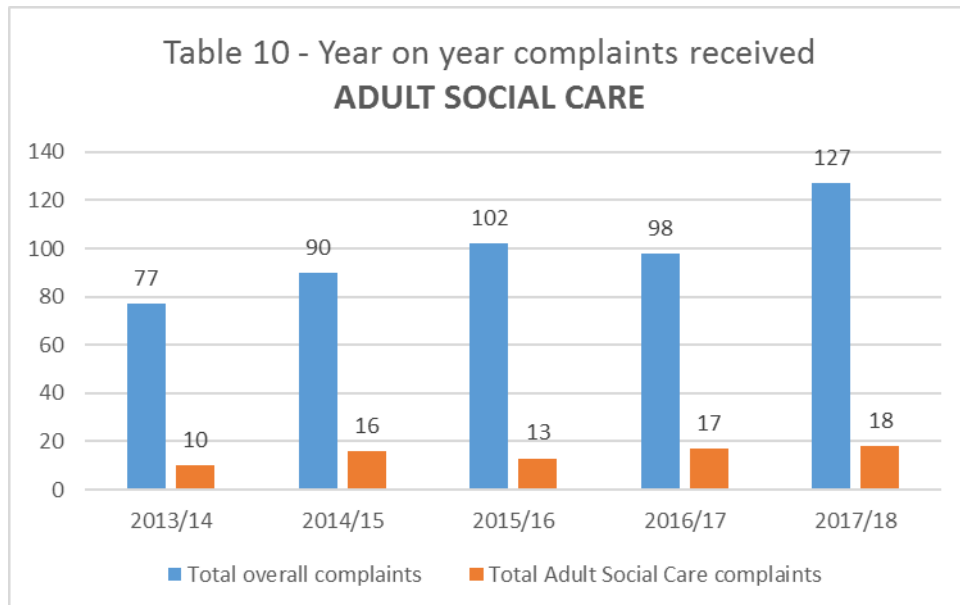


**4.2 Adult Social Care Services**

The average amount of complaints received about Adult Social Care Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 17% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received eighteen complaints and enquiries relating to Adult Social Care Services. This is the highest seen over recent years.



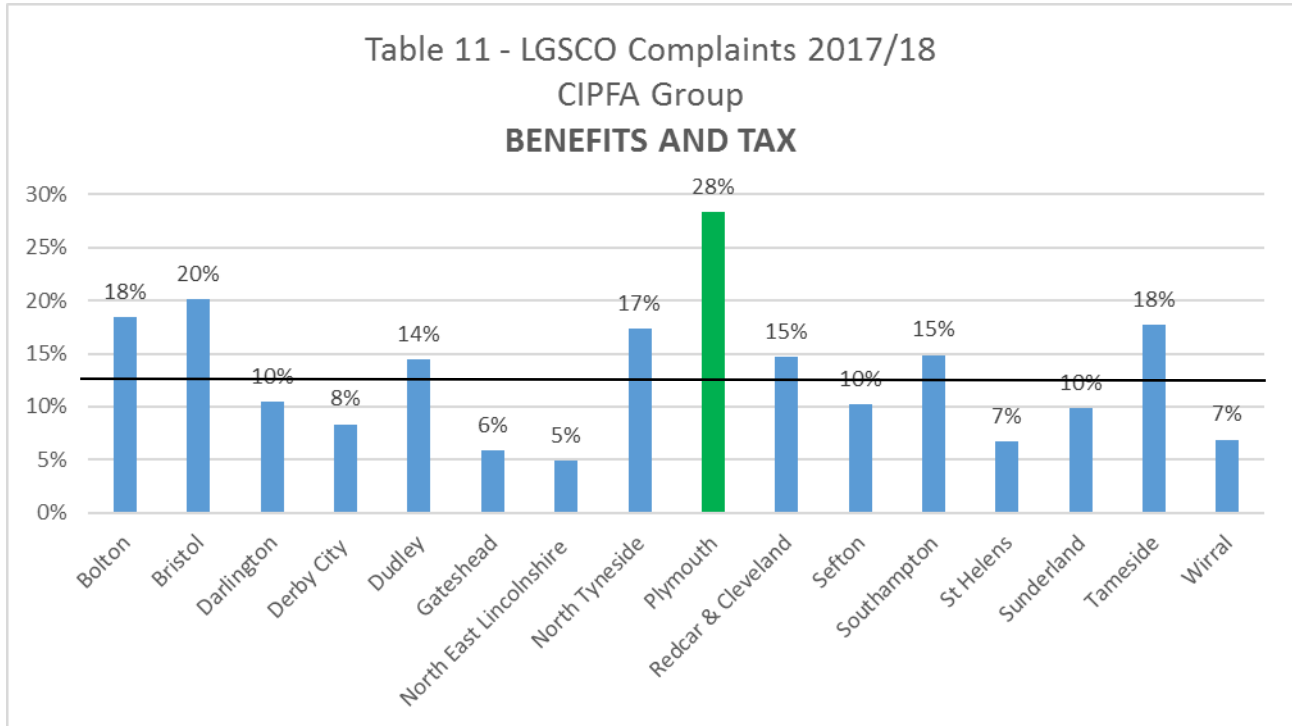
**UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Of the eighteen complaints received by the LGSCO, three were upheld. Following these cases Adult Social Care complaints processes were reviewed and are now investigated under a revised

Livewell South West process.

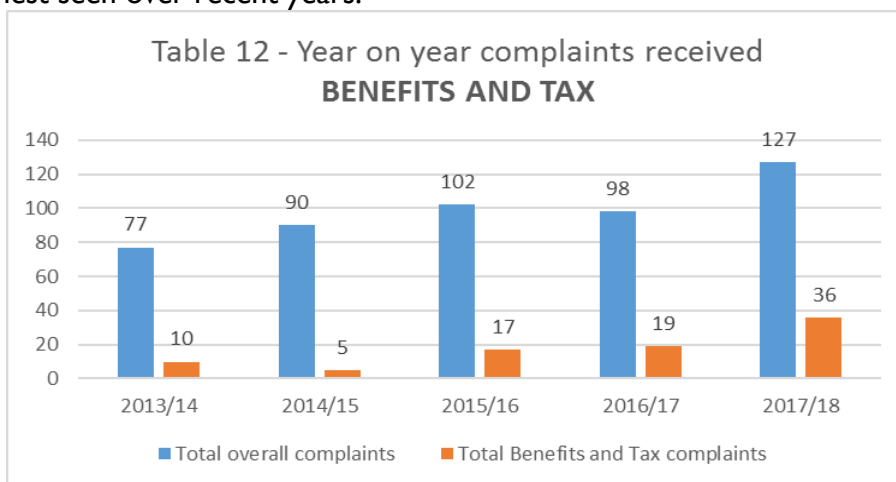
**4.3 Benefits and Tax Services**

The average amount of complaints received about Benefits and Tax Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 13% of total overall complaints. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average.



Whilst Plymouth does not perform favourably in terms of the total number of benefits and tax related complaints, our upheld rate is 8% which is better than the average upheld rate across the group which is 12%.

In total Plymouth received thirty-six complaints and enquiries relating to Benefits and Tax Services. This is the highest seen over recent years.

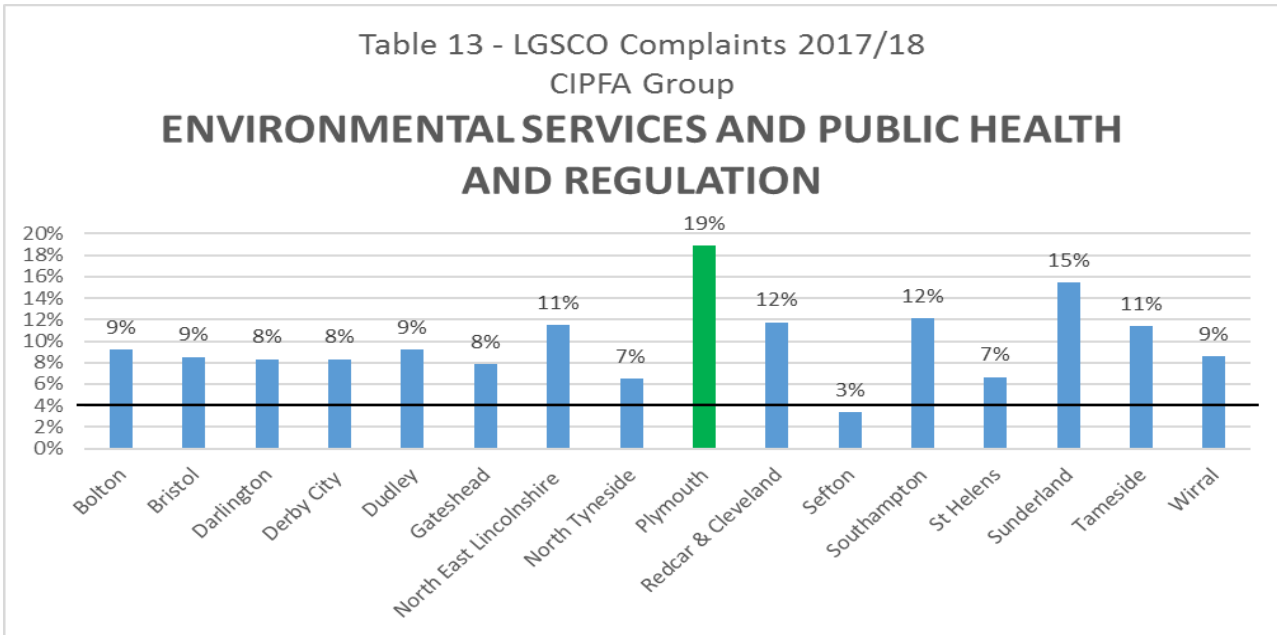


**UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Of the thirty-six complaints received, three complaints were upheld by the LGSCO. All staff members have been reminded of procedures with additional training being provided where required.

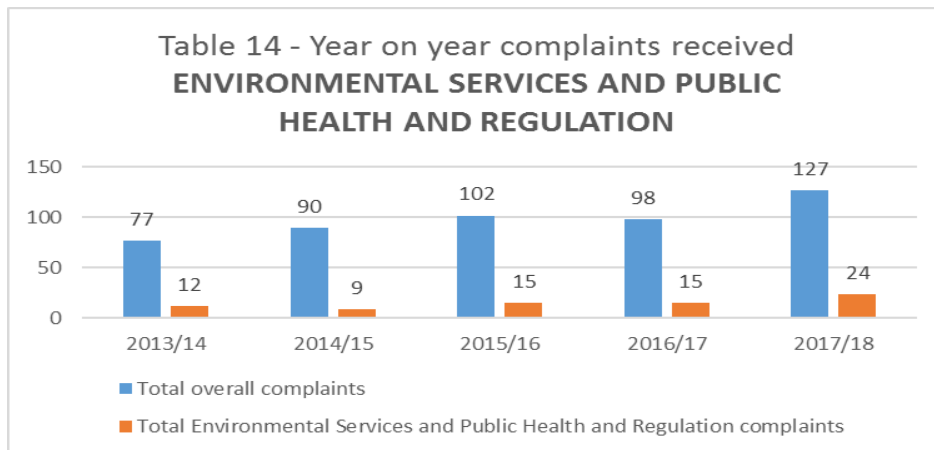
#### 4.4 Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation

The average amount of complaints received about Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 9% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average.



Whilst Plymouth does not perform favourably in terms of the total number of environmental services and public health and regulation related complaints, our upheld rate is 3% which is much better than the average upheld rate across the group which is 14%.

In total Plymouth received twenty four complaints and enquiries relating to Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation Services, which is the highest seen over recent years. This correlates with corporate feedback volumes, where complaints about street and waste services account for the majority of complaints received by PCC.

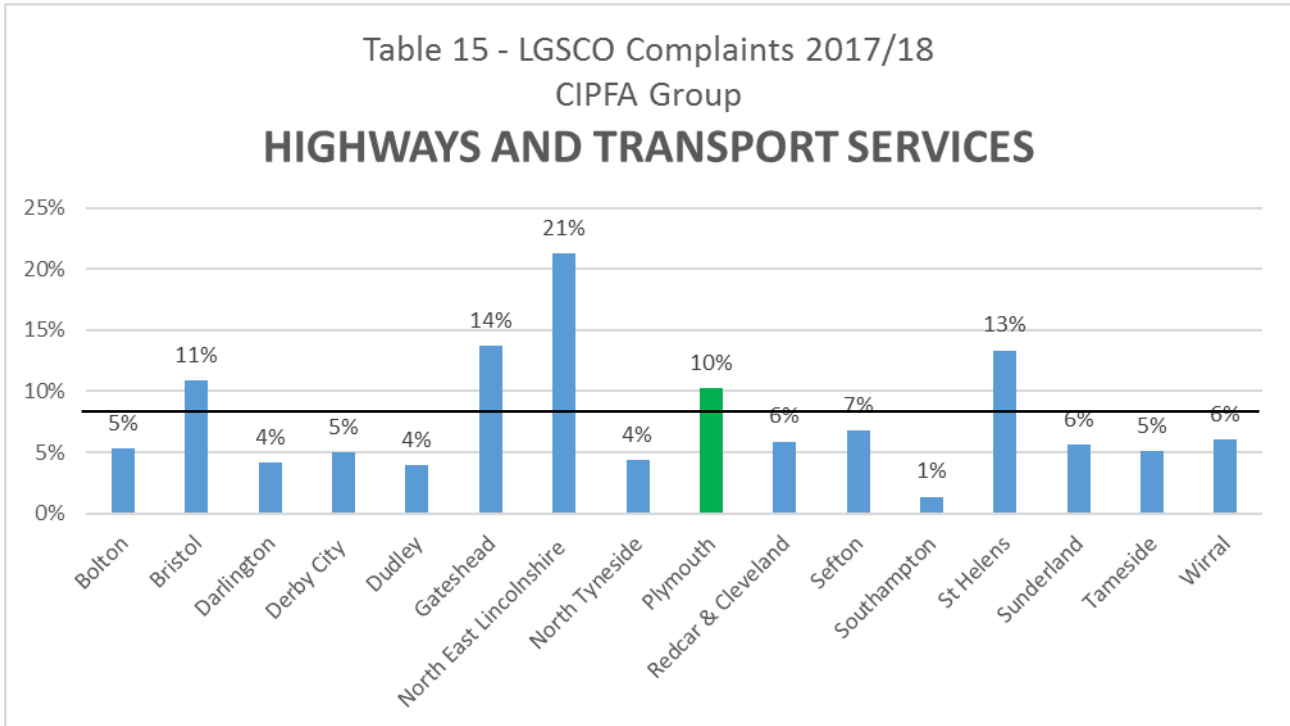


#### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Of the twenty four complaints received, one was upheld and related to a delay with an assisted bin collection application. A review of the assisted collection policy and the assessment process and the criteria for eligibility will be undertaken in light of the lessons learned from this case.

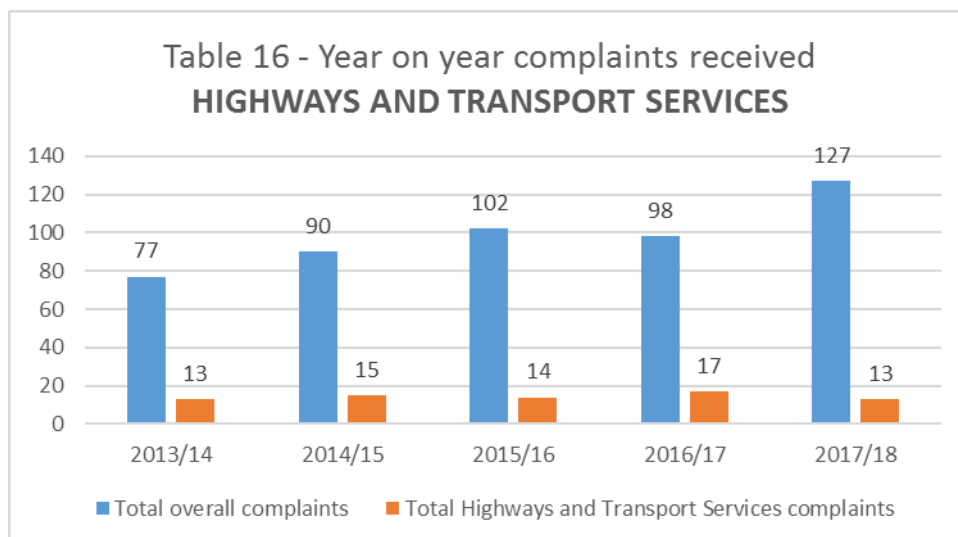
### 4.5 Highways and Transport Services

The average amount of complaints received about Highways and Transport Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 8% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth does not perform favourably against the family group average.



Whilst Plymouth does not perform favourably in terms of the total number of highways and transport services related complaints, our upheld rate is 8% which is much better than the average upheld rate across the group which is 24%.

In total Plymouth received thirteen complaints and enquiries relating to Highways and Transport Services. This is the lowest seen over recent years.

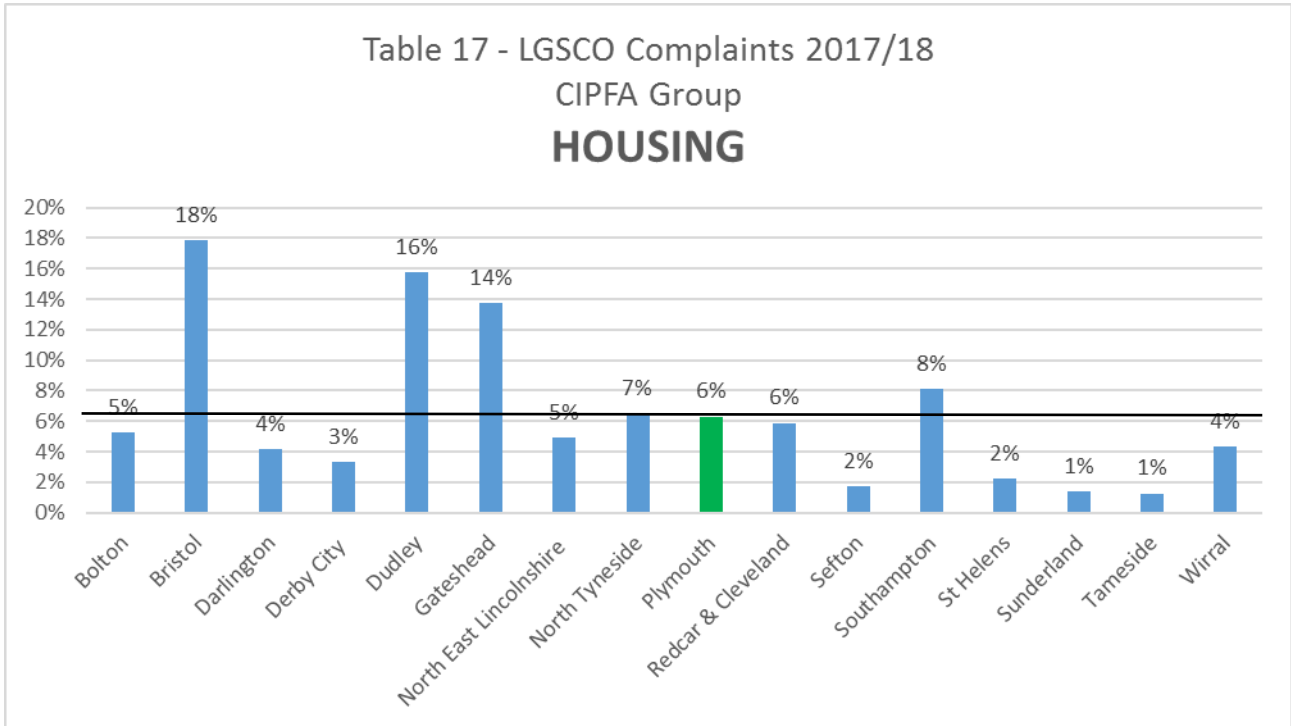


### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

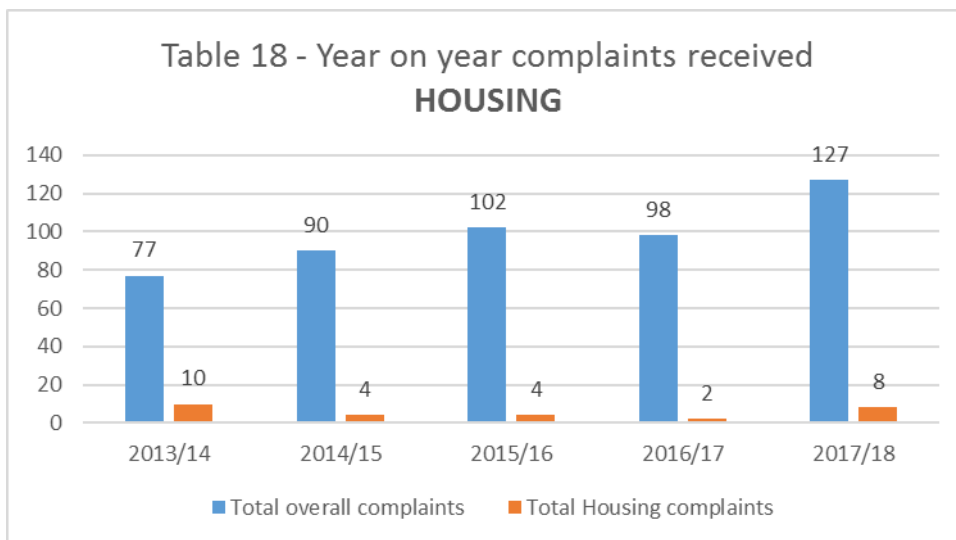
Of the thirteen complaints received, one complaint was upheld by the LGSCO and related to parking. Lessons learned from the case have meant that policy has been amended.

### 4.6 Housing Services

The average amount of complaints received about Housing Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 7% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received eight complaints and enquiries relating to Housing Services in 2017. This is the highest seen over recent years.

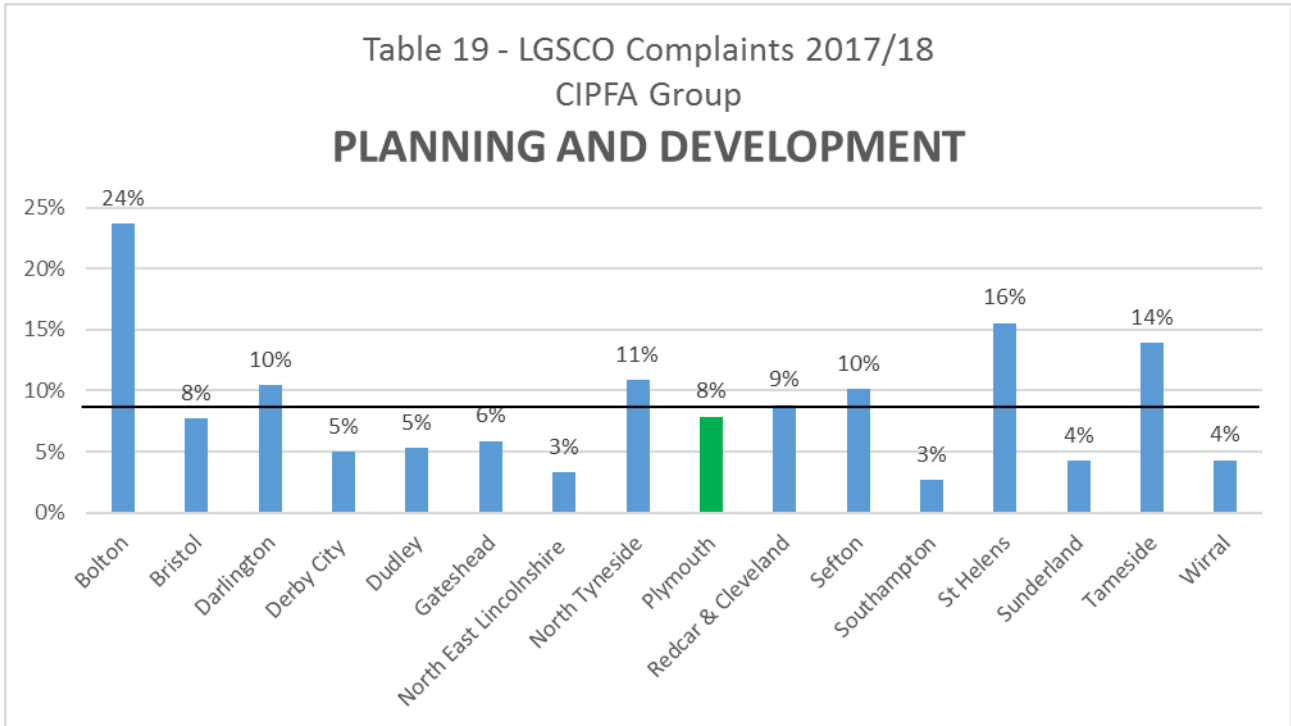


### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

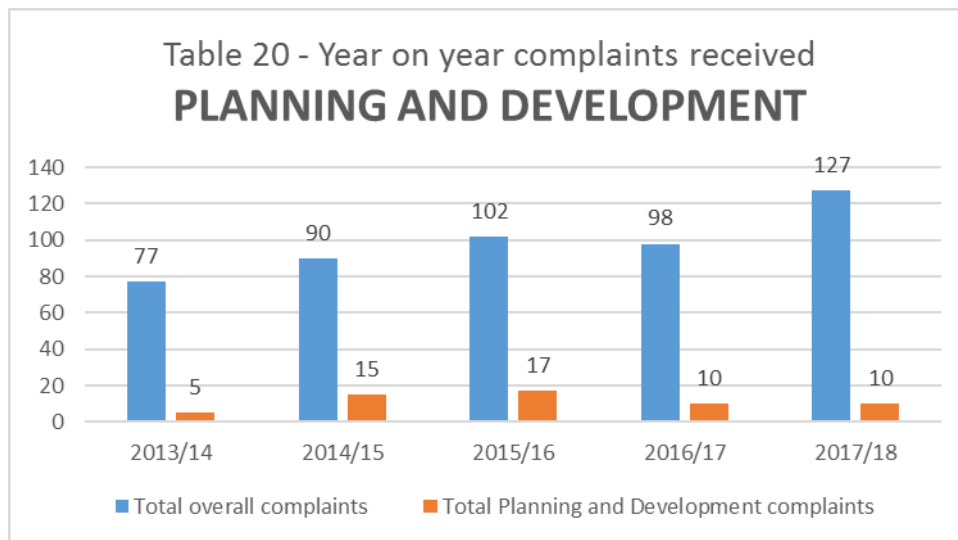
Of the eight complaints received, two were upheld. Lessons learned resulted in an outsourcing contract and changes to training and processes.

**4.7 Planning and Development Services**

The average amount of complaints received about Planning and Development Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 9% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs slightly below the family group average.



In total Plymouth received ten complaints and enquiries relating to Planning and Development Services in 2017/18.

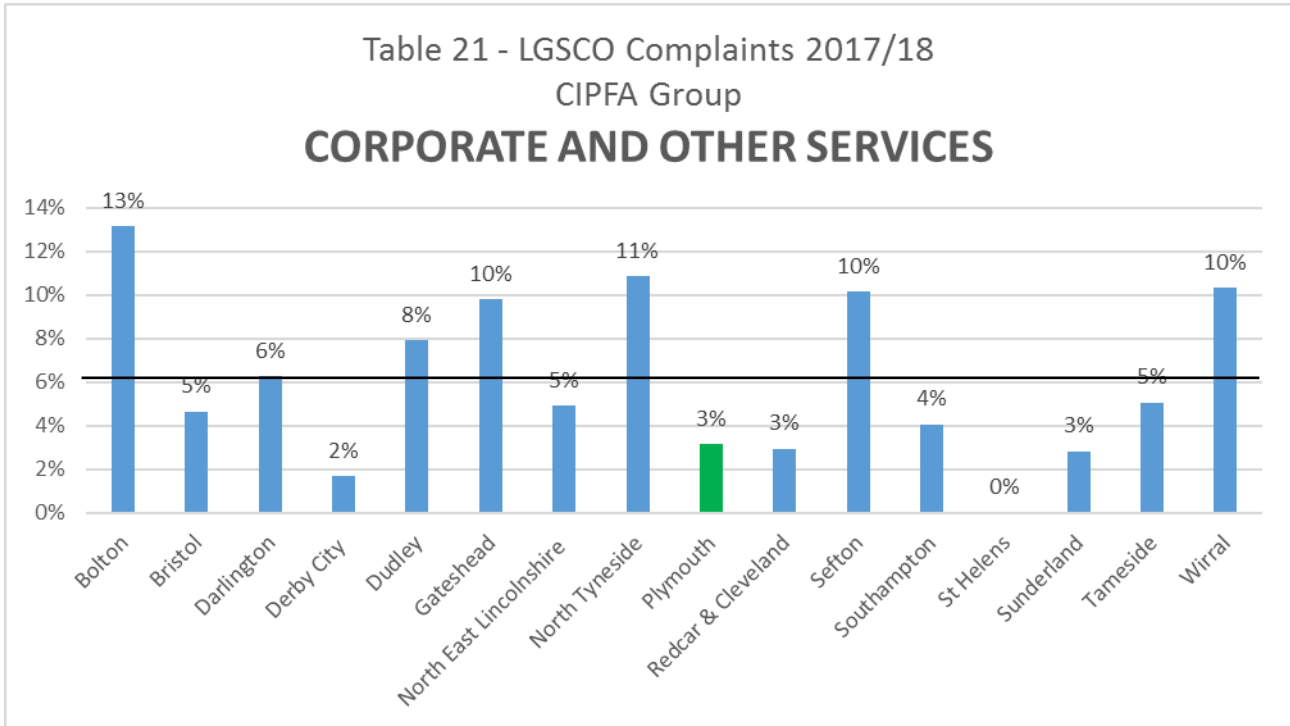


**UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

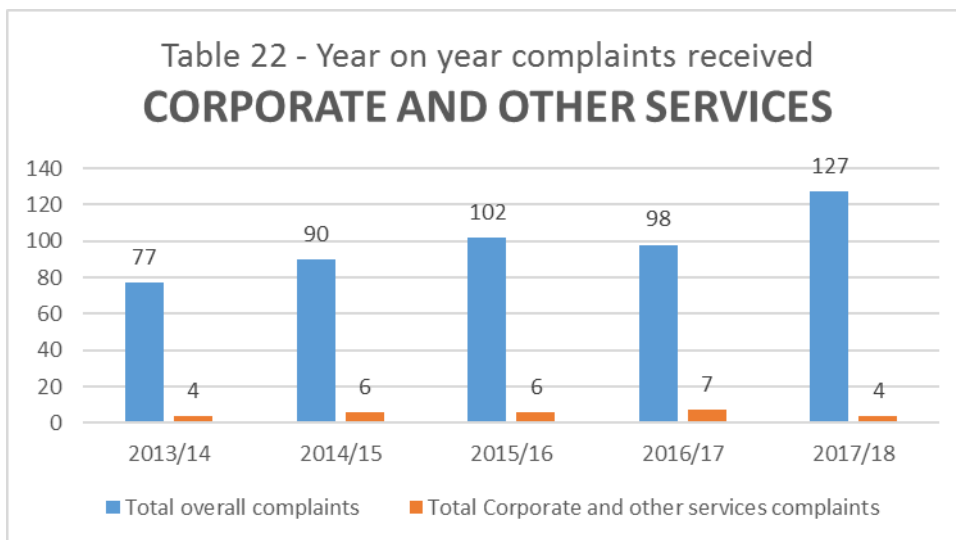
Of the ten complaints received, one was upheld and procedures have been changed as a result of the learning from this case.

### 4.8 Corporate Services

The average amount of complaints received about Corporate and Other Services within the CIPFA Family Group is 6% of total overall complaints received. Plymouth performs favourably against the family group average.



In total Plymouth received four complaints and enquiries relating to Corporate and Other Services in 2017. This is a decrease on previous years.



### UPHELD COMPLAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Of the four complaints received, none were upheld.



## Appendix I – Decisions made by the LGSCO for Plymouth in 2017/18

	Total complaints received	Decisions				Detailed investigations		
		Invalid or Incomplete	Advice Given	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate (%)
Adult Social Care	16	1		7	4	1	3	75%
Benefits and Tax	34	2		9	18	2	3	60%
Corporate and Other Services	3		1		2	0	0	0%
Education and Children's Services	14		1	5	1	3	4	57%
Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation	23			20	1	1	1	50%
Highways and Transport	13		1	2	7	2	1	33%
Housing	7	1		4			2	100%
Planning and Development	11			1	7	2	1	33%
2017/18 Totals	121	4	3	48	40	11	15	58%
2016/17 Totals	102	5	37	0	32	12	15	56%

**Appendix 2 – How to understand the categories in the breakdown tables on the LGSCO’s Annual Review Letter 2017/18**

**Invalid or incomplete.** We were not given enough information to consider the issue.

**Advice given.** We provided early advice, or explained where to go for the right help.

**Referred back for local resolution.** We found the complaint was brought to us too early because the organisation involved was not given the chance to consider it first.

**Closed after initial enquiries.** We assessed the complaint but decided against completing a full investigation. This might be because the law says we’re not allowed to investigate it, or because it would not be an effective use of public funds if we did.

**Upheld.** We completed a detailed investigation and found evidence of fault, or we found the organisation accepted fault early on.

**Not upheld.** We completed a detailed investigation but did not find evidence of fault.

**APPENDIX 3 – Remedies for those complaints upheld by the LGSCO following detailed investigation in 2017/18 for Plymouth**

	Upheld	Remedies for those upheld								
		Financial redress	Reassessment	Procedure change	No further action	Apology	Financial Redress, Training	Financial Redress, Procedure or policy change/review	Reassessment, Procedure or policy change/review	Financial redress, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Procedure or policy change/review
Adult Social Care	3	2	1							
Benefits and Tax	3	2			1					
Corporate and Other Services	0									
Education and Children's Services	4				1					3
Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation	1							1		
Highways and Transport	1								1	
Housing	2					1	1			
Planning and Development	1			1						
<b>2017/18 Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

**APPENDIX 4 – Corporate and Statutory Complaints 2017/18**

The LGSCO only consider complaints that have already been through the authority’s complaints process. The following tables have been included to show complaint statistics from our corporate and statutory complaints processes in 2017/18. A comparison is also made with Table 2 and Table 5 from this report to show volumes of corporate, statutory and LGSCO complaints as well as upheld complaint volumes.

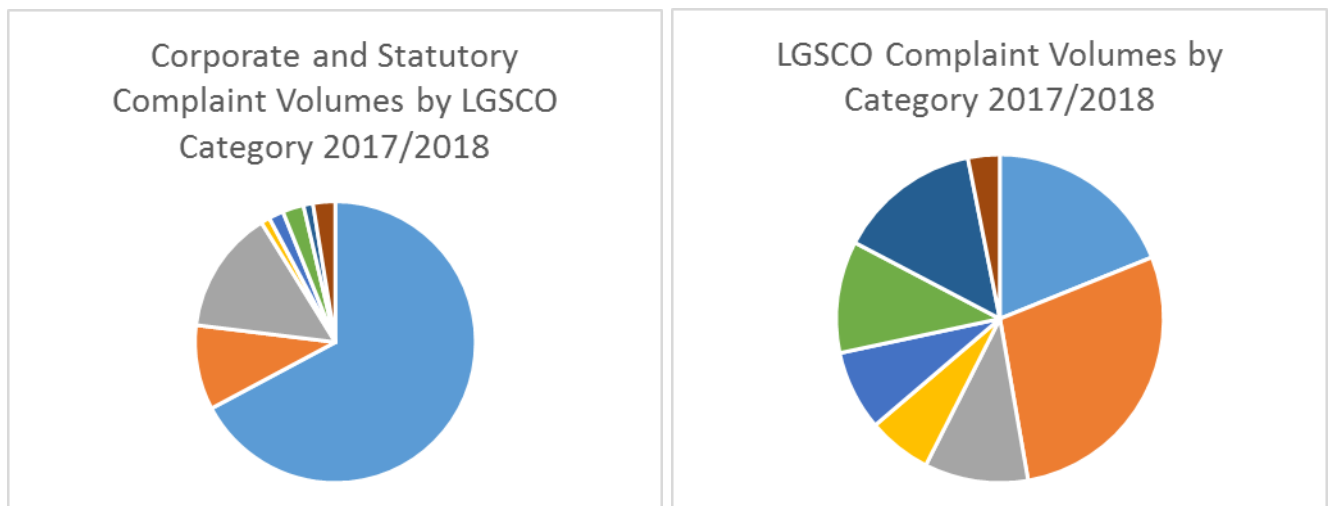
Table 24 below shows the number of corporate complaints recorded in the Council’s digital platform, Firmstep, during 2017/18 and includes the number of complaints upheld with a percentage upheld rate.

Table 24	Children's Services	Executive Office	People	Place	ODPH	Transformation and Change	Other
No. of Complaints	7	3	70	4526	76	651	7
No. Upheld	1	3	18	1613	27	264	0
Upheld rate (%)	14.3%	100.0%	25.7%	35.6%	35.5%	40.6%	0

Table 25 below shows the number of statutory complaints closed during 2017/18 and includes the number of complaints upheld or partially upheld with a percentage upheld/partially upheld rate.

Table 25	Children's Social Care	Adults Social Care
No. of Complaints closed	128	61
No. Upheld	7	17
No. Partially Upheld	44	20
Upheld/Partially Upheld rate (%)	40%	61%

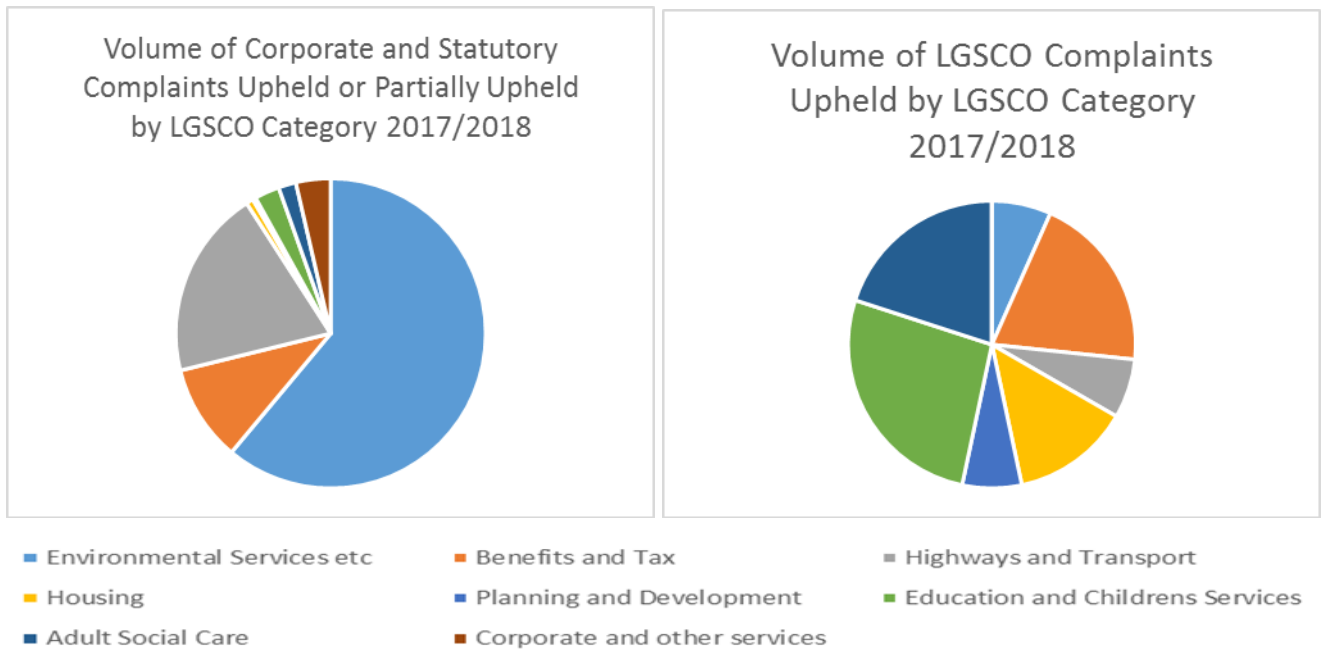
The pie charts below compare the volume of corporate and statutory complaints (shown in Tables 24 and 25) with the volume of LGSCO complaints for 2017/18 (shown in Table 2) by LGSCO category. The categories used by the LGSCO differ to our service structure so corporate and statutory complaints have been amalgamated into the relevant LGSCO category where possible.



- Environmental Services etc
- Benefits and Tax
- Highways and Transport
- Housing
- Planning and Development
- Education and Childrens Services
- Adult Social Care
- Corporate and other services

These pie charts show that the combination of Environmental Services and Benefits and Tax complaints account for the majority (77%) of corporate and statutory complaints and for almost half (47%) of LGSCO complaints.

The pie charts below compare the volume of upheld or partially upheld corporate and statutory complaints (shown in Tables 24 and 25) with the volume of upheld LGSCO complaints (shown in Table 5) for 2017/18 by LGSCO category. The categories used by the LGSCO differ to our service structure so corporate and statutory complaints have been amalgamated into the relevant LGSCO category where possible.



These pie charts show that corporately Environmental Services have the most upheld complaints and that Adult Social Care and Education and Children’s Services have the highest upheld volumes following LGSCO investigations. These three service areas feature in the recommendations of this report, where it is proposed action is taken to support a reduction in upheld rates through the use of customer feedback to resolve issues and improve the customer experience.

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## **APPENDIX G – Progress update on 2017/18 recommendations**

As a result of the data analysed from the complaints escalated to the LGSCO in 17/18 the following recommendations were put together to ensure that PCC is learning lessons from customer feedback. Progress against these recommendations is also highlighted below;

1. Address the comments made by the LGSCO in respect of statutory children's complaints procedures.

The Statutory Complaints Team moved into Customer Services in March 2019 and are now line managed by the Customer Liaison Manager. The options for moving all complaint recording into the same system are being considered to ensure data can be joined up.

2. Work with Livewell South West to strengthen the complaints handling process and ensure lessons learned are driving service improvements across organisations in respect of Adult Social Care.

Performance reporting has been implemented, following the same format as corporate complaints handling reporting. Livewell South West are now providing monthly updates to the Customer Liaison Team for monitoring.

3. Work with Street Services to improve the customer experience (complaints are included in the LGSCO category Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation).

The Customer Liaison Manager monitors complaints on a monthly basis and meets with DMTs quarterly. Over the last year this also included data being scrutinised at Street Services Modernisation Board and interventions resulted in a reduction in complaints recorded, escalated and upheld rates by the end of 2018/19.

4. Further develop the monitoring of corporate performance in respect of customer feedback and ensure customer feedback is used to resolve any issues through the implementation of lessons learned.

Customer feedback is monitored in monthly balanced scorecards. This data, as well as lessons learned, are then monitored at quarterly DMTs and in quarterly performance monitoring against the Corporate Plan.

Complaints are also monitored as a Corporate Key Performance Indicator and CMT are provided with a monthly performance flash report.

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24 July 2019

*By email*

Tracey Lee  
Chief Executive  
Plymouth City Council

Dear Ms Lee

### **Annual Review letter 2019**

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2019. The enclosed tables present the number of complaints and enquiries received about your authority, the decisions we made, and your authority's compliance with recommendations during the period. I hope this information will prove helpful in assessing your authority's performance in handling complaints.

### **Complaint statistics**

As ever, I would stress that the number of complaints, taken alone, is not necessarily a reliable indicator of an authority's performance. The volume of complaints should be considered alongside the uphold rate (how often we found fault when we investigated a complaint), and alongside statistics that indicate your authority's willingness to accept fault and put things right when they go wrong. We also provide a figure for the number of cases where your authority provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached us, and new statistics about your authority's compliance with recommendations we have made; both of which offer a more comprehensive and insightful view of your authority's approach to complaint handling.

The new statistics on compliance are the result of a series of changes we have made to how we make and monitor our recommendations to remedy the fault we find. Our recommendations are specific and often include a time-frame for completion, allowing us to follow up with authorities and seek evidence that recommendations have been implemented. These changes mean we can provide these new statistics about your authority's compliance with our recommendations.

I want to emphasise the statistics in this letter reflect the data we hold and may not necessarily align with the data your authority holds. For example, our numbers include

enquiries from people we signpost back to your authority, some of whom may never contact you.

In line with usual practice, we are publishing our annual data for all authorities on our website, alongside our annual review of local government complaints. For the first time, this includes data on authorities' compliance with our recommendations. This collated data further aids the scrutiny of local services and we encourage you to share learning from the report, which highlights key cases we have investigated during the year.

### **New interactive data map**

In recent years we have been taking steps to move away from a simplistic focus on complaint volumes and instead focus on the lessons learned and the wider improvements we can achieve through our recommendations to improve services for the many. Our ambition is outlined in our [corporate strategy 2018-21](#) and commits us to publishing the outcomes of our investigations and the occasions our recommendations result in improvements for local services.

The result of this work is the launch of an interactive map of council performance on our website later this month. [Your Council's Performance](#) shows annual performance data for all councils in England, with links to our published decision statements, public interest reports, annual letters and information about service improvements that have been agreed by each council. It also highlights those instances where your authority offered a suitable remedy to resolve a complaint before the matter came to us, and your authority's compliance with the recommendations we have made to remedy complaints.

The intention of this new tool is to place a focus on your authority's compliance with investigations. It is a useful snapshot of the service improvement recommendations your authority has agreed to. It also highlights the wider outcomes of our investigations to the public, advocacy and advice organisations, and others who have a role in holding local councils to account.

I hope you, and colleagues, find the map a useful addition to the data we publish. We are the first UK public sector ombudsman scheme to provide compliance data in such a way and believe the launch of this innovative work will lead to improved scrutiny of councils as well as providing increased recognition to the improvements councils have agreed to make following our interventions.

### **Complaint handling training**

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. In 2018-19 we delivered 71 courses, training more than 900 people, including our first 'open courses' in Effective Complaint Handling for local authorities. Due to their popularity we are running six more open courses for local authorities in 2019-20, in York, Manchester, Coventry and London. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

Finally, I am conscious of the resource pressures that many authorities are working within, and which are often the context for the problems that we investigate. In response to that situation we have published a significant piece of research this year looking at some of the

common issues we are finding as a result of change and budget constraints. Called, [Under Pressure](#), this report provides a contribution to the debate about how local government can navigate the unprecedented changes affecting the sector. I commend this to you, along with our revised guidance on [Good Administrative Practice](#). I hope that together these are a timely reminder of the value of getting the basics right at a time of great change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M King', with a horizontal line underneath.

Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

**Local Authority Report:** Plymouth City Council  
**For the Period Ending:** 31/03/2019

For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our [website](#)

## Complaints and enquiries received

Adult Care Services	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and Other Services	Education and Children's Services	Environment Services	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
20	18	9	15	18	13	2	7	1	103

## Decisions made

Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Detailed Investigations			Total
				Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate (%)	
4	1	46	36	2	18	90	107

**Note:** The uphold rate shows how often we found evidence of fault. It is expressed as a percentage of the total number of detailed investigations we completed.

## Satisfactory remedy provided by authority

Upheld cases where the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman	% of upheld cases
0	0

**Note:** These are the cases in which we decided that, while the authority did get things wrong, it offered a satisfactory way to resolve it before the complaint came to us.

## Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations

Complaints where compliance with the recommended remedy was recorded during the year*	Complaints where the authority complied with our recommendations on-time	Complaints where the authority complied with our recommendations late	Complaints where the authority has not complied with our recommendations	
22	21	1	0	<b>Number</b>
	100%		-	<b>Compliance rate**</b>
<p><b>Notes:</b>            * This is the number of complaints where we have recorded a response (or failure to respond) to our recommendation for a remedy during the reporting year. This includes complaints that may have been decided in the preceding year but where the data for compliance falls within the current reporting year.            ** The compliance rate is based on the number of complaints where the authority has provided evidence of their compliance with our recommendations to remedy a fault. This includes instances where an authority has accepted and implemented our recommendation but provided late evidence of that.</p>				

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**Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview  
Scrutiny Committee**

Work Programme 2019-2020



**Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice. The information in this work programme is intended to be of strategic relevance.**

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this Committee's work programme, please contact Jamie Sheldon, Democratic Advisor on 01752 304001.

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Prioritisation Score</b>	<b>Reason for consideration</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer</b>
<b>12 June 2019</b>	Corporate Finance Monitoring Report Q4 and Outturn	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and Performance and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham/ Andrew Loton
<b>24 July 2019</b>	Monthly Finance Report Month 2	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham
	Procurement Services	(5)	To receive an update on the Procurement Services	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham
	Customer Experience Programme update	(4)	To receive an update on the Customer Experience Programme	Councillor Haydon/Andy Ralphs/Pete Honeywell
<b>02 October 2019</b>	Street Services	(5)	To receive an update on the Street Services department	Councillor Dann/Katrina Houghton
	Monthly Finance Report Month 5	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham
	Climate Emergency/Carbon Reduction Plan (internal perspective)		To receive an update on available information prior to submission to Full Council in November	Councillor Dann/Andrew Hardingham and Ralph Bint

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Prioritisation Score</b>	<b>Reason for consideration</b>	<b>Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer</b>
	LGO Annual Review		To receive full analysis of the data, in particular the upheld complaints, will be undertaken against our internal data and will also be benchmarked against other family authorities in our family group	Councillor Haydon/Helen Cocks
<b>21 November 2019</b>	Monthly Finance Report Month 6	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham
	Corporate Finance & Performance Monitoring Report Q2 and Outturn 2019/20	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and Performance and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham/Andrew Loton
	Customer Experience Programme update	(4)	To receive an update on the Customer Experience Programme	Councillor Haydon/Andy Ralphs/Pete Honeywell
	Update on Alliance Contract 6 month review		To review progress	Councillor Penberthy/Matt Garrett
	Homelessness and Begging	(5)	To examine the extent of the issue in the city; how can we better understand the causes of homelessness; how can we raise awareness of what we are doing to tackle this issue	Councillor Penberthy/ Matt Garrett
	Communication Review Report		To receive an update on the recent review of communications function	Dominic Nutt
<b>22 January 2020</b>	Monthly Finance Report Month 7	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham
	Employee Parking and Travel Plan			
	Monthly Finance Report Month 10	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham



Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer
<b>18 March 2020</b>	Corporate Finance Monitoring Report Q3 and Outturn 2019/20	(5)	To monitor the Council's financial position and Performance and identify areas of concern for further scrutiny	Councillor Lowry/Andrew Hardingham/Andrew Loton
	Customer Experience Programme update	(4)	To receive an update on the Customer Experience Programme	Councillor Haydon/Andy Ralphs/Pete Honeywell
	Staff Survey Update			
<b>Items to be scheduled 2019/20</b>				
<b>Select Committee Reviews</b>				
<b>To be scheduled</b>	Gypsy Roma and Travellers Unauthorised Camps	(4)	Member request	Councillor Penberthy/Matt Garrett
	Electoral Processes		Member Request	Councillor Pete Smith/ Glenda Favor - Ankersen
<b>Joint Select Committee Reviews</b>				

**Annex I – Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool**

		<b>Yes (=1)</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>P</b> ublic Interest	Is it an issue of concern to partners, stakeholders and/or the community?		
<b>A</b> bility	Could Scrutiny have an influence?		
<b>P</b> erformance	Is this an area of underperformance?		
<b>E</b> xtent	Does the topic affect people living, working or studying in more than one electoral ward of Plymouth?		
<b>R</b> eplication	Will this be the only opportunity for public scrutiny?		
	Is the topic due planned to be the subject of an Executive Decision?		
	<b>Total:</b>		High/Medium/Low

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>5-6</b>
<b>Medium</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Low</b>	<b>1-2</b>

## Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Tracking Decisions

Minute	Decisions	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
<p>July 2019</p> <p>Update on the Corporate Procurement Services</p>	<p>To be informed when the Head of Procurement position is filled.</p>	<p><b>Date:</b> July 2019  <b>Officer:</b> Andrew Hardingham/ Councillor Penberthy  <b>Progress:</b> On going</p>
<p>July 2019</p> <p>Work Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking (to include 1000 extra parking spaces and parking permits);</li> <li>• Street Services End to End Review</li> </ul>	<p><b>Date:</b> July 2019  <b>Officer:</b> Jamie Sheldon  <b>Progress:</b> Complete – items have been added to the Work Programme.</p>

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