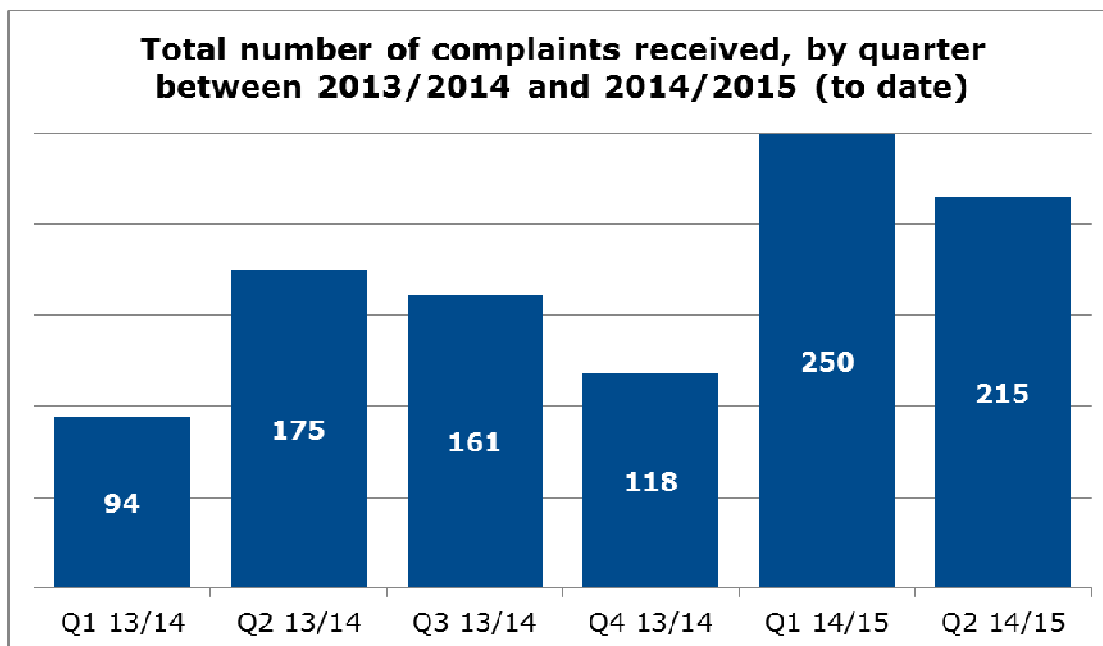


1. Overall Figures

There were 215 complaints received in total this quarter. This was a drop in complaints compared to the previous quarter. However this was a greater number of complaints compared to quarter 2 of 2013/2014. The graph below shows that more complaints were received in quarter 2 of 2014/2015 than any quarter in 2013/2014. The high number of complaints can be pinpointed to six services. This is further explored in section 4- Complaints by Service.



2. Complaint Timeliness

14 of the 215 complaints received were responded to outside of target time of ten days this quarter. This represents 93.5% of complaints responded to on time.

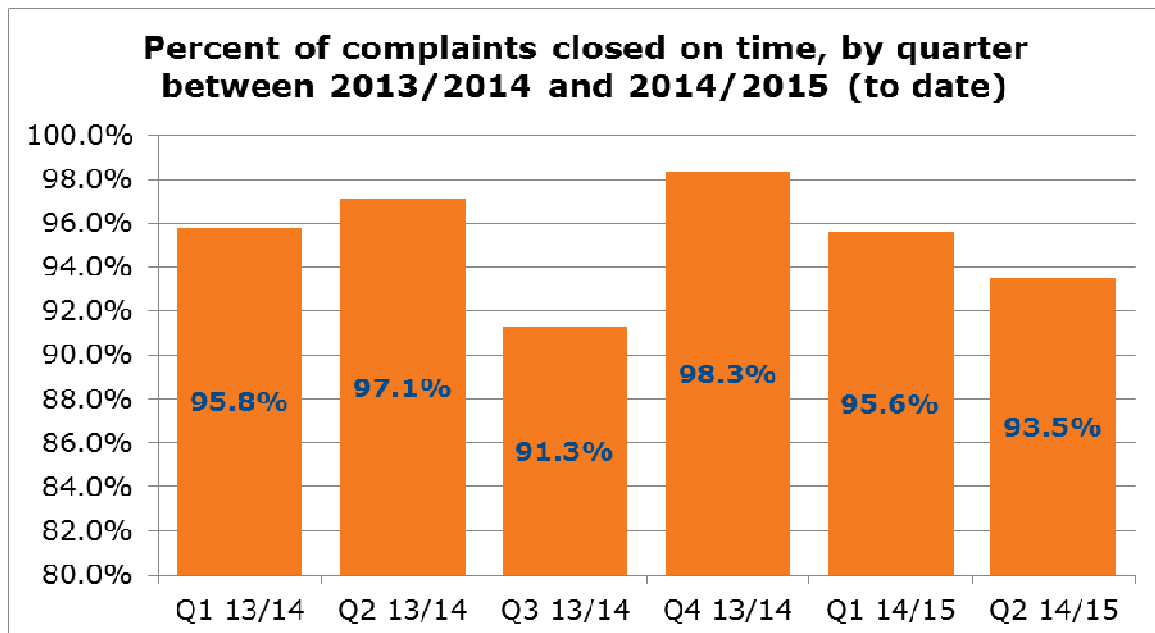
Of the 14 complaints that were closed out of time only three customers were kept updated on the progress of their complaint in line with the policy.

The Head of Policy and Communications will send a reminder to unit managers to ensure complaints are closed on time. But if this is not possible customers must be kept updated as to the progress of their complaint.

The services that closed complaints outside of the 10 working day turnaround time are highlighted in the table below, along with any explanatory notes about these complaints.

| Service | Number of late complaints | Notes |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Development Management | 3 | One customer kept updated. One complaint was closed late as it was sent to another exec support team during holiday cover but was missed. |
| Electoral Registration | 1 | No reason given. |
| Housing Options/Register | 6 | One customer was kept updated. One customer's response was ready but response had to be collected from the Gateway as customer had no address- this happened late. |
| Parks and Leisure | 4 | One customer was kept updated. |

The percentage of complaints being closed on time has declined each quarter since quarter 4 of 2013/2014. Performance has dropped from 98.3% of complaints answered on time to 93.5%, this equates to a drop in performance of 4.8%. However it is worth noting that a lower than average (for 2013/2014) number of complaints were received during Q4 of 2013/2014.

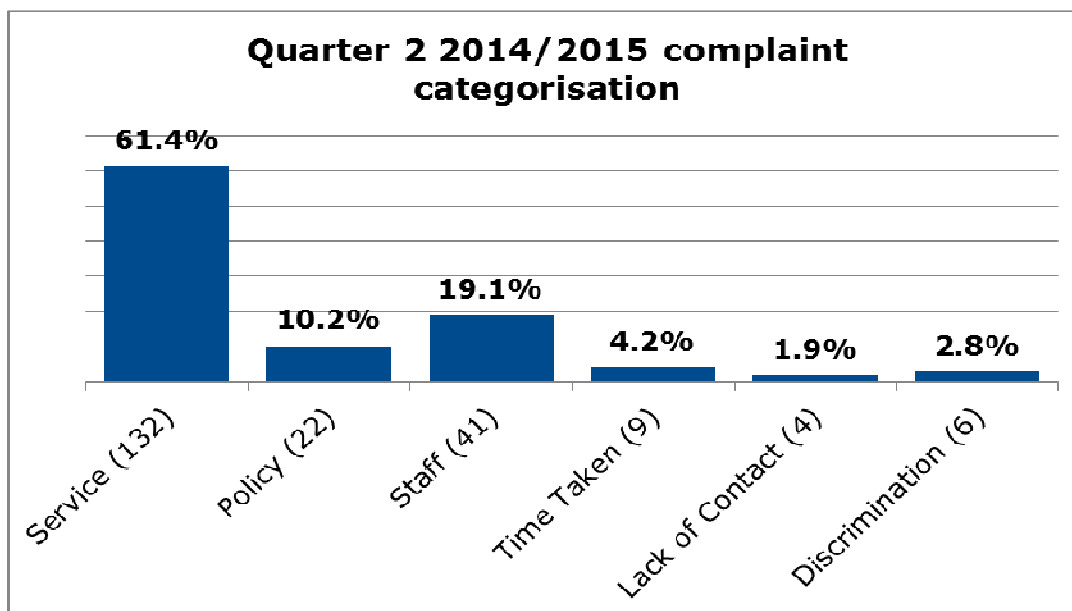


For comparison purposes, a table comparing volumes of complaints received and the percentage of complaints that were answered on time for the last 18 months can be found below.

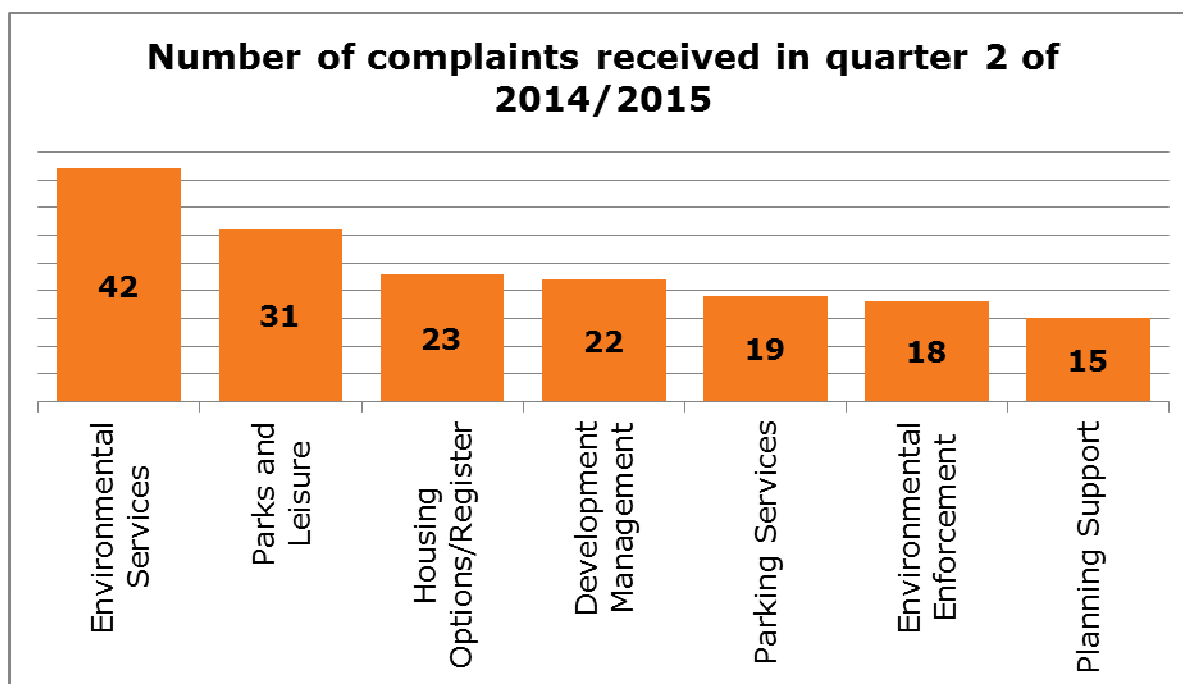
| | Year | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Overall number of complaints received | 13/14 | 94 | 175 | 161 | 118 |
| | 14/15 | 250 | 215 | - | - |
| Percent of complaints responded to on time | 13/14 | 95.8% | 97.1% | 91.3% | 98.3% |
| | 14/15 | 95.6% | 93.5% | - | - |

3. Complaint Categorisation

The vast majority of complaints received were about service. It is important to note that many complaints are about more than one element (for example, time taken as well as lack of contact) and complaints of this nature are usually categorised as service complaints.



4. Complaints by Service

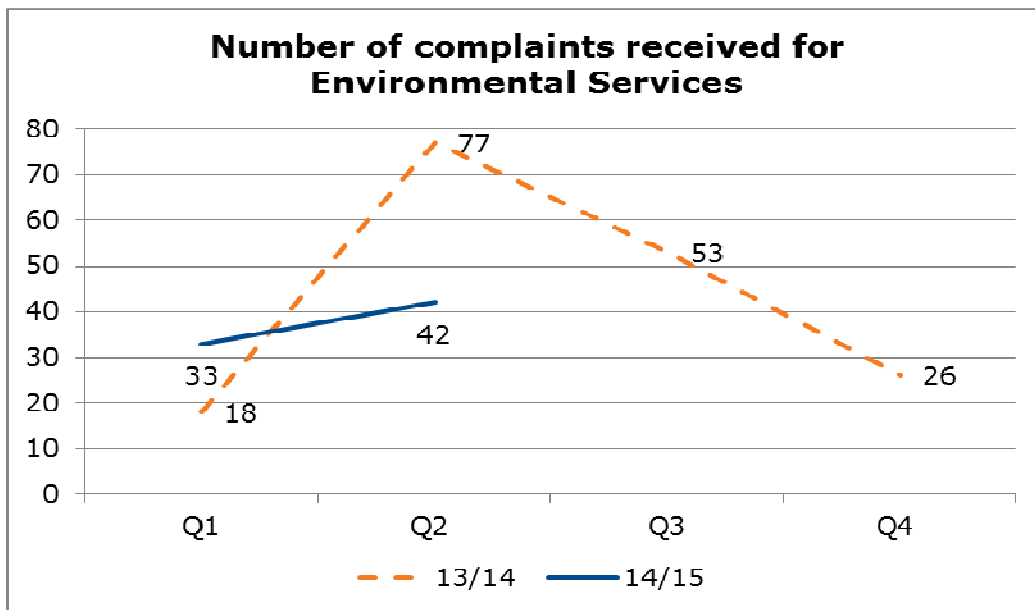


Environmental Services received the greatest number of complaints this quarter, closely followed by Development Management. Environmental Services usually receive the most complaints overall, but this is because this service includes Waste Collection and is used by the majority of residents in the borough.

Planning Support and Parks and Leisure both experienced particular issues that generated a large number of complaints this quarter. These issues are covered in their respective sections below.

Environmental Services (including Waste Collection)

Complaints for this service peaked in quarter 2 of 2013/2014 as this was when the new waste collection contract was introduced. Complaints about this service had been decreasing up until quarter 4 of 2013/2014. Over the last two quarters there has been an increase in the numbers of complaints from 26 in the last quarter of 2014 to 42 this quarter.



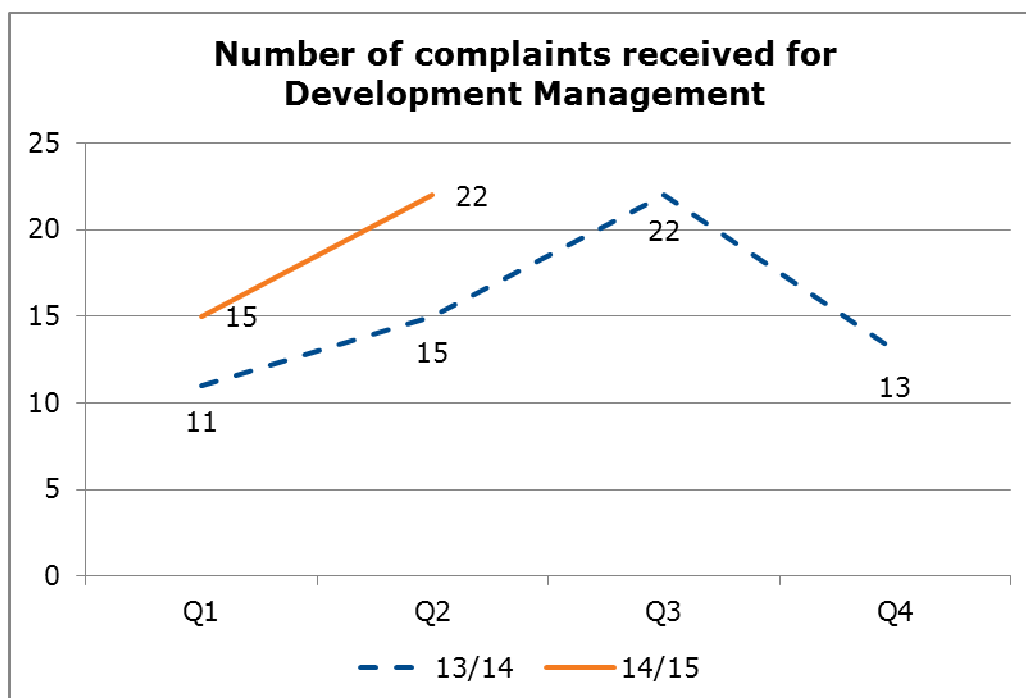
Of the 42 complaints for this service for quarter 2:

- 19 were about missed collections, including 5 about missed garden waste collections;
- Two were about missed bulky collections;
- Two were about side waste that was not collected; and
- Two were about recycling information stickers placed on the bins of customers.

Development Management and Planning Support

Development Management received a high number of complaints this quarter- equal to their previous high number of complaints which was reached in quarter 3 of 2013/2014. There were no individual issues that generated large numbers of complaints for this service. However there were common themes in the complaints received. These were:

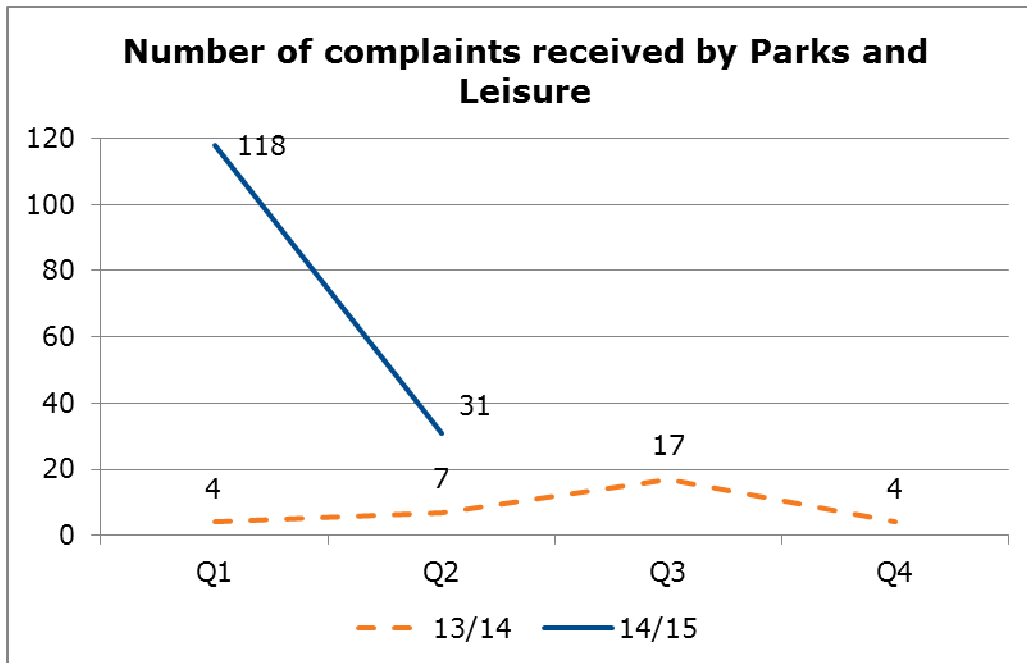
- Lack of contact by planning officers;
- Time taken to determine planning applications;
- Complainants unhappy with planning decisions;
- Complainants unhappy with the pre-application advice service; and
- Residents unhappy that they did not receive notifications of a planning application.



In addition to complaints about Development Management, Planning Support received 15 complaints this quarter. The main reason for these complaints was delays in validating applications due to the implementation of the Planning Support shared service. Fifteen complaints can be directly attributed to problems around the implementation of the service. It is important to note that previously, complaints about planning support were few and far between and would have been classified under Development Management. However as Mid Kent Planning Support is now an individual service it will now have its own category on the complaints system and in future complaints reports.

Parks and Leisure

Parks and Leisure received a high number of complaints this quarter compared to complaint volumes in 13/14; however the number received was significantly lower than the previous quarter.



The reason for the high number of complaints received by this service was 'The Social' festival which was held in Mote Park on 13th September. This festival resulted in 19 complaints. The complaints received raised the following issues:

- Noise levels being too high, including the bass levels;
- Residents not informed of the event in advance;
- Insufficient parking enforcement around the event;
- Antisocial Behaviour- including public urination;
- Litter following the event- including glass bottles;
- People taking 'legal high' substances;
- Lack of Police presence; and
- Large numbers of people leaving the event after 11pm, causing disruption.

In response to these points, Parks and Leisure stated:

- The licence set the noise levels and duration of the event. The Environmental Enforcement team were on site to monitor noise levels, and the event did not breach the conditions of the licence.
- The event was advertised in Mote Park, local media, around the town and houses bordering the park received a letter drop from the organiser. Work is being carried out to put together an email list to inform residents in advance of any future large events.
- To prevent antisocial behaviour, future event organisers will be required to have stewards patrolling the approach to events.

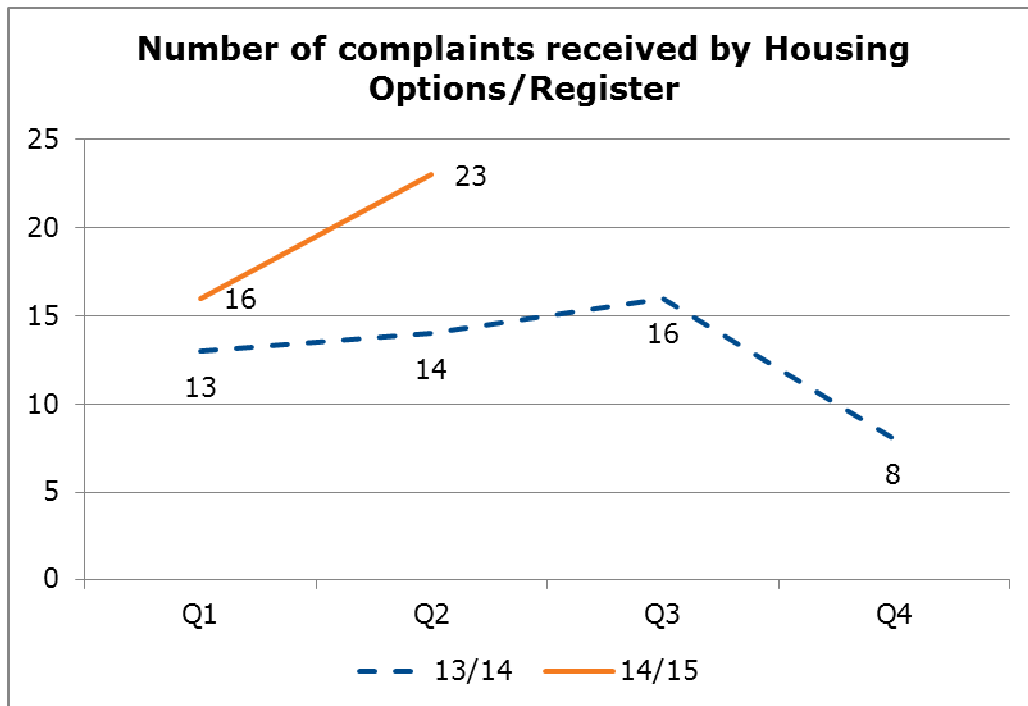
- Event organisers will be requested to place portaloos at the entrance to the park to discourage people from urinating in the street. This tactic is used to good effect in areas surrounding large football and rugby stadiums.
- The event organiser had a litter picking team working during and after the event. This ensured the park was mostly clear of rubbish by the morning after the event. For future events additional litter bins will be placed on the approach to the event.
- The parking arrangements were not effective for this year's festival. In the future, surrounding streets will be made no parking zones and there will be off road drop off/pick up points to minimise disruption to local residents.

Last year the event received 11 complaints compared to 19 this year showing a significant rise. More needs to be done to learn from the mistakes in both years if the number of complaints is to be reduced. A debrief is also due to be carried out with the event organiser to look at how the event can be improved in the future

It is worth noting that this event was enjoyed by 7,500 attendees and brought economic benefits to the borough as a whole, as well as directly to the council. There were also many positive comments made on social media about this festival. These are covered in more detail in section 8: Social Media

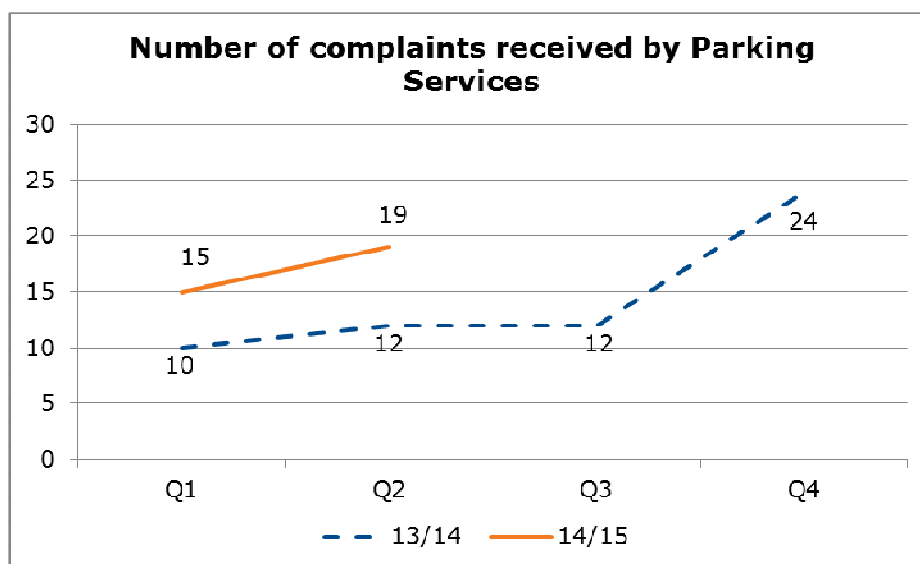
Housing Options/Register

There were no particular issues that generated a large number of complaints for this service during quarter 2. Nevertheless, the overall number of complaints received appears to be steadily rising.



Parking Services

19 complaints were received by Parking Services this quarter. This is a higher number of complaints than q2 of 13/14. However there were no particular issues that generated a high number of complaints for this service.

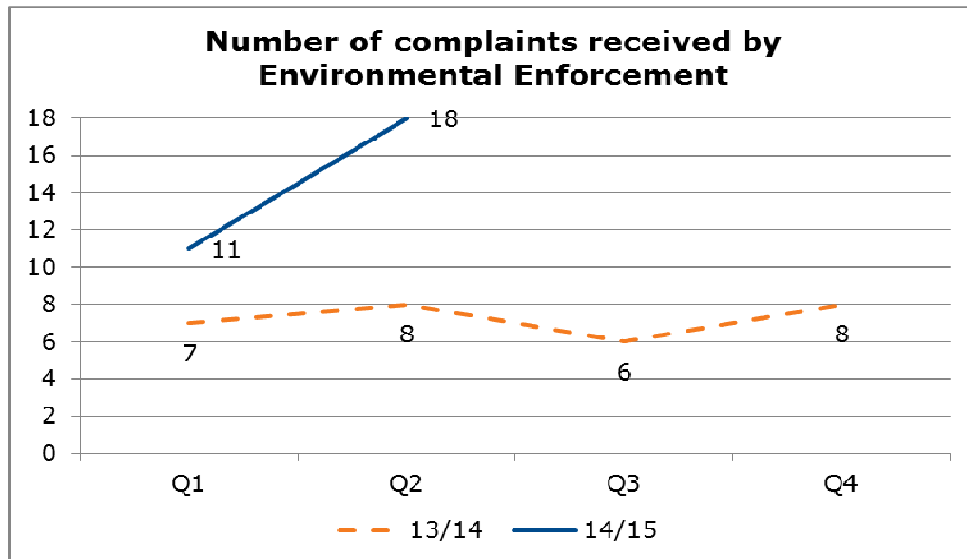


There was no significant change in the number of penalty charge notices (PCNs) issued this quarter. The number of PCNs issued each quarter, going back to quarter 1 of 2013/2014 can be seen in the table below. This suggests there is no correlation between the number of PCNs issued and the number of complaints received.

| Number of PCNs issued by Parking Services in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| 2013/2014 | 7538 | 7425 | 8352 | 8379 |
| 2014/2015 | 7881 | 8114 | - | - |

Environmental Enforcement

Complaints against Environmental Enforcement have been steadily increasing since quarter 3 of 2013/2014. The number of complaints received against this service is relatively low when considering the nature of the service that is provided.



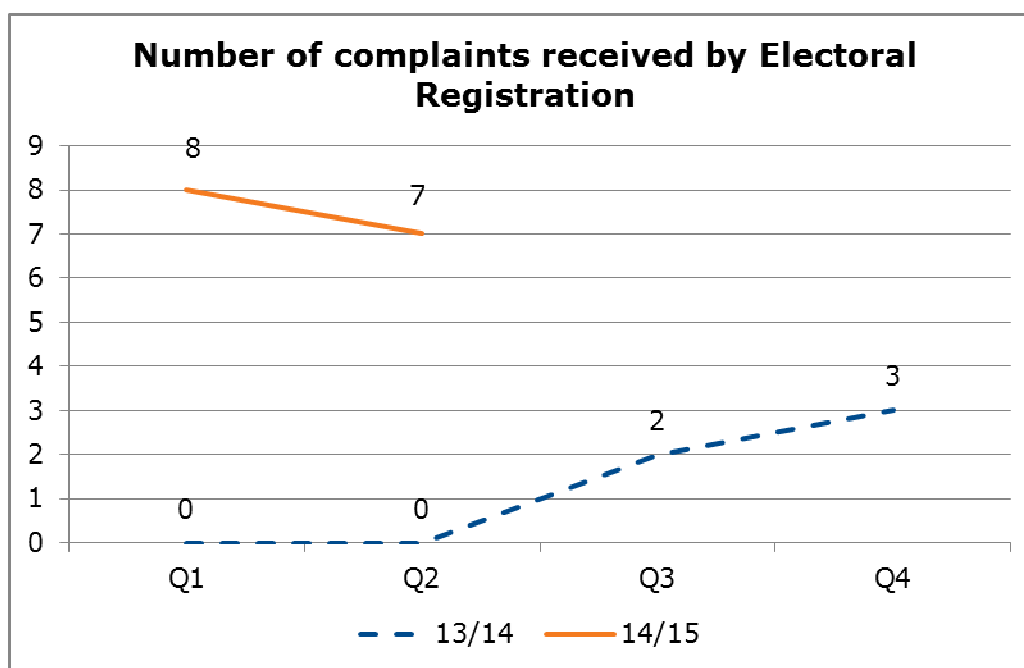
15 complaints received by Environmental Enforcement during quarter 2 were received about the council's litter enforcement scheme. These complaints were either about the conduct of Litter Enforcement officers whilst issuing litter fines or about the operation of the scheme itself.

Electoral Registration

Electoral Registration received seven complaints this quarter. This is a high number of complaints for this service compared to the volume of complaints in previous quarters. The reason for this high number of complaints was an error in a letter that was sent out in September about the new individual registration system. Five complaints were received about this issue.

The letter sent out had been mail-merged incorrectly meaning those who had opted to not be on the open register received a letter incorrectly stating they were on the open register, and vice versa.

The graph below shows the numbers of complaints received by Electoral Registration over the past 18 months.



5. Stage 2 Complaints

This quarter, the council received 24 stage 2 complaints. One of which was closed outside of the target time (20 working days). The complainant was kept updated with the progress of the complaint.

Of the 24 stage 2 complaints, eight were found to be justified this quarter. Of these eight complaints, three resulted in refunds, payments or compensation. This is covered more thoroughly in section 9: Payments, refunds and compensation.

The table below shows stage 2 complaints by service.

| Service | Stage 2 Complaints | Number Justified |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Benefits | 1 | 1 |
| Building Control | 1 | 0 |
| Council Tax | 1 | 1 |
| Customer Services | 1 | 0 |
| Development Management | 5 | 2 |
| Electoral Registration | 1 | 1 |
| Environmental Services | 1 | 0 |
| Housing Options/Register | 2 | 1 |
| Market | 1 | 0 |
| Parking Services | 5 | 2 |
| Parks and Leisure | 4 | 0 |
| Planning Enforcement | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 24 | 8 |

The services that received the most stage 2 complaints this quarter were Parking Services and Development Management. However it is worth noting that Development Management received less stage 2 complaints this quarter than last (in Q1 of 14/15 8 stage 2s were received for Development Management) despite receiving more stage 1 complaints.

Some statistics on stage 2 complaints overall can be seen below:

| | Year | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|--|--------------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of stage 2 complaints received | 13/14 | 23 | 16 | 39 | 17 |
| | 14/15 | 32 | 24 | - | - |
| % of complaints escalated to stage 2 | 13/14 | 24.5 | 9.1 | 24.2 | 14.4 |
| | 14/15 | 12.8 | 11.1 | - | - |
| % justified stage 2 complaints | 13/14 | 47.8 | 37.5 | 41.0 | 23.5 |
| | 14/15 | 31.3 | 33.3 | - | - |

Overall the number of stage 2 complaints has dropped this quarter compared to the last quarter. In quarter 1, 32 stage 2 complaints were received. The escalation rate was also lower than in quarter 1 of 2014/2015. The percentage of justified stage 2 complaints has increased slightly compared to the previous quarter, but there is no significant variance compared to previous quarters.

6. Complaint Handling Satisfaction

Usually a complaint satisfaction survey is sent to every complainant following the closure of their complaint at Stage 1. In total 173 surveys were sent out for quarter 2 out of 215 complaints as the resources required to send out the survey were not available. This meant that complaints surveys were not sent to every complainant, leading to a low response rate for the quarter compared to the total number of complaints made. However the response rate was also low compared to the number of actual surveys sent out (8.1%). The satisfaction rate was 0% for quarter 2- the low response rate most likely contributed to the low result for this quarter. The response rate to the customer satisfaction survey for the last 18 months can be found in the table below.

| | Year | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|----------------------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Response rate | 2013/2014 | 10.6% | 14.3% | 29.2% | 30.5% |
| | 2014/2015 | 22.8% | 8.1% | - | - |

7. Compliments

Several teams received compliments during quarter 2. The Number of compliments for each team are shown in the table below:

| Team | Number of compliments |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bereavement Services | 2 |
| Environmental Services | 8 |
| Business Improvement | 1 |
| Grounds Maintenance | 2 |
| Planning Support | 1 |
| Planning Policy | 1 |
| Community Safety | 1 |
| Heritage, Landscape and Design | 1 |
| Council Tax | 2 |
| Housing Options | 1 |
| Parks and Leisure | 2 |
| Communications | 3 |
| Street Cleansing | 1 |
| Customer Services | 1 |
| Parking Services | 1 |

A selection of quotes from the compliments received can be found in the boxes below:

Vinters Park is such a beautiful place, so well cared for, and a lovely welcoming place to visit.

(A resident) would like to comment on the lovely job the grass cutting team have done in Rivers Walk today and everyone has commented that it is the best job they have done in a long time.

I have seen that the council is considering spending £2m on new safe cycling routes around Maidstone. As someone who regularly cycles in and around Maidstone, this news is warmly welcomed.

I am most grateful to you for the trouble taken and endeavour given to answering my request. If there is such a thing you should certainly be recommended for some form of meritorious recognition under MBC's customer service programme. I am more than happy for you to forward this email to any relevant "powers-that-be" or to provide further endorsement.

(A resident) rang to let us know that she thought the contractors were incredibly patient this morning when cars blocked the entrance to Holtye Crescent. The contractors got out and knocked on the doors and kept going round even after no one was answering, eventually getting the cars moved to complete their round.

8. Social Media

Interactions on social media are gathered and classified by the Communications team. Everything with the word Maidstone in is logged, and classified by subject. Pictures are then made up on a monthly basis, using the names of the subject, with the larger the word the greater the number of mentions on social media. There is an overall summary provided below, along with the pictures for each of the months in the quarter.

Summary

- In July there was a large storm that generated a large amount of activity on social media. This month also saw Race for Life mentioned.
- In August there was some discussion of the new McDonalds drive through that was being built.
- Nightlife and transport issues (traffic, trains and cycling) are, as always, a major theme with a large number of mentions on social media. July had a larger than usual number of mentions for cycling.
- There are two different pictures for September- one including Maidstone United and one not including Maidstone United. Maidstone United had a large number of mentions due to their 10-0 victory over Littlehampton Town.
- Other issues from September from the picture without Maidstone United include:
 - The Social- split into positive, neutral and negative. You will notice that the positive comments are much more prominent than the neutral or negative. Negative comments about the festival are so small they are unreadable;
 - DemonCon08 was a Comic book convention (a gathering of comic book, sci-fi and fantasy enthusiasts) event at the Royal Star Arcade; and
 - Maidstone Studios received more mentions than usual as they were filming Jools Holland there.
- Luna Cinema, an open air cinema event that was run in partnership between the council and a private company, generated mentions during August.
- Mote Park received a number of mentions during August and September, and the Museum received a number of mentions in July.

July

MAIDSTONEUNITED

RACEFORLIFE

CONKSION

POIICEOPENDAY

BYELECTION

JOEYESSKH

ARTSFESTIVAL

BUSSES

CYCLING

TRAFFIC

TRAINS

SHOPPING ALANCARR

MUSEUM

NIGHTLIFE

MUSEUM

MOTEPARK

STORM

August

nightlife

MotePark
MaidstoneUnited
ChrisSmalling

traffic
shopping
Museum
McDonnals
JoeyEssex
rain
LunaCinema

trains

September (without Maidstone United)

nighlife

ChrisSmalling

trains

busess

SocialNegative
MorePaul

AnyRoad

SocialNeutral

traffic
shopping DemonCon8
MaidstoneStudios

SocialPositive

September (with Maidstone United)

trains
nightlife
MaidstoneUnited
SocialPositive

9. Payments, Refunds and Compensation

Payments, refunds and compensation as a result of complaints are listed in the table below.

| Service | Stage | Reason | Amount |
|------------------------|--------------|--|----------------|
| Council Tax | 1 | Cancelled court costs | £110 |
| Development Management | 1 | Refund for pre- app advice given | £36 |
| Environmental Services | 1 | Refund for a bulk collection fee | £22.50 |
| Parking Services | 1 | Additional fee waived as wrongly advised when applying for a permit | £25 |
| Parking Services | 2 | Refund of an overpayment made due to an error by the council | £15 |
| Parking Services | 2 | Refund offered as parking machine generated a ticket that was unreadable. Refund offered but not taken | 90p |
| Total | | | £209.40 |

The total cost of payments, refunds and compensation as a result of complaints is significantly lower than quarter 1 (£1026.42). However quarter 1 had a large ex gratia payment to a complainant (£500) and the refund of several Penalty Charge Notices (£290) due to a resident permit error.

10. Methods of Contact

Methods of contact for complaints received can be found in the table below.

| | Email | Post | Telephone | Face to Face | Social Media |
|---------------|-------|------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Number | 96 | 27 | 75 | 17 | 0 |
| % | 44.7 | 12.6 | 34.9 | 7.9 | 0 |

In quarter 2, complainants were most likely to complain by email with nearly half of all complaints received by email. This is a higher proportion than in quarter 1, when 35.2% of complaints were made using this method of contact. Correspondingly, the proportion of complaints made by telephone has dropped from 52.4% in quarter 1 to 34.9% in quarter 2, and the proportion of complaints received by face to face and post have both risen since quarter 1 (6.0% and 6.4% in quarter 1).

A table showing methods of contact to the council for the past 18 months can be found below.

| | Year | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Email | 13/14 | 34.0% | 35.6% | 29.2% | 39.8% |
| | 14/15 | 35.2% | 44.7% | - | - |
| Post | 13/14 | 19.1% | 27.5% | 17.4% | 10.2% |
| | 14/15 | 6.4% | 12.6% | - | - |
| Telephone | 13/14 | 29.8% | 31.2% | 47.8% | 40.7% |
| | 14/15 | 52.4% | 34.9% | - | - |
| Face to Face | 13/14 | 11.7% | 5.0% | 5.0% | 9.3% |
| | 14/15 | 6.0% | 7.9% | - | - |
| Social Media | 13/14 | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.06% | 0.0% |
| | 14/15 | 0.0% | 0.0% | - | - |