

OPEN



Corporate Policy Committee

28/11/2024

Six Monthly Complaints Update 2024-25

Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director Resources and S151 Officer

Report Reference No: CPC/46/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision or Scrutiny: Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides a summary and analysis of complaints and compliments received by the Council during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024.
- 2 The report highlights any areas of concern and examples of good practice. It provides assurance that matters raised as complaints by customers are being addressed; that action has been taken to rectify issues and that information arising from complaints has informed service improvements. Responsibility for services rests with the relevant service committee and members may wish to seek additional assurances from those service committees.
- 3 The report supports the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 to become an open and enabling Council and specifically supports the objectives of the Council's Customer Experience Strategy.

Executive Summary

- 4 The Council provides the facility for customers to report compliments and complaints in relation to Council services in an accessible and consistent way. Improvements have been made to the processes for these customer engagements following the approval of the Customer Experience Strategy by the Corporate Policy Committee. As part of this approval the Committee continues to receive updated performance information on progress.
- 5 The Council provides in the region of 500 different services across a population of almost 400,000 residents. These range from place-based services, such as waste collection and highways management which are universal, to individual services such as social care and housing.

- 6 The Council received 2,097 complaints and 524 compliments in between April and September 2024. 1% of the total contact received by the Council during the 6-month period.
- 7 In Quarter 1, 1,086 complaints were received compared to 1,011 in Quarter 2. This is a decrease of 7%. In terms of compliments, 245 were received in Quarter 1 compared to 279 in Quarter 2. This is an increase of 14%. Of the 2,097 complaints received over the two quarters, 164 were rejected, withdrawn or not pursued; and the remaining 1,933 were processed as official complaints. Of the 1,933 processed complaints, 103 were Stage 2 complaints and 0 were Stage 3 complaints.
- 8 The Council has a two-stage complaints procedure. Most complaints are resolved at Stage 1 where a complaint is investigated and responded to by a manager from the service being complained about. The council's Customer Charter sets a standard of 10 or 20 days to respond to a complaint (depending on the stage and whether statutory or non-statutory). The customer will generally receive a written response within 10 working days, unless the matter has been resolved and the customer has been contacted directly by the service via telephone or email. It should be noted that the statutory complaints process for Children's Social Care has the option to go to Stage 3 if required.
- 9 If the customer remains unhappy following the Stage 1 response and outcome, they can request that the complaint is considered at Stage 2. At this stage a review of the complaint is carried out by a manager who has not previously been involved with the complaint.
- 10 Of the 1,913 complaints that had received a response at the time of writing, 51% were upheld, 16% were partly upheld and 33% were not upheld.
- 11 Customer feedback is very important in the future development of services and this report provides data and activities related to feedback in the period 1st April to 30th September 2024, focusing on those services which received a comparatively high volume of complaints (compared with other services in the same committee); or where complaint volumes have significantly increased for a service. The Customer Services Team has increased engagement with service leads throughout this period in line with the strategy. This has led to process changes and increased awareness.
- 12 Earlier in the year, the Customer Feedback Team introduced a Complaints Customer Satisfaction Survey. We were hopeful that this would provide valuable feedback from residents who had made a complaint. However, the engagement from customers has been sporadic; and what data has been received shows contradictory results. Therefore, the survey will need to be reviewed and revised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

- 1 Note the Committee complaints and compliments data, and the briefing material in this report relating to first half of the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2 Note the issues raised and improvements made in respect to the management of complaints across the Council contained within the briefing material in this report.
- 3 Note the Council's compliance with the Corporate Complaints Policy, and with the recommendations of the Ombudsman.

Background

- 13 The Council has a Corporate Complaints Policy covering all complaints about Council services other than Adults & Health and Children's Social Care complaints, which each have separate statutory complaints process.
- 14 The Policy provides for members of the public to contact the Council in several different ways. Most complaints are received either by email, via the Customer Contact Centre or are self-logged via the Council's website.
- 15 The Local Government Act 1974 established the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. It empowers the Ombudsman to investigate complaints against councils and adult social care providers and to provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice. Once a complainant has exhausted the Council's Complaints procedure, their next recourse, should they remain dissatisfied with the Council's response, is to contact the Ombudsman.
- 16 The Ombudsman will assess the merits of each case escalated to them and seek clarification from the Council as necessary before making the decision to investigate a complaint. Once the Ombudsman decides to investigate, they will try to ascertain if maladministration/Fault has occurred and whether there has been any resulting injustice to the complainant because of the maladministration/Fault.
- 17 In instances where maladministration/Fault with Injustice is found, the Ombudsman will usually make non-legally binding recommendations which they consider to be appropriate and reasonable. Although not legally binding, refusal to accept the Ombudsman's recommendation(s) will trigger a Public Report. A Public Report is a detailed account of the complaint, outlining the failures by the Council in the investigation.
- 18 All complaints are a useful indicator of performance and provide the Council with an opportunity to review the quality of service provided and to make improvements. The Customer Relations Team within Customer Services reports the volume, outcome and time taken to resolve complaints to each Directorate on a quarterly basis. The volume of compliments, overall customer contact and,

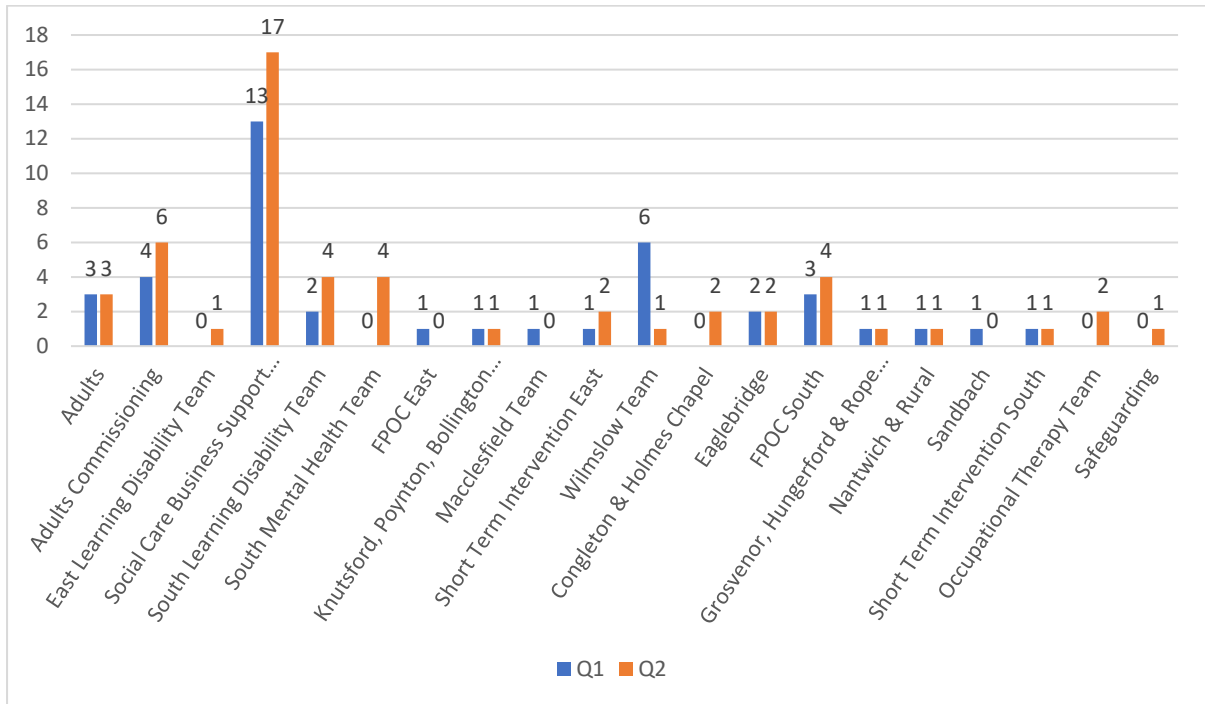
where appropriate, areas of concern and potential for service improvements are also reported.

- 19 Colleagues from a number of services have attended the in-house Customer Experience Training for Managers; and the feedback from the trainees via the training evaluation survey has been very positive.
- 20 Last financial year, the Complaints Team introduced a 'themes tracker' to assist in understanding the root of complaints. This is referenced in the Briefing section below.
- 21 Data provided within this report relates to the 'static' SLAs – which are set out by the Charter. Two services (SEND and Development Management) currently have temporary Stage 1 complaint SLAs of 20 working days rather than 10 working days; and on occasion, services may agree a different SLA with the complainant / correspondent. The Briefing section for each committee gives details of both the static SLA data and the 'non-static' SLA data – SLAs which have been agreed between the complainant and the responder which may fall outside the Charter's SLAs.
- 22 The Adult Social Care policy has been revised and one of the main changes is that the Stage 2 option has been removed in line with the Adults statutory complaints process. Instead, further work at Stage 1 – including the offer of a meeting and a further written response – will be completed where deemed necessary to provide further clarification to the complainant. They will then be referred to the Local Govt & Social Care Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied.
- 23 It is noted that the LGSCO has launched a new Complaints Handling Code. The Ombudsman believes that a single code that applies to all councils in England will make it easier for customers to know what to expect in terms of how their complaint is going to be dealt with; and that it will improve complaints handling and standards, resulting in better services. The code will officially go live on the 1st of April 2026; however, we are currently revising the Corporate Complaints Policy to fall in line with the code.

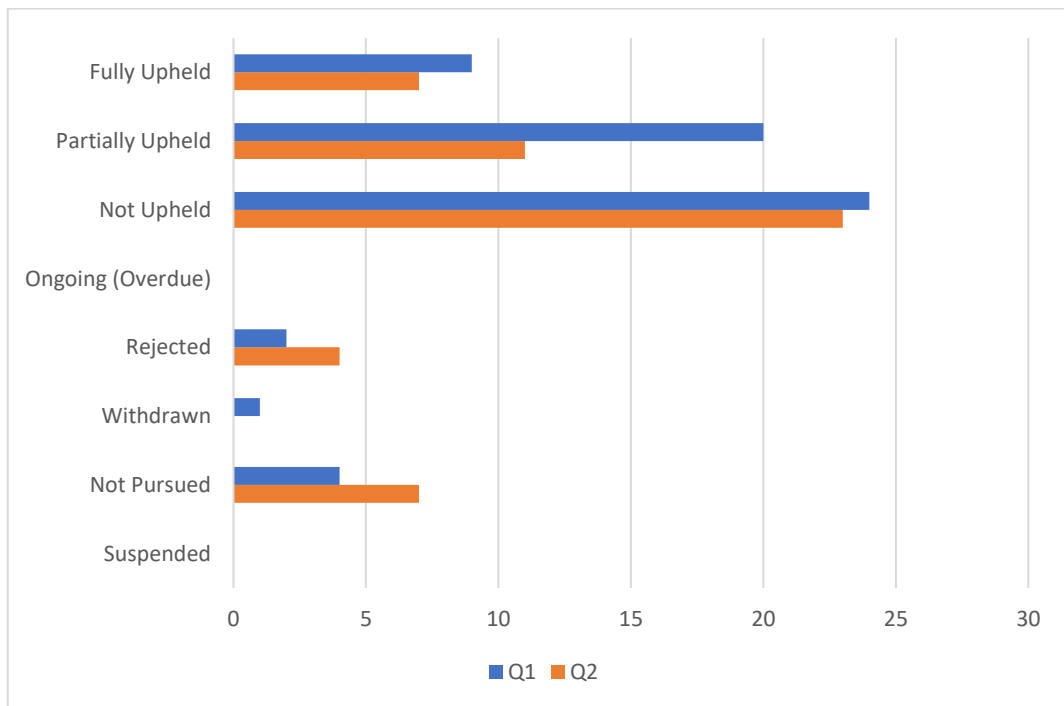
Briefing

Adults and Health

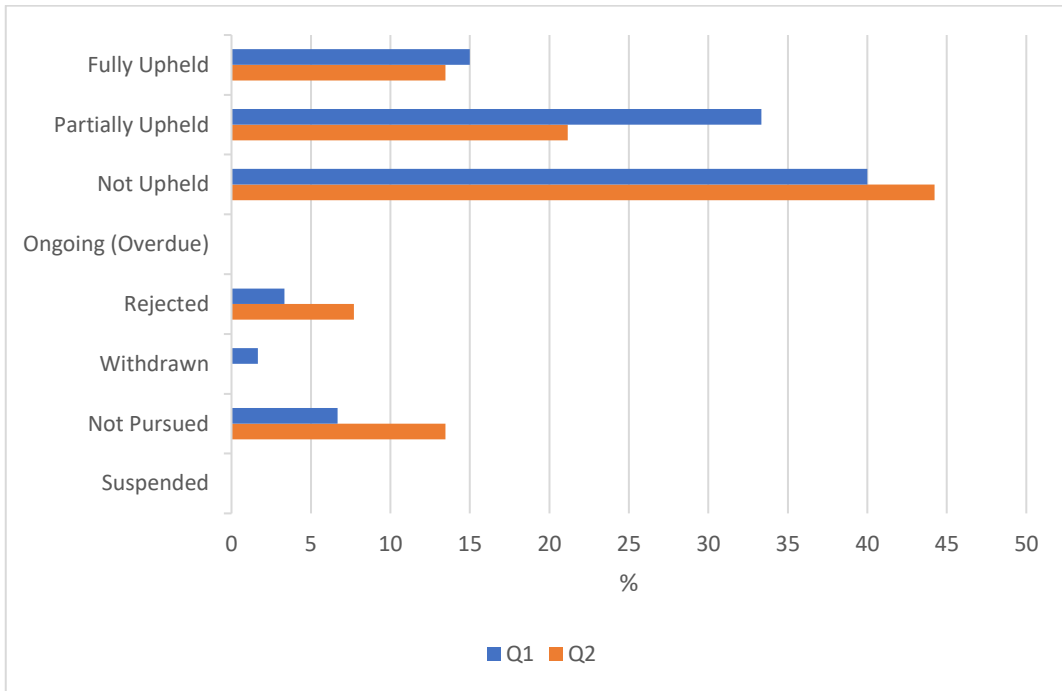
- 24 Adults and Health received 112 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024/25, 5% of the total received by the council. Of these, 18 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 94 were processed as official complaints.
- 25 Quarter 2 saw a 23% decrease in processed complaints compared with Quarter 1 (53 and 41 respectively). There were 0 Stage 2 complaints processed in the 6 months.
- 26 Adults and Health received 254 compliments between April and September 2024.
- 27 **Table 1:** Complaint Volumes by Service



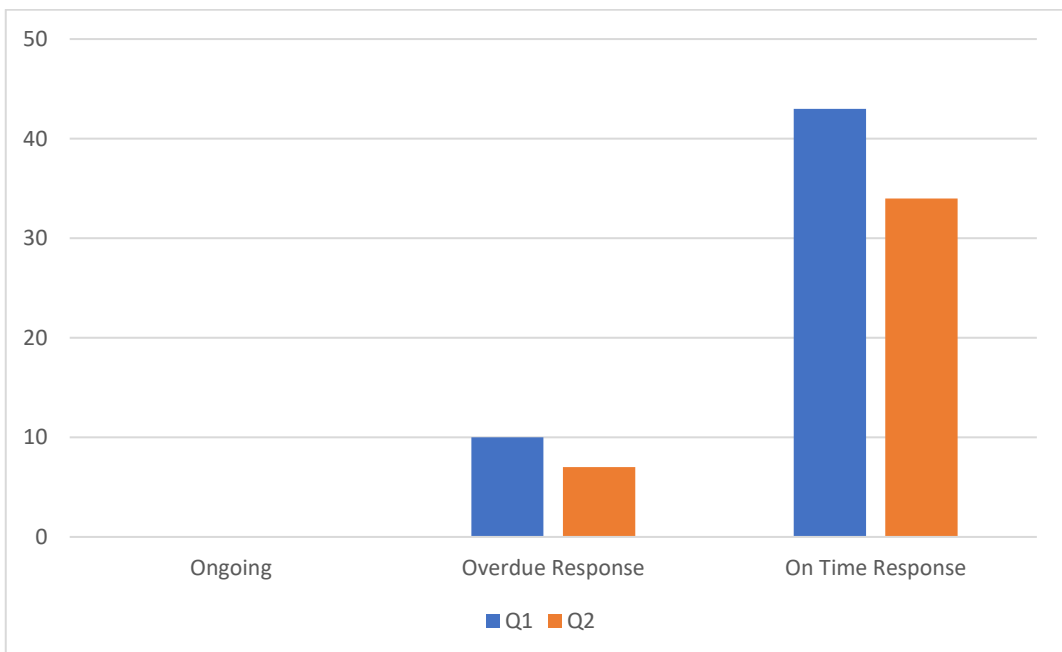
28 **Table 2: Complaints by Outcomes - Numbers**



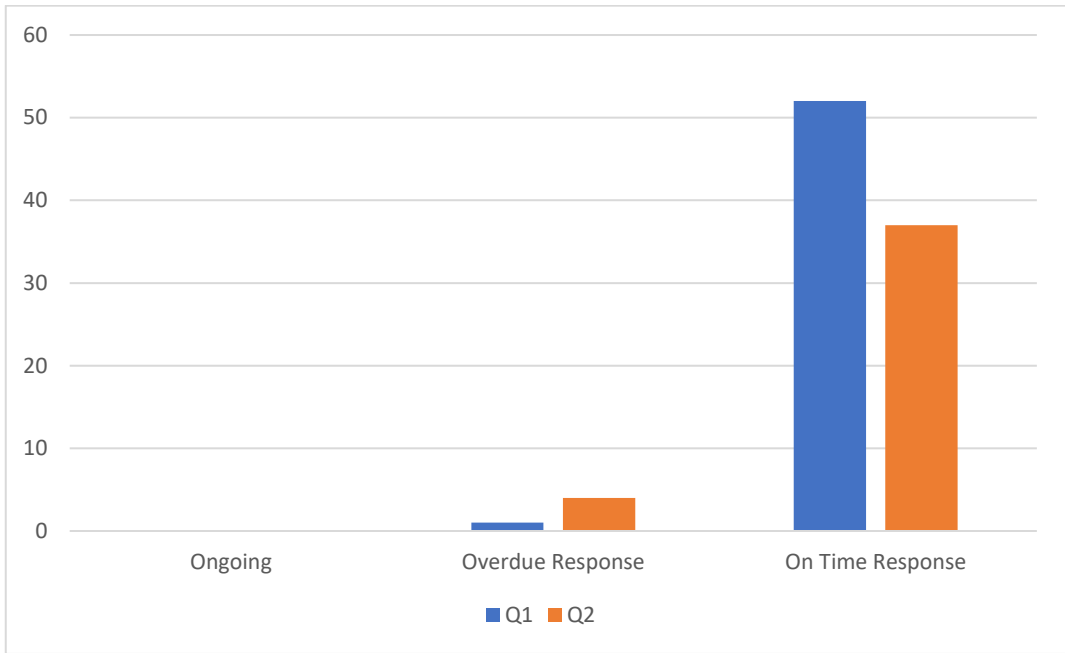
29 **Table 3: Complaints by Outcomes by Percentage**



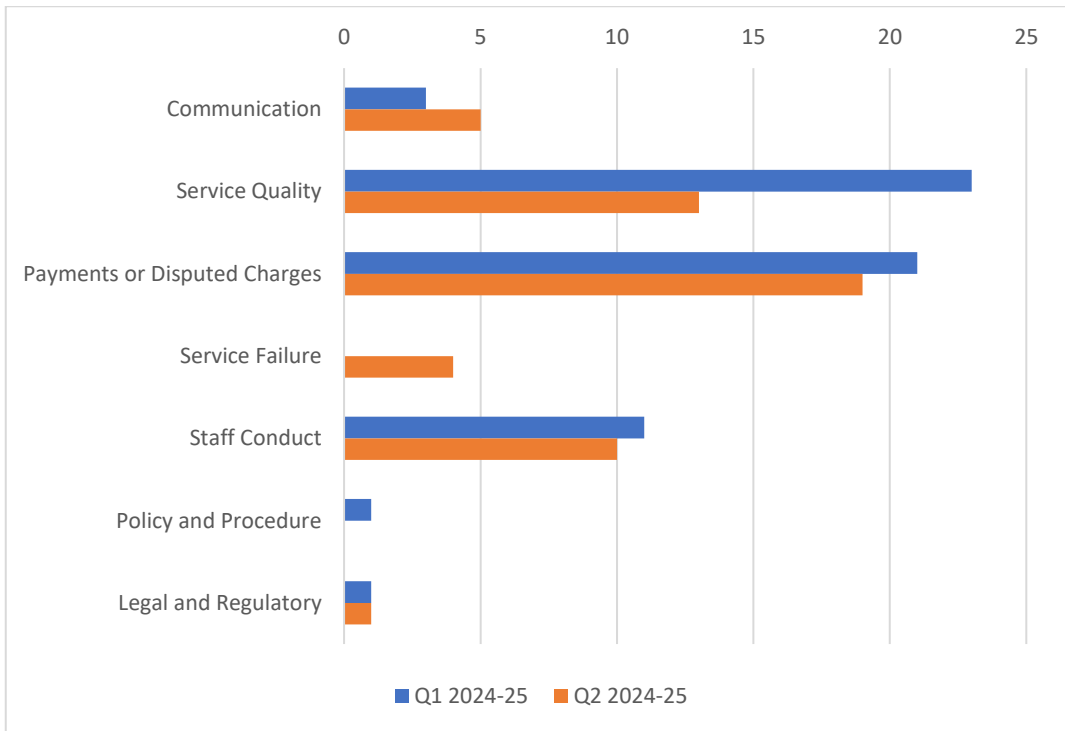
30 **Table 4: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Static (answered within 10 working days)**



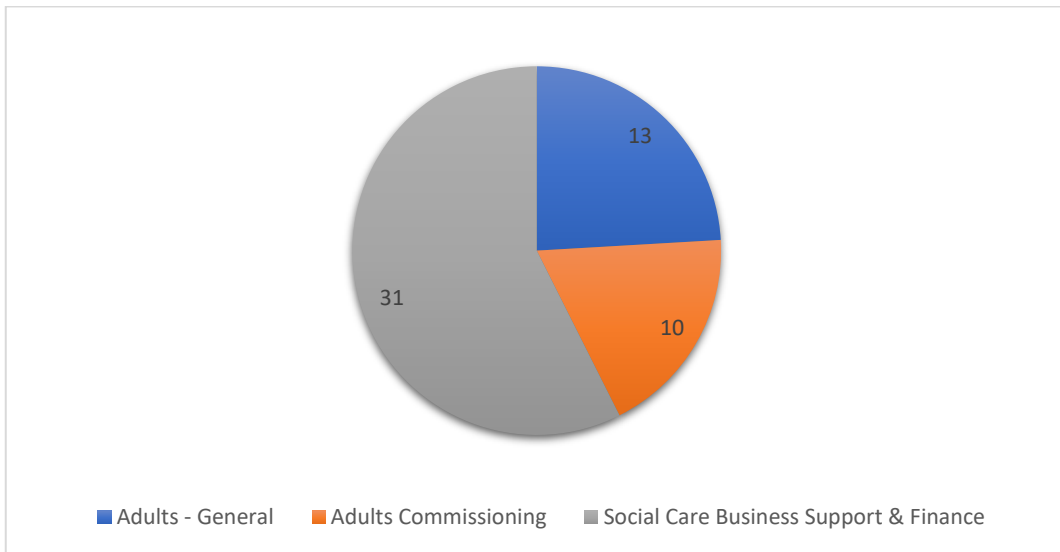
31 **Table 5: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Non-Static**



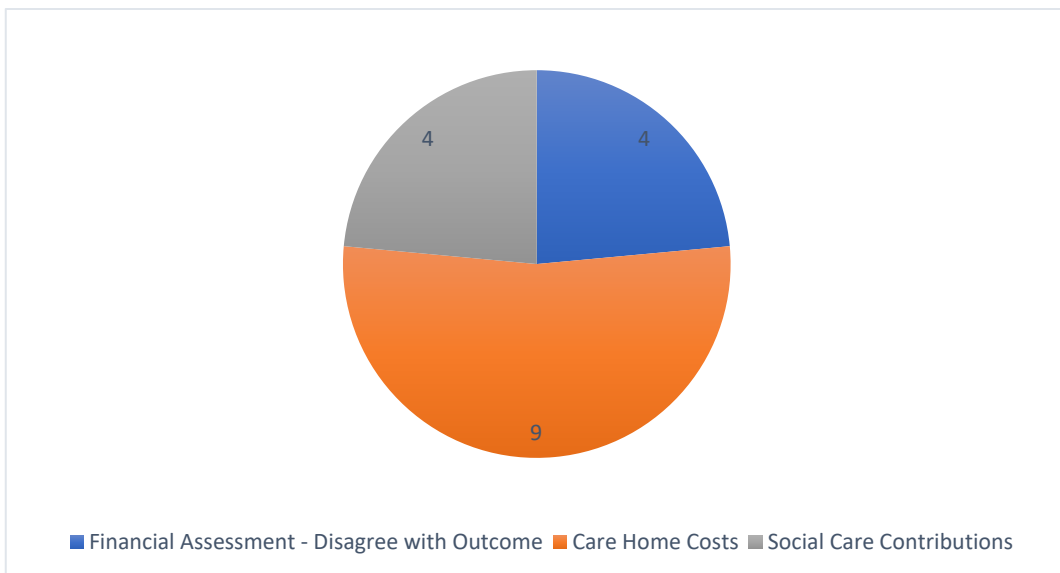
32 **Table 6: Complaint Primary Causes in Q1 and Q2**



33 **Table 7:** Themes Tracker – Top 3 Services



34 **Table 8:** Themes by Service – Social Care Business Support & Finance

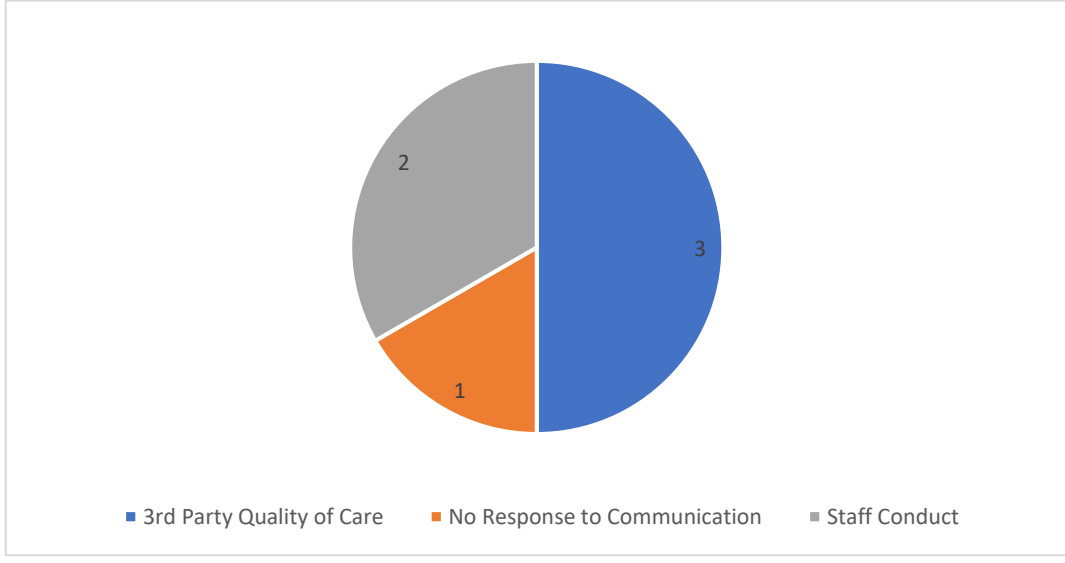


35 **Table 9:** Theme by Service outcomes - Social Care Business Support & Finance

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Financial Assessment – Disagree with Outcome	0	0	4
Care Home Costs	0	7	2

Social Care Contributions	1	1	2
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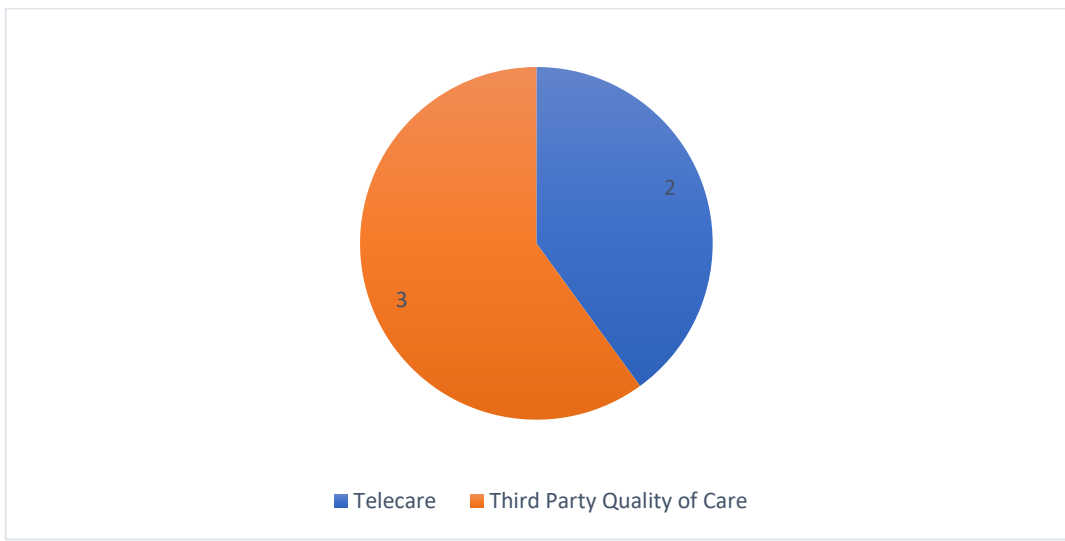
36 **Table 10:** Themes by Service – Adults



37 **Table 11:** Themes by Service outcomes – Adults

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Third Party Quality of Care	1	2	0
No Response to Communication	1	0	0
Staff Conduct	0	0	2

38 **Table 12:** Themes by Service – Commissioning



39 **Table 13:** Themes by Service outcomes – Commissioning

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Telecare	0	2	0
Third Party Quality of Care	1	0	2

40 **Table 14:** Adults and Health received 254 compliments between April and September 2024, spread across 25 services.

Service	Total Q1	Total Q2
Adults	4	0
Adults Commissioning	0	1
Social Care Business Support and Finance	0	2
Dementia Reablement North	4	17
Dementia Reablement South	21	14
Domiciliary Reablement North	23	26
Domiciliary Reablement South	24	19
MH Providers and Reablement North	11	10
MH Providers and Reablement South	9	4
Reablement Crewe	1	1
Reablement Macclesfield	9	4
Reablement Wilmslow	18	3
Salinae Centre	1	0
SLN Heather Brae	0	1
FPOC East	1	4
Knutsford, Poynton, Bollington & Disley	2	1
Macclesfield Team	1	0
Short Term Intervention East	0	1
Wilmslow Team	2	0
Congleton & Holmes Chapel	1	0
Eaglebridge	1	1
FPOC South	2	5
Nantwich & Rural	2	0
Short Term Intervention South	1	1
Safeguarding	1	0
TOTAL	139	115

41 Examples of Compliments in Q1 and Q2

We wanted to drop you a note of thanks for all that you've done for Dad. He was thrilled to get home a couple of weeks ago and has surprised us all by managing very well with the help of the care team. The care team are absolutely outstanding. It is their high quality, diligent, professional and attentive person-centred care, which has made his return home a success - at least for now, as we're all clear that there are risks. But we wanted you to know that he's happy and content which is lovely to see. Thanks again from X, Y and Z.

Thank you for your time, patience, support and understanding. Without which, I would not be able to look at the future with any confidence. I'm

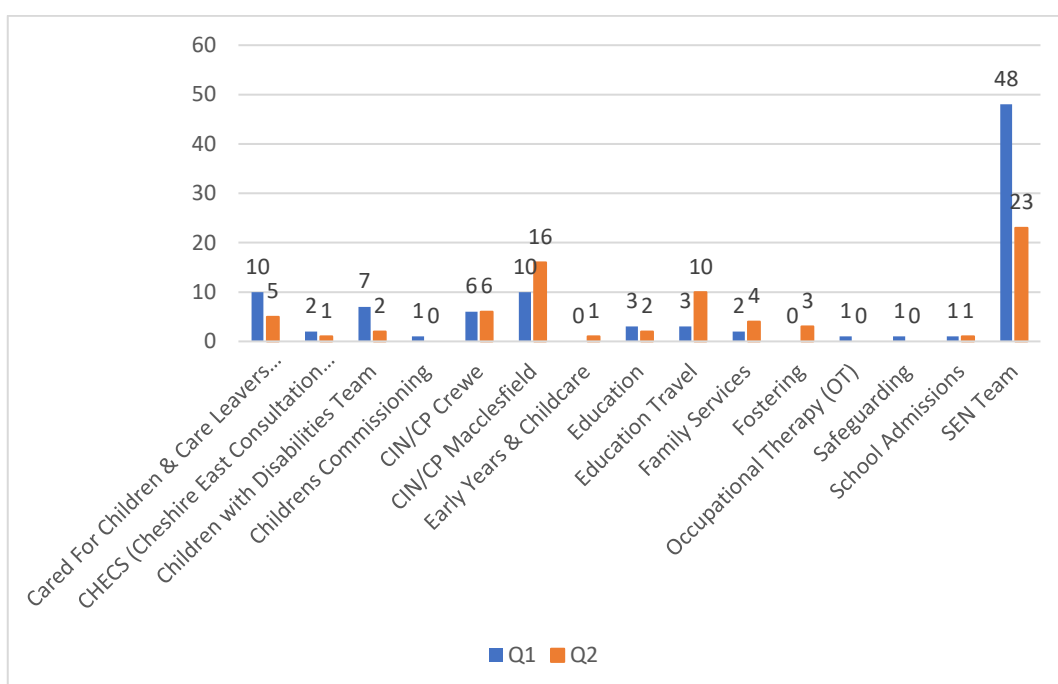
massively indebted to you and a simple thank you just doesn't do you and your hard work justice. Thank you again for providing me with the platform to start the process of rebuilding my health.

X it was really important to me that you know just what an impact you had on me and of course my family. In a time of great distress, fear and uncertainty, you moved around us with such gentleness, genuine concern, a listening ear, an understanding and professionalism. I am so grateful it was you supporting us.

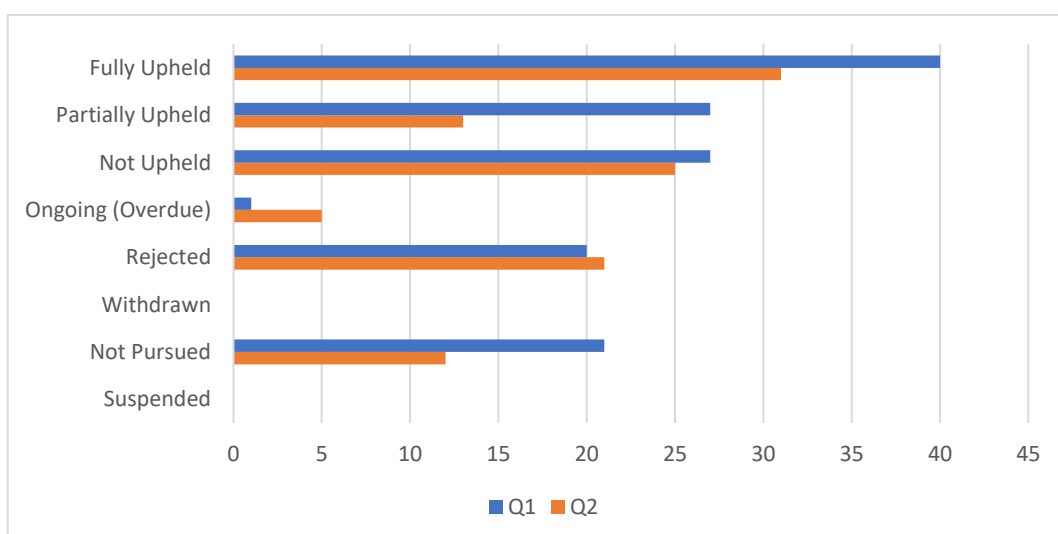
We have had very good support from the Dementia team at Crewe – in particular X who has visited my husband at home. X has been kind, understanding and listened to our concerns. My husband now has good medication which enables him to continue his pastimes of bowls and table tennis and I hope this will continue for a long time. Thank you, X, and the team behind the scenes. I know I can contact you if I need any help or support in the future.

Children and Families

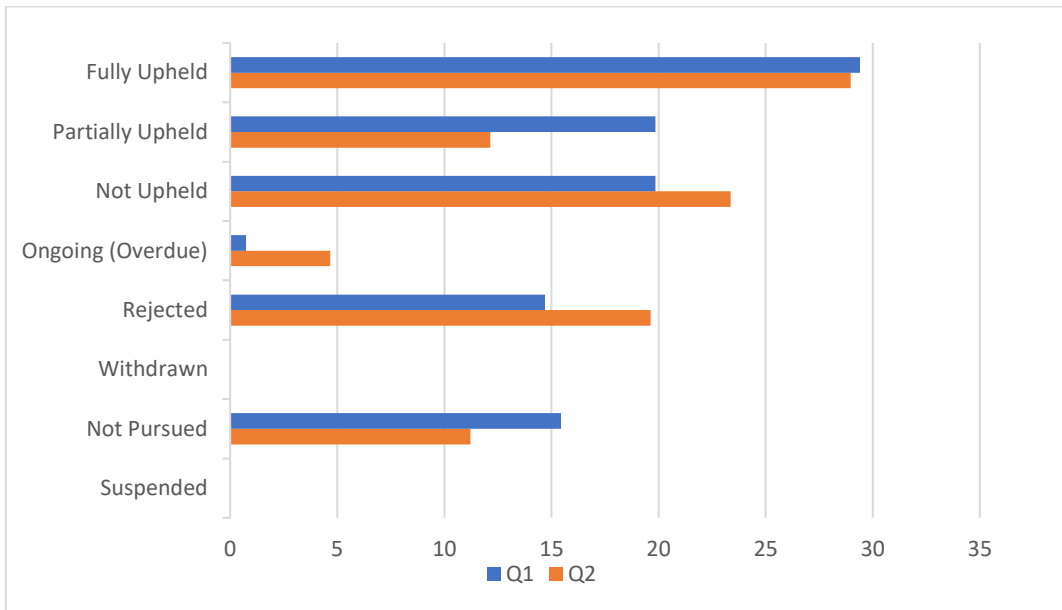
- 42 Children and Families received 243 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024/25, 12% of the total received by the council. Of these, 74 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 169 were processed as official complaints.
- 43 Quarter 2 saw a 22% decrease in processed complaints compared with Quarter 1 (74 and 95 respectively). There were 6 Stage 2 complaints and 0 Stage 3 complaints in the 6 months.
- 44 Children and Families received 57 compliments between April and September 2024.
- 45 **Table 15: Complaint Volumes by Service**



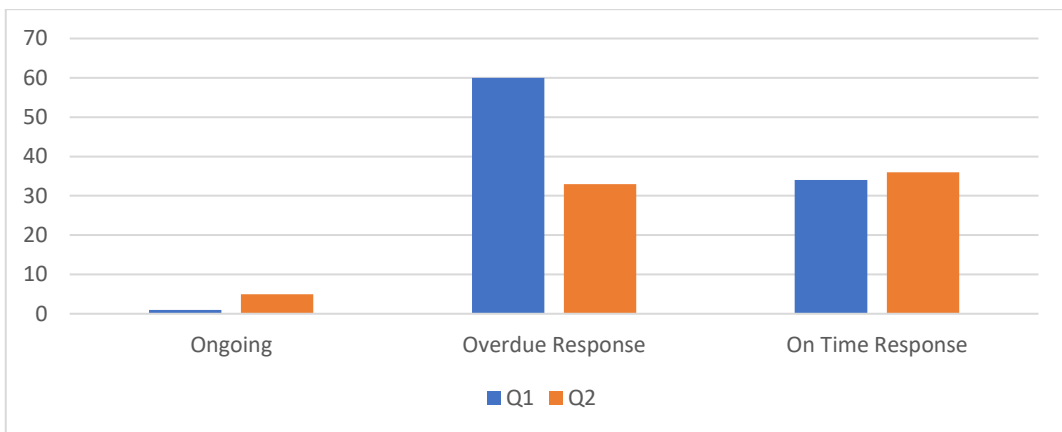
- 46 **Table 16: Complaints by Outcome - Numbers**



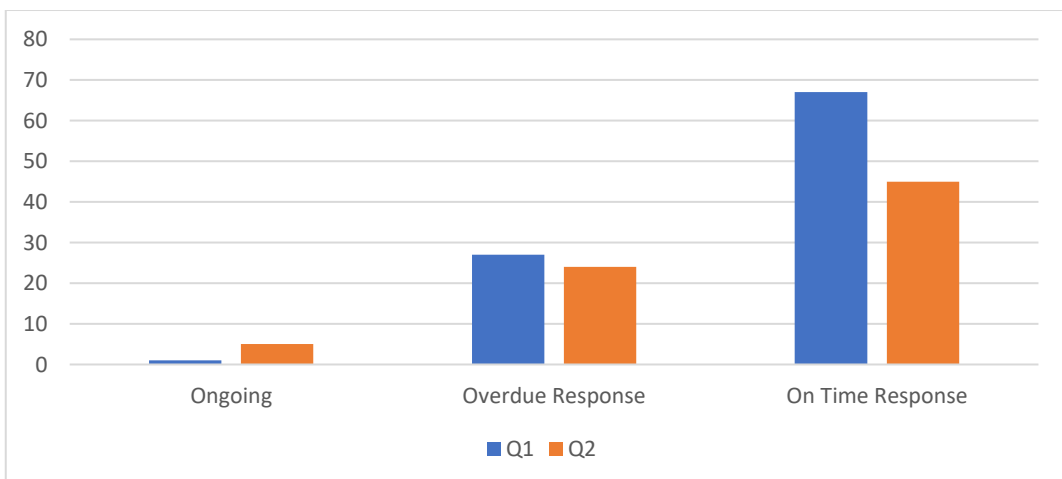
47 **Table 17: Complaints by Outcome – Percentages**



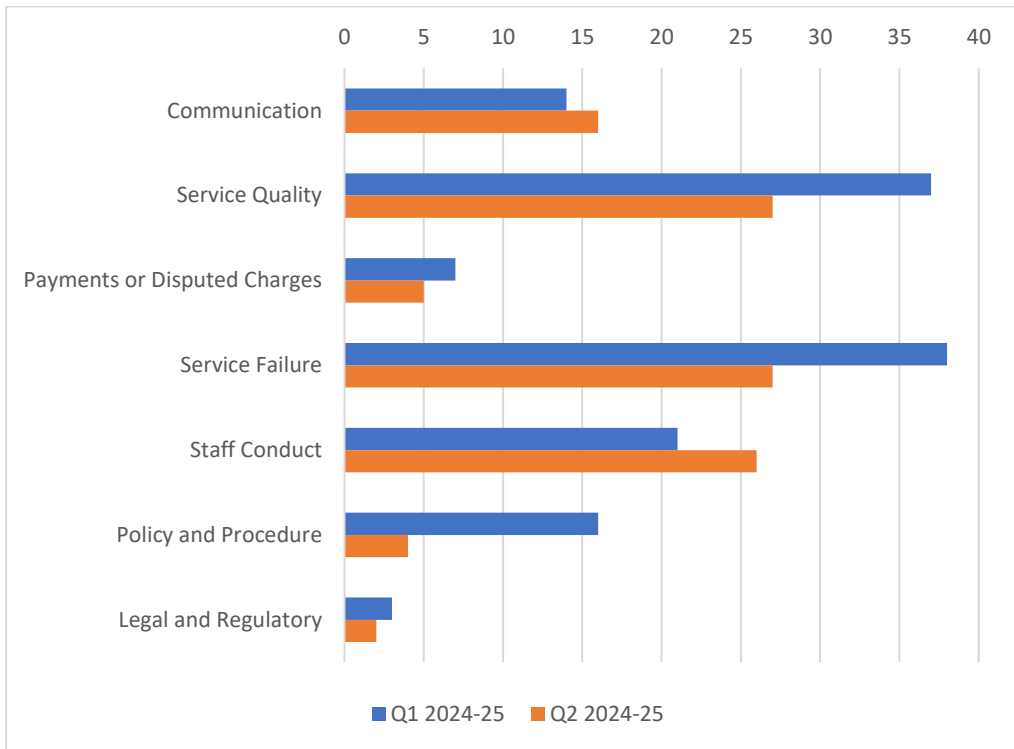
48 **Table 18: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 & Q2 – Static**



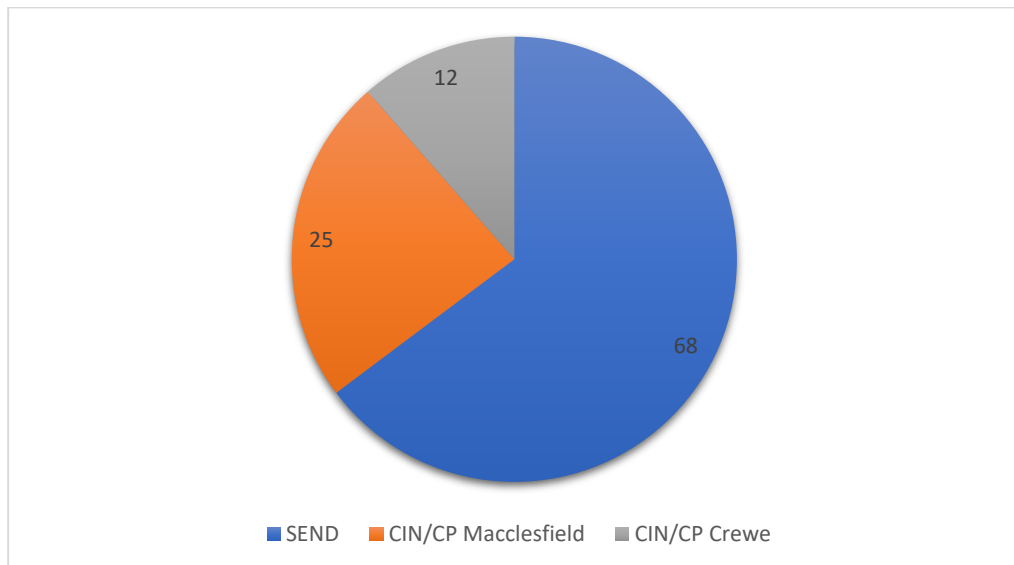
49 **Table 19: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 & Q2 – Non-Static**



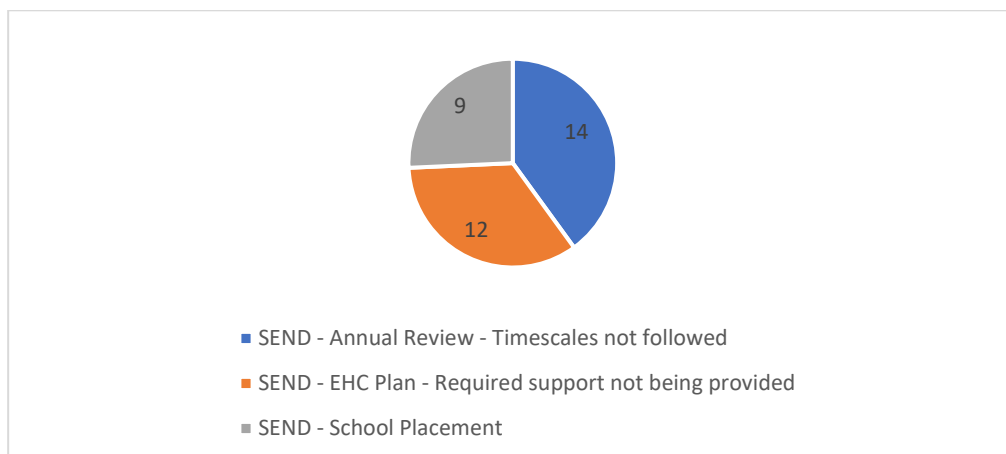
50 **Table 20:** Complaint Primary Causes in Q1 & Q2



51 **Table 21:** Themes Tracker – Top 3 Services



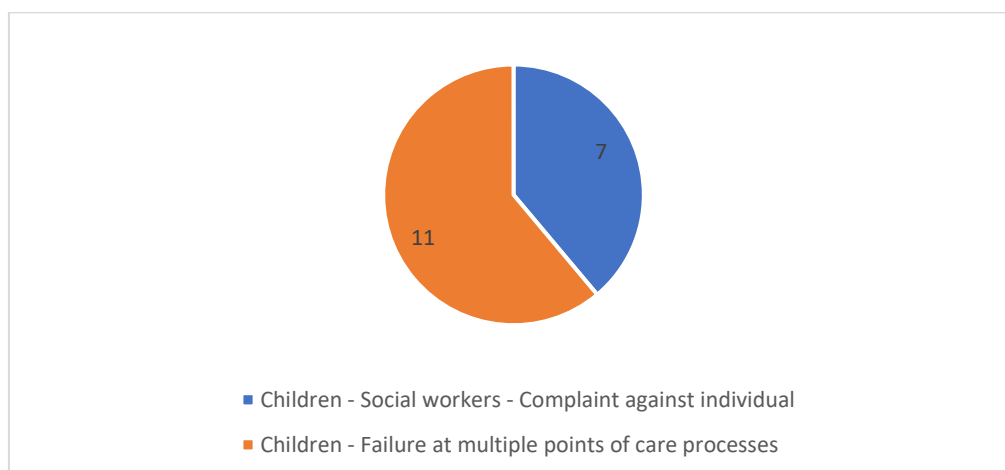
52 **Table 22:** Top 3 themes by Service – SEND



53 **Table 23:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes – SEND

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
SEND - Annual Review - Timescales not followed	8	1	0
SEND - EHC Plan - Required support not being provided	6	4	2
SEND - School Placement	9	4	1

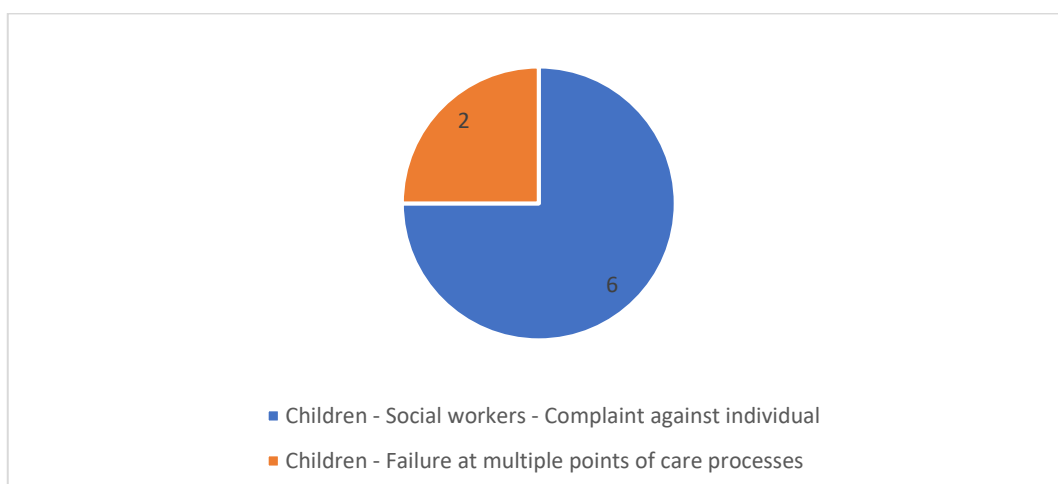
54 **Table 24:** Top 2 Themes by Service – CIN/CP Macclesfield



55 **Table 25:** Top 2 Themes by Service outcomes – CIN/CP Macclesfield

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Children - Failure at multiple points of care processes	1	3	3
Children - Social workers - Complaint against individual	4	2	5

56 **Table 26:** Top 2 themes by Service – CIN/CP Crewe



57 **Table 27:** Top 2 themes by Service outcomes – CIN/CP Crewe

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Children - Social workers - Complaint against individual	3	0	3
Children - Failure at multiple points of care processes	0	1	1

58 **Table 28:** Children and Families received 57 compliments between April and September 2024, spread across 9 services

Service	Total Q1	Total Q2
Autism Team	2	0
Cared For Children & Care Leavers Service	0	1
Children with Disabilities Team	2	0
CIN/CP Crewe	0	0
CIN/CP Macclesfield	2	1
Education	2	3
Education Travel	1	2
Family Services	3	8
SEN Team	15	15
TOTAL	27	30

59 Examples of Compliments in Q1 and Q2

Could you please convey my gratitude to the SEN team at Cheshire East, including the Plan Writers, Educational Psychologist, and everyone involved in drafting this EHCP for X. The plans and reports written for this EHCP are very comprehensive and easy to follow, particularly with the clear formatting that distinguishes quality first teaching from the additional support required. It's evident that a lot of work has gone into this plan during a time when I know the

service is extremely busy, and we are deeply thankful for the time and effort invested in supporting our son's educational journey.

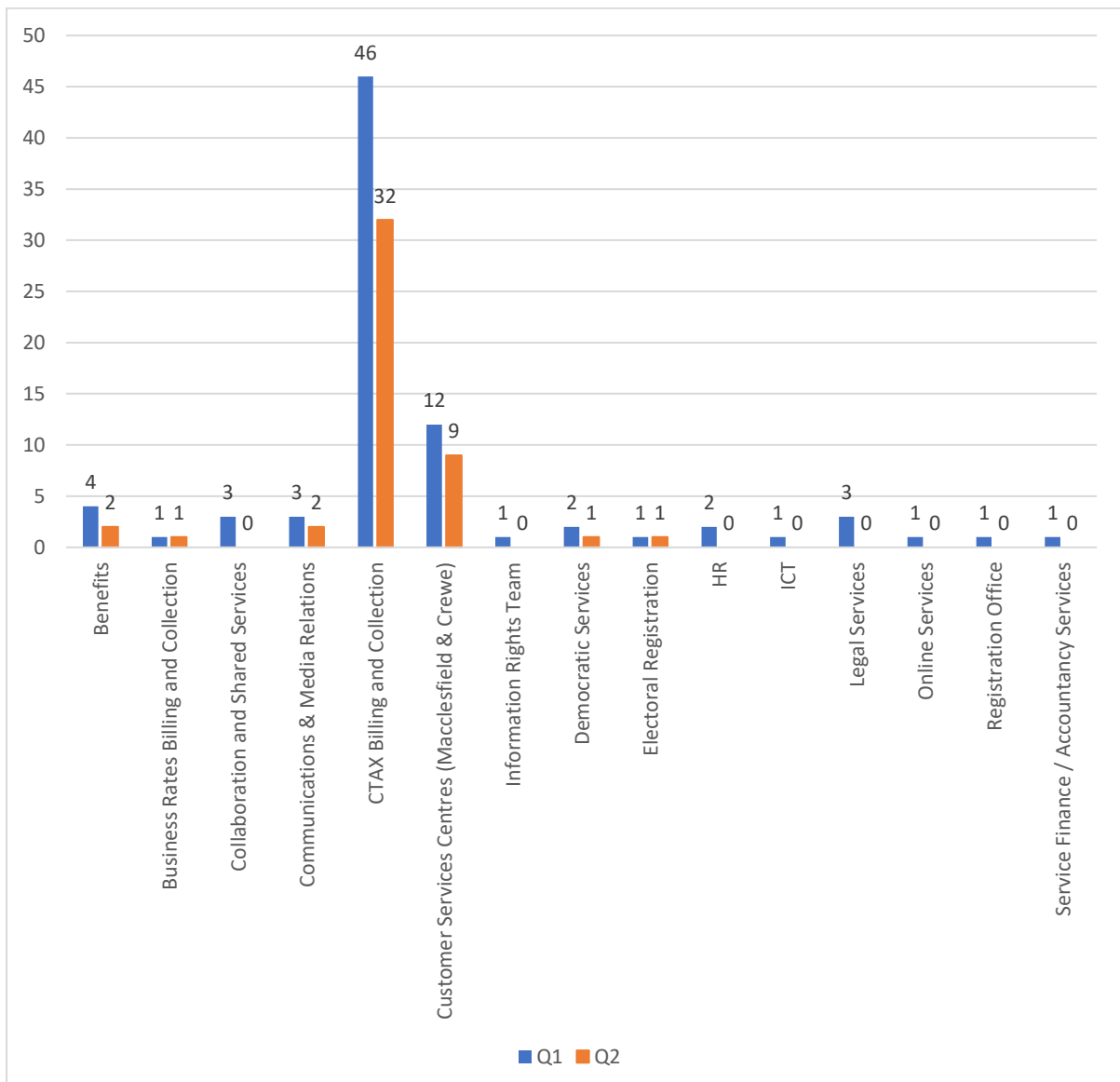
I just wanted to express a sincere and heartfelt thank you to everyone. I appreciate your time is valuable, but despite those time constraints, you have all dedicated your time to discussing X's wellbeing and looking into developing a thorough support plan.

We just wanted to say a big thank you for taking the time to listen to us about X and her needs. We appreciate the time you have spent on this to find out more information from us and school.

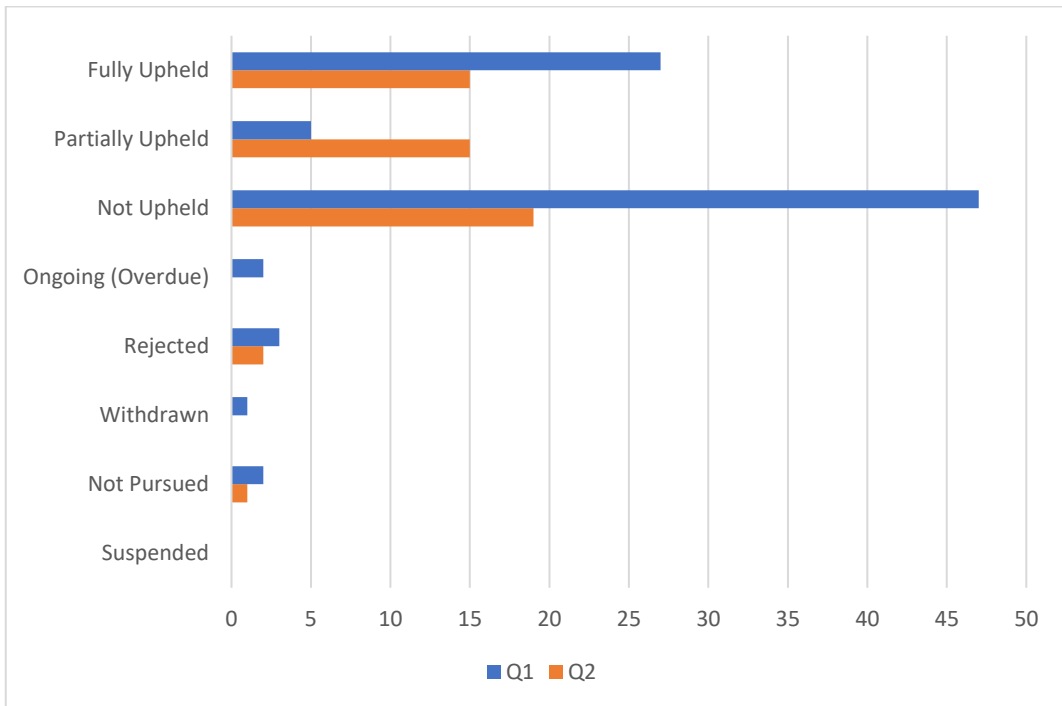
Both my husband and I found yesterday's session incredibly useful. As parents just starting to navigate the world of neurodiversity and the school system, we gained an awful lot. Your talk was particularly helpful in putting autism and other behaviours in context and was wonderfully affirming. Beyond the well-known autistic traits, your overview of the spectrum of issues that children can face gave us many lightbulb moments that have helped us understand our son and why he struggles with so many aspects of school. Both talks were full of really useful tips and suggestions, which we can apply at home

Corporate Policy

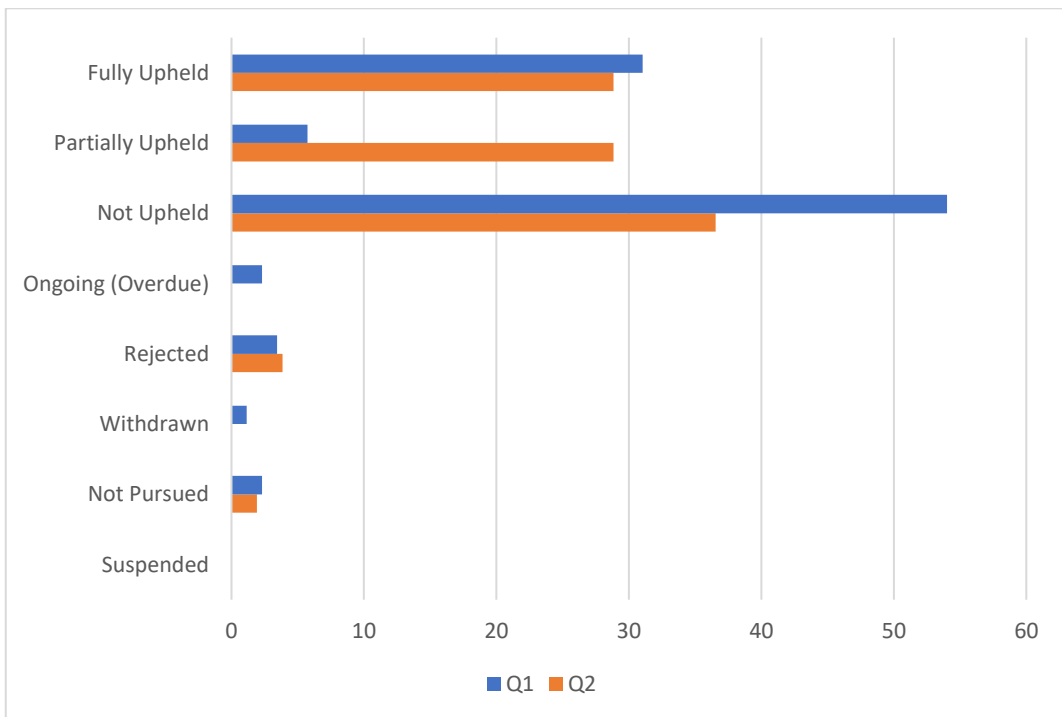
- 60 Corporate Policy received 139 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024/25. 7% of the total received by the council. Of these, 9 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 130 were processed as official complaints.
- 61 Quarter 2 saw a 40% decrease in processed complaints compared with Quarter 1 (49 and 81 respectively). There were 12 Stage 2 complaints in the 6 months.
- 62 Corporate Policy received 137 compliments between April and September 2024.
- 63 **Table 29: Complaint Volumes by Service**



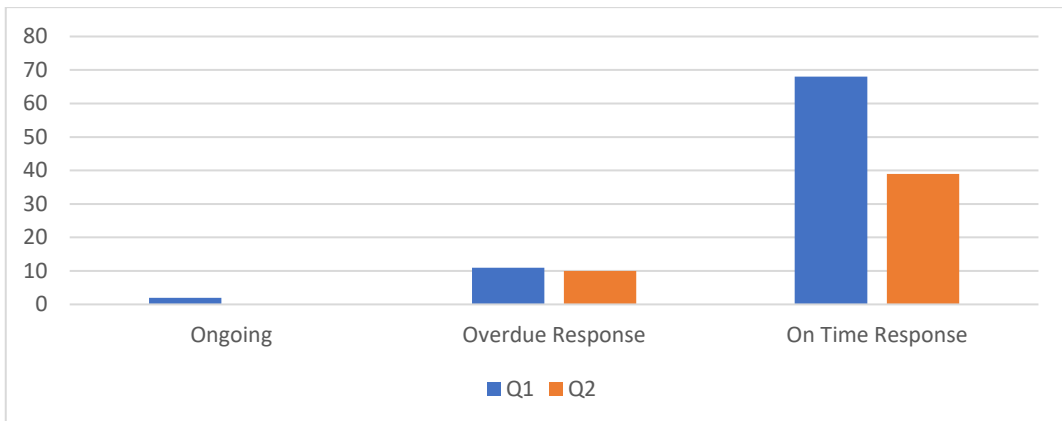
64 **Table 30: Complaint by Outcome – Numbers**



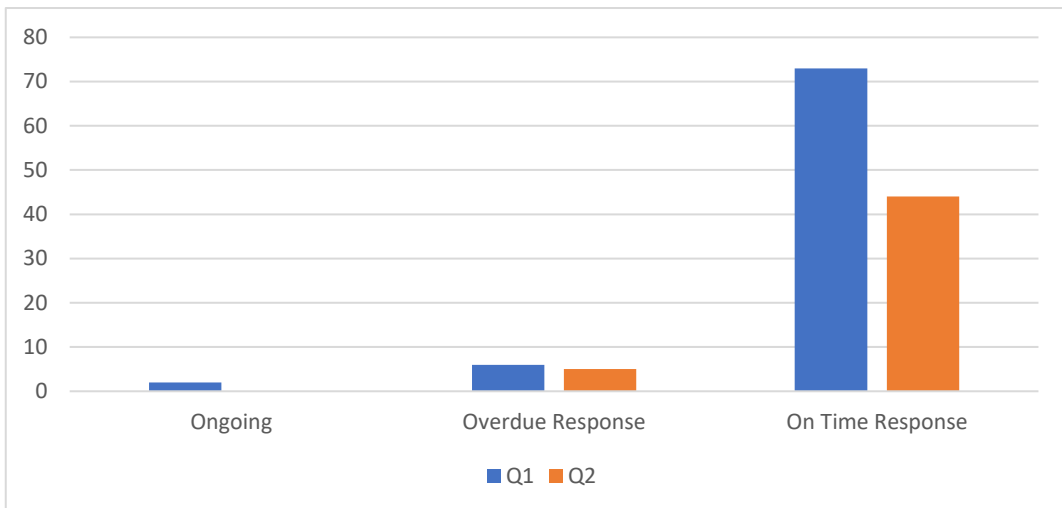
65 **Table 31: Complaints by Outcome – Percentages**



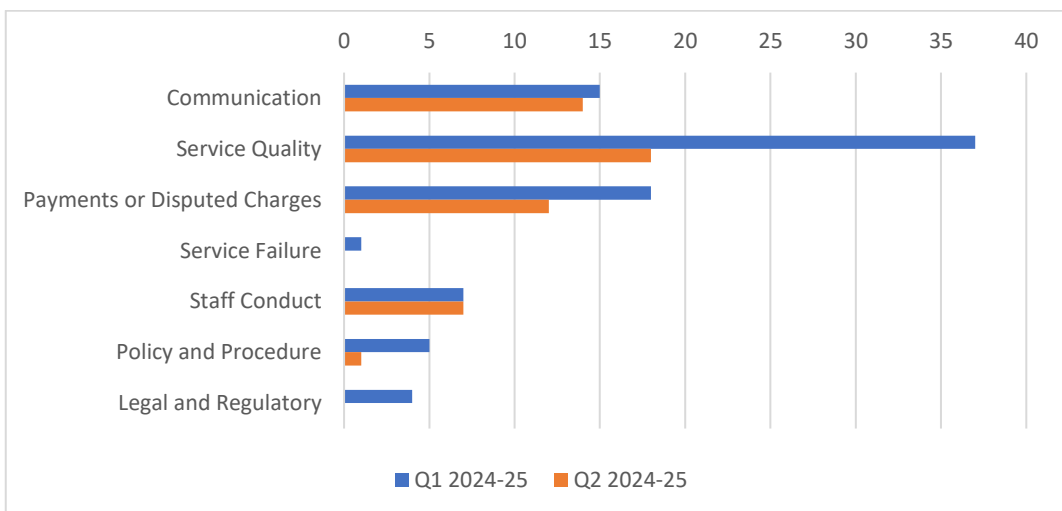
66 **Table 32: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Static (answered within 10 working days)**



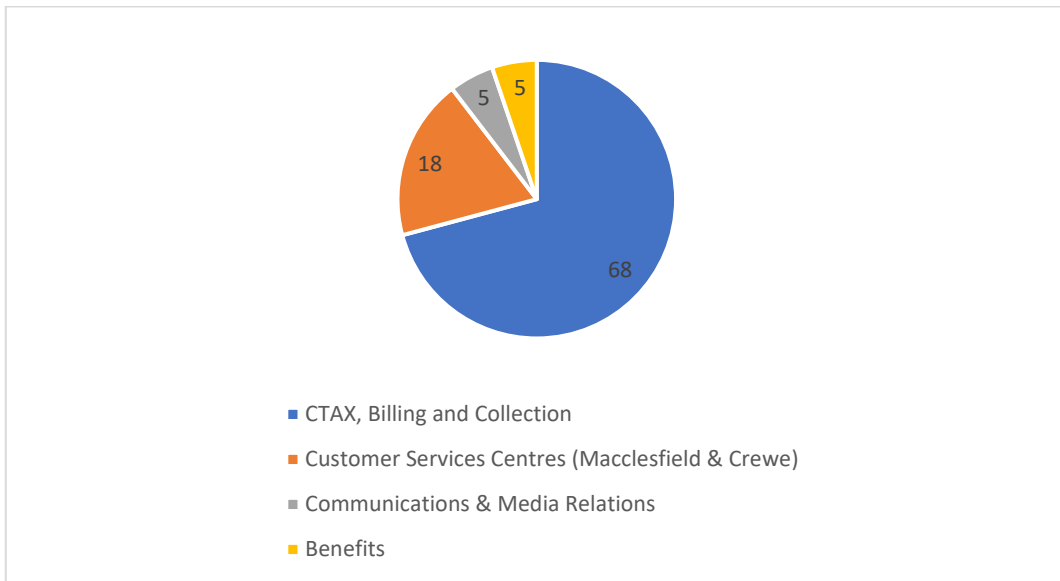
67 **Table 33: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Non-Static**



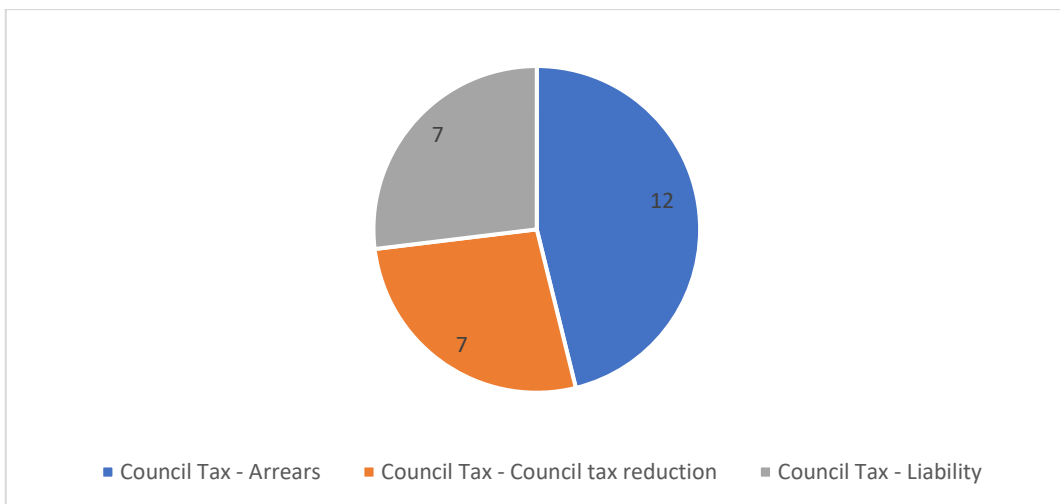
68 **Table 34: Complaint Primary Causes in Q1 and Q2**



69 **Table 35:** Themes Tracker – Top 4 Services



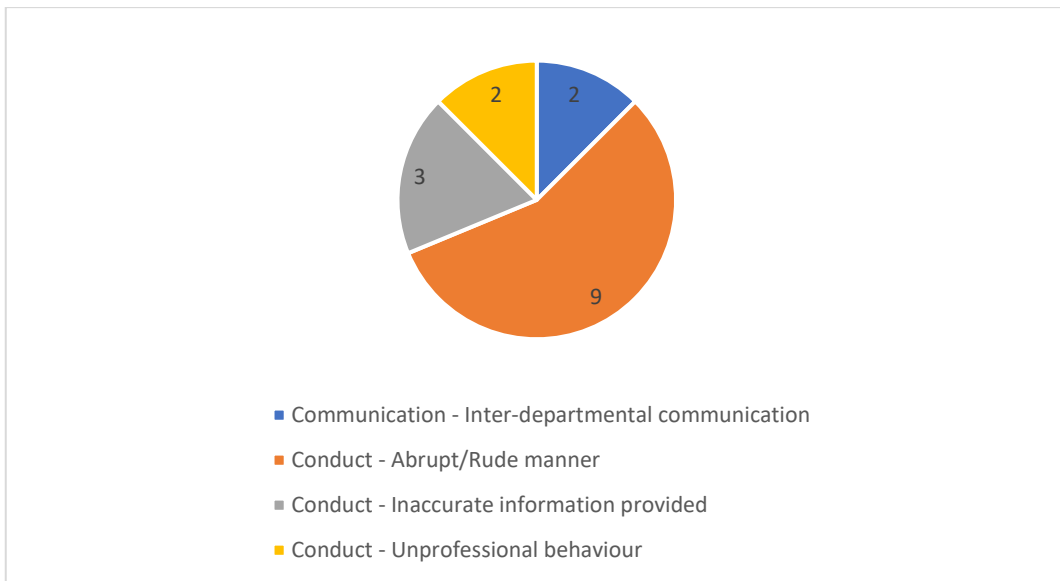
70 **Table 36:** Top 3 themes by Service – CTAX, Billing and Collection



71 **Table 37:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes – CTAX, Billing and Collection

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Council Tax - Arrears	2	3	7
Council Tax - Council tax reduction	2	0	5
Council Tax - Liability	4	1	2

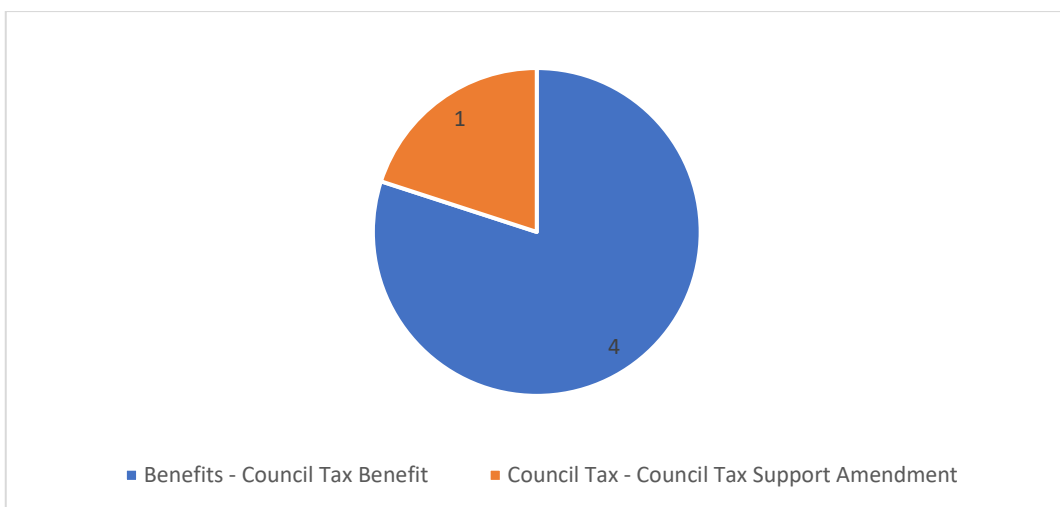
72 **Table 38:** Top 4 Themes by Service - Customer Services Centres (Macclesfield & Crewe)



73 **Table 39:** Top 4 Themes by Service outcomes - Customer Services Centres (Macclesfield & Crewe)

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Conduct - Abrupt/Rude manner	8	0	1
Conduct - Inaccurate information provided	2	0	1
Conduct - Unprofessional behaviour	0	1	1
Communication - Inter-departmental communication	1	0	1

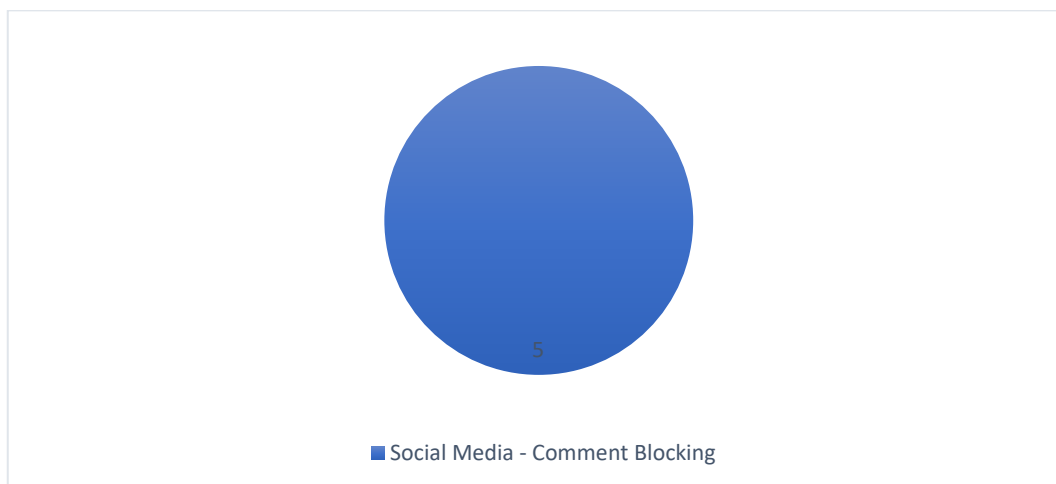
74 **Table 40:** Top 2 Themes by Service – Benefits



75 **Table 41:** Top 2 Themes by Service outcomes – Benefits

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Benefits - Council Tax Benefit	1	0	3
Council Tax - Council Tax Support Amendment	0	1	0

76 **Table 42:** Top themes by service - Communications & Media Relations



77 **Table 43:** Top themes by service - Communications & Media Relations

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Social Media - Comment Blocking	0	0	5

78 **Table 44:** Corporate Policy received 137 compliments between April and September 2024 across 3 services

Service	Total Q1	Total Q2
Business Rates Billing and Collection	5	3
CTAX Billing and Collection	11	9
Customer Services Centres (Macclesfield & Crewe)	26	83
TOTAL	42	95

79 Examples of Compliments in Q1 and Q2

Thank you so much for handling everything so quickly and efficiently. I am extremely grateful for your help.

Thank you so much for your prompt response to my request. This has been most helpful, and I thoroughly appreciate your attention to my needs. In these days when it is so easy to be critical of public officials, you set an example of the high standards to follow. I am also grateful to X for initially taking the call and handing it onto you, for delivery. Both of you make a great team.

My advisor X is a credit, he was polite, helped me understand what was happening and explained step by step what I needed to do, and as I have terminal cancer it's so overwhelming with information and he made it so easy, thank you.

The Board formally asked us to pass on their appreciation of what they view as outstanding work undertaken by the CEC Business Rates Team in preparing and issuing the BID Levy bills and collecting the BID levy. Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside manage the BID and are involved with BIDs across the region. They therefore have experience in dealing with Business Rates teams in other Councils and can compare our services to those provided elsewhere. They have mentioned in several meetings how extremely impressed they have been by X and other members of the BR team involved in the collection of the BID Levy. The Board wanted us to pass upward their thanks for such an excellent service to ensure the team get some recognition.

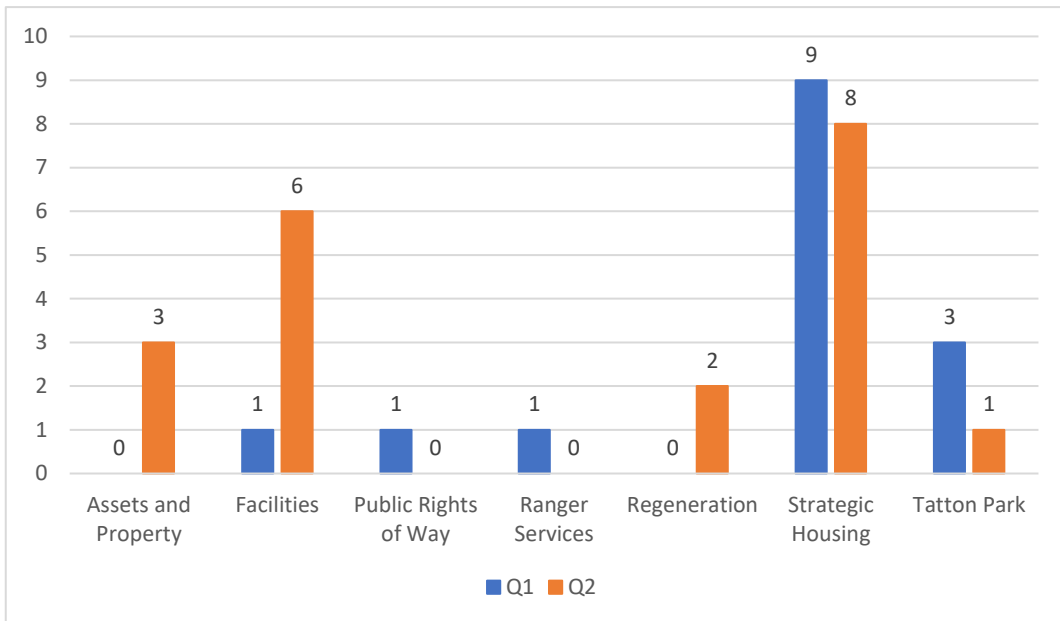
Economy and Growth

80 Economy and Growth received 39 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024/25. 2% of the total received by the council. Of these, 4 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 35 were processed as official complaints.

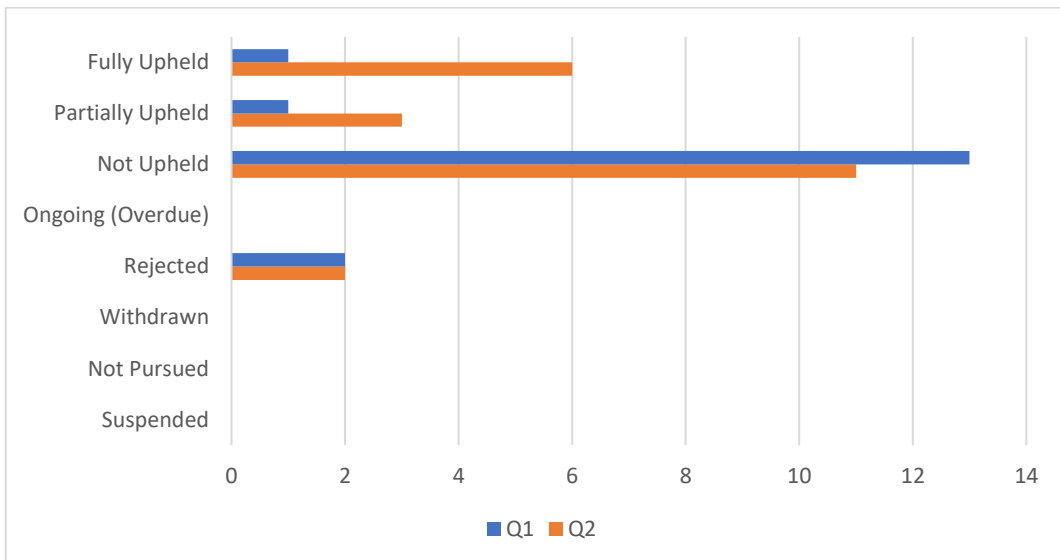
81 Quarter 2 saw a 33% increase in processed complaints compared with Quarter 1 (15 and 20 respectively). There were 5 Stage 2 complaints in the 6 months.

82 Economy and Growth received 0 compliments between April and September 2024.

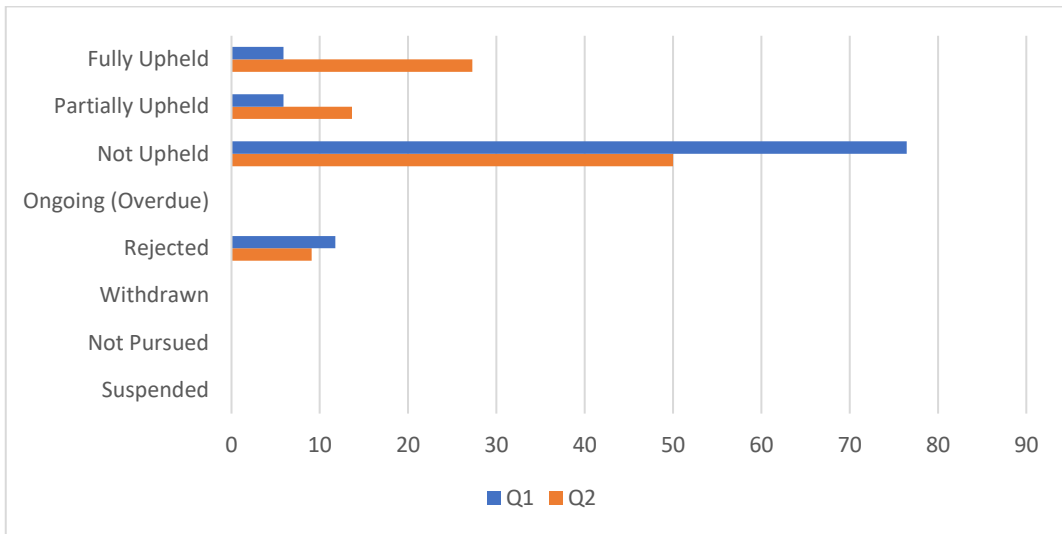
83 **Table 45: Complaints Volumes by Service**



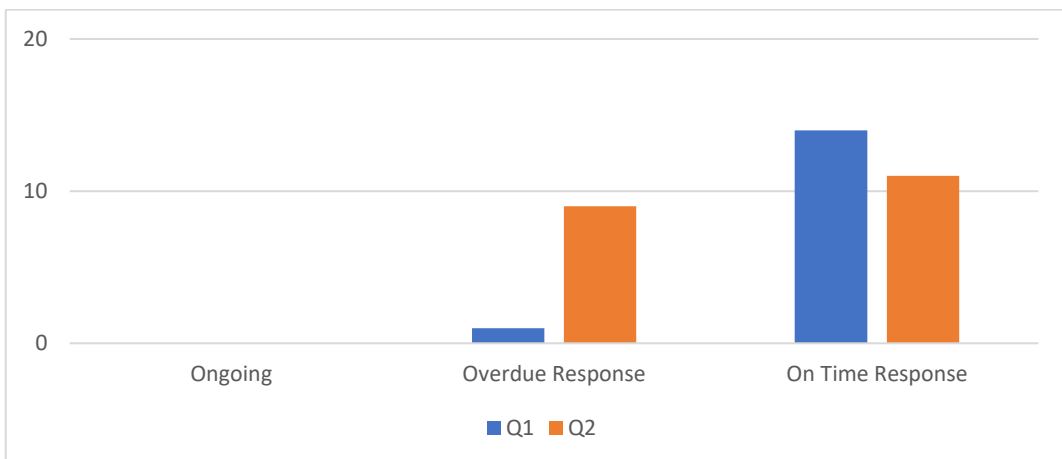
84 **Table 46: Complaints by Outcome – Numbers**



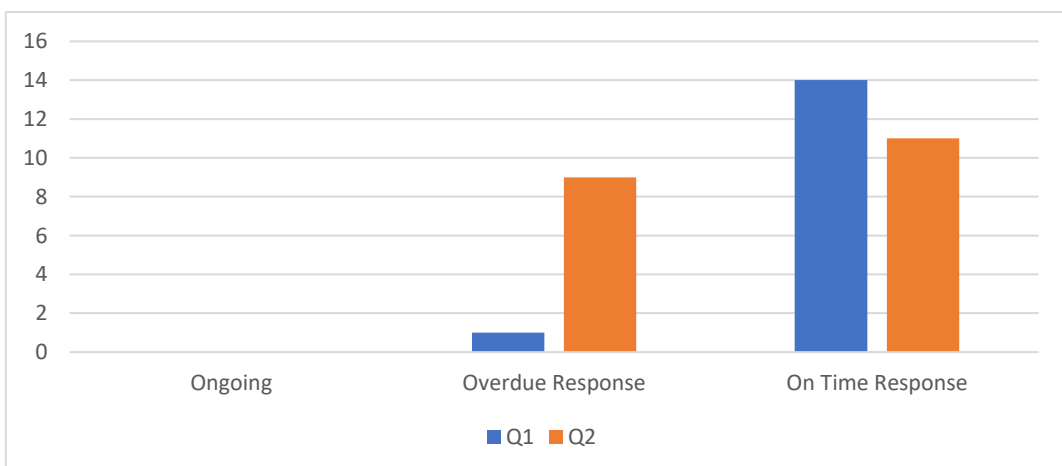
85 **Table 47: Complaints by Outcome – Percentages**



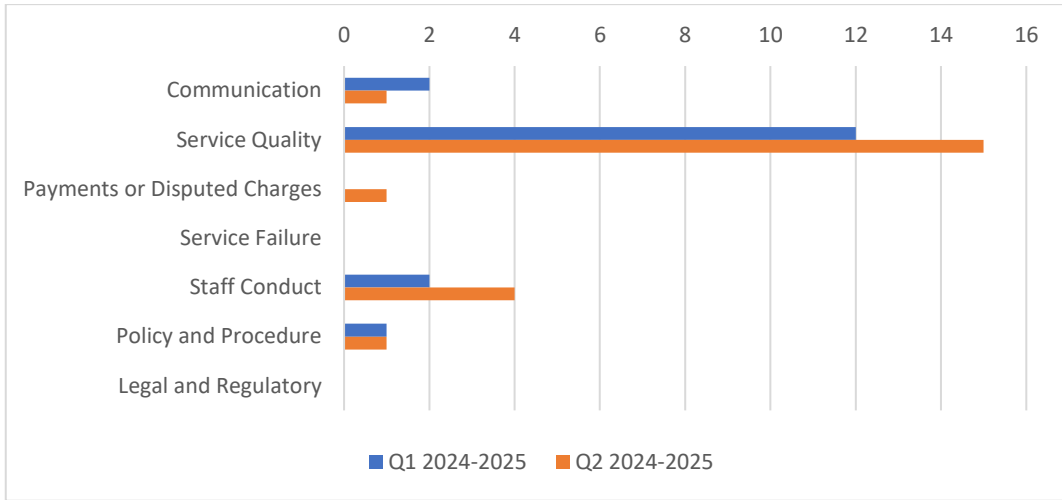
86 **Table 48: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Static (answered within 10 working days)**



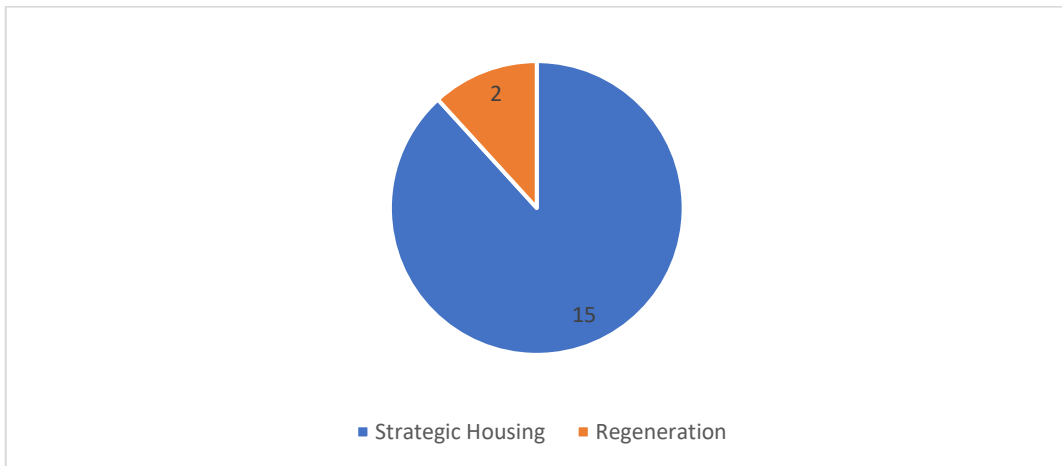
87 **Table 49: Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Non-Static**



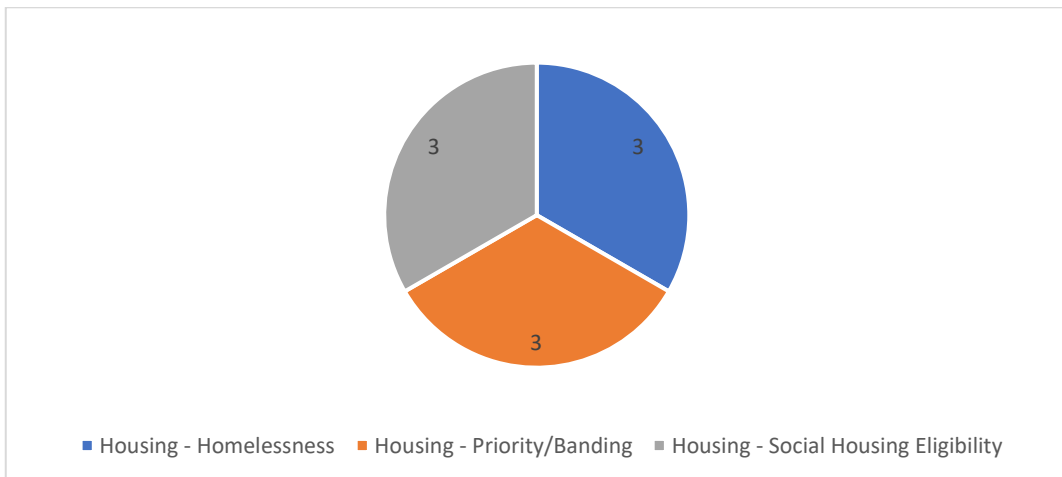
88 **Table 50:** Complaint Primary Causes in Q1 and Q2



89 **Table 51:** Themes Tracker – Top 2 Services



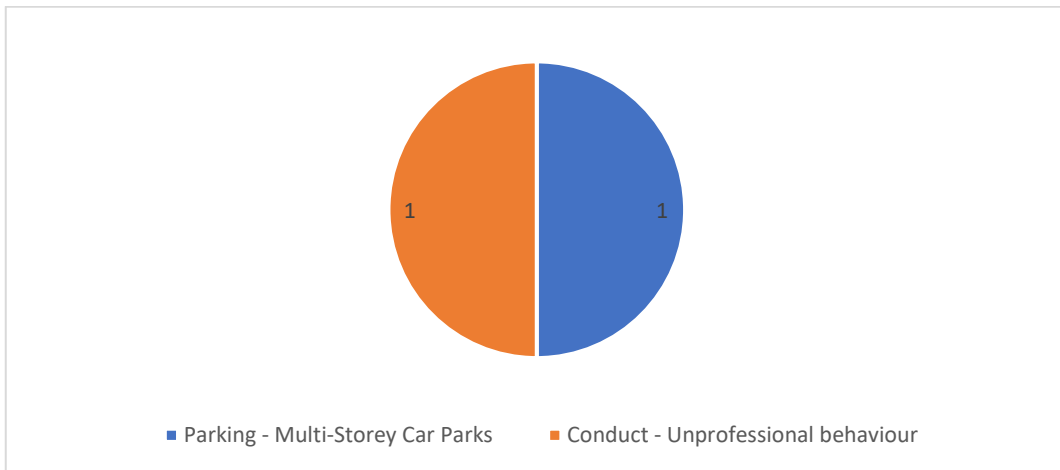
90 **Table 52:** Top 3 themes by Service – Strategic Housing



91 **Table 53:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes – Strategic Housing

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Housing - Homelessness	0	0	3
Housing - Priority/Banding	0	0	3
Housing - Social Housing Eligibility	0	1	2

92 **Table 54:** Top 2 themes by Service – Regeneration



93 **Table 55:** Top 2 themes by Service outcomes – Regeneration

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Parking - Multi-Storey Car Parks	0	0	1
Conduct - Unprofessional behaviour	0	1	0

94 There were no compliments recorded for Economy and Growth between April and September 2024.

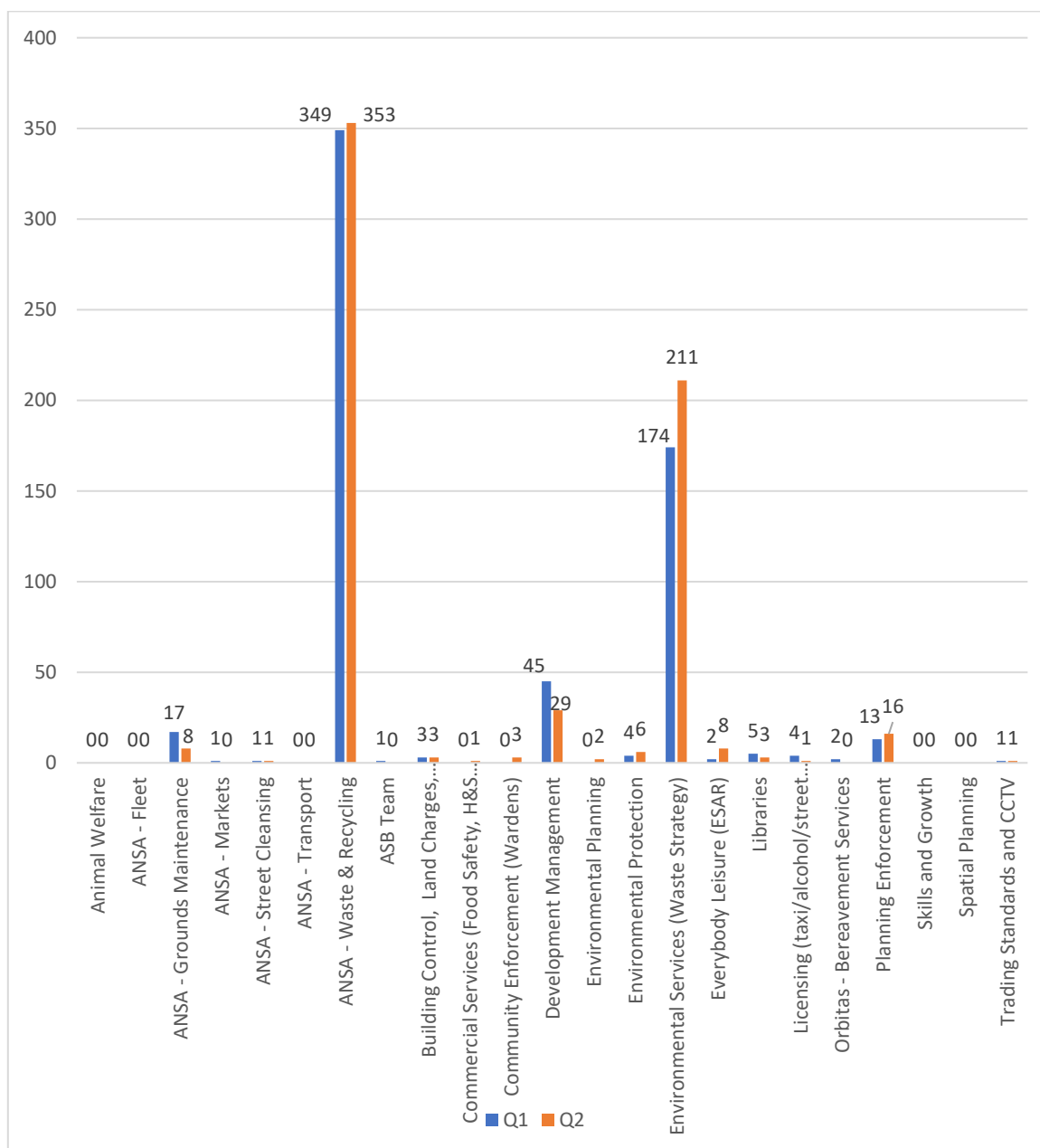
Environment and Communities

95 Environment and Communities received 1,308 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024/25. 62% of the total received by the council. Of these, 40 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 1,268 were processed as official complaints.

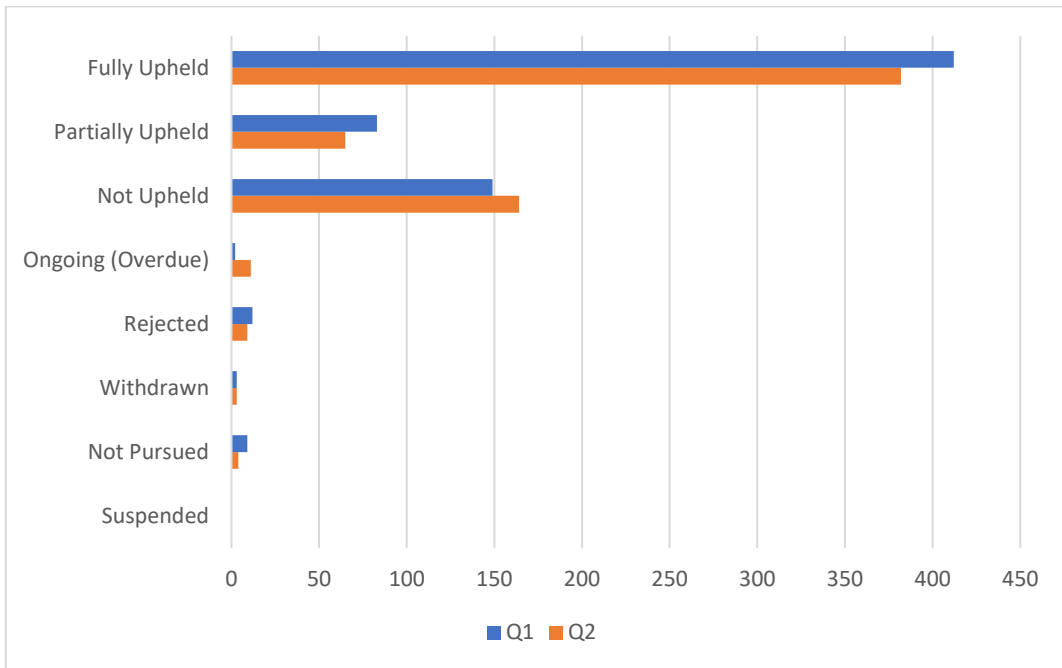
96 Quarter 2 saw a 4% decrease in processed complaints compared with Quarter 1 (622 and 646 respectively). There were 60 Stage 2 complaints in the 6 months.

97 Environment and Communities received 66 compliments between April and September 2024

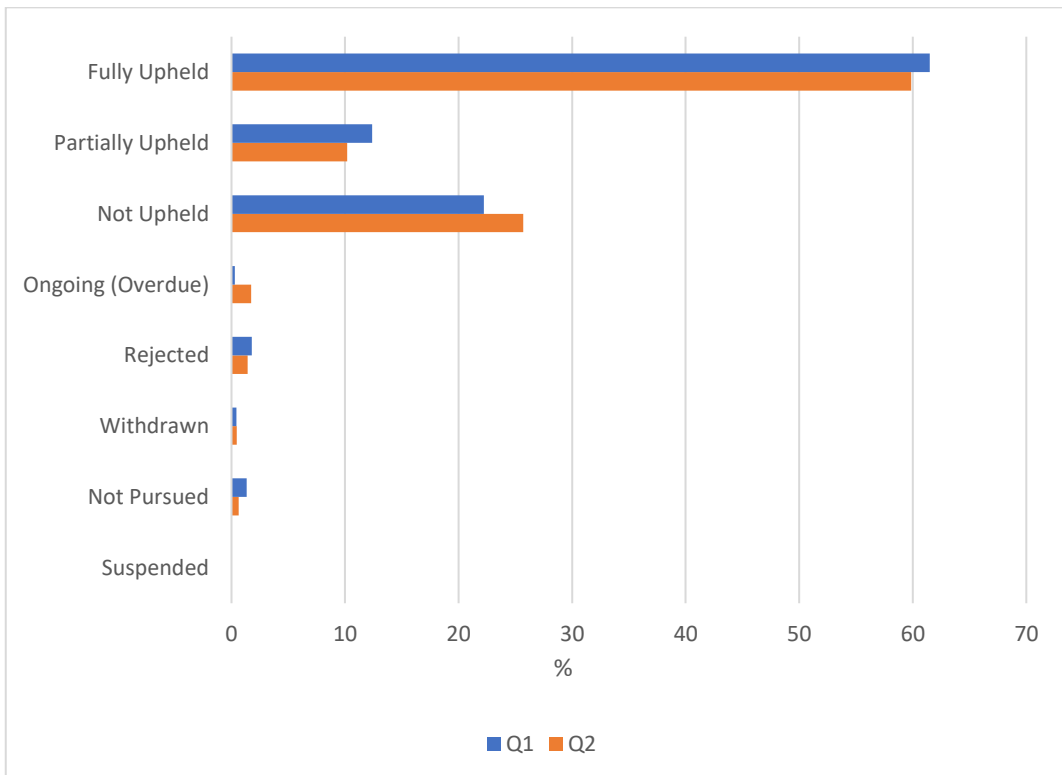
98 **Table 56:** Complaints Volumes by Service



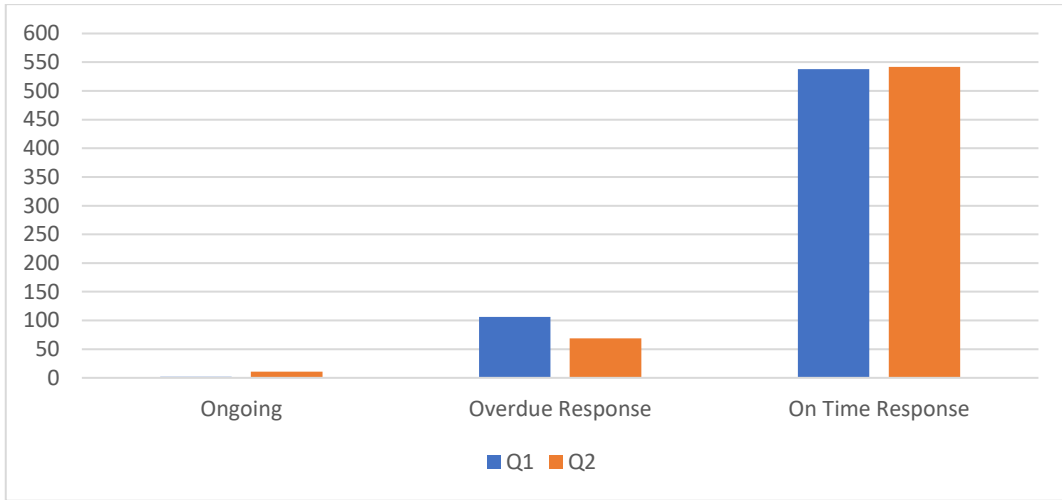
99 **Table 57: Complaints by Outcome – Numbers**



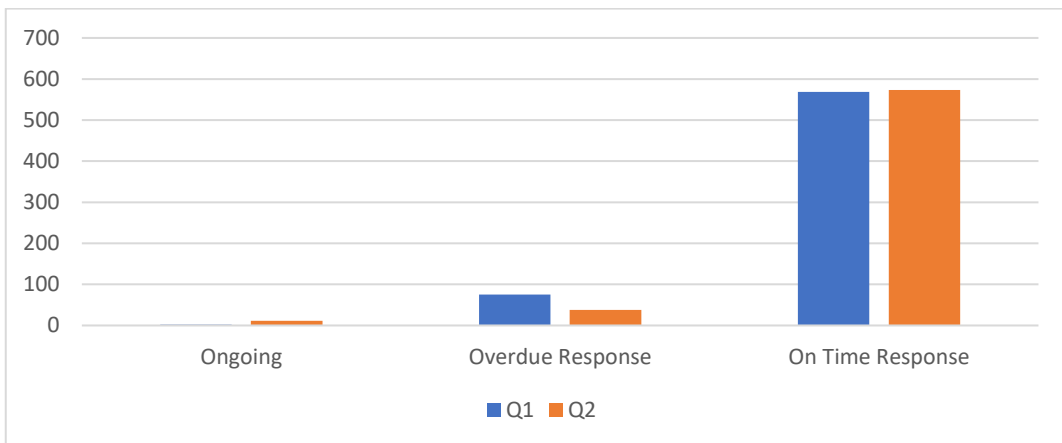
100 **Table 58: Complaints by Outcome – Percentage**



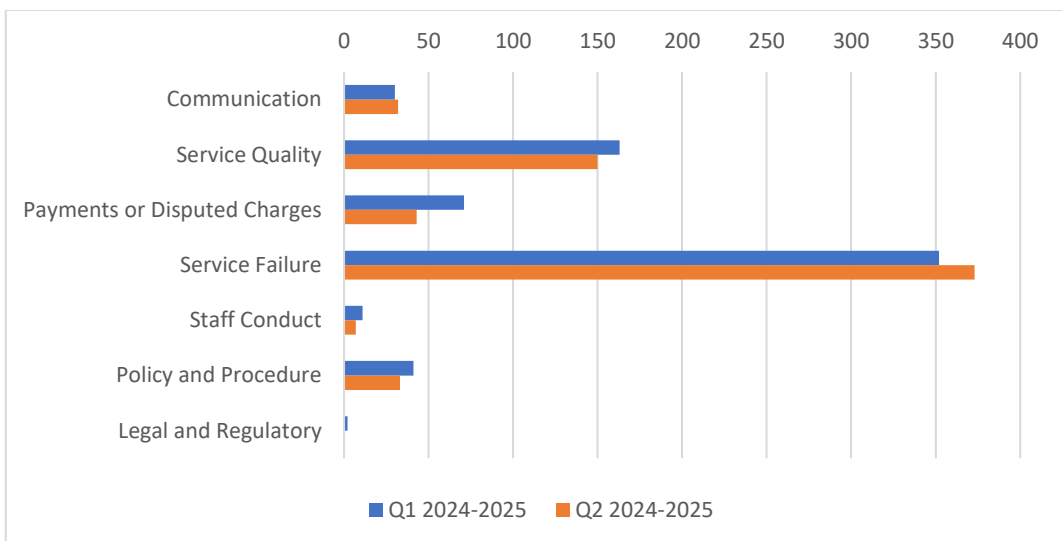
101 **Table 59:** Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Static (answered within 10 working days)



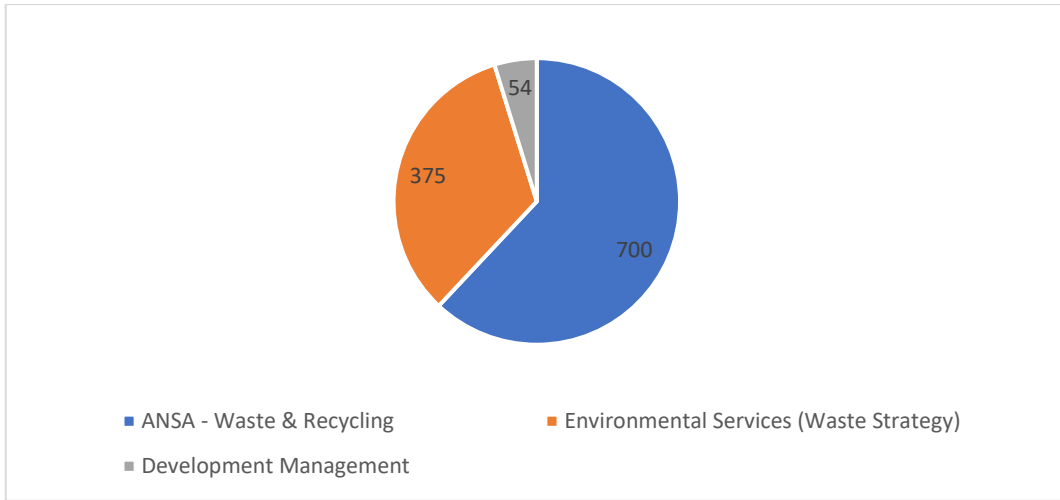
102 **Table 60:** Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Non-Static



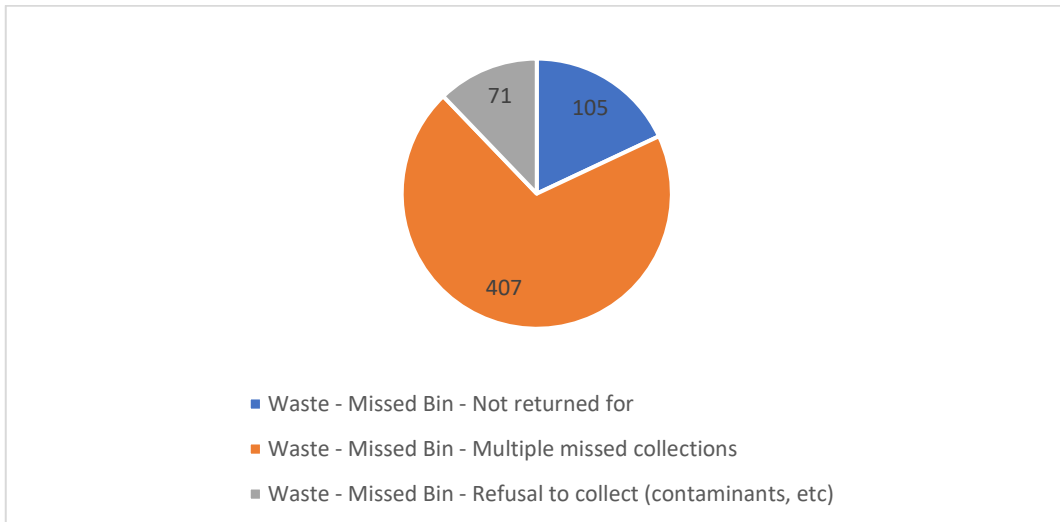
103 **Table 61:** Complaint Primary Causes in Q1 and Q2



104 **Table 62:** Themes Tracker – Top 3 Services



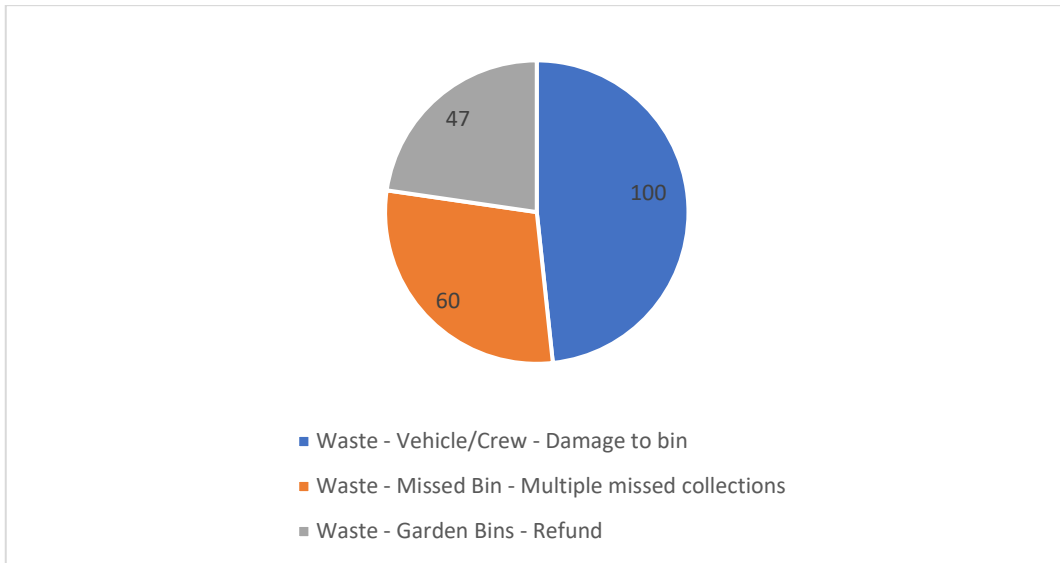
105 **Table 63:** Top 3 themes by Service – ANSA Waste & Recycling



106 **Table 64:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes – ANSA Waste & Recycling

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Waste - Missed Bin - Multiple missed collections	374	11	22
Waste - Missed Bin - Not returned for	101	0	4
Waste - Missed Bin - Refusal to collect (contaminants, etc)	42	3	26

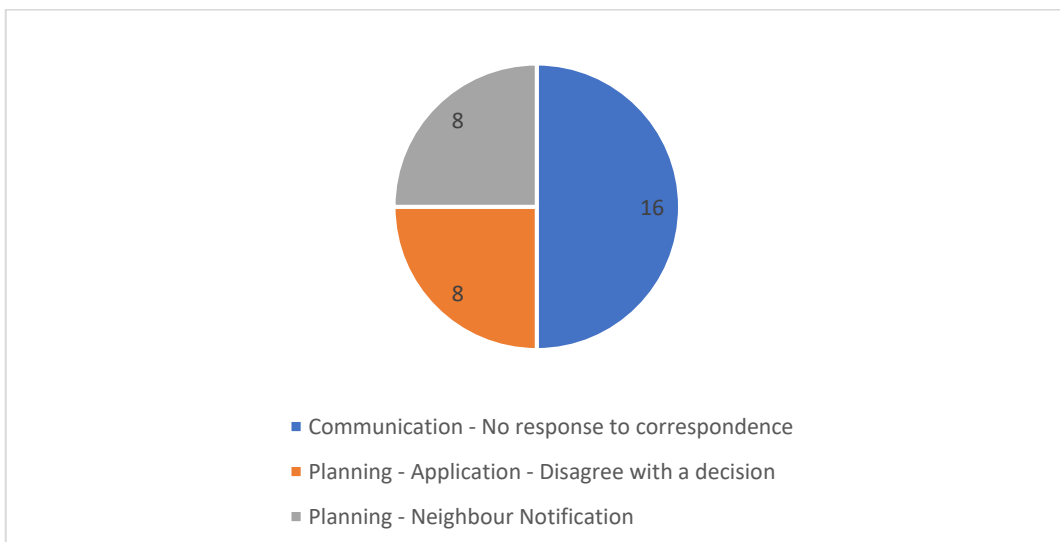
107 **Table 65:** Top 3 themes by Service - Environmental Services (Waste Strategy)



108 **Table 66:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes - Environmental Services (Waste Strategy)

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Waste - Vehicle/Crew - Damage to bin	54	1	45
Waste - Missed Bin - Multiple missed collections	24	35	1
Waste - Garden Bins - Refund	5	36	6

109 **Table 67:** Top 3 themes by Service - Development Management



110 **Table 68:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes - Development Management

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Communication - No response to correspondence	8	3	5
Planning - Application - Disagree with a decision	0	0	8
Planning - Neighbour Notification	2	1	5

111 **Table 69:** Environment and Communities received 66 compliments between April and September 2024 across 9 services.

Service	Total Q1	Total Q2
ANSA - Grounds Maintenance	3	13
ANSA - Street Cleansing	3	2
ANSA - Transport	1	0
ANSA - Waste & Recycling	15	7
Development Management	0	1
Environmental Protection	1	0
Environmental Services (Waste Strategy)	6	7
Everybody Leisure (ESAR)	1	0
Libraries	1	5
TOTAL	31	35

112 Examples of Compliments in Q1 and Q2

May I take this opportunity to say thank you to the waste and recycling teams, as in the 4 years of living in this authority not one collection has been missed, even on Bank Holidays, and everything has always been collected in a professional way. We have been so impressed, and it is much appreciated and never goes unnoticed. Please pass on our sincere thanks. Many thanks for your help.

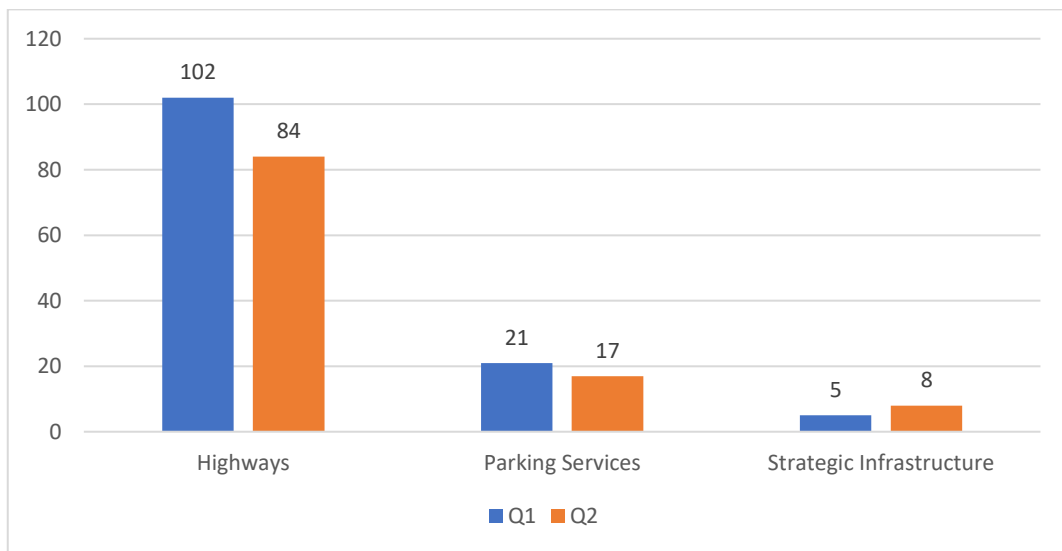
Resident called to advise that the two guys who are mowing and strimming at Wybunbury Cemetery are doing a really good job and she wanted to let us know.

Resident called up to say X, their bin operative spoke to her yesterday regards the assisted collection, as he could see she was struggling. She has just come out of hospital after 3 weeks and her husband returned home from respite care, and she said X was lovely and really helpful. He has gone back to the wagon and the crew added the note on Bartec and she was so grateful.

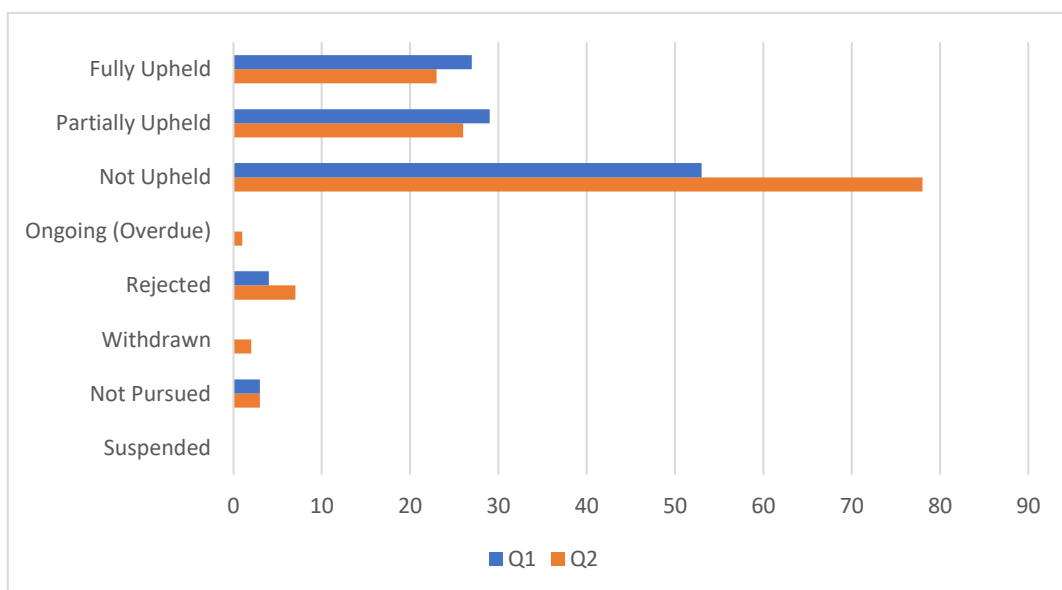
I would like to thank the refuse collectors please, that collected rubbish from X [address], as they were very helpful and went out of their way to collect another bag of rubbish. It actually made my day. It was pouring with rain. Thank you so much.

Highways and Transport

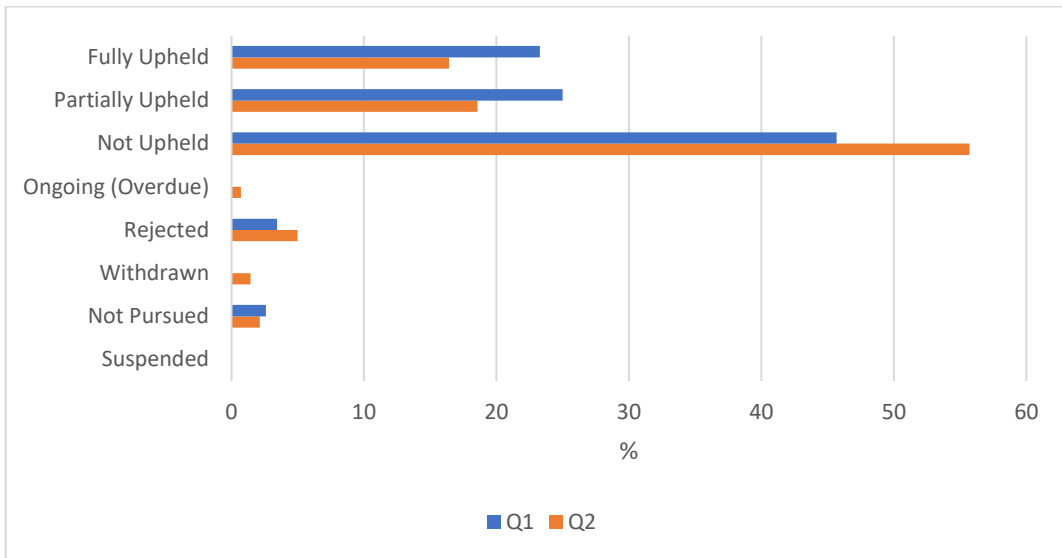
- 113 Highways and Transport received 256 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2024/25. 12% of the total received by the council. Of these, 19 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 237 were processed as official complaints.
- 114 Quarter 2 saw a 17% increase in processed complaints compared with Quarter 1 (109 and 128 respectively). There were 20 Stage 2 complaints in the 6 months.
- 115 Highways and Transport received 10 compliments between April and September 2024
- 116 **Table 70: Complaints Volumes by Service**



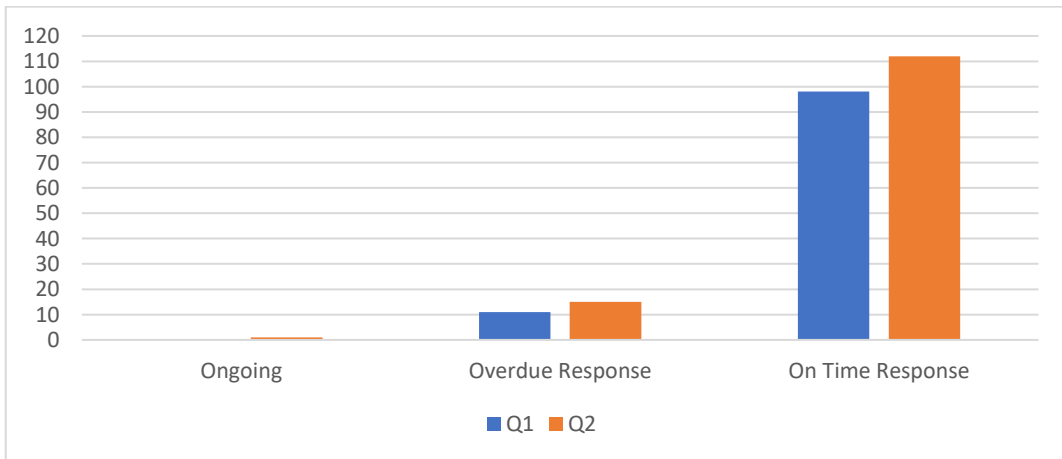
- 117 **Table 71: Complaints by Outcome – Numbers**



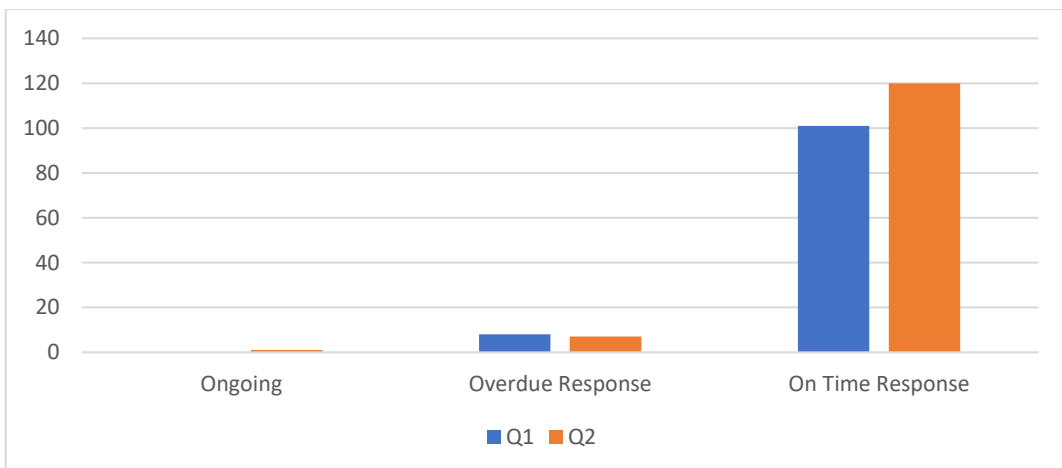
118 **Table 72:** Complaints by Outcome – Percentages



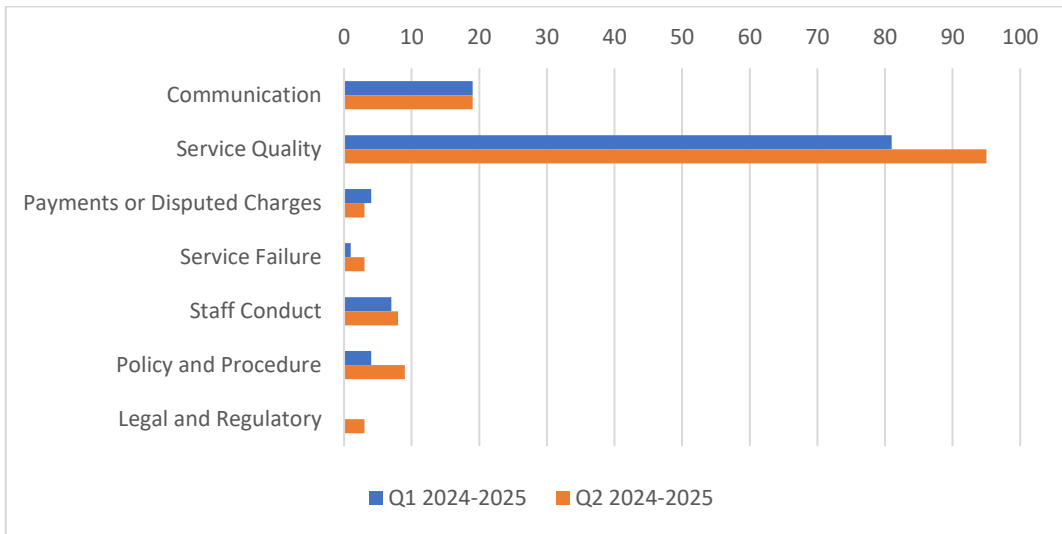
119 **Table 73:** Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Static (answered within 10 working days)



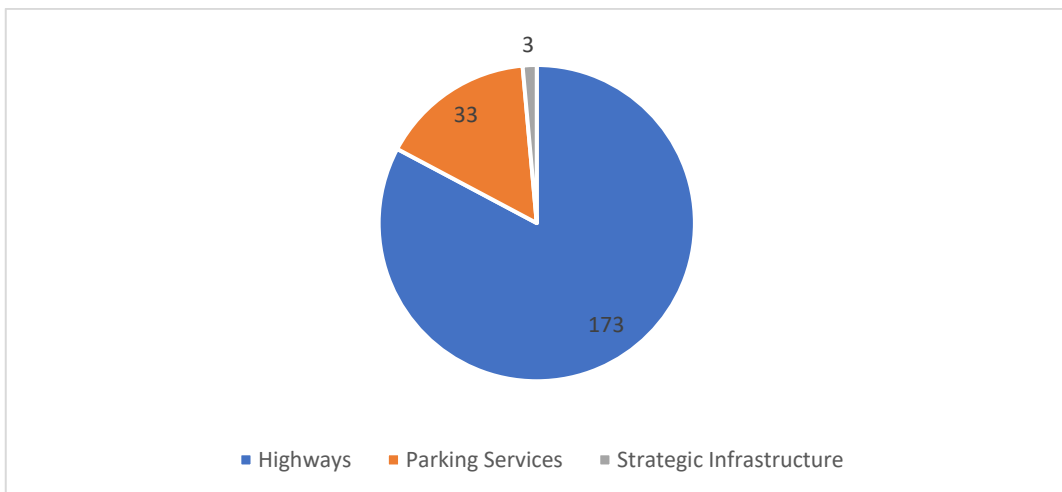
120 **Table 74:** Complaint Timeframes in Q1 and Q2 – Non-Static



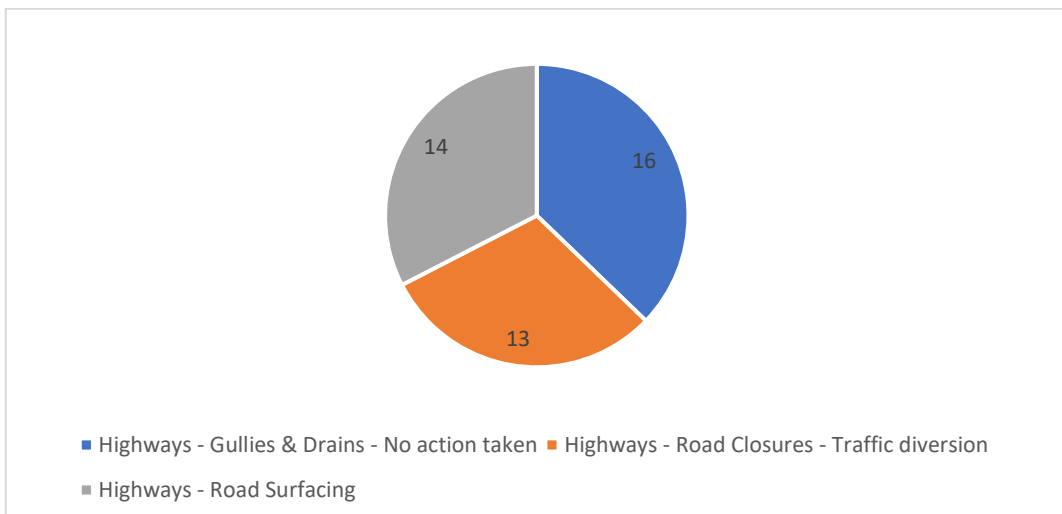
121 **Table 75:** Complaint Primary Causes in Q1 and Q2



122 **Table 76:** Themes Tracker – Top 3 Services



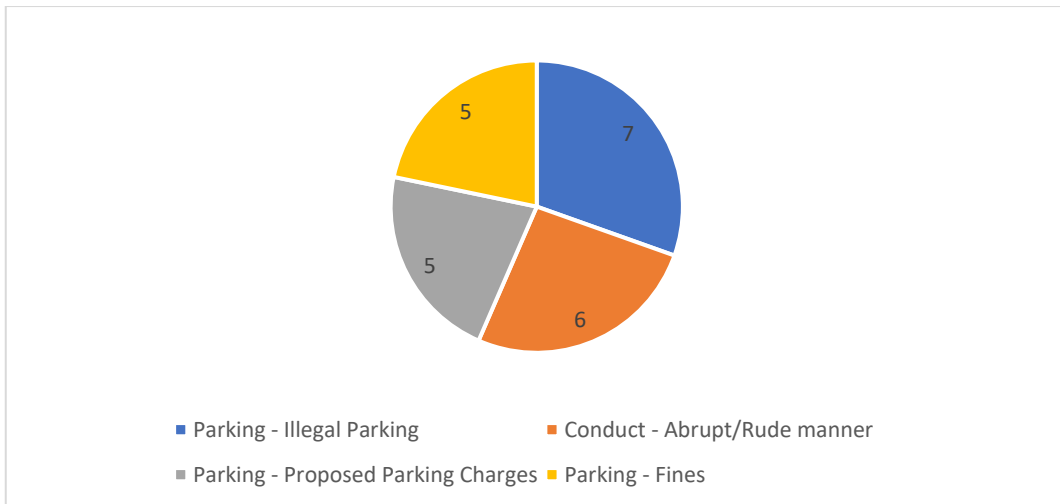
123 **Table 77:** Top 3 themes by Service – Highways



124 **Table 78:** Top 3 themes by Service outcomes – Highways

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Highways - Gullies & Drains - No action taken	7	7	2
Highways - Road Surfacing	1	1	12
Highways - Road Closures - Traffic diversion	0	2	11

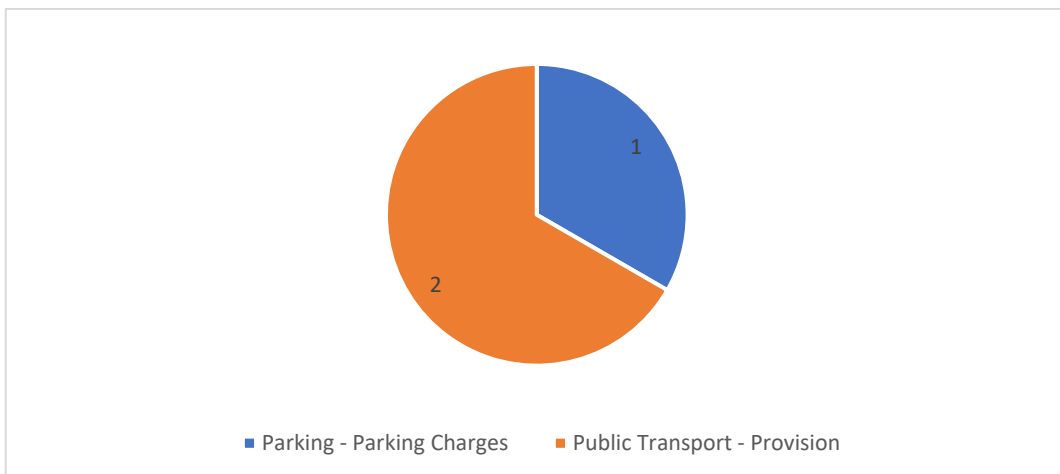
125 **Table 79:** Top 4 themes by Service – Parking Services



126 **Table 80:** Top 4 themes by Service – Parking Services

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Parking - Illegal Parking	0	0	7
Conduct - Abrupt/Rude manner	0	1	5
Parking - Proposed Parking Charges	0	0	5
Parking - Fines	0	0	5

127 **Table 81:** Top 2 themes by Service - Strategic Infrastructure



128 **Table 82:** Top 2 themes by Service outcomes - Strategic Infrastructure

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Public Transport - Provision	2	0	0
Parking - Parking Charges	1	0	0

129 **Table 83:** Highways and Transport received 10 compliments between April and September 2024 which were all for the Highways Service.

Service	Total Q1	Total Q2
Highways	6	4
TOTAL	6	4

130 Examples of Compliments in Q1 and Q2

I would like to commend X supervisor on the Elm Drive, Crewe project on his professional work ethic, he is so helpful and knowledgeable of what is happening at what stage, as the works get carried out. His friendly demeanour means he's been very approachable. In my opinion he is irreplaceable, please thank him for his hard work and friendly attitude. Thank you.

I reported a loose kerb with East Cheshire Council and it was noted through "Fix My Street " giving a 20 day follow up repair. I noticed within less than a week, white markers on the kerb in question within a few days. Following that a team arrived in less than 10 days and the kerb was promptly rectified to its correct location. Excellent service given where it is due and an impressive follow up on my complaint from start to finish was achieved. Thanks to the team and Cheshire Council for the rapid response!

As a resident of Evans Street, I would like to thank the highways team for the work they have done on our pavements. We now have easier access to our property without having to go across the grass verge. The team were very accommodating in helping us, especially as I have to use a wheelchair. So please thank all involved for a good job well done.

I wish to record the excellent work completed by the team working on the lane near Knarr Farm, Wildboarclough, SK11 0BQ last week, yesterday and today. They have filled and worked on a large quantity of potholes and the edges of the road failing using the Velocity machine, professional skills using care and attention to the difficult conditions. Taking into account limitations of the weather as well as conditions of the lane. I have thanked the team personally but want to ensure that this is recorded officially with yourselves.

Consultation and Engagement

- 131 Quarterly reports on complaints and compliments are provided to all directorates highlighting areas of concern and of good practice specific to their directorate. By recognising the key themes and primary causes of complaints, management teams are enabled to consider opportunities to drive improvements and to share best practice. This can form the basis of developing forward action plans to improve the service and its delivery. A key theme in complaints received across all directorates is communication with customers, and the work we are doing with customer service standards is important to making improvements.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 132 To ensure that the Committee is provided with assurances of service departments use of complaints to deliver service improvements in line with the Customer Experience Strategy.
- 133 To ensure that the Committee is kept informed of the Ombudsman's findings and to provide assurance that the Council is complying with the Corporate Complaints Policy and any recommendations made by the Ombudsman.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Poor customer experience would not be addressed, lessons would not be learned, and service improvements would not be made	Likely increase in complaints to Local Government Ombudsman with the potential for financial penalties and poor reputational impact

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 134 Whilst there are no legal implications flowing directly from the content of this report, there are legal, reputational and resource implications in complaints that are taken through the corporate process and in addressing complaints which reach LGO and Public Report. Providing services with the data and trends is a means to influence and improve customer engagement.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 135 If Fault causing Injustice is found, the Council can be asked to pay compensation to a complainant, the level of which is determined on a case by-case basis. The cost of such compensation is paid for by the service at fault. In 9 cases where the Ombudsman found Fault with Injustice between April and September 2024, the Council was required to make compensation payments totalling £95,529.54. An

increase of 494% on the last 6 months of 2023/24 where payments totalled £16,075. £71,479.54 of this cost relates to one Adults complaint. The exact value of the compensation for this case is being appealed with the Ombudsman, and so may be subject to change. 50% of the final agreed value of this case's compensation will be recouped from the NHS.

Policy

- 136 Analysis of complaints enables services to identify and deliver improvements in service aligned with the Council's Customer Experience Strategy. If a high volume of complaints were received about a specific policy, a review of the relevant policy could be triggered and referred to the relevant service committee.

An open and enabling organisation	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
1.Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation		

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 137 When responding to complaints, the Council must ensure that people are treated fairly and that we comply with the Equality Act 2010, making reasonable adjustments where necessary. This may include providing responses in large font, using coloured paper, or communicating by specific means such as email only.

Human Resources

- 138 Whilst the primary purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of complaints and to seek to secure improvements in performance, resource implications arise from the high numbers of complaints. These relate to the increased demand upon officers in researching the background to complaints and responding appropriately. Where complaints relate to specific staff members, for example because of behaviour or attitude, these are escalated to the appropriate manager.

Risk Management

- 139 If recommendations made by the Ombudsman are not followed, this could trigger a public report, as detailed in paragraphs 15 to 17.

Rural Communities

- 140 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Public Health

- 141 *There are no direct implications for public health.*

Climate Change

142 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Paul Manning, Head of Revenues & Benefits and Acting Head of Customer Experience paul.manning@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Outcome of complaints to the LGSCO by committee Appendix 2 - Summary of Recommended Actions from Ombudsman Decision Notices where Fault was found (as per Appendix 1)
Background Papers:	N/A