

# Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Friday 15 November 2019  
10.00 am Library Meeting Room, Taunton Library



To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Dimery, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr W Wallace, Cllr J Williams.  
Mr P Elliott, Ms Helen Fenn, Mrs Ruth Hobbs and Mrs Eilleen Tipper.

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager – Democratic Services - 7 November 2019

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 359045 or [ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on

[www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

**Are you considering how your conversation today and the actions you propose to take, contribute towards making Somerset carbon neutral by 2030?**



**RNID typetalk**

# AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 10.00 am Friday 15 November 2019

**\*\* Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe \*\***

**1 Apologies for Absence**

to receive Members' apologies

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

**3 Minutes from the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 10)**

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

**4 Public Question Time**

The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chairman's discretion.**

**5 Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 11 - 30)**

To discuss any items for the forthcoming work programme. To assist the discussion, the following documents are attached:

- a) – The Cabinet's latest published forward plan;
- b) – Current Work Programme for the Committee;
- c) – Outcome Tracker;
- d) – Task & Finish Group proposal – School Exclusions (to follow).

**6 Review of Scrutiny function (Pages 31 - 48)**

**7 Progress on the implementation of the new Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements (Pages 49 - 54)**

To consider this report.

**8 Annual Customer Feedback report (Pages 55 - 88)**

To consider this report.

**9 Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

## Guidance notes for the meeting

### 1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting on 01823 359045 or email: [democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk)  
They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

### 2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

### 3. Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

### 4. Public Question Time

**If you wish to speak, please tell the Committee's Administrator by 5.00pm on Monday 11 November.**

At the Chair of the Committee's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the Agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the Agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

## 5. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the Agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

## 6. **Committee Rooms & Council Chamber and hearing aid users**

To assist hearing aid users the meeting rooms have infra-red audio transmission systems. To use this facility you need a hearing aid set to the T position.

## 7. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings.

No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the relevant Chair can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings in County Hall as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance.

## **SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee held in the Library Meeting Room, Taunton Library, on Friday 18 October 2019 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr W Wallace, Mrs Eileen Tipper, Cllr M Keating, Cllr L Leyshon and Cllr D Loveridge (substitute). Mrs Eileen Tipper.

**Other Members present:** Cllr Chilcott, Cllr Nicholson and Cllr Purbrick.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr L Redman, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr J Williams, Elliot, Ms Helen Fenn and Ruth Hobbs.

### **7 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2**

Cllr Keating declared a personal interest as a Member of the Somerset Schools Forum.

Mrs Tipper declared a personal interest as a Member of the Somerset Community Council.

### **8 Minutes from the previous meeting - Agenda Item 3**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting, following a few minor amendments, were correct and the Vice Chair signed them.

### **9 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no members of the public present and no questions had been submitted.

### **10 Scrutiny Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The Vice Chair of the Committee invited Members to consider the Cabinet's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in forthcoming months and suggest any items for the Committee to consider. The plan was noted.

The Vice Chair directed attention to the Committee's its own work programme and invited suggestions for possible future agenda items.

It was agreed that a 'Young Carers update report' be added to the agenda for the 13 December meeting.

It was suggested that a report about 'Adoption Medicals' be added to the work programme and the Scrutiny Manager undertook to liaise with the CCG to ascertain when they could attend.

It was suggested that a report about the availability of school places be considered for a future meeting. The Cabinet Member asked that the Member who had raised the issue approach her in the first instance to discuss her concerns.

Cllr Lock again requested that, as part of a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Committee, that the issue of Transition Plans for LD service users (18-25) going in to Adult Services be included on that agenda.

On the topic of a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Committee, Mrs Tipper requested that the 'health of children' be included, and that this incorporate the different proposals and plans such a 'fit for your future'.

The Scrutiny Manager undertook to discuss the proposed joint meeting between this Committee and the Adults and Health Committee with the respective Chairs of each Committee with a view to identifying a date.

It was noted that the Outcome Tracker had been refreshed and updated and it was accepted.

#### 11 **Troubled Families update report - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee considered this report about how the Troubled Families programme has been delivered in Somerset. It was noted that the Troubled Families (TF) Programme (2015 – 2020) was run from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and managed in Somerset by the Council. The TF programme was working to achieve significant and sustained progress with up to 3000 Somerset families, to help with addressing worklessness, poor school attendance, health problems, crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and children who need help.

It was explained that the outcomes were measured against a national Troubled Family Outcomes Framework using the Somerset Families Outcomes Framework which supported delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. Successful progress of the TF programme in Somerset had secured £2m in Payment by Results claims and additional funding for 'transformation' and attachments fees had been invested in Early Help and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Members heard that Officers had developed a TF database – Transform, which enabled practitioners (internal) to have a holistic view of the family's complexities by drawing together information from different systems to provide a snapshot of the family. Additionally, the database had provided information for the Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board with insights into the effectiveness of Early Help arrangements. The current programme had been due to conclude on 31 March 2020, however in September the Government's spending review confirmed a further year of funding for the programme, but there was no confirmation of a 'successor' programme from March 2021.

The report was supplemented with a short PowerPoint presentation that showed a map of Somerset and the location of troubled families including their complexity of issues. There were diagrams to help demonstrate how outcomes were monitored and how a complex legal landscape had been simplified to ensure efficient flow of information that complied with data protection legislation.

During the discussion of the report and presentation, issues/concerns were raised, questions asked/answered and further information was provided on:

- Qualitative data from staff involved in the TF Programme indicated that the work undertaken had been effective in initiating change at a local level, and feedback from participant families had reflected the benefit of the initiative;
- It was reported, in response to a question, that 2,254 families in Somerset had achieved 'significant and sustained' outcomes, and it was further highlighted that many more families had made positive changes for and within their families but had not met the set outcome criteria so were not included in the official figures;
- The Director for Children's Service noted that an element of progress saw payments being made by demonstrable results and he was confident that Somerset was now better at achieving improvements in outcomes;
- It was requested that the phrase 'hard to reach families' was not used as it was troubled families that found it hard to reach services;
- Predictive analytics was a new and exciting area as it could be increasingly used to help to mitigate potential problems and help ensure better targeted support and use of resources;
- A glowing tribute was paid to the Lead Officer, who was described as 'a Goddess' and her work had been shown to a former Prime Minister and it was thought that the early work with TF undertaken in Somerset had helped to inform and shape national policy;
- It was noted that improvements could be made through improved liaison with the NHS, to include data sharing and if District Councils held a register of private landlords.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Officers for the interesting and informative presentation. He noted that the Health and Well-being Board (HWB) was leading on liaising with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to improve data sharing with partner agencies. He suggested and it was accepted that the Committee ask the HWB to request that the TF programme be included amongst the areas where enhanced partnership working was being encouraged. The report was accepted.

## 12 **2019/20 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Month 4 - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee considered this report, introduced by the Deputy Leader of Council, that provided details of the month 4 forecast outturn position for 2019/20 for the net Revenue Budget. The report also highlighted variances to service budgets, as well as detailing emerging issues, risks, areas of concern and proposed actions to resolve them.

It was reported that Children's Services had an adverse variance within their budget of £0.467m, although this had decreased by £0.030m from month 3. The Deputy Leader stated that it was encouraging that the financial forecast continued to show confidence that the changed approach to budget planning for 2019/20 onwards had ensured that the budget assumptions were realistic,

and deliverable with a relatively small adverse variance in overall service forecasts of £0.520m.

There was a brief discussion of the report and it was noted in response to a question that the variance was currently being off-set by a 'notional' allocation from corporate contingency and in addition firm management actions to correct variances were being developed. To ensure a tight grip was maintained the monthly monitoring reports to Cabinet and the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee would continue as this would help ensure effective review and scrutiny. Alongside this internal tracking and budget monitoring processes would continue to be given close attention by the Council's senior leadership team.

It was noted that the Children's Services budget, while rebased, remained under pressure as the Service continued to improve and this was in part due to unknown aspects especially regarding placements. It was reported that fees and allowances were reporting a reduced underspend of £0.130m although the number of adoption allowances had increased, resulting in an additional projected cost of £0.059m. This however reflected a positive outcome for children in Somerset and was more likely to result in cost avoidance on other placement budgets. The report also detailed a £0.175m underspend in the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) budget and an overall staffing underspend of £0.487m.

There was a brief discussion about social worker recruitment, and it was noted that recruiting experienced social workers was not only difficult but could also be more expensive. However, in the long run it would save money as it would require less to be spent on children as they would be better supported in their own families.

The Committee accepted the report.

**13 Value for Money: Tracker and Social Care Experts Review 2018 - 2019 - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee considered this report, introduced by the Deputy Leader of Council, that had been used by the Council's external auditor to inform their overall Value for Money conclusion. It was explained that the external auditor had sought additional assurance over the robustness regarding the Council's budget planning in respect of some services, including the increase to the Children's Services base budget. The work had provided more information to the external auditors and enabled them to provide assurance over the embeddedness of arrangements for sustainable resource deployment.

It was explained that the experts' conclusion had been attached as Appendix A to the report and it contained a section on Children's Services and included some useful benchmarking comparisons. The overall VFM experts' opinion for Children's Services had concluded that there was a moderate risk to the delivery of the Council's budget in respect of Children's Services.



Members heard that the work undertaken during the additional review had identified a few areas where further action would be required to strengthen the Council's financial resilience regarding Children's Social Care. It was reported that management actions had been incorporated into the VFM tracker considered by the Audit Committee at its last meeting and progress reports would be reported to each Audit Committee during 2019/20.

There was a brief discussion about how progress on the 3 specific VFM actions that related to Children's Services (VFMY20008, VFMY20010, and VFMY20012 (page 113)) would be reported to the Committee, and the Vice Chair noted the clear demarcation lines between the work of the 2 Committees.

The Committee accepted the report and the Vice Chair undertook to work with the Chair and Officers to determine how the Committee could best review progress on the 3 specific VFM actions during the year.

14 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 9

After ascertaining there were no other items of business, the Vice-Chair thanked all those present for attending, and closed the meeting at 11.44am.

**(The meeting ended at 11.44 am)**

**CHAIRMAN**

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## Somerset County Council Forward Plan of proposed Key Decisions

The County Council is required to set out details of planned key decisions at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken. This forward plan sets out key decisions to be taken at Cabinet meetings as well as individual key decisions to be taken by either the Leader, a Cabinet Member or an Officer. The very latest details can always be found on our website at:

<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>

Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 defines a key decision as an executive decision which is likely:

(a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

(b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.

The Council has decided that the relevant threshold at or above which the decision is significant will be £500,000 for capital / revenue expenditure or savings. Money delegated to schools as part of the Scheme of Financial Management of Schools exercise is exempt from these thresholds once it is delegated to the school.

Cabinet meetings are held in public at County Hall unless Cabinet resolve for all or part of the meeting to be held in private in order to consider exempt information/confidential business. The Forward Plan will show where this is intended. Agendas and reports for Cabinet meetings are also published on the Council's website at least five clear working days before the meeting date.

Individual key decisions that are shown in the plan as being proposed to be taken "not before" a date will be taken within a month of that date, with the requirement that a report setting out the proposed decision will be published on the Council's website at least five working days before the date of decision. Any representations received will be considered by the decision maker at the decision meeting.

In addition to key decisions, the forward plan shown below lists other business that is scheduled to be considered at a Cabinet meeting during the period of the Plan, which will also include reports for information. The monthly printed plan is updated on an ad hoc basis during each month. *Where possible the County Council will attempt to keep to the dates shown in the Plan. It is quite likely, however, that some items will need to be rescheduled and new items added as new circumstances come to light.* Please ensure therefore that you refer to the most up to date plan.

For general enquiries about the Forward Plan:

- You can view it on the County Council web site at <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>
- You can arrange to inspect it at County Hall (in Taunton).
- Alternatively, copies can be obtained from Scott Wooldridge or Michael Bryant in the Democratic Services Team by telephoning (01823) 357628 or 359500.

To view the Forward Plan on the website you will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader available free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)  
Please note that it could take up to 2 minutes to download this PDF document depending on your Internet connection speed.

To make representations about proposed decisions:

Please contact the officer identified against the relevant decision in the Forward Plan to find out more information or about how your representations can be made and considered by the decision maker.

The Agenda and Papers for Cabinet meetings can be found on the County Council's website at:  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=134&Year=0>

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p><b>FP/19/07/01</b> First published: 2 July 2019</p>	<p>4 Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>	<p>Issue: Decision to extend the Term Maintenance Contract for Highways Lighting maintenance services Decision: Somerset County Council's existing maintenance contract for highways street lighting is due to end in March 2020. The contract allows for up to a 48-month extension. This decision proposes that the Council should use this option to extend the contract.</p>	<p>Street Lighting TMC Extension</p>		<p>Neil Guild, Highways Asset Improvement Officer</p>
<p><b>FP/19/09/09</b> First published: 17 September 2019</p>	<p>Not before 6th Nov 2019 Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure Commissioning</p>	<p>Issue: Award of contract for the provision of Somerset County Council (SCC) Hybrid Mail Decision: Approval to award the contract for the provision of Somerset County Council (SCC) Hybrid Mail</p>	<p>Hybrid Mail Contract Award Report</p>		<p>Heidi Boyle Tel: 01823 355524</p>
<p><b>FP/19/05/10</b> First published: 28 May 2019</p>	<p>13 Nov 2019 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Q2 Performance Report Decision: To agree the report.</p>			<p>Simon Clifford, Customers &amp; Communities Director Tel: 01823359166</p>
<p><b>FP/19/10/11</b> First published: 23 October 2019</p>	<p>13 Nov 2019 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Q2 2019/20 Revenue Budget report Decision: To consider the quarter 2 revenue budget position and approve any recommendations / virements or mitigating actions</p>			<p>Elizabeth Watkin, Service Manager - Chief Accountant Tel: 01823359573</p>

Weekly version of plan published on 4 November 2019

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<b>FP/19/10/12</b> First published: 23 October 2019	13 Nov 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Q2 2019/20 Capital Programme report Decision: To receive the Q2 update on the capital programme and consider any recommendations			Elizabeth Watkin, Service Manager - Chief Accountant Tel: 01823359573
<b>FP/19/10/10</b> First published: 15 October 2019	13 Nov 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Treasury Management 2019/20 mid-year Report Decision: To consider this report			Alan Sanford, Principal Investment Officer Tel: 01823 359585
<b>FP/19/08/02</b> First published: 20 August 2019	13 Nov 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Heart of the South West Joint Committee - Governance Arrangements & Budgetary Position Decision: To approve amendments to functions and note the updated budget position			Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager Governance & Risk and Council's Monitoring Officer Tel: 01823 359043
<b>FP/19/10/01</b> First published: 4 October 2019	13 Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation	Issue: Creation of New Academies in Somerset Decision: The Secretary of State for Education has directed via an Academy Order, the conversion to Academy Status for the following four schools.			Helen Waring, Commissioning Officer - Schools

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<b>FP/19/10/08</b> First published: 7 October 2019	Not before 15th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure	Issue: Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 Decision: To consider this report			Paula Hewitt, Director of Commissioning for Economic and Community Infrastructure Tel: 01823 359011
<b>FP/19/09/08</b> First published: 10 September 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Decision to accept the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Local Growth Fund Award towards the Creech Castle junction improvements (Toneway Corridor phase 1) Decision: That the Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Interim Director of Finance & Performance agree to accept the Local Growth Fund Award by signing an agreement with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.			Sunita Mills, Service Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823 359763
<b>FP19/08/01</b> First published: 12 August 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) Phase 2: decision to introduce additional funding into the Lot 4 contract. Decision: To approve the introduction of additional funding into the Lot 4 Contract.			Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873

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<b>FP19/07/07</b> First published: 23 July 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Resources	Issue: Sale of The Court and Popham House property, Wellington Decision: Authority to proceed to sale of the surplus SCC Property, previously known as the Popham Court Care Home, comprising of The Court and Popham House in Wellington.			Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
<b>FP19/07/14</b> First published: 31 July 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Resources	Issue: Sale of Morgan House site, Bridgwater, including former library office. Decision: Authority to proceed to sale of the surplus SCC Property, namely the Morgan House Site, Bridgwater, including Bridgwater library offices			Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
<b>FP/19/07/06</b> First published: 22 July 2019	18 Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation	Issue: Creation of New Academies in Somerset Decision: The Secretary of State for Education has directed via an Academy Order, the conversion to Academy Status for the following schools.			Elizabeth Smith, Service Manager – Schools Commissioning Tel: 01823 356260
<b>FP/19/07/11</b> First published: 30 July 2019	18 Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: Approval of Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2018/19 Decision: Approval of Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2018/19			Lise Bird, Strategic Manager - Prevention,



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<b>FP/19/04/13</b> First published: 29 April 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure	Issue: Decision to appoint a contractor from a framework for the delivery of the Bruton Enterprise Centre Decision: To agree to appoint a supplier for the delivery of the Bruton Enterprise Centre			Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873
<b>FP/18/04/06</b> First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure	Issue: Procurement of the HotSW Growth Hub Service Decision: To undertake the procurement of a Business Support Service (Growth Hub) on behalf of the HotSW LEP			Melanie Roberts, Service Manager - Economic Policy Tel: 01823359209
<b>FP/19/06/02</b> First published: 14 June 2019	18 Nov 2019 Director of Children's Services, ECI Commissioning Director	Issue: Approval to submit the full application for European Social Funding, under Priority Axis 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets (1.2) Decision: To consider thie report			Melanie Roberts, Service Manager - Economic Policy Tel: 01823359209
<b>FP/19/04/01</b> First published: 3 April 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Director of Corporate Affairs	Issue: The award of a contract for the provision of replacement end of life mobile devices & connections Decision: To approve the award of a three-year contract.	Replacement mobile devices		Andy Kennell Tel: 01823359268

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<p><b>FP/10/01/11</b> First published: 5 February 2019</p>	<p>Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation</p>	<p>Issue: Bridgwater College Academy Expansion - Funding Decision: To agree funding as required</p>			<p>Elizabeth Smith, Service Manager – Schools Commissioning Tel: 01823 356260</p>
<p><b>FP/18/11/10</b> First published: 20 November 2018</p>	<p>Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure, Economic and Community Infrastructure Commissioning Director</p>	<p>Issue: Decision to approve revisions to the Connecting Devon and Somerset phase 2 deployment contracts Decision: To approve revisions to the Connecting Devon and Somerset phase 2 deployment contracts</p>			<p>Nathaniel Lucas, Senior Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823359210</p>
<p><b>FP/19/07/03</b> First published: 16 July 2019</p>	<p>18 Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>	<p>Issue: Implementation of New Street Works Permitting System Decision: We are responding to a request from the Secretary of State for Transport to replace our existing Street Works Noticing system with a Street Works Permitting system in line with other Highway Authorities</p>			<p>Bev Norman, Service Manager - Traffic Management, Traffic &amp; Transport Development Tel: 01823358089</p>

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<b>FP/19/07/13</b> First published: 30 July 2019	Not before 18th Nov 2019 Cabinet Member for Strategy, Customers and Communities	Issue: Revision of Corporate Complaints Policy Decision: A periodical update to the Council's complaints policy. Key changes are a switch in title from a 'procedure' to a 'policy', a change in the stage 1 resolution target time from 10 working days to 20 working days and the addition of a quality control process at stage 1.			Rebecca Martin, Service manager- Customer Experience & Information Governance
<b>FP19/10/09</b> First published: 14 October 2019	27 Nov 2019 Public Health Director	Issue: Approval to award the contract for the Provision of a Public Health Nursing Case Management & Information Management System Decision: Approval to award the contract			Alison Bell, Consultant in Public Health, Public Health
<b>FP/19/03/03</b> First published: 26 March 2019	Not before 9th Dec 2019 Interim Finance Director, Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure Commissioning	Issue: Somerset Energy Innovation Centre (Phase 3) - acceptance of Growth Deal 3 Funding Decision: Approves acceptance of Heart of the South West Growth Deal 3 funding £2,542,755 for the development of phase 3 of the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre and approve the decision to proceed with the construction of SEIC 3			Julie Wooler, Economic Development & Strategic Tourism Officer

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p><b>FP19/09/05</b> First published: 3 September 2019</p>	<p>13 Dec 2019 Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure</p>	<p>Issue: SCC Endorsement of the Heart of the South West Local Industrial Strategy Decision: SCC endorsement of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The HotSW LIS has been developed by the Local Enterprise Partnership in coordination with local partners and stakeholders, including SCC, and in partnership with Government.</p>			<p>James Gilgrist</p>
<p><b>FP/19/10/12</b> First published: 15 October 2019</p>	<p>Not before 16th Dec 2019 Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure</p>	<p>Issue: To identify a sustainable long term location for a library in Shepton Mallet Decision: To consider the relative merits of 3 options for the location of the library and make a decision informed by the conclusions of the options appraisal</p>			<p>Sue Crowley, Strategic Manager Library Services, Community and Traded Services Tel: 01823355429</p>
<p><b>FP/19/10/04</b> First published: 7 October 2019</p>	<p>Not before 16th Dec 2019 Public Health Director</p>	<p>Issue: Changes to sexual health targeted prevention services Decision: Award of contract, additional targeted prevention services and arrangements for c-card condom distribution</p>			<p>Michelle Hawkes, Public Health Specialist Tel: 01823 357236</p>
<p><b>FP/19/10/22</b> First published: 30 October 2019</p>	<p>18 Dec 2019 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Review of Scrutiny Function Decision: To consider this report</p>			<p>Jamie Jackson, Service Manager - Governance Tel: 01823 359040</p>

Weekly version of plan published on 4 November 2019

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/19/10/11</b> First published: 15 October 2019	18 Dec 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Management of Risk Pathway documents; Strategy, Policy and Process Decision: Approve that the Management of Risk Pathway documents are fit for purpose and allow adoption into the business			Pam Pursley
<b>FP/19/09/13</b> First published: 25 September 2019	18 Dec 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Climate Change Strategy Framework Decision: To endorse the framework			Michele Cusack, ECI Commissioning Director
<b>FP/19/10/13</b> First published: 23 October 2019	18 Dec 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Investment Strategy Decision: To consider a proposed Investment Strategy to support the MTFP and recommend this to Full Council			
<b>FP/19/09/11</b> First published: 17 September 2019	18 Dec 2019 Cabinet	Issue: SCC Endorsement of the Heart of the South West Local Industrial Strategy Decision: SCC endorsement of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The HotSW LIS has been developed by the Local Enterprise Partnership in coordination with local partners and stakeholders, including SCC, and in partnership with Government.			James Gilgrist

Weekly version of plan published on 4 November 2019

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/19/10/19</b> First published: 24 October 2019	18 Dec 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Revenue Budget Monitoring - Month 7 Decision: To consider this report			Sheila Collins
<b>FP/19/10/05</b> First published: 7 October 2019	18 Dec 2019 Cabinet	Issue: Annual Report of the Director of Public Health Decision: To agree the report			Pip Tucker, Public Health Specialist Tel: 01823 359449
<b>FP/19/10/07</b> First published: 7 October 2019	22 Jan 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan Decision: To consider this report			Mickey Green, Managing Director - Somerset Waste Partnership Tel: 01823 625707
<b>FP/19/10/10</b> First published: 15 October 2019	22 Jan 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Admission Arrangements for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools for 2021/22 Decision: That the Cabinet agrees the determination of the Admission Arrangements for all Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools for 2021/22 as set out in this report.			Jane Seaman, Access and Admissions Manager Tel: 01823 355615
<b>FP/19/10/20</b> First published: 24 October 2019	22 Jan 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Revenue Budget Monitoring - Month 8 Decision: To consider this report			Sheila Collins

Weekly version of plan published on 4 November 2019

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/19/10/22</b> First published: 29 October 2019	22 Jan 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Adoption of the International definition of Antisemitism Decision: Cabinet to adopt the definition and additional policy changes and training			Tom Rutland Tel: 01823 359221
<b>FP/19/10/02</b> First published: 4 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Decision to conclude the award of a contract for the provision of highway improvements at Toneway Creech Castle junction. Decision: The decision is to enter into a contract with the preferred contractor for the construction of the highways scheme to improve the Toneway Creech Castle junction.			Sunita Mills, Service Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823 359763
<b>FP/19/10/15</b> First published: 23 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 Decision: To consider the proposed strategy and recommend it to Full Council in February for approval			
<b>fp/19/10/16</b> First published: 23 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Q3 2019/20 Performance Report Decision: To receive the Q3 report on performance, details of management actions and consider any further actions required			Simon Clifford, Customers & Communities Director Tel: 01823359166

Weekly version of plan published on 4 November 2019

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>fp/19/10/17</b> First published: 23 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Q3 2019/20 Revenue Budget update Decision: To receive the Q3 revenue budget position and consider any recommendations			
<b>fp/19/10/18</b> First published: 23 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Q3 2019/20 capital investment programme update Decision: To receive the Q3 budget position and consider any recommendations			
<b>FP/19/10/14</b> First published: 23 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 - 2022/23 Revenue Budget Decision: To consider the proposed MTFP 2020/21+, council tax precepts and revenue budget proposals			
<b>FP/19/10/16</b> First published: 23 October 2019	10 Feb 2020 Cabinet	Issue: Capital Investment Programme 2020/21-2022/23 Decision: To consider the proposed capital programme and recommend it to Full Council for approval			



## Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme

Committee meetings		Lead Member & Officer
<b>15 November</b>		
New Safeguarding arrangements		Caroline Dowson
Annual Customer Feedback report		Rebecca Martin
Scrutiny review report		Jamie Jackson
<b>13 December</b>		
CYPP Update 2019-2022 – Year 1 Quarter 2		Fiona Phur
CYP Mental Health Local Transformation Plan		John Dunning
Safe routes to school		Mike O'Dowd-Jones
Finance update report – Month 6 (quarter 2)		Lizzie Watkin
Young Carers update report		Louise Palmer
<b>24 January 2020</b>		
MTFP/Budget setting report?		Sheila Collins
<b>4 March</b>		
Adoption Medicals		Pending CCG attendance
<b>1 April</b>		
Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board Update – (possible visit)		Louise Palmer
<b>6 May</b>		
<b>3 June</b>		
<b>9 July</b>		

(What impact does that have on Children in Somerset?)

## Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme

<b>9 September</b>		
<b>7 October</b>		
<b>12 November</b>		
<b>2 December</b>		
<b>27 January 2021</b>		
<b>3 March 2021</b>		

**Note:** Members of the Scrutiny Committee and all other Members of Somerset County Council are invited to contribute items for inclusion in the work programme. Please contact Democratic Services (01823) 359500 & [democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk) who will assist you in submitting your item.

**Possible future items:**

A Joint meeting with Adults & Health Scrutiny Committee: CAHMS service;  
 Immunisations;  
 Oral health;  
 Transitions Plans for LD service users (18-25) going in to Adult Services;  
 The impact on Children and Families of the next stage of migration/roll out of Universal Credit.

(What impact does that have on Children in Somerset?)

## Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Agenda items	Action owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
<b>22 July 2016</b>			
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	Scrutiny Manager	There was a suggestion that the Council consider approaching the local Muslim Community to work with and offer advice on this area and that such a representative might also be invited to become a co-opted Member of the Committee.	Pending – this is being progressed with the Equalities Officer
<b>26 April 2019</b>			
Regional Adoption Agency	Suzanne Lyus	The update was accepted, and the Chair suggested, and it was agreed that an update report be provided in 6 months.	Pending
<b>17 May 2019</b>			
SEND Update	Annette Perrington	The Committee accepted the update and welcomed the offer of a 'SEND workshop' and a Q&A session, Members were encouraged to think about possible questions, and areas they would like to discuss in more detail.	Pending – workshop session at 17 July meeting
Somerset Children's Trust – revised safeguarding arrangements	Caroline Dowson	The Committee agreed that it would like to receive a further report on this topic to include details on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the future framework and detail particularly regarding scrutiny;</li> <li>• how the voice of the child would be heard;</li> <li>• assurances concerning the new governance arrangements; and</li> <li>• how risk would be managed.</li> </ul>	Completed – report to June meeting
<b>14 June 2019</b>			
Work Programme		The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be a 2 agenda item meeting with a financial budget monitoring report, with a 2 hour SEND workshop. Health and Wellbeing Board members would be invited.	Completed – September mtg

## Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Self-Harm Update	Clerk	It was requested that the Life Hacks website details be circulated. A question was asked about the comparison rates for young males regarding self-harm and it was stated details would be provided. There was a discussion about Your Somerset and deliveries and availability and it was stated further details would be provided.	Completed  Completed
Proposals to implement the new Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements		The Chair and Vice Chair undertook to meet with the DCS and Portfolio holder outside of the meeting to discuss the issues further and establish clarity.	Completed
<b>19 July 2019</b>			
Scrutiny Work Programme	Jamie Jackson	The Committee requested an update at the next meeting, on the possible joint meeting with Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee regarding transition between children and adult services.	Completed – both committees to meet on same day from March
2019/20 Revenue Budget Monitoring - Month 2 Report	Julian Wooster	The Committee considered the recommendations and noted the reprofiled budgets for 2019/20 and the current overspend in the Children's Services budget, and requested that Cabinet be mindful of ensuring Value for Money from the service.	Completed – report to October meeting
<b>13 September 2019</b>			
Scrutiny Work Programme	Scrutiny Manager	It was requested that a report with a Children and Families aspect regarding contingencies to manage 'Brexit' be brought to a future meeting.	Pending
	Scrutiny Manager	The Chair noted that on the Committee's forward plan a number of items had been suggested that would lend themselves to discussion by a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Manager undertook to discuss this with the Chair of that Committee.	Completed
		The Scrutiny Manager updated Members on the 'Safe routes to school' item and the Committee agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Manager meet to determine the specific aspects to be considered.	Pending

## Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board Update	Scrutiny Manager	The Chair requested that Officers look in to arranging an appropriate visit for the Committee and that an update report be presented in 6 months.	Pending
<b>18 October 2019</b>			
Troubled Families	Chair	The Vice-Chair thanked the Officers for the interesting and informative presentation. He noted that the Health and Well-being Board (HWB) was leading on liaising with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to improve data sharing with partner agencies. He suggested and it was accepted that the Committee ask the HWB to request that the TF programme be included amongst the areas where enhanced partnership working was being encouraged.	Completed
Value for Money: Tracker and Social Care Experts Review 2018 - 2019	Chair & Vice Chair & Scrutiny Manager	The Committee accepted the report and the Vice Chair undertook to work with the Chair and Officers to determine how the Committee could best review progress on the 3 specific VFM actions during the year.	Pending

The new CYPP 2019-2022 had been produced following a multi-agency process, overseen by Somerset Children's Trust. The CYPP had 4 priorities: **Supported Families; Healthy Lives; A Great Education; Positive Outcomes.**

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting and retained on Master Tracker document.
Pending	Action on-going or plans in place to address.
Incomplete	No action currently in place with a minimum of 3 months since action agreed.

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Somerset County Council  
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families  
Committee – 15 November 2019

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## Review of Scrutiny function

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager, Governance

Author: Jamie Jackson, Service Manager, Governance

Contact Details: 01823 359040 – JAJackson@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: N/A

Division and Local Member: N/A

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the Council and, if done well, amongst other public service providers too. While scrutiny has matured in Somerset over the years, it still faces challenges.
- 1.2. As part of organisational transformation and taking forward Peer Challenge recommendations, the Council has undertaken a thorough review of its scrutiny function. The review has considered best practice from other councils and the latest Government statutory guidance in May 2019. Our review has also involved working with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). Their covering report along with final review report (attached as Appendix A) provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider a series of recommendations and suggest any further developments they consider appropriate.
- 1.3. The majority of the recommendations in this report combine both the short term improvements that can be taken forward from the CfPS report along with recognising that the necessary cultural improvements to develop and embed better scrutiny form part of a longer term programme of work commencing before the end of 2019 through until March 2021.

### 2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

The Committee is asked:

- 2.1. to endorse and recommend to Full Council that the Council implements a programme of cultural transformation and improvements to its scrutiny arrangements by March 2021, including the provision of additional resources in the Democratic Services Team and members training budgets to deliver the enhanced scrutiny arrangements;
- 2.2. to endorse 10 of the 11 recommendations within the Centre for Public Scrutiny's 'Supporting governance, scrutiny and member support in Somerset County Council' report as detailed on pages 9 and 10 of Appendix A; The Committee is asked to agree to an alteration to Recommendation 6 within the CfPS report and limit the number of agenda items to an absolute maximum of 4, rather than two as currently recommended, as this more accurately reflect the current position of the Authority and the size of the workload.
- 2.3. to consider and make any further recommendations it considers appropriate to include as part of the Scrutiny Review with reference to the Government's new

statutory guidance, best practice from other councils and the members workshop held in September 2019;

- 2.4. to support all recommendations relating to the Scrutiny Review being recommended by Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and for the improvements to be taken forward from January 2020 to March 2021;
- 2.5. The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee to receive a quarterly progress report on the improvements and review of scrutiny arrangements.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Council undertakes an annual review of its democratic arrangements and its Constitution to ensure they remain fit for purpose for the organisation and meet its legal duties.
- 3.2. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee undertook an inquiry into the effectiveness of scrutiny in local government in 2017. The select committee's report identified a number of areas for improvement. This work has led to the development of the new statutory Scrutiny Guidance which was published in May 2019.
- 3.3. While Scrutiny has matured in Somerset over the last decade, it still faces challenges. These have included officer driven agendas, Scrutiny Committees being used as a 'tick box' for agreeing new policy and not providing the Committees the opportunity to add value, limited member engagement and overcrowded agendas and work programmes.
- 3.4. The Peer Challenge in 2018 identified, as one of the key recommendations, that 'Somerset County Council should review its scrutiny arrangements as part of making it more effective, ensuring all councillors are equipped to play an active role and contribute to the policy making and key decisions affecting the future of Somerset's residents and the council, and that its governance arrangements are reflective of this.' In parallel, as part of the organisational transformation work it was recognised there was a need to improve the Council's scrutiny arrangements. As a result the Council commissioned the nationally renowned Centre for Public Scrutiny to carry out an independent review of the scrutiny function at SCC between March and May 2019. This involved attending all 3 Scrutiny Committees (Place, Adults and Health and Children and Families) during April and conducting a Member survey, before producing an initial draft report in late May. This was subsequently reviewed with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs in June.



- 3.5.** Following receipt of the draft Scrutiny Review report the Leader and the 3 Scrutiny Chairs agreed that the next step should involve an all member workshop to discuss the report, the recommendations within and consider these alongside the recent issued national guidance and the council's transformation work. The workshop was held in September, where members received an introductory briefing on the recently published statutory Scrutiny guidance for councils, an appraisal of the scrutiny arrangements and scrutiny resources at Devon County Council, provide a valuable opportunity for members to discuss the ideas and opportunities to make scrutiny more effective. The workshop provided the opportunity for members to discuss the Centre for Public Scrutiny's report and other ideas that members had for improving scrutiny prior to the report formally considered at all 3 Scrutiny Committees in November, as well as Cabinet, ahead of the recommendations being presented to Full Council in November. The workshop was facilitated by Ian Parry, from the Centre for Public Scrutiny who wrote the CFPS's report.

One of the main areas of focus discussed by the Members present, was that the report was focusing on an ideal scenario for 'pure scrutiny' and did not necessarily completely reflect the reality of day to day Local Authority and Committee working styles and politics. There was also concern raised that the report was in parts generic and Members felt that what the Council adopts should be more Somerset specific. This is reflected in the amended recommendation relating to the number of agenda items and a consensus that Cabinet Members and the relevant Director should co-present agenda items, rather than a select Committee style approach, which Members agreed didn't consider appropriate for Somerset County Council.

- 3.6.** The report of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, attached as Appendix A, gives a comprehensive analysis of the current arrangements and contains 11 specific recommendations for how scrutiny might be improved at the Council. Several of these recommendations can be defined as logistical or practical changes and therefore are relatively easy and straightforward to implement. Other recommendations are more cultural and these will take longer to embed and will require a change of approach throughout the Council by Members and officers.

The easier to implement changes include reducing the number of formal committee meetings in order to provide each scrutiny committee with the opportunity to focus its available resources on areas such as the development of commissioning plans, undertaking more partnership scrutiny, review opportunities for services improvements and doing more scrutiny outside of formal committee meetings e.g carrying out visits to frontline services and greater use of task and finish groups. Improvements to work planning (including quarterly joint work planning meetings across the committees), more focused agenda setting, improved meeting layouts, as well as a strict adherence to no 'for information' report as part of any formal agenda, would be relatively straightforward to implement during 2020.

- 3.7.** The cultural work that has been identified will require a more gradual introduction, as members assume more ownership with the work programme and actively suggest and pursue items they wish to be considered, as well as Cabinet and officers making greater use of utilising Scrutiny as a sounding board early in policy development and consider their recommendations when shaping decisions and focusing on outcomes. There must also be an emphasis of greater ownership and engagement by all Scrutiny Committee Members, as well as a depoliticising of scrutiny where possible, for example removing the need for political group pre-meetings and replacing with pre-meetings for all Committee members, to agree themes of questioning and specific areas of interest. These types of changes will take time to embed and as result the intention is to have implemented and fully embedded all of the recommendations by March 2021, to align with the new quadrennium. It is however anticipated that all Members will begin to notice changes to the way scrutiny is working and conducted with an immediate effect.
- 3.8** Although the CfPS's report is comprehensive and suggested improvements and amendments in a number of areas, the Committee are invited to suggest other areas or issues that could be addressed at this time and can be incorporated in the overall review. Officers are especially keen to seek the Committee's views on the relationships with Cabinet members, senior officers and also how they would like to be consulted and incorporated within policy development.

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1.** Page 11 of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's final report details the Members and officers who were met with on an individual basis.
- 4.2.** All Members were invited to take part in an online Scrutiny survey. Over 40% of Members completed the survey, the results of which form part of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's final report.
- 4.3.** 20 County Councillors attended the Scrutiny review Member workshop in September.

#### **5. Implications**

- 5.1.** While there are no direct budget implications within the CfPS recommendations, the review of other councils and the new statutory guidance identifies the need for more scrutiny training and development for members, the possibility of conducting scrutiny in different ways, including increased use of visits and travel around the County. These recommendations will result in increased Member expenses and training budget requirements. However this should be considered alongside a reduction in officer demand, especially at a senior level, to prepare reports, briefings and attend a reduced number of formal Committee meetings from 2020.
- 5.2.** The cultural transformation required, improved work planning and policy advice support will require dedicated officer resources in addition to what the council provides through the Democratic Services Team. The Strategic Manager, Democratic Services has reviewed other councils and the CfPS recommendations and has identified, as a minimum, the need for an additional

scrutiny support officer within the Democratic Services team. This additional officer resource and training resources for members forms are an integral part of the recommendations as they will be essential to support successful implementation by March 2021 and will have specific responsibility for policy research, liaison with members and officers throughout the Authority and scrutiny training and development.

## **6. Background papers**

- 6.1.** Supporting governance, scrutiny and member support in Somerset County Council – Centre for Public Scrutiny - May 2019
  
- 6.2.** Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – May 2019

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

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Supporting governance, scrutiny and member support in Somerset County Council

Final Report

May 2019

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## **Contents:**

### **Executive Summary:**

- **Introduction**
- **Scope and methodology**
- **Summary of findings**
- **Recommendations**

**Appendix A – Member survey summary**

**Appendix B – Evidence gathering summary**

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## Supporting scrutiny, governance and member guidance

### Introduction

Scrutiny plays an essential role in policy shaping, holding the executive to account and reviewing issues of importance to local communities. For it to do this effectively the scrutiny function and members need to develop a shared understanding on the role, purpose and objectives of overview and scrutiny. Scrutiny has to be a whole council responsibility and not left to a few members in scheduled meetings. It needs to be strong on prioritisation, develop strategic work programming and engage in evidence-based objective enquiry. It must have measurable impact on policy shaping, decision making, value and the quality of council services.

Somerset County Council is keen to drive the council's ambitious plans for its local economy, healthy communities and infrastructure projects. It also wishes to ensure that scrutiny arrangements are effective and support the council's goals, through constructive challenge and visible accountability.

Following a recommendation in SCC's external corporate peer review the Council engaged the Centre for Public Scrutiny to provide a comprehensive review of scrutiny and member support arrangements and to provide proposals and recommendations on where it could improve and develop the effectiveness of scrutiny.

The review also takes into account the recently published government [MHCLG] guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities [May 2019]. CfPS were closely involved in this guidance and were therefore able to include it in the review prior to its official publication.

CfPS is the leading national body promoting and supporting excellence in governance and scrutiny. Its work has a strong track record of influencing policy and practice nationally and locally. CfPS is respected and trusted across the public sector to provide independent and impartial advice.

CfPS is an independent national charity founded by the Local Government Association [LGA], Local Government Information Unit [LGIU] and Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants [CIPFA]. Its governance board is chaired by Lord Bob Kerslake.

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## Review process

This review considered the following:

### Review of the arrangements to support members, governance and scrutiny.

#### 1. Scope

##### 1. Members, meetings and agendas:

Are there barriers to member engagement, is there a shared understanding of scrutiny's mission? How are meetings structured, chaired, supported and attended? What is achieved? Are agendas focused? Are they balanced or cluttered, indulgent or objective?

##### 2. Structure and work programming:

Are the scrutiny committees able to offer effective scrutiny across the council? Are committee work plans aligned or are there gaps, overlaps and is the workload spread as evenly as possible? Are work plans strategic and focused on achieving positive outcomes? Are they affiliated to the corporate plan and its delivery? Are they prioritised and able to show a value contribution?

##### 3. Support and resources:

How effectively are members supported in their community roles and how does this provide adequate insight into public concerns and issues that supports the work of scrutiny. How well do officers (not just scrutiny officers) support the work of scrutiny? How embedded is scrutiny in policy development, budget and MTFS planning?

##### 4. Relationships, behaviours and culture:

Are relationships between executive and scrutiny mature and based on trust? Is there good, robust challenge. Are there points of unnecessary conflict or tension? Can executive and scrutiny openly share. What are officer and scrutiny relationships like? Is scrutiny getting the best out of both executive members and officers?

##### 5. Member skills and development opportunities

Is there a reasonable spread of interest, experience and ability across committees? What are the specific gaps in skills, knowledge and experience? How can members support themselves and each other?

##### 6. Contribution, performance and value-adding:



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What difference is scrutiny making, how does it contribute to council improvement, council performance, service delivery and improved outcomes for Somerset.

### **7. Improvement programme:**

How can scrutiny achieve more? What needs to change culturally and structurally to make it happen. What part can stakeholders, scrutiny members, chairs, cabinet members, Leader and CEO team play in effecting and supporting change and improvement?

### **8. Working with and scrutiny of partners:**

This review did not include within its scope scrutiny of partner organisations. However, this is an increasingly crucial area for scrutiny activity. Partnerships are wide and varied including health and care strategic integration arrangements, health providers, public protection services and many other public and private sector providers. This review reinforces the importance for effective scrutiny in these areas.

## **2. Methodology**

Desk study of meetings, agendas, constitution and other relevant reports and documents

Desk study of documentation and material produced by other councils (to be selected to allow for comparison of different elements of Somerset's business and governance model)

On-site meetings with officers and members to gather evidence and information on the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangements

Short interviews (in person or by phone) with scrutiny chairs and vice chairs, Leader and DL, Cabinet Members, and opposition spokespeople, previous chairs, and committee members.

Member on-line survey to capture the views of all council members.

Observations of the scrutiny process including meeting management, involvement and conduct. The review observed meetings of the three main scrutiny committees.

## **3. Workshop**

CfPS will present its findings and recommendations to a workshop for members and officers.

## **Summary of findings**

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## **1. Overall assessment:**

1.1 Overall the council has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to scrutiny in terms of the creation and focus of committees, the level of activity undertaken, and time and resource dedicated across the organisation.

1.2 There is a clear realisation and commitment from members and officers that scrutiny could be more effective and productive. The majority of those interviewed welcomed the opportunity to make changes and improvements.

1.3 There is good support from the democratic services team which is recognised by scrutiny members and from the council's political and officer leadership to support change to enable improvement to happen.

1.4 From its current base there is a good platform from which scrutiny can successfully develop.

1.5 There have been 24 responses to the on-line member survey on scrutiny (41%). A full analysis of responses will be included in the draft report.

## **2. Findings assessments:**

2.1 We found a consistent view that scrutiny is not adding value in the way it currently operates. This is negatively impacting on the 'return' the organisation gets from its investment in scrutiny. Officer support and engagement is effective and the commitment from chairs and vice-chairs overall is good.

2.2 A consistent clear understanding of the purpose, role and responsibilities of scrutiny is lacking across the organisation. There is also a weak appreciation of how scrutiny adds value as part of a whole council function.

2.3 The principle of democratic accountability is not being adequately applied. Political decision-makers are not sufficiently held to account and are frequently absent from scrutiny meetings when items on their portfolio are discussed. A key function of scrutiny is holding to account. However, scrutiny meetings do not appear to be organised to allow transparent challenge and accountability to take place. Officers instead are often providing a briefing and Q&A sessions for scrutiny.

2.4 More pre-scrutiny of forward plans and decisions would engage scrutiny in real shaping and value-based activity. There is scope for more of this to be included.

2.5 We acknowledge that there appears to be a lot of scrutiny activity happening – 3 committees, each meeting 10 times a year, usually with full agendas. These need significant financial investment of resource from the council both in officer and member time. But it is difficult to quantify its positive contribution to the council's decision-making, strategic goals and priorities. We also recognised that the scrutiny function continued with significant activity in 2018/19 - a time when the Council faced financial challenges and essential transformational work.

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2.6 The scrutiny work programme is fairly static and often repetitive, wide-ranging and can lack focus or alignment with the council's strategic plans or key high impact or high value issues. Few people were able to evidence examples where scrutiny had led to a specific beneficial outcome, influenced or improved council outputs.

2.7 Scrutiny itself is predominantly committee-based, there was talk of positive engagement in task and finish groups, but the vast majority of scrutiny takes place in meetings. Here there are too many examples of officer information sharing and members clarifying rather than specific issues being explored and recommendations made.

2.8 Scrutiny could benefit from additional officer capacity to advise and support. This should not be used to allow more activity, but to support and advise scrutiny on objective setting, work programming, increasing productivity, supporting task and finish work, policy support and improving outcomes. There is some member concern that there is a lack of capacity in the Democratic Services Team. New government guidelines draw attention generally within councils to resourcing weaknesses.

2.9 Overall there is a lack of basic scrutiny standards applied in relation to the structure and layout of meetings; who asks questions, how officers and members are questioned, and actions/ recommendations are agreed. From a visitor or public perspective, it is also difficult to work out who is sitting round the table. As an alternative there could be set seating positions for scrutiny members, cabinet members and their support officers, scrutiny and governance officers and identification made clearer.

3.0 For some, there is a view that scrutiny has lost of its independence and become too politically influenced in the way that it operates.

3.1 An acceptance of officer presentations, an inability to dig deeper and investigate led to descriptions of the scrutiny experience as being 'an easy ride', and frustrations that obvious areas of concerns are not picked up or reacted to or followed up.

3.2 It is suggested that scrutiny is lagging behind, as Somerset continues at pace to transform how it operates. There is a risk that a significant gap in the organisation's governance/oversight framework expands and becomes a significant organisational weakness

3.3 Scrutiny of partner organisations has begun to develop in recent years and although we were unable to observe this, there is a growing appetite across the 3 committees to engage key partner organisations such as health, public safety, transportation providers and others. It is clearly in the interests of the council to improve outcomes for Somerset's communities to develop and extend this external scrutiny further.

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3.4 There is a challenge that member substitutes at meetings make it more difficult to create a team environment and approach to agreeing lines of inquiry etc. Potentially it may help to remove this rule and expect consistent attendance.

3.5 Query the value of public questions at the scrutiny committee, both from a public perspective and contribution to scrutiny. As a principle this approach is good practice but in practice it was difficult to see how this approach resulted in a positive experience for the public (compared to other ways to engage) and contributed to effective scrutiny of specific topics.

3.6 There is currently a limited used of independent co-opted members by scrutiny. By using co-opted members scrutiny could gain significant additional skills, insight and capacity particularly in specialised areas. The latest Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny indicates the potential to increase representation beyond Children & Families to improve the skills and experience available to the committee. The use of independent technical advisers as co-opted members on specific areas of scrutiny and partnership scrutiny work could be an exciting and bold way to add more capacity.

## **Member survey highlights**

There were 24 responses to the on-line survey making the sample large enough to be reasonably representative.

A majority of councillors (65%) agreed that scrutiny was either effective or very effective, which was not supported in the interviews and evidence gathered by the CfPS review

Appendix A . Report on the survey results

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## Recommendations

1. Scrutiny members, Cabinet and SLT conduct an exercise to clarify the role and purpose for scrutiny. We would recommend that the MHCLG Guidance on Culture is used as a set of principles to consider in this exercise. The guidance covers:
  - Recognising scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy
  - Identifying a clear role and focus
  - Regular engagement between scrutiny and executive [cabinet]
  - Managing potential disagreements
  - Providing necessary support
  - Ensuring impartial advice from officers
  - Communicating scrutiny's role within the council
  - Embedding scrutiny with the whole council
  - Ensuring that scrutiny has an independent mindset
  - Consider the use of independent co-opted members to add independent expertise and insight
2. Move towards a more agile and potentially productive scrutiny structure. This could be achieved by reducing the number of meetings. Additional capacity and scope could be achieved through task and finish groups. These T&F working groups, however, should be tightly managed to ensure their scope timescale and value contributions are clear. They should be limited in number to ensure that their demand upon resources and officer support capacity is measured and commensurate with the return on the investment of time and resource involved.
3. Cabinet members need to be more visibly accountable to scrutiny. All scrutiny meetings should include the relevant Cabinet Member or Leader as the main focus/witness of scrutiny. Cabinet members are accountable for their portfolios and should be prepared to attend, present and answer policy-related questions. Officers should be present as technical advisors. This will provide transparent, clear visible accountability of political decision-makers.
4. Political group influence through pre-meetings or advice to chairs can cause scrutiny to lose its impartial role and independent mindset which is crucial for effective and objective scrutiny. We recommend that scrutiny operates totally in public and any political pre-meetings avoided.

- 
5. Review approach to work planning, agenda setting, meeting preparation. Scrutiny work programmes should avoid repetitive reporting, 'for-information' items or general presentations and reports to which scrutiny can add only minimal value.
  6. Scrutiny meetings should try to aim for a maximum of two agenda items per meeting and design meetings to have clear lines of enquiry and objectives. This would provide scrutiny to engage more thoroughly and productively.
  7. Scrutiny should develop a clear methodology in the creation of work programmes to ensure that it segments and prioritises and aligns with the council's plans and goals. This should be member-led and in consultation with cabinet.
  8. The layout of the meeting room should make it clear through allocated seating and name plates the roles of participants and attendees. It is particularly important to be able to differentiate who is being scrutinised and who is scrutinising. And to make a clear distinction between politicians and officers or witnesses.
  9. The involvement of the public should be reviewed. This could include a public question-time at each meeting, seeking public and wider community input into work programmes and consideration of broadcasting meetings through visual or audio means. There are a number of councils that have developed broadcasting techniques to make public access available.
  10. Many members expressed a gap in their knowledge and skills relating to scrutiny and would value training and development. Our assessment suggests that general training of the essential principles and practice of scrutiny, questioning techniques and work programme planning were of particular value.
  11. To lead change and improvement some tailored coaching/mentoring for individual chairs would be beneficial.

### **Acknowledgments and thank you**

1. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was commissioned by Somerset County Council to advise and support an internal review on the effectiveness and impact of their current approach to overview and scrutiny.
2. The review was conducted on-site on in April 2019, with subsequent further desk research.
3. We would like to thank those elected scrutiny Members, Executive Members, and Officers who took part in interviews, survey and observations for their time, insights and honesty.

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## Appendix A – Survey Results

See attachment

## Appendix B – Evidence gathering

Somerset County Council – Scrutiny Review – April 2019

Appendix B

Engagement schedule

Interviews Schedule
Jamie Jackson Deputy Strategic Manager Democratic Services
Sheila Collins, Director of Finance and 151 Officer
Scott Wooldridge – Monitoring Officer
Cllr Jane Lock, Leader of the Opposition and Children and Families Scrutiny Committee Member
Cllr Frances Nicholson, Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Pat Flaherty, Chief Executive
Stephen Chandler, Director of Adult Social Services, Lead Commissioner Adults and Health
Cllr Liz Leyshon, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Place Scrutiny Committee Member
Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey, Chair of Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee
Leigh Redman, Leader of the Labour Group and Chair of Children and Families Scrutiny
Cllr John Hunt, Independent Group Leader and Member of Place Scrutiny Committee
Paula Hewitt, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director of Commissioning
Michele Cusack, Operations Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure
Julian Wooster, Director of Adult Social Services, Lead Commissioner Adults and Health

Scrutiny Committee Observations
Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee
Scrutiny for Policies Adults and Health Committee
Scrutiny for Policies Children and Wellbeing Committee

### Ian Parry | Development Manager

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Somerset County Council  
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee –  
15 November 2019

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## **Progress on the implementation the new Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements**

Lead Officer: Julian Wooster

Author: Caroline Dowson, SSCP Business Manager

Contact Details: CDowson@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson

Division and Local Member: All (county-wide implications)

### **1. Summary**

1.1 The three Somerset Safeguarding Partners (Somerset County Council, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, and Avon and Somerset Constabulary) now constitute a tripartite Children's Safeguarding Partnership. New safeguarding arrangements were published on 26 June 2019 and took effect on 29 September 2019, having been assessed as compliant with the new legislation by the Department for Education. The arrangements replace the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board. In the interests of efficiency, it has also been possible to integrate the Somerset Children's Trust with the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. Delivery subgroups are currently under review with revised chairing and membership.

1.2 The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the local area. Many local organisations and agencies also have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions, and continue to be involved in the wider Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

1.3 Local and regional scrutiny arrangements are being developed, building on existing good practice across the Safeguarding Partnership. A key development is the intention of the three key safeguarding partners to appoint an Independent Scrutineer to undertake high-level assurance of safeguarding activity for children across Somerset.

1.4 The final annual report for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (2018-2019) has been published, detailing progress and outcomes against the four key priority areas: early help, multiagency safeguarding, child exploitation, and neglect.

### **Links to County Plan**

1.5 The merger of the Children's Trust Board Executive and Board with the current Somerset Safeguarding Children Board governance group and wider

Board is a strategic partnership development which builds on Somerset Children's Trust arrangements, as well as partnership safeguarding arrangements. It links them to the County Vision of partnership working for the benefit of children and families, with a focus on those most in need of safeguarding to promote the best possible outcomes for children.

1.6 The partnership now has ownership of the revised Children and Young People's Plan via the Partnership Business Group, which will meet in its new form at the end of November 2019, and which will be comprised of chairs of the SSCP subgroups, as well as the Corporate Parenting Board and Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board. The Partnership Business Group will also strengthen links to other relevant strategic partnerships that have a role in safeguarding children and young people, such as the Safer Somerset Partnership.

1.7 The new arrangements support better integration with health partners in line with the Somerset Four Year Efficiency Plan (Partnership and Integration) and strengthens the role of the Health Safeguarding Partnership subgroup. It also promotes stronger communities by taking an overarching strategic approach to working with children and families (Think Family).

## **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

2.1 Cabinet endorsed the proposal for Somerset County Council to implement new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements alongside changes to the Children's Trust arrangements in March 2019.

2.2 The Scrutiny for Policies for Children and Families Committee is asked to note:

**The progress towards new arrangements as set out in the attached paper (September 2019) and focus of future activity.**

**The developing scrutiny arrangements for safeguarding activity in so far as they have been agreed by the three key safeguarding partners as of October 2019.**

**Key areas in the final Somerset Safeguarding Children Board annual report (2018-2019).**

## **3. Background**

3.1 The Children and Social Work Act (2017) and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) remove the requirement for a Local Safeguarding Children Board. Instead of the local authority taking the

lead, the new Act apportions equal responsibility for making multi-agency safeguarding arrangements between three 'Safeguarding Partners' who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

4.1 The new safeguarding children arrangements were agreed by Cabinet and by governance arrangements for the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and by Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

Through consultation on the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and Families, children and young people indicated that they wished to hold partners to account for safeguarding in Somerset via an annual face-to-face meeting, which will be facilitated by Somerset County Council Participation Workers.

#### **5. Implications**

5.1. The current budget has been retained for the year 2019-2020. Together the three key safeguarding partners will identify efficiencies for 2020-2021 and set a budget by December 2019.

5.2. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) sets out the requirements for the Safeguarding Partnership. The lead representatives for the safeguarding partners are Somerset County Council's Chief Executive, the accountable officer of the Somerset Clinical Commissioning group, and the Chief Officer of Avon and Somerset Constabulary, who have shared accountability. In policy situations that require a clear, single point of leadership all three safeguarding partners should decide who will take the lead on issues that arise.

5.3 Regional arrangements: Regional arrangements between the partners remain informal in legal terms. A number of workstreams have been established, with representatives across the partnership, to explore opportunities for further and closer joint working and therefore create efficiencies across the region. These include Complex Safeguarding, Scrutiny arrangements, Data and Performance, and Training and Development. The SSCP takes the position that the local area partnership will retain responsibility for the development and implementation of the local Safeguarding Children Partnership strategic and operational plans, which will include alignment of resources, knowledge and expertise at a local level. At this point, there is no agreement to becoming part of a wider remit of the regional data and performance workstream, but Somerset partners will continue to work with

regional partners on the development of a regional performance data set. The Somerset new safeguarding arrangements will retain local responsibility for the self-funding training function within Somerset, overseen by a local Learning and Improvement function. Somerset safeguarding partners are open to the possibility of some regional work in relation to training, such as peer review of locality training e.g. programmes, quality of providers.

5.4 The SSCP is exploring regional scrutiny arrangements where they add value (e.g. a regional pool of independent reviewers for child safeguarding practice reviews or other independent scrutiny/reciprocal regional arrangements for peer reviews with clearly defined terms of reference). An initial scoping meeting was held across the force area on 1 October 2019, during which the following themes emerged as areas for consideration for peer scrutiny in Somerset, building on learning from serious case reviews and other learning activity:

- intrafamilial sexual abuse
- child exploitation
- children's emotional and mental health
- early help in the context of neglect.

5.5 At present, scrutiny arrangements will remain place-based within Somerset, with the possibility of future contractual arrangements for delegation at a regional level.

5.6 The tenure of the Independent Chair for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board, required under the previous legislation, ended on 30 September 2019. In October 2019, the three key safeguarding partners agreed the appointment of an Independent Scrutineer to provide robust scrutiny of the effectiveness of Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's multi-agency arrangements in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in Somerset. This will include scrutiny of arrangements in place to identify and review Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews which replace Serious Case Reviews under the new legislation. The post has been advertised and an appointment is anticipated in late 2019.

5.7 In addition, a local framework is being refreshed which builds on existing scrutiny and quality assurance activity which includes, but is not limited to:

- multi-agency audits
- thematic and learning reviews
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Section 11 audits as set out in the Children Act (2004) and associated multi-agency peer challenges to audit findings
- peer reviews within Somerset
- an annual face-to-face conversation with children and young people
- Section 157/175 audits of education providers as set out in the Education Act (2002)
- a twelve-monthly report in line with Working Together to Safeguard

## Children (2018) guidance.

5.8 Overarching structures for the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements are shown in the attached appendix as a pictorial representation, which also shows the subgroups that will deliver on key areas of work for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. In addition, a framework for seeking the views of children and young people within the new safeguarding arrangements is under development, building on existing good practice from the Children's Trust.

5.9 Responsibility for Child Death Reviews now falls under the Department of Health as opposed to the Department for Education, and therefore outside local safeguarding arrangements. Somerset Child Death Overview Panel has merged with the Pan-Dorset Child Death Panel to increase the number of cases reviewed from which to draw learning. As from 1 April 2019, administrative support for child death arrangements will be provided by Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, as opposed to Somerset County Council, but strong links will be retained with the Safeguarding Partnership to ensure continued learning from child deaths.

5.10 The Scrutiny for Policies for Children and Families Committee is asked to note the final report of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board for 2018-2019. During the year, SSCB has focused on four priority areas:

- 1) Early Help
- 2) Multi-agency Safeguarding
- 3) Neglect
- 4) Child Exploitation/Children Missing

5.11 Serious case reviews: Two serious case reviews were undertaken in the period 2018 to 2019: one was published in autumn 2018 (Family A), and one will be published in early 2020 (Family B). Two thematic reviews were also undertaken: one regarding suicides of young people in Somerset, which showed no rising trend and no factors which would make Somerset an outlier; and another reviewing the management of sex offenders against children. The learning continues to be embedded across the partnership in terms of the identification and intervention where there is long-term neglect, and the protection of unborn and very young children, and the importance of information-sharing.

## 6. Background papers

6.1 The Children and Families Scrutiny Committee has been presented with the attached papers for consideration.

- **Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements – September 2019**

- <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Details-of-new-safeguarding-arrangements.pdf>
- **Somerset Safeguarding Children structure chart**  
<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safeguarding-arrangements-structure-chart.pdf>
- **Independent Scrutineer post advertisement**
- <https://dasjobs.co.uk/job/independent-scrutineer-somerset-safeguarding-children-partnership/>
- **Annual report 2018-2019**
- <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SSCB-Annual-Report-2018-2019.pdf>

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.



Somerset County Council

# Annual Customer Feedback Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 March 2019



**Author:** Rebecca Martin, Service Manager – Customer Experience

**Date:** 04/10/2019

**Version:** FINAL

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## **Introduction**

This is the Somerset County Council annual customer feedback report for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Data used in this report is taken from the corporate iCasework system and the Ombudsman annual review.

The first section of this report is an executive summary, reflecting feedback across all Somerset County Council services and giving a brief analysis of the Ombudsman's data. Detailed data analysis for Adults and Children's Services and for Economic and Community Infrastructure follow later in the document.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman produces an annual review for each council and the Somerset County Council 2019 review can be found at <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/somerset-county-council/statistics>

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Overview

In 2018/19 there was a total of 1923 pieces of feedback recorded (all types) compared with 1933 in the previous year (0.5% reduction). Complaints reduced by just over 2% on the previous year with 1076 received (compared to 1101 in 17/18).

## 1.2 Volumes and Comparisons

Total feedback received across all council services for last 3 years:

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
Children’s Social Care Complaints	267	272	277
Other Children’s Services Complaints	131	187	134
Adult Services Complaints	305	269	216
ECI Complaints	196	275	349
Corporate Complaints	34	98	101
<b>Total Complaints</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>1101</b>	<b>1077</b>
Children’s Social Care Compliments	124	67	73
Other Children’s Services Compliments	144	110	113
Adult Services Compliments	128	83	124
ECI Compliments	261	273	188
Corporate Compliments	6	9	9
<b>Total Compliments</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>507</b>
Children’s Social Care Comments	16	6	6
Other Children’s Services Comments	9	4	14
Adult Services Comments	15	3	6
ECI Comments	51	60	104
Corporate Comments	7	5	18
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>148</b>
Children’s Social Care Member Enquiries	19	11	16
Other Children’s Services Member Enquiries	35	34	62
Adult Services Member Enquiries	35	26	24
ECI Member Enquiries	2	113	82
Corporate Member Enquiries	36	28	7
<b>Total Member Enquiries</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Total Feedback</b>	<b>1821</b>	<b>1933</b>	<b>1923</b>

Figures for 2018/19 show a 0.5% decrease in total feedback received when compared with figures recorded in the 12 months prior. Complaints have decreased by 2.2% compared with 2017/18 and compliments by 6.4%. The table below shows percentage increase/decrease per service area for all feedback types.

Service Area	Feedback Type	↑↓
Children’s Social Care	Complaint	+1.83
	Compliment	+8.95
Other Children’s Services	Complaint	-28.34%
	Compliment	+2.72%
Adult’s Social Care	Complaint	-19.70%

	Compliment	+49.39
Economic & Community Infrastructure	Complaint	+26.90%
	Compliment	-31.13%
Corporate Feedback	Complaint	+30.6%
	Compliment	0.00%

### 1.3 Performance

The table below shows the resolution status for the 1077 complaints received in 2018/19. The vast majority of complaints received in the year (95%) have been managed at stage 1 of the complaints process. This is consistent with previous years. There has been an increase in cases escalating past stage 1 of the process with 13 cases escalating to stage 2 and 41 referred to the Ombudsman (6 and 17 respectively in 2017/18).

Resolution	Number
Stage 1 – resolved in year	937
Stage 1 – still open at end of year	86
Stage 2 – resolved in year	6
Stage 2 – still open at end of year	7
LGO – resolved in year	17
LGO – still open at end of year	24
	<b>1077</b>

Somerset County Council's complaint procedure sets a target resolution timescale of 10 days. The table below show the average resolution times at stage one by service area for the 937 stage1 cases resolved in year:

Service Area	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019
Children's Social Care	31 working days	29 working days
Other Children's Services	18 working days	26 working days
Adult's Social Care	23 working days	23 working days
Economic & Community Infrastructure	16 working days	13 working days
Corporate Feedback	13 working days	15 working days

For the 86 stage 1 complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31<sup>st</sup> March is 45. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	25
10 – 20	15
21 – 30	6
31 – 40	11
41 – 50	6
51 – 60	6
61 – 70	1
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	2

91 – 100	4
> 100	10
	<b>86</b>

#### 1.4 Complaint Outcomes

The table below shows the percentage of complaints across all services that were resolved with the listed outcomes and a comparison with the previous year. The percentage of complaints that have been upheld or partly upheld in 2018/19 is broadly consistent with the previous year (31% compared to 32% in 17/18).

Outcomes	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019
Upheld	14%	11%
Not Upheld	38%	31%
Partly Upheld	18%	20%
Resolved Upon Receipt	11%	9%
Case Withdrawn/Rejected	19%	29%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 1.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the primary causes recorded for resolved complaints as a percentage of the total and the percentage change compared with the previous year. Service provision and communication remain in the top 3 causes for complaint and are joined this year by 'service quality' which has seen an 8% increase. Complaints regarding policy and procedures have reduced by 11%.

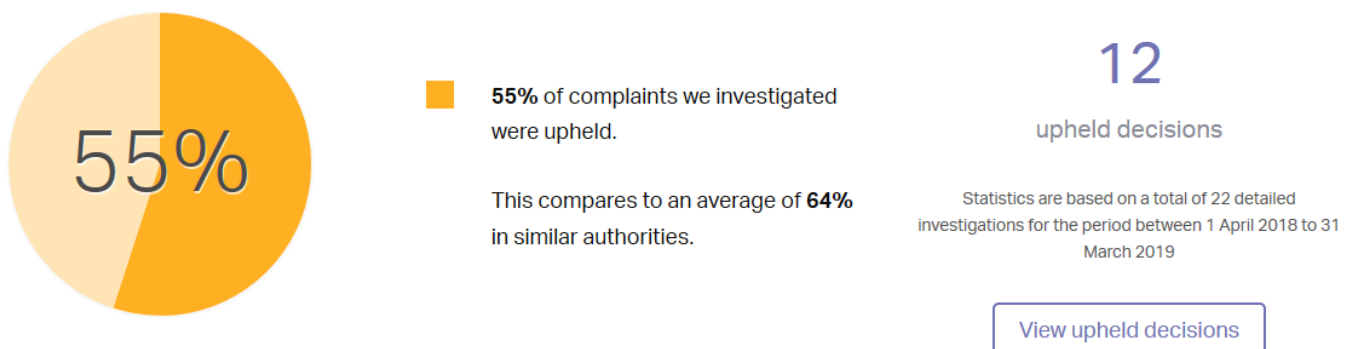
Cause Theme	% of total	+/- from previous year
Service Quality	25%	+8%
Communication	20%	+2%
Service Provision	18%	-4%
Staff Conduct	14%	+5%
Policy & Procedures	13%	-11%
Information	5%	Neutral
Financial	3%	Neutral
Confidentiality	1%	Neutral
Unfair Treatment	0.5%	-0.5%
Health & Safety	0.5%	+0.5%
	<b>100%</b>	

## 1.6 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publish annual review letters to all local authorities. The letters include information about the number of customers that approached them to complain about the Council, how many were refused, signposted, investigated etc. and for the investigated cases, what the LGSCO judgment was. The letter supplies both high level statistical data and the case references to allow further analysis. All annual review letters are publicly available online. When considering the annual review data, it should be noted that the data supplied will not necessarily align with the data held locally. For example, the numbers quoted will include enquiries from people that the LGSCO signposts back to the Council, some of whom may never contact us. Additionally, some of the cases the LGSCO have closed within the year 2018/19 may fall in to a different reporting period for the Council (e.g. the case may have been received significantly earlier or later by SCC).

On analysis of the Ombudsman Review Letter, there was a slight decrease in the number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO in 2018/19 compared with the previous 12 months (81 in 2017/18, 76 in 2018/19).

As a general picture, the LGSCO have reported that they have upheld 58% of detailed investigations nationally for the year (a slight increase on 57% nationally in 2017/18). It is therefore really pleasing that Somerset's uphold rate is below the national average by 3%, with a significant improvement on previous years (63% in 17/18, 79% in 16/17 and 78% in 15/16). Additionally, the LGSCO analysis shows that the number of Somerset complaints upheld is less than the average for similar authorities (which is 64%).



Our compliance with Ombudsman recommendations rate is a little below similar authorities (ours is at 91% compared to 99%) and we have volunteered to work with the LGSCO on a pilot in this area.

Sources:

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2019/jul/ombudsman-annual-report-focuses-on-sharing-the-learning-from-complaints>

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/somerset-county-council/statistics>

<b>LGO Uphold Rates</b>					
<b>Authority</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>+/- SCC comparison</b>
Somerset	78%	79%	63%	55%	N/A
Cornwall	57%	54%	61%	53%	-2%
Devon	39%	66%	53%	65%	+10%
Dorset	45%	55%	47%	71%	+16%
East Sussex	56%	66%	46%	67%	+12%
Gloucestershire	24%	50%	50%	52%	-3%
Herefordshire	48%	45%	43%	47%	-8%
Norfolk	47%	56%	75%	67%	+12%
Suffolk	38%	62%	81%	71%	+16%
Wiltshire	53%	50%	40%	53%	-2%
Shropshire	50%	48%	32%	61%	+6%

When looking at our statistical neighbours (a slightly different group of authorities than used by the LGSCO as 'similar' authorities), performance ranges between 47% and 71% with the average at approximately 60%. This puts us at 5% below the average for our statistical neighbours for 2018/19 which is a significant improvement on the previous year when we were 9% above the average.

The uphold rate is based on cases where the Ombudsman undertook detailed investigation in year. Further breakdown is provided below:

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Service Category</b>	<b>No. of cases</b>	<b>% of total investigations</b>
Upheld	Adult Care Services	9	55%
	Education & Children's Services	1	
	Environmental Services	1	
	Highways & Transport	1	
Not Upheld	Adult Care Services	5	45%
	Education & Children's Services	3	
	Highways & Transport	2	

Anonymised details of all cases upheld by the LGSCO can be found online - <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/somerset-county-council/decisions/2018/u/Listing?t=statement&fd=2018-04-01&td=2019-03-31&dc=u&aname=Somerset%20County%20Council&atype=County%20council&sortOrder=DESCENDING>. In investigating complaints the LGSCO judges whether the Council's actions amount to fault, whether that fault caused the complainant injustice and what remedy should be made (if applicable). Remedy can be a range of measures including an apology, a review of policy, procedure and practice and financial redress.

## **1.7 Remedy, Learning and Improvement**

Where a complaint is upheld, it is important that the Council puts things right for affected individuals and takes time to understand what went wrong in order that service can be improved for the future.

The Customer Experience Team are now working with services to produce a 'remedy and learning action plan' in cases where fault is found. This helps to identify what needs to be done to remedy the situation for the complainant but also looks more broadly to see if there are any practice changes that might prevent future errors or dissatisfaction. Each identified action is assigned a responsible owner and the Customer Experience Team oversee the implementation in order that remedies can be appropriately evidenced.

This year, the Customer Experience Team with Adult Social Care, tried out a new, additional method of considering lessons learned. This was in relation to a complaint made by a sister of a customer who was placed by the Council in a local care home. The customer was unhappy in the home and suffered physical and mental symptoms as a result of the care received. The complaint was upheld and remedy was put in place, including relocation of the customer to a new provision. We invited the sister to come and talk to the Safeguarding Board about her sister's experiences and about her own journey when trying to address concerns and make her voice heard. The customer made a very compelling and impactful presentation to the board which generated a number of actions for change. We will use this process again as and when suitable circumstances present.

## **1.8 Channel Shift**

There has been a pleasing move towards 'self-service' with feedback this year, with more than half being submitted through the online option. This represents an increase of approximately 18% on the previous year. Feedback submitted by email, letter and telephone have all accordingly reduced.

## 2. Detailed Data - Children's Services

### 2.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of Children's Services feedback received across the last 3 years broken down by social care and other children's services.

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
CSC Complaints	267	272	277
CSC Compliments	124	67	73
CSC Comments	16	6	6
CSC Member Enquiries	19	11	16
<b>Total CSC Feedback</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>372</b>
Other Children's Complaints	131	187	134
Other Children's Compliments	144	110	113
Other Children's Comments	9	4	14
Other Children's Member Enquiries	35	34	62
<b>Total Other Children's Feedback</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Total Children's Feedback</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>695</b>

### 2.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 411 complaints about children's services were received in 2018/19. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%	
Stage 1 – resolved in year	348	237 CSC 111 Other	84.67% 57.66% 27.01%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	46	27 CSC 19 Other	11.19% 6.57% 4.62%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	2	2 CSC	0.49% 0.49%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	2	2 CSC 0 Other	0.49% 0.00%
Stage 3 – resolved in year	0		
Stage 3 – Still open at end of year	0		
LGO – resolved in year	5	4 CSC 1 Other	1.22% 0.97% 0.25%
LGO – Still open at end of year	8	4 CSC 4 Other	1.94% 0.97% 0.97%
	<b>411</b>		

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for children's services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019
26 working days	26 working days	28 working days



For the 46 stage 1 children's services complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31<sup>st</sup> March is 53. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	10
10 – 20	6
21 – 30	4
31 – 40	5
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	5
61 – 70	1
71 – 80	1
81 – 90	1
91 – 100	3
> 100	7
	<b>46</b>

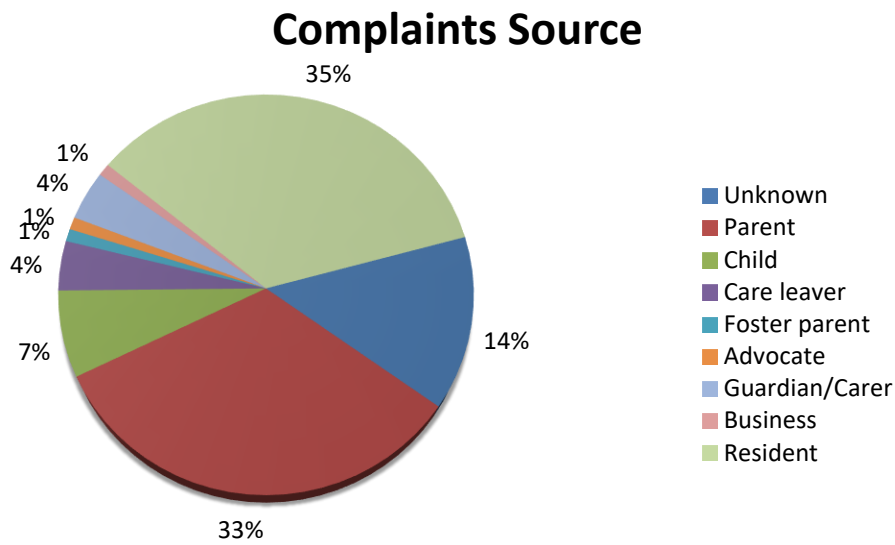
The table below shows the outcomes for the 348 stage 1 children's services complaints received and resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	9%	10%	36	10%	Neu
Not Upheld	35%	48%	129	37%	-11%
Partly Upheld	33%	23%	83	24%	+1%
Resolved Upon Receipt	8%	7%	33	10%	+3%
Withdrawn/Rejected	15%	12%	67	19%	+7%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100%</b>	

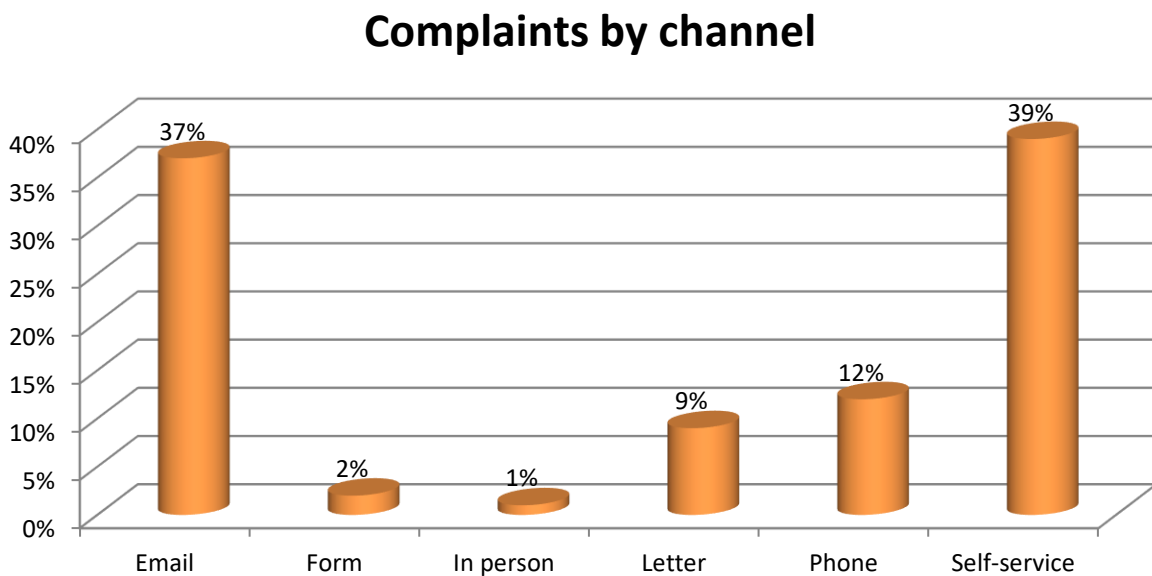
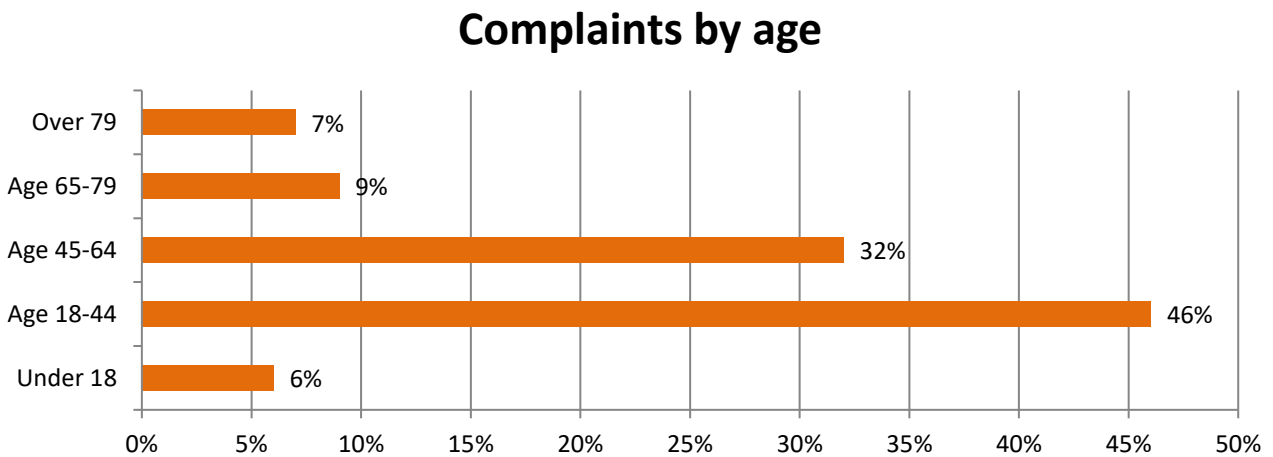
## 2.3 Customer Profiles

Collecting 'customer profile' information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to the customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the sensitive nature of the issues raised did not lend themselves to the collection of such data (whilst we aim to gather the information, discretion would be used by officers where it was clear that the customer was upset, frustrated or angry). Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:



Only 35% of complainants about children’s services provided age data, the split is as follows:

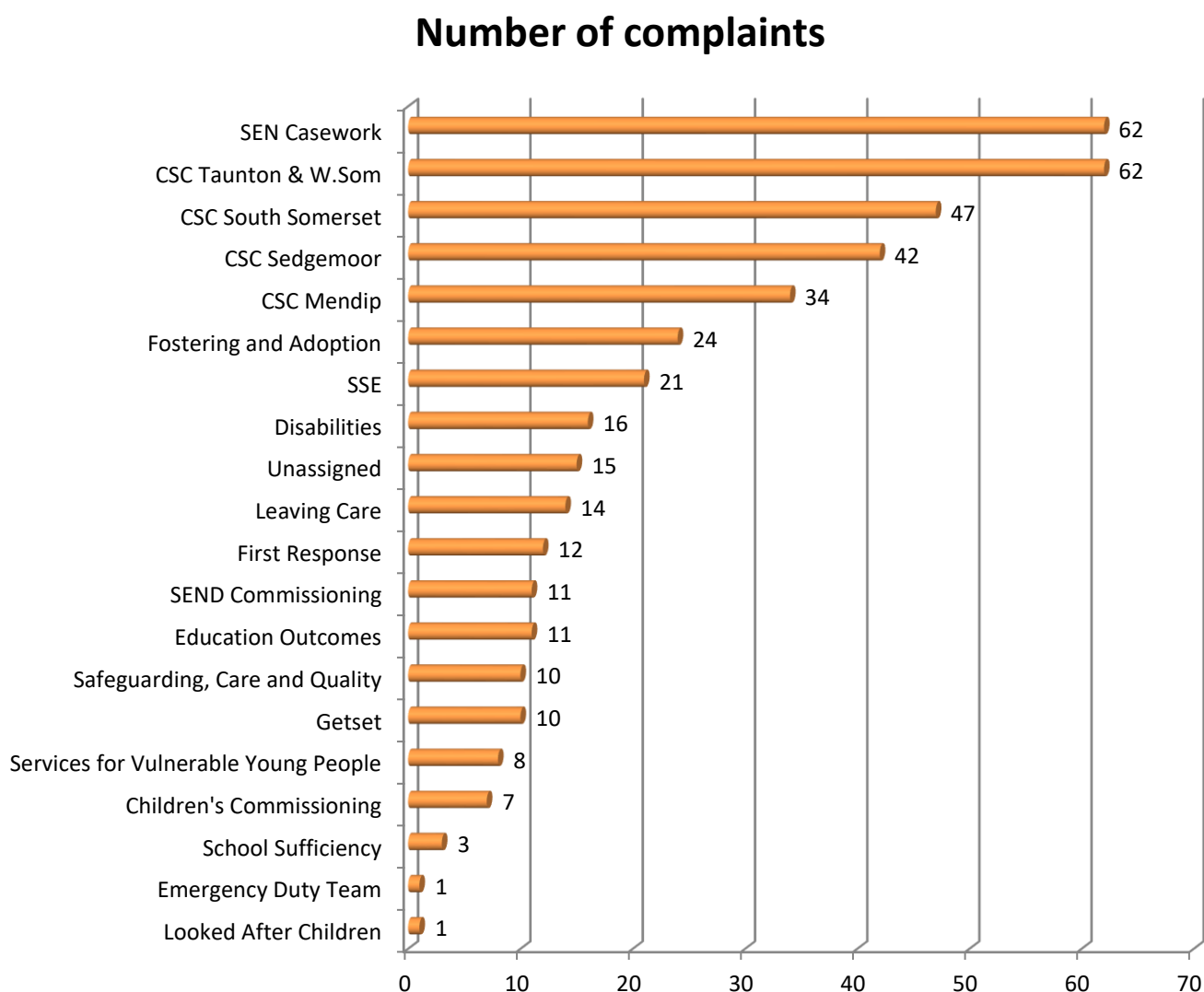


Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 – 31 Mar 2019	+/-
Phone	13%	12%	-1%
Email	42%	37%	-5%
Letter	18%	9%	-9%
Self-Service	19%	39%	+20%
Form	6%	2%	-4%
In Person	1%	1%	Neu
Text	0%	0%	Neu
Apps	1%	0%	-1%

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

## 2.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across all children's services of the 411 complaints received during 2018/19.



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 348 stage 1 complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time (working days)
Emergency Duty Team	1
School Sufficiency	1
Unallocated	4
First Response	13
Services for Vulnerable Young People	15
SSE	18
Disabilities	18
CSC Mendip	22
SEND Commissioning	24
Leaving Care	25
CSC Sedgemoor	28
SEN Casework	28
CSC South Somerset	29
Children's Commissioning	33
Getset	33
Fostering and Adoption	35
Education Outcomes	44
CSC Taunton & W.Som	45
Safeguarding, Care and Quality	49

## 2.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for complaints about children's services and the broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (inc. open/rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	48	14%
Accuracy of information	Information	17	6%
Quality of information/advice		4	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	33	20%
Implementation of policy and procedures		6	
Decision		7	
Result of assessment		13	
Plan		10	
Quality of service	Service Quality	14	15%
Arrangements for daily living		35	
Contact Arrangements		3	
Discrimination		1	
Confidentiality	Confidentiality	5	1%
Payments or charges	Financial	3	1%
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	10	11%
Timeliness of doing something		12	
Timeliness of service provision		6	

Service availability		10	
Communication by service	Communication	8	20%
Quality of communication		31	
Timeliness of communication		25	
Other communication cause		7	
Staff conduct		1	
Professionalism	Staff Conduct	32	12%
Staff rudeness		1	
Staff behaviour		6	
		<b>348</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 2.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 411 complaints received about children's services in 2018/19, 17 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 4 cases to stage 2 of the complaints process and 13 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). This represents 4% of cases received.

Two stage 2 cases are still open to investigation at the close of year. The two cases closed at stage two were both partially upheld. One case related to Fostering and Adoption and the other to the Disability Service.

Of the 13 cases referred to the LGSCO, 5 have been resolved in year and 8 remain open at the close. Details of the 5 resolved in-year LGSCO complaints are shown below:

### LGSCO Case 1

Customers complained that the Council failed to take proper account of all relevant information in its assessment of their grandchildren's needs. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate the complaint as it was felt that it would have been reasonable for the grandparents to raise their concerns in court.

### LGSCO Case 2

Customer complained that she felt the Council had failed to safeguard her grandson. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate the complaint as it was felt that it would have been reasonable for her to raise her concerns in court.

### LGSCO Case 3

Customer complained about the conduct of a social worker in relation to the assessment of her son's needs. The Ombudsman have declined to investigate at this stage as it considers the escalation premature (the complainant has not yet given the Council proper opportunity to address her concerns).

### LGSCO Case 4

Customer complained that the Council had not implemented a remedy associated with an earlier complaint. The Ombudsman have declined to investigate at this stage as it considers the escalation premature (the complainant has not yet given the Council proper opportunity to address her concerns).

### LGSCO Case 5

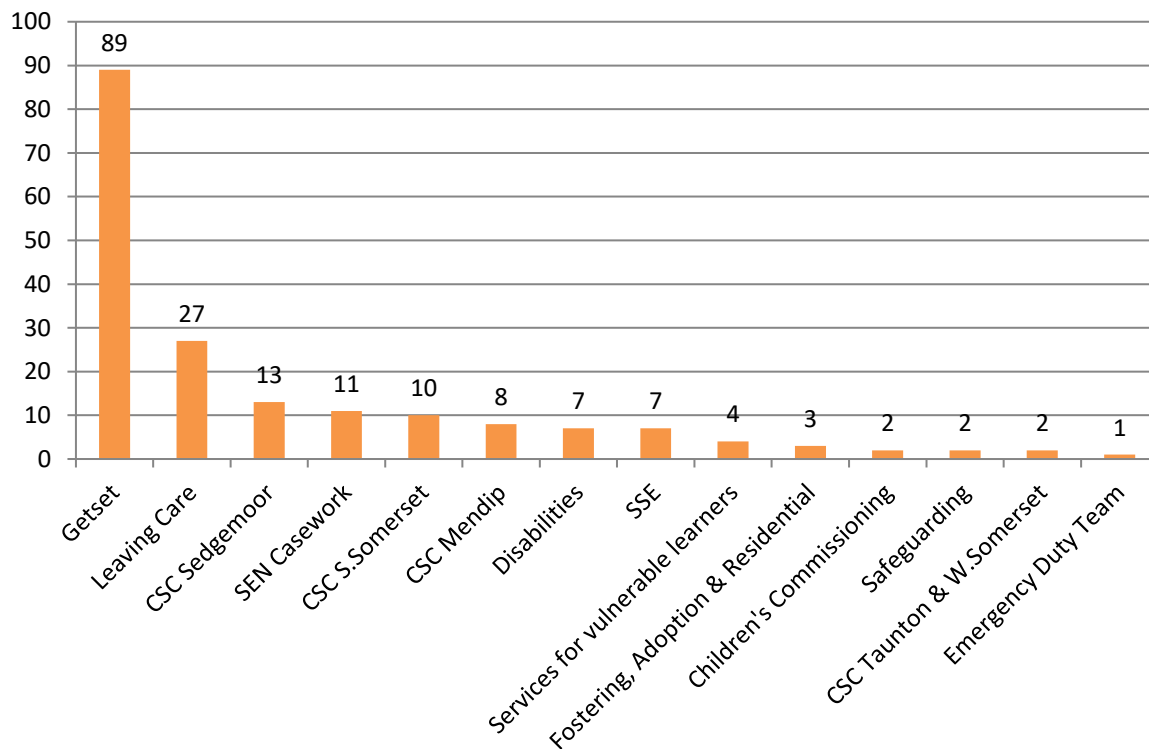
Customer complained that the Council had not asked two social workers to make an apology to him and his wife after making allegations regarding the standard of

care provided by him and his wife to a foster child. The Ombudsman did not find fault on the part of the Council in this matter.

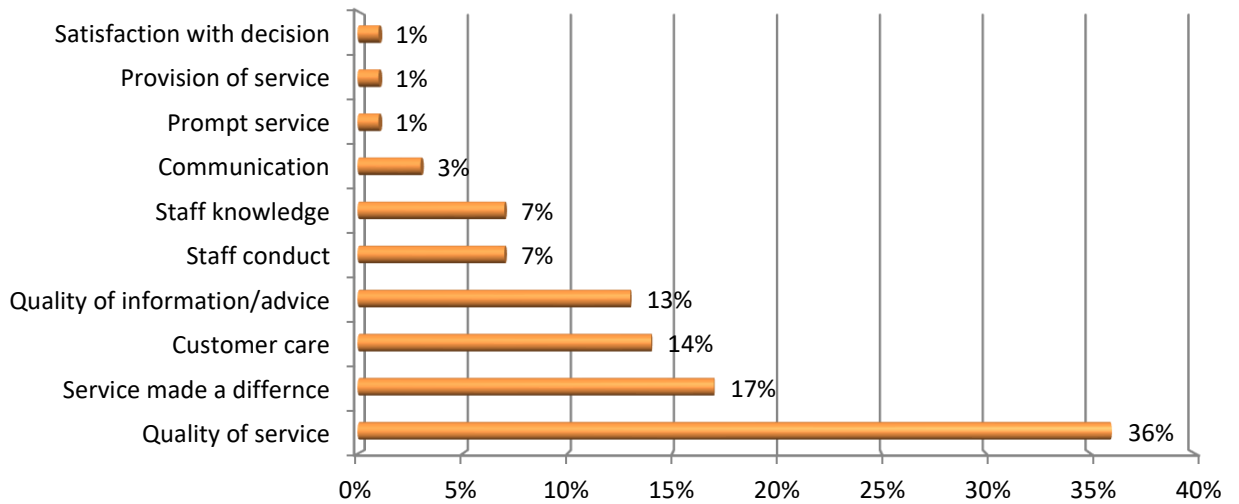
## 2.7 Compliments

There were roughly 5% more compliments recorded for children's services in 2018/19 than for the previous year. The charts below provide further information.

### Compliments by service



## Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:



## **2.8 Other Feedback**

20 general comments about children's services were received during the year. Comments can range from suggestions for improvement to services to the thoughts and opinions of local residents regarding council services in general and the funding of them. Comments are monitored and practical suggestions are passed to appropriate managers.

78 enquiries relating to children's services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for member enquiries regarding children's services in 2018/19 was 28 working days.



### 3. Detailed Data - Adult Services

#### 3.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of Adult Services feedback received across the last 3 years.

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
Adults Complaints	305	269	216
Adults Compliments	128	83	124
Adults Comments	15	3	6
Adults Member Enquiries	35	26	24
<b>Total Adults Feedback</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>370</b>

#### 3.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 216 complaints about adults services were received in 2018/19. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	178	82%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	15	7%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	1	1%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	5	2%
LGO – resolved in year	5	2%
LGO – Still open at end of year	12	6%
	<b>216</b>	

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for adult services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019
30 working days	23 working days	23 working days

For the 15 stage 1 adult services complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31<sup>st</sup> March is 29. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	6
10 – 20	6

21 – 30	0
31 – 40	1
41 – 50	0
51 – 60	1
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	0
91 – 100	0
> 100	1
	<b>15</b>

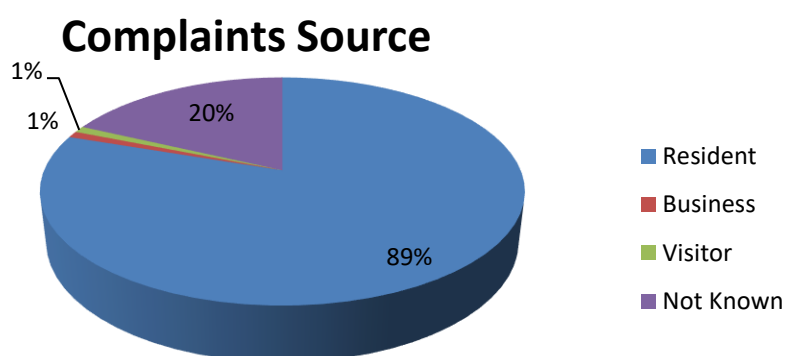
The table below shows the outcomes for the 178 stage 1 adult services complaints resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	19%	22%	36	20	-2%
Not Upheld	33%	32%	55	31	-1%
Partly Upheld	28%	25%	56	32	+7%
Resolved Upon Receipt	20%	10%	15	8	-2%
Withdrawn/Rejected	0%	11%	16	9	-2%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>	

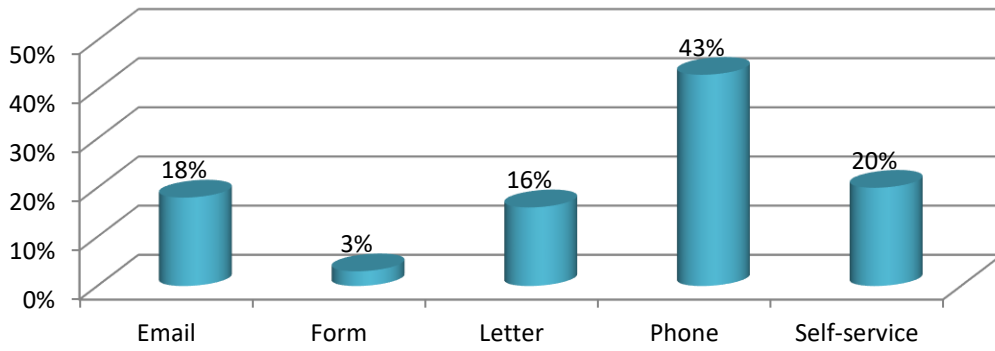
### 3.3 Customer Profiles

Collecting ‘customer profile’ information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to the customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the sensitive nature of the issues raised did not lend themselves to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:



## Complaints by channel



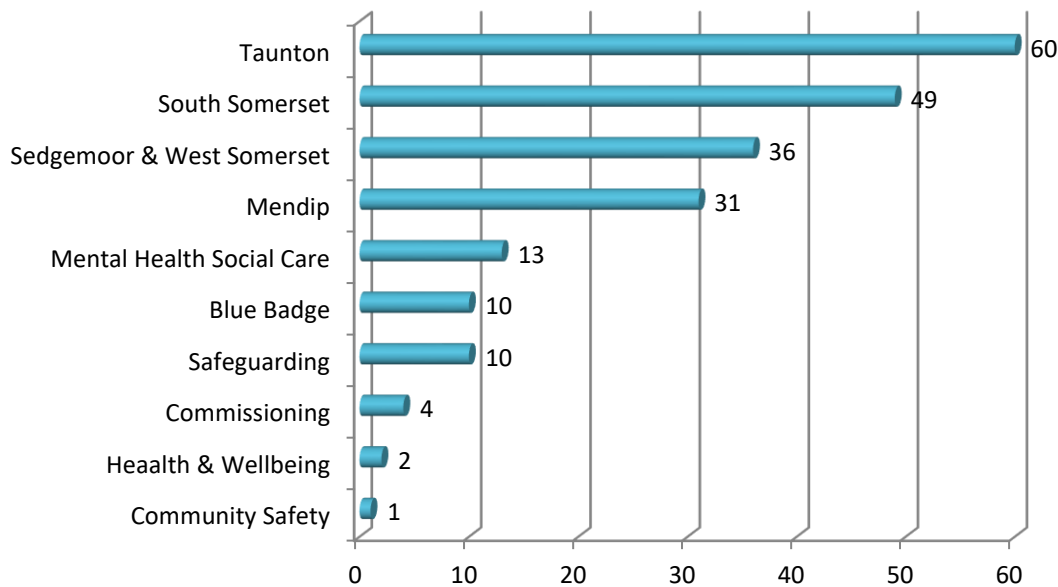
Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 – 31 Mar 2019	+/-
Phone	49%	43%	-6%
Email	14%	18%	+4%
Letter	19%	16%	-3%
Self-Service	17%	20%	+3%
Form	1%	3%	+2%

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

### 3.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across adult services of the 216 complaints received during 2018/19.

## Number of complaints



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 178 stage 1 complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
Blue Badge	8 working days
Mendip	12 working days
Sedgemoor & West Somerset	15 working days
Community Safety	17 working days
Taunton	20 working days
Safeguarding	29 working days
Mental Health Social Care	31 working days
Commissioning	33 working days
South Somerset	37 working days

### 3.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for resolved adult services complaints and their broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (incl. rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	11	6%
Amount of information given	Information	4	4%
Quality of information/advice		4	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	3	6%
Decision		8	
Quality of service	Service Quality	13	15%
Quality of 3 <sup>rd</sup> party services		13	
Health & Safety	Health & Safety	1	1%
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	27	31%
Timeliness of doing something		15	
Cancellation or withdrawal of service		11	
Other service failure cause		2	
Communication by service	Communication	19	19%
Timeliness of communication		8	
Other communication cause		7	
Staff conduct	Staff Conduct	4	12%
Assistance/help from staff		3	
Staff rudeness		3	
Staff behaviour		11	
Amount of financial support given	Financial	4	6%
Payments or disputed charges		5	
Payment not received		2	
		<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 216 complaints received about adult services in 2018/19, 23 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 6 cases to stage 2 of the complaints process and 17 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents 10% of cases received.

Of the 6 cases which have escalated to stage 2, 1 case was resolved in year, with the others still in progress. The resolved case concerned complaint regarding the communication and support provided to a customer following a hospital discharge. The customer was unhappy with the original response so escalated the complaint. However, when offered the opportunity to meet with an appropriate manager at stage 2, the customer withdrew the escalation.

Of the cases referred to the Ombudsman, 5 have been resolved in year.

#### **LGSCO case 1**

The complainant's representative complained that the SCC had not engaged with the local district council in order to endorse a change in the housing band for his clients. Following receipt of evidence that SCC had indeed done so, the Ombudsman decided not to further investigate.

#### **LGSCO case 2**

The LGSCO were contacted by an advocacy charity. The advocate complained about the Council's application of both the DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) and complaints processes in relation to a specific customer. The advocate did not supply consent from the customer and on further enquiry, the Ombudsman was not able to secure this consent and therefore closed the case.

#### **LGSCO Case 3**

The customer complained that ASC had failed to properly update its care assessment following the outcome of a previous complaint. The Ombudsman agreed that the decision regarding eligibility was not expressed with sufficient clarity and asked that this be redone, and guidance updated. These actions were subsequently implemented. £250 was paid to the customer for time and trouble.

#### **LGSCO Case 4**

The customer complained that the council wrongly assessed his mother-in-law's contribution towards her care costs. The Ombudsman found no fault in the way the Council calculated the customer's contribution to her day care but did find fault in the Council not deducting the customer's contribution to respite care and in not properly agreeing the 'top-up' with the complainant. The Ombudsman's decision was that the customer should return wrongly made payments for day care and that the Council would take no further payments for the respite care.

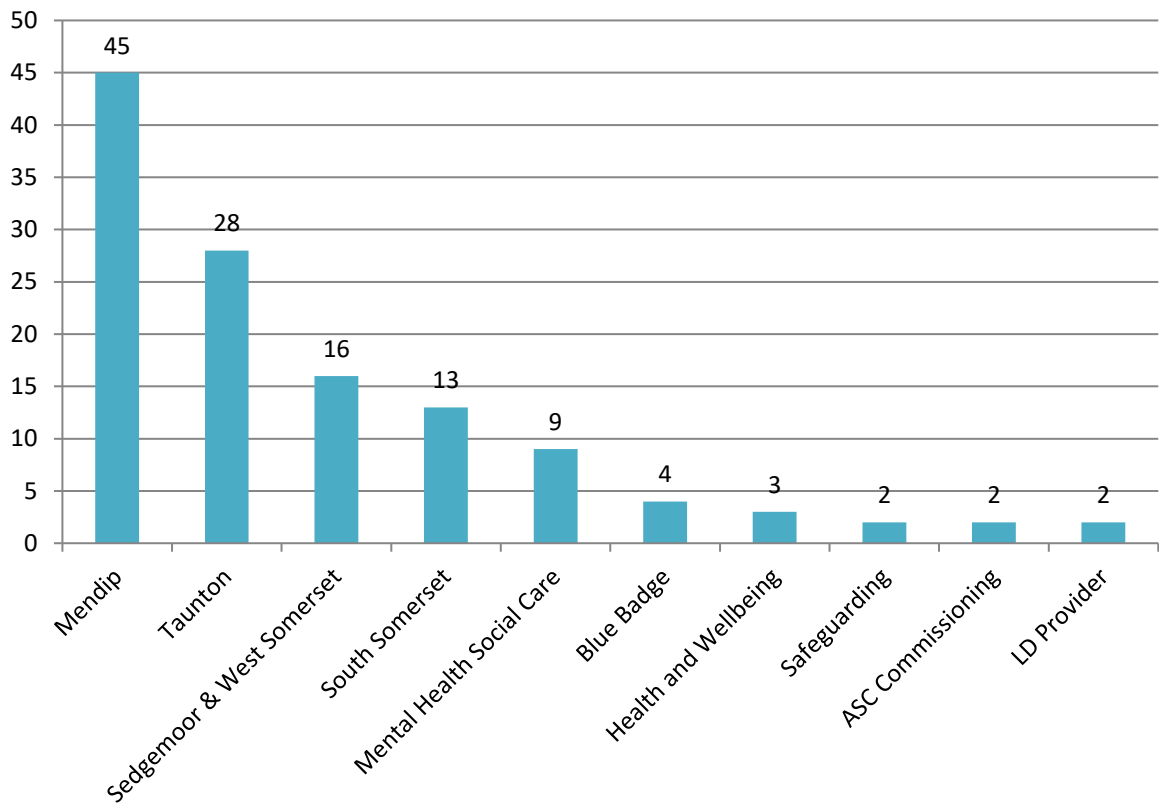
#### **LGSCO Case 5**

The customers complained that their needs had changed since their last assessment, but the evidence seen by the Council were not in terms of eligible needs. The Ombudsman did not find fault in this case, but the Council did, in any case, offer a review of needs.

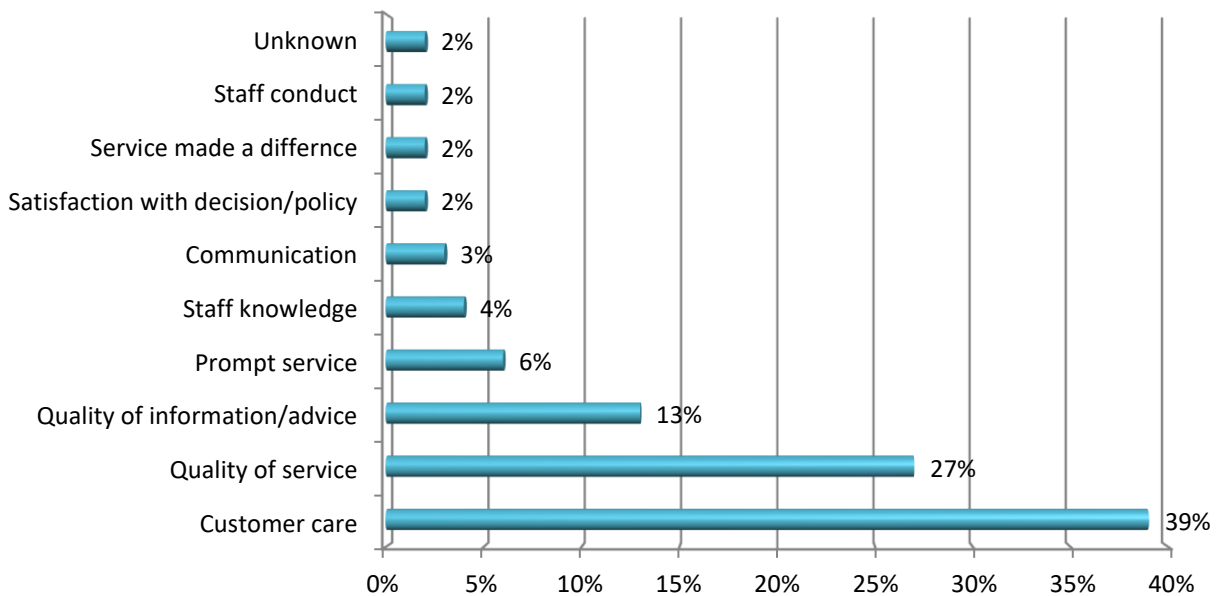
### **3.7 Compliments**

There were 124 compliments recorded for adult services in 2018/19, an increase of 49% on the previous year. The charts below shows the service split for 2018/19 compliments.

## Compliments by service



## Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:



### 3.8 Other Feedback

6 general comments about adult services were received during the year and were routed to appropriate managers.

24 enquiries relating to adult services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for member enquiries regarding adult services in 2018/19 was 32 working days.

## 4. Detailed Data - Economic & Community Infrastructure

### 4.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of ECI feedback received across the last 3 years.

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
ECI Complaints	196	275	349
ECI Compliments	261	273	188
ECI Comments	51	60	104
ECI Member Enquiries	2	113	82
<b>Total Adults Feedback</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>723</b>

### 4.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 349 complaints about ECI services were received in 2018/19. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	320	92%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	18	5%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	3	1%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	0	0%
LGO – resolved in year	4	1%
LGO – Still open at end of year	4	1%
	<b>349</b>	

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for ECI services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019
15 working days	16 working days	13 working days

For the 18 stage 1 ECI complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31<sup>st</sup> March is 40. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	3



10 – 20	4
21 – 30	2
31 – 40	4
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	0
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	0
91 – 100	1
> 100	1
	<b>18</b>

The table below shows the outcomes for the 320 stage 1 ECI complaints received and resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	17%	16%	24	8%	-8%
Not Upheld	33%	32%	90	28%	-4%
Partly Upheld	26%	8%	42	13%	+5%
Resolved Upon Receipt	19%	19%	25	8%	-11%
Withdrawn/Rejected	5%	25%	139	43%	+18%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100%</b>	

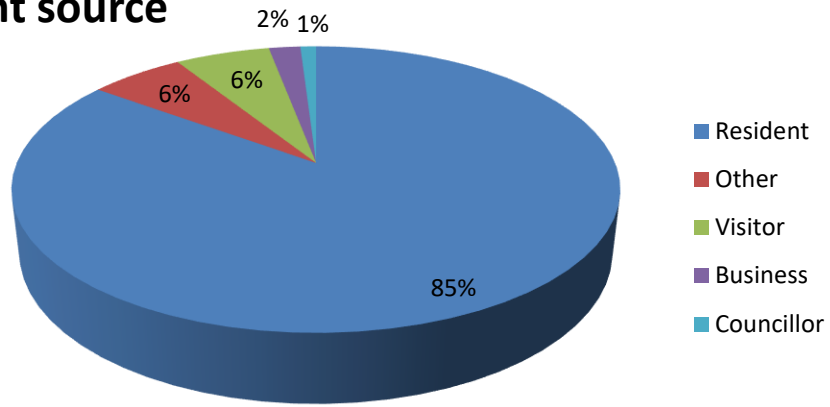
ECI often have a large number of rejected/withdrawn complaints and this is largely due to the fact that customers often voice a request for service as a complaint. For example, a customer might say “I want to complaint about a pot hole in my street”. If this is the first time the defect has been reported, we would not progress under the complaints process but as a request for service (as the Council must be given the opportunity to put things right). This year there has been an increase which is in part due to a change in the winter gritting routes (with both first-time service requests and lobbying against the decision sometimes being incorrectly logged as complaints).

### 4.3 Customer Profiles

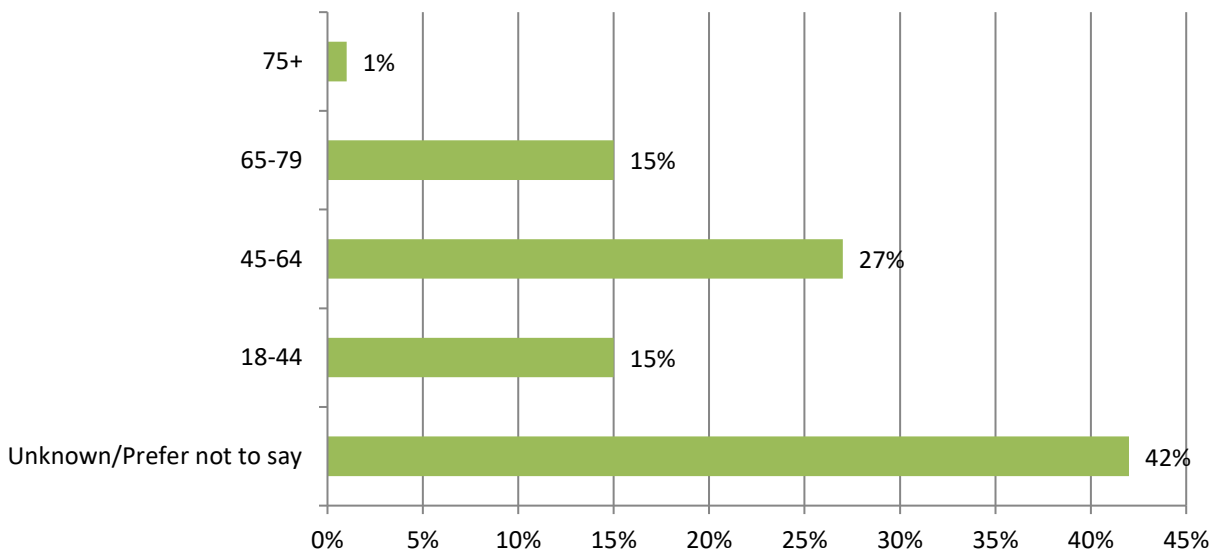
Collecting ‘customer profile’ information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the nature of the issues or interaction did not lend itself to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:

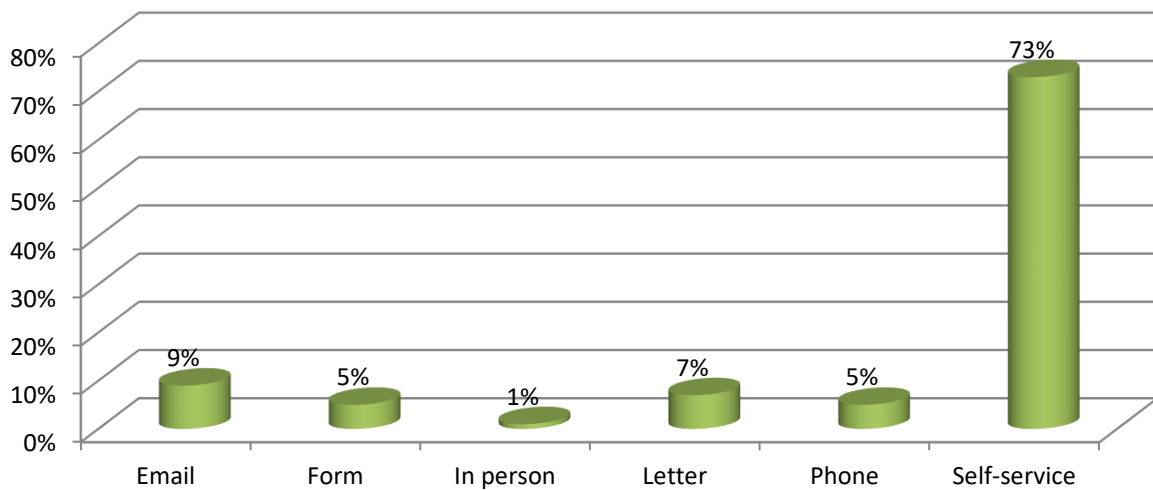
### Complaint source



### Age of complainant



### Complaints by channel



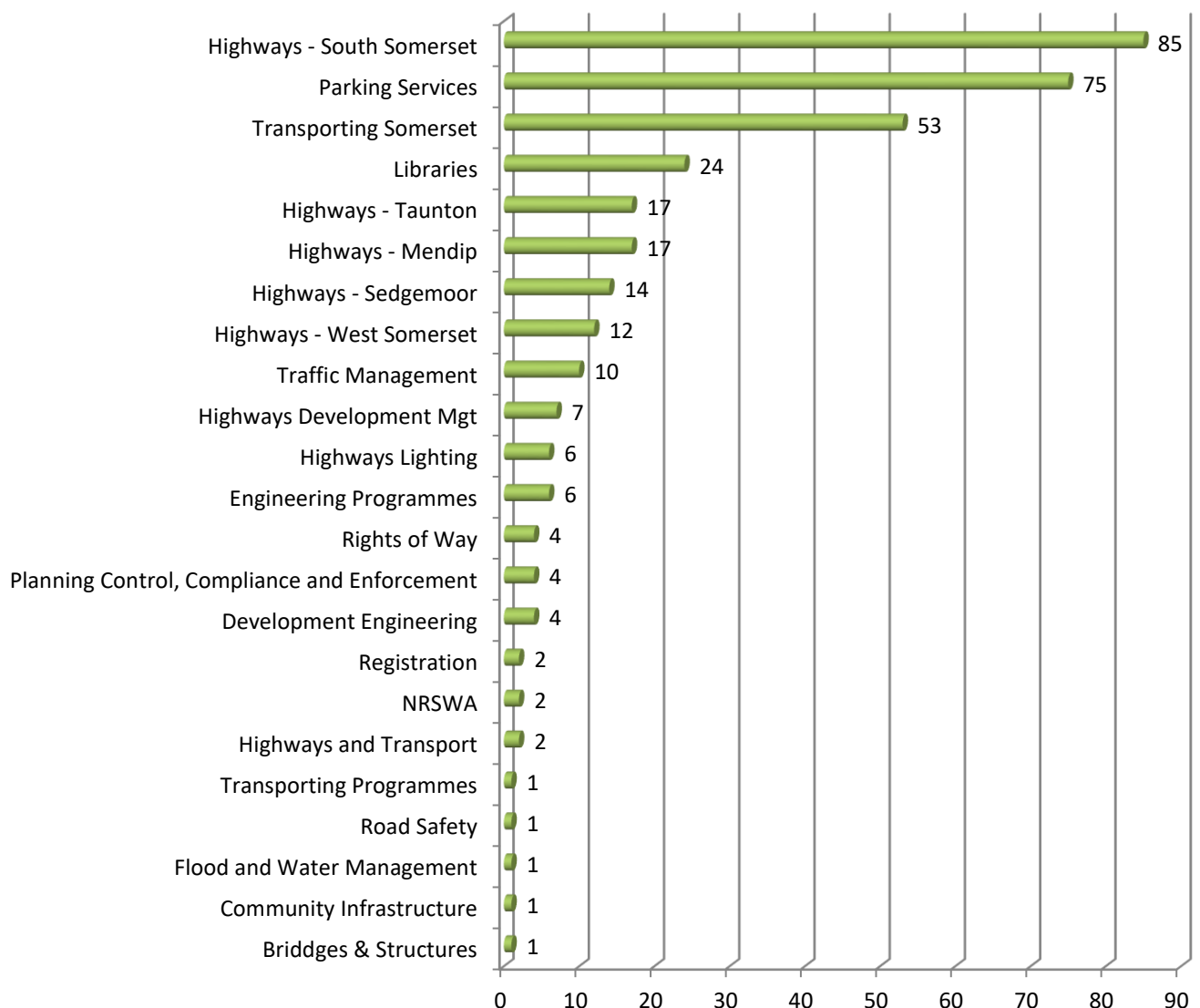
Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 – 31 Mar 2019	+/-
Phone	18%	5%	-13%
Email	15%	9%	-6%
Letter	6%	7%	+1%
Self-Service	51%	73%	+22%
Form	9%	5%	-4%
In Person	1%	1%	Neu

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

#### 4.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across all ECI services of the 349 complaints received during 2018/19.

### Number of complaints



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 320 ECI complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
Road Safety	2 working days
Highways Lighting	5 working days
Development Engineering	5 working days
Bridges and Structures	6 working days
Parking Services	8 working days
Highways – South Somerset	9 working days
Traffic Management	9 working days
Highways – Taunton	10 working days
Highways and Transport	10 working days
Highways – Sedgemoor	11 working days
Community Infrastructure	12 working days
Transporting Somerset	14 working days
Engineering Programmes	15 working days
Highways - Mendip	18 working days
Libraries	18 working days
Registration	20 working days
NRSWA	22 working days
Highways – West Somerset	25 working days
Rights of Way	26 working days
Planning Control, Compliance & Enforcement	34 working days
Transporting Programmes	52 working days
Highways Development Management	60 working days

#### 4.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for all 320 resolved stage 1 complaints about ECI services and their broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (incl. rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	141	44%
Amount of information given	Information	3	1%
Quality of information/advice		1	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	29	16%
Legal or regulatory cause		4	
Implementation of policy and procedures		10	
Decision		7	
Quality of service	Service Quality	26	10%
Quality of 3 <sup>rd</sup> party services		7	
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	17	11%
Timeliness of doing something		2	
Cancellation or withdrawal of service		9	
Other service failure cause		6	
Communication by service	Communication	4	6%
Timeliness of communication		11	
Other communication cause		5	

Assistance/help from staff	Staff Conduct	1	10%
Staff behaviour		17	
Staff rudeness		10	
Other staff conduct cause		3	
Discrimination	Discrimination	2	0.5%
Privacy and Confidentiality	Confidentiality	1	0.5%
Amount of charge	Financial	1	1%
Other payment or disputed charge cause		3	
		<b>320</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 4.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 349 complaints received about ECI services in 2018/19, 11 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 3 cases to stage 2 and 8 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents 3% of cases received.

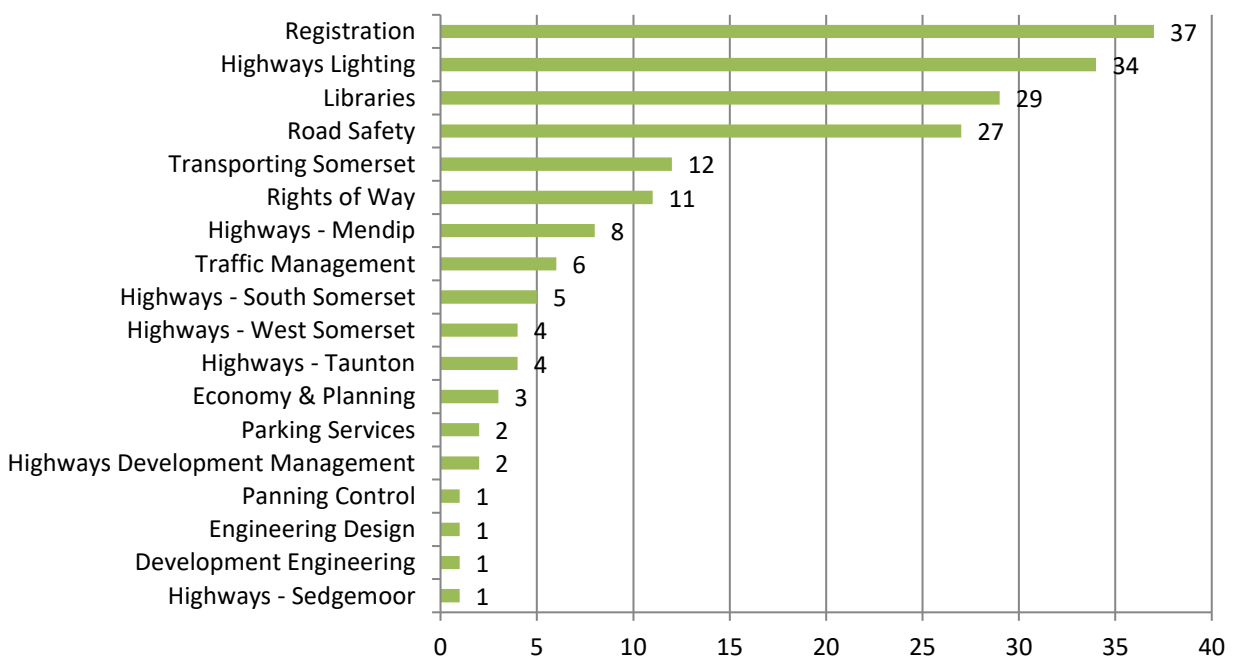
All 3 cases investigated at stage 2 of the complaints process were resolved in year and not upheld. Two cases related to parking services and the other to Transporting Somerset.

Of the 8 cases referred to the LGSCO, 4 have been resolved in year and 4 remain open at the close. Of the 4 cases that have been resolved, the LGSCO decided not to investigate after their initial enquiries for 3 and did not uphold the 4<sup>th</sup>.

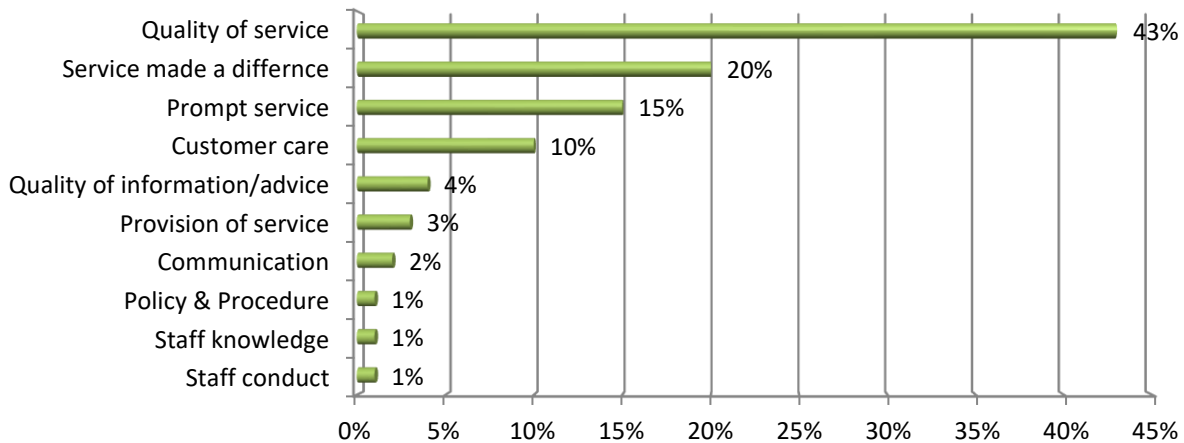
#### 4.7 Compliments

ECI received 188 compliments in 2018/19. The chart below shows the service split.

### Compliments by service



## Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:

I joined a book club which meets within the library upon retiring. At that time, I felt I might become somewhat isolated as my husband passed away very shortly thereafter. The book club was a wonderful addition to my life keeping me involved socially and intellectually with new friends and ideas.

I must commend X, she was kind and helpful and made the whole process of registering the death much more bearable.

Thank you for successfully shielding the street light...it has made a massive difference

I am very glad to see that the Council is moving ahead with the TRO for St James St, Taunton, to prohibit motor vehicles and allow cycling. It is a long overdue and badly needed move towards a more progressive approach to transport and the urban environment.

Yesterday I was taken from Yeovil to Bournemouth Hospital...he was courteous, polite and very cheerful...his driving was excellent, and he kept me informed of our progress at all times. I suffered no anxiety about being late or abandoned and he made sure I was clear and happy about all the arrangements.

My son attended the bikeability held at Crewkerne last week. He keeps coming out with different bits that he learnt on the course ...I went out on the bikes last night around our town and was very impressed by his riding ...I feel he is more confident and knows how to ride correctly.

## 4.8 Other Feedback

104 general comments about ECI services were received during the year. The comments are quite wide ranging and include observations about the convenience of bus specific bus routes, suggestions for minor improvements to facilities at registrar offices, comments on the font and readability of text on parking tickets and views on the Drag Queen event held at the Taunton Library. All comments are assigned to the appropriate service manager for consideration.

82 enquiries relating to ECI services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for received and resolved member enquiries regarding ECI services in 2018/19 was 25 working days.

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