



**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -  
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count  
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013**



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

This report details the customer feedback received by Bromsgrove District Council during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

It also provides information about the customer demand received through the customer service team and payment channels.

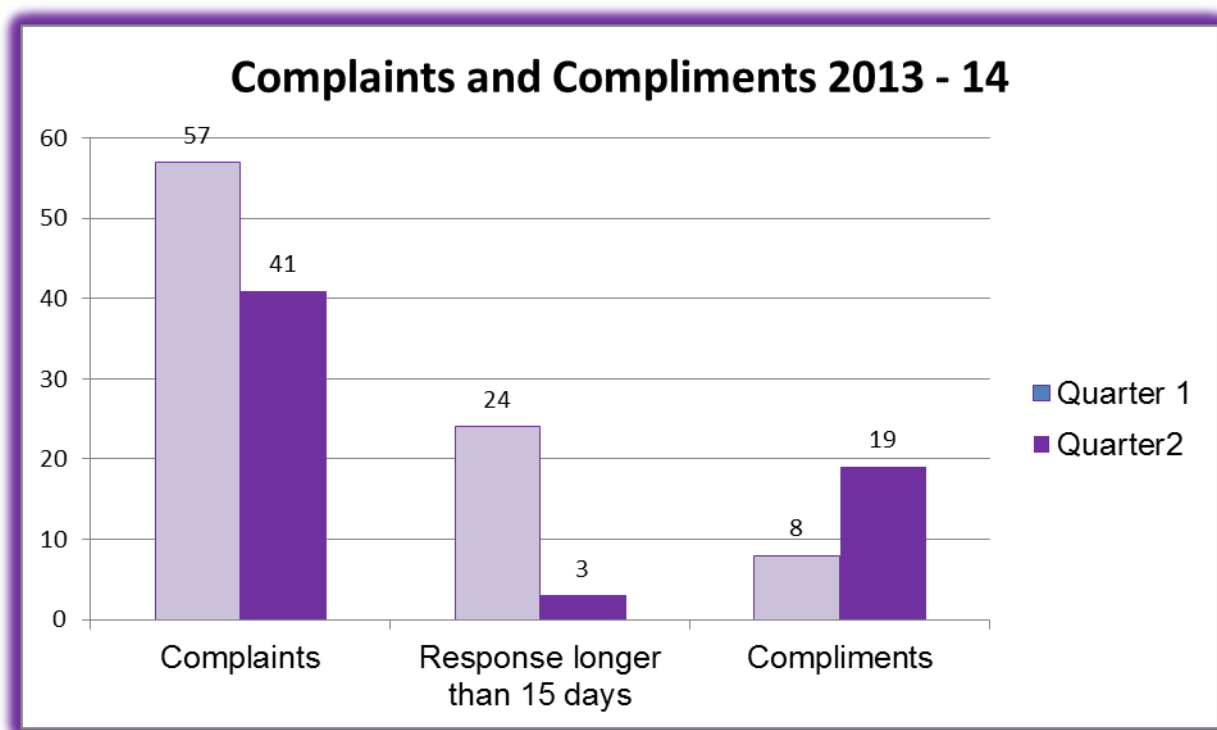
## 2. Customer Feedback Analysis

**41** complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, or failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome. Details of all complaints received can be found at the end of this report in Appendix A.

**38** complaints (92%) were answered in 15 working days or less and **3** complaints took longer than 15 working days to respond to.

We also received **19** compliments.

This chart shows number of complaints and compliments for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2; we will continue to chart this as a comparison through the year.



Complaint figures have significantly reduced since last quarter when we received **57** across the Council. As per last quarter, the majority of the complaints for this quarter have been triggered by the Route Optimisation project for Refuse and Recycling and issues with the telephony service within the Revenues team – these are now reducing as the issues are being resolved.

Refuse crews continue to be very flexible during this period of change going the extra mile to help customers who have been confused by the new collection arrangements. Their enthusiasm and dedication seems to have been appreciated as during the month of September there were no complaints about the service.

The common themes in the complaints received this quarter were:

- Missed bins.
- Staff being rude.
- Not doing what we promised.
- Aggressive driving of Council vehicles.
- Lack of response to some customers' calls and queries.
- Problems getting through on the telephone.
- Customers receiving over bearing demanding letters.
- Automated systems not working consistently.
- Unacceptable delays in taking action.
- Not keeping customers informed of changes/cancellations of service.

### Number of complaints by service (detailed)

The following table provides a more detailed breakdown of complaints by service



### “You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?

Some of the changes made as a result of complaints include:-

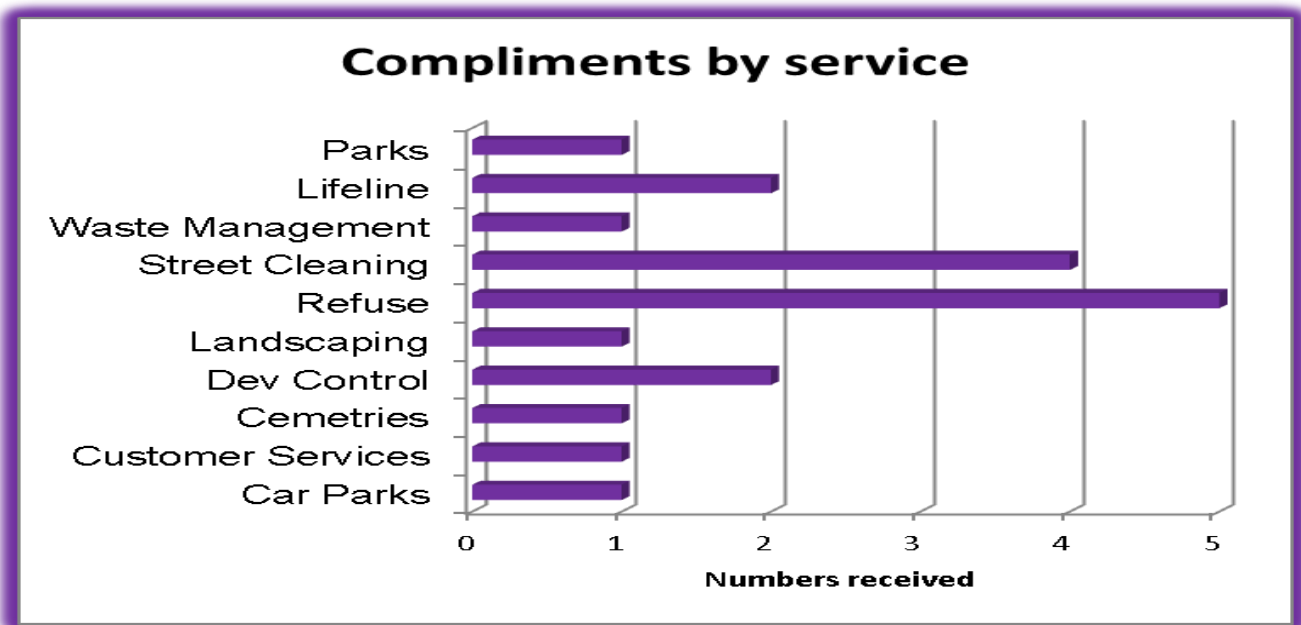
- New process to ensure that grass is checked for litter before being mown.
- Delivered training regarding sending multiple email communications to the Development Control Team and highlighted the importance of this issue to all staff.
- Developing ways of improving communication within the Benefits Team.

### Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services or to Stage 2



## Happy Customers!

From the 19 compliments received we can see that customers appreciate the range of services the Council provides, especially when we deal with their requests in a timely and professional manner.



Here are some of the compliments we have received for information.

Team	Compliment Detail
Lifeline	Customer wished to thank us so much for our help and was pleased with the service she received when she fell.
Customer Services	The customer was really grateful and impressed with the lengths Nicki and Beth went to help her with her Blue badge application.
Refuse	Customer says she is over the moon with the level of service provided and politeness of operatives.
Street Cleaning	Compliment from customer for Angela Akers - regarding the compassion that she showed when dealing with a dead cat.
Street Cleaning	Customer wished to compliment the service he has received for some removal of hedge cuttings. He said he was also impressed with the cost of the removal of the hedge cuttings and has booked the council again asking for a quote and the removal of more hedge cutting as he said it would have cost a lot more if he had hired a skip.
Development Control	We write to express our appreciation for the assistance we received when we visited the Council Planning Surgery office this morning. The receptionist was most welcoming and our time with David Kelly, Planning Officer was really helpful. We found the availability of a Planning Surgery to be a most valuable service and hopefully will be appreciated as much by the public in Bromsgrove as it was by ourselves

### 3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There were no complaints referred from the Ombudsman this quarter.

### 4. Customer Service Centre Information

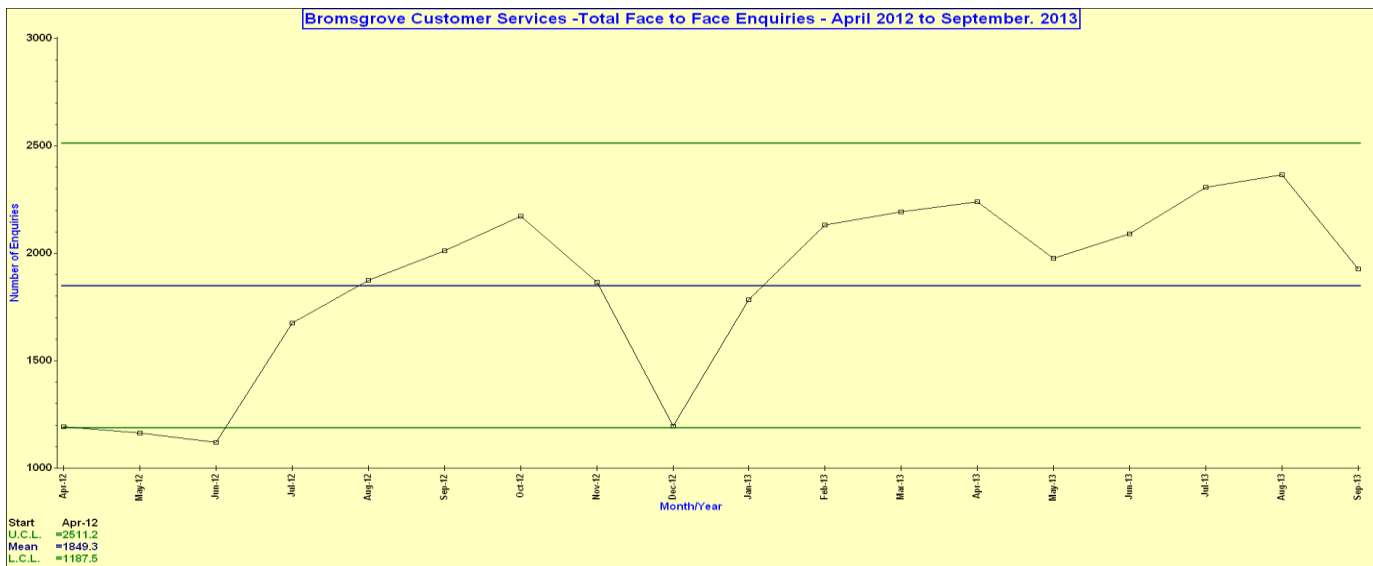
This section provides some statistical information in respect of the amount of customer demand received via the telephone, face to face and through our payment channels.

The operational purpose of the Customer Services team is **'Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem'**. Most customer demand is now passed to expert teams and the customer service staff act as a filter to ensure that the customer gets to see or speak to the right expert. We use this information to help us understand the demand on all Council services.

The following tables and charts show the numbers of customer transactions recorded and trends over time.

#### Face to face demand at the Customer Service Centre

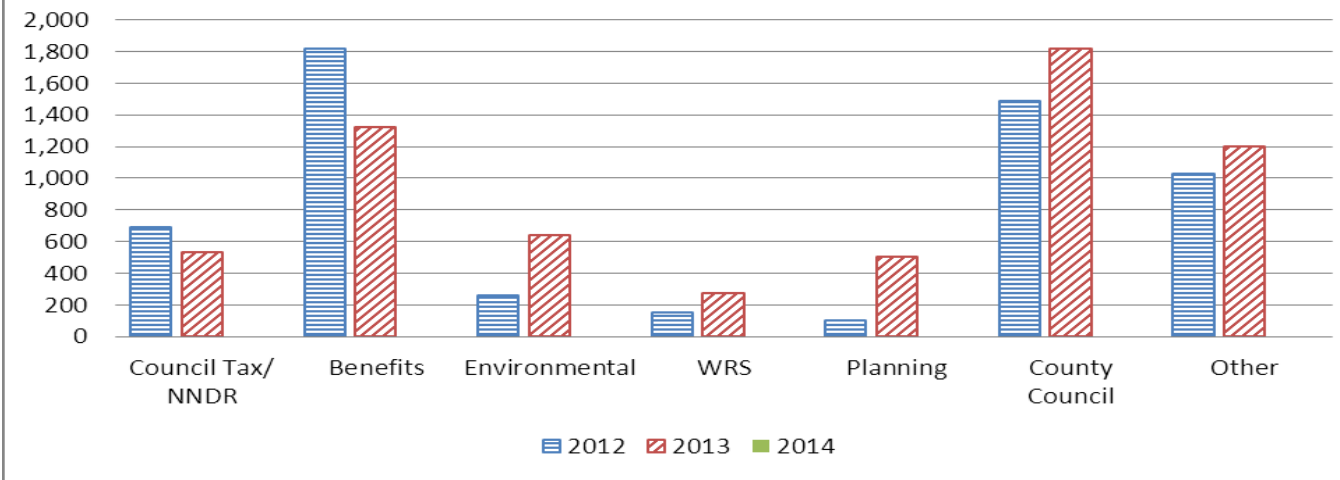
The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre on a month by month basis since April 2012 to September 2013. It informs of patterns that occur and the data is then used to plan for busy times and to check the reasons for the peak, this may identify waste in systems which can then be addressed.



The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face customer enquiries received during the 2nd quarter of 2013/14, compared with the same period last year.

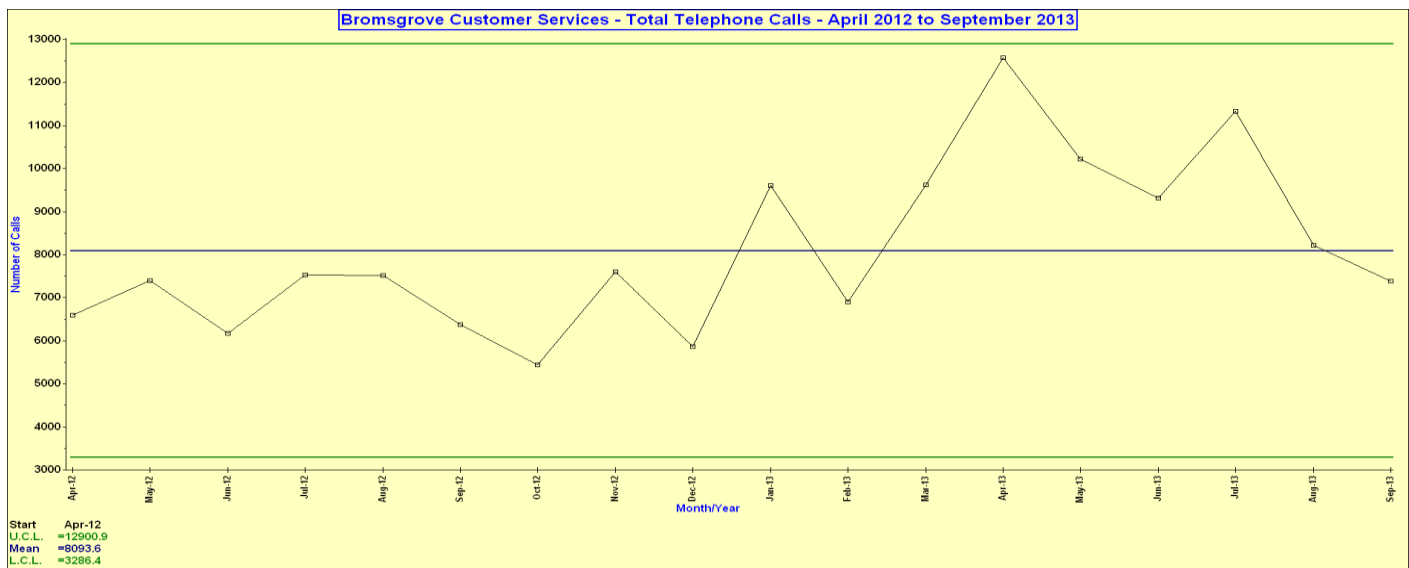
The chart shows that compared with the same period in 2012 the number of Council Tax and Benefits enquiries has reduced; however as we changed how we record this data in July 2012, therefore the data for Qtr 2 12/13 may not be a direct comparison.

## Enquiries Breakdown - Total



### Telephone demand received

The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2012 until the end of September 2013.

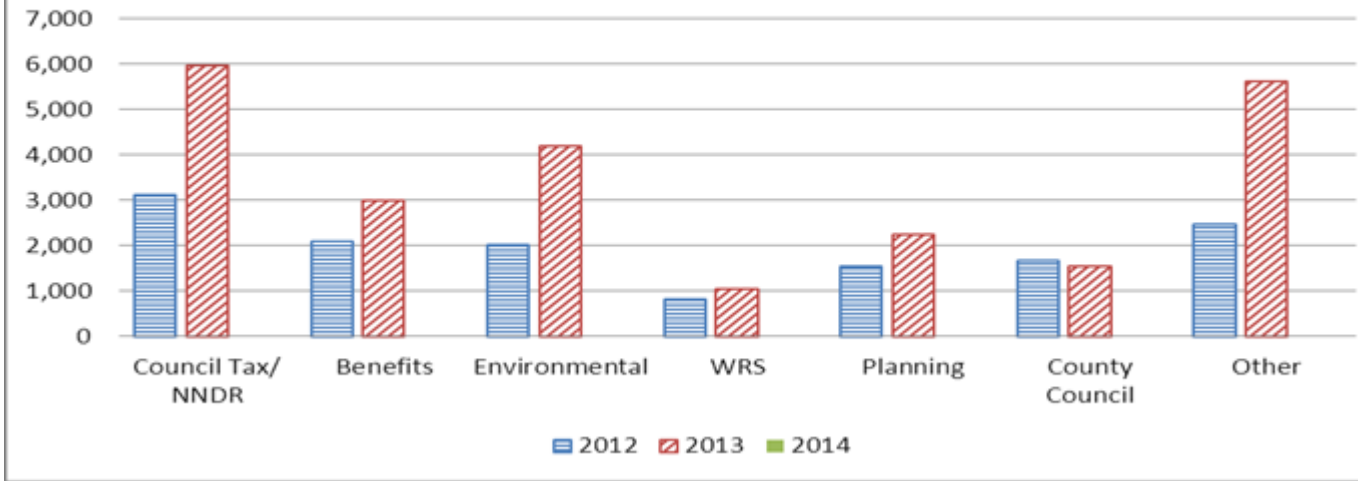


The following chart shows the breakdown of calls received via the switchboard and customer contact centre phone lines by department during the quarter. (Calls made to direct dial lines are not recorded and therefore not included.)

The volume of Environmental calls shows the impact which Route Optimisation had on number of customers calling us for clarification to the scheme during July 2013.

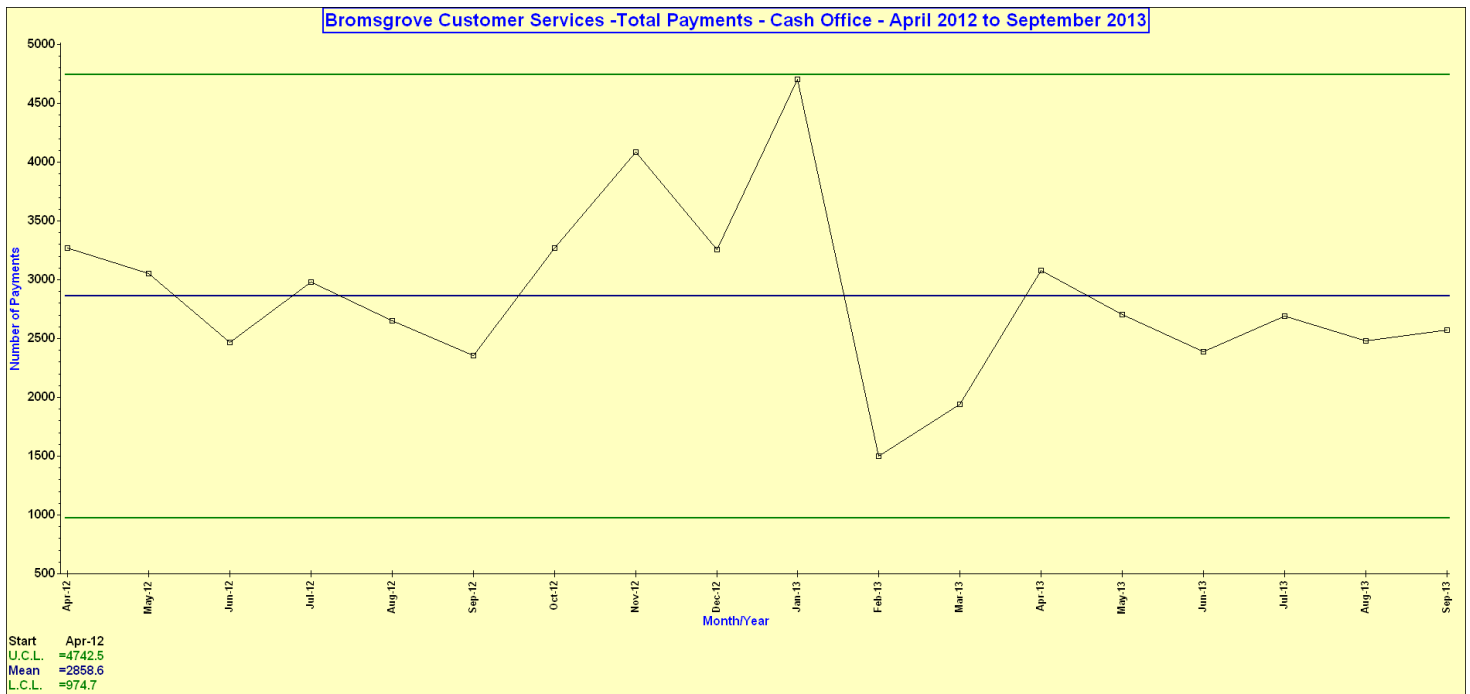
There have been a number of changes to how Benefits and Council Tax calls are dealt since Quarter 1 2012/2013, so the data for Quarter 2 in 2012/13 and Quarter 2 2013/2014 is not comparable.

## Telephone Calls Breakdown - Total



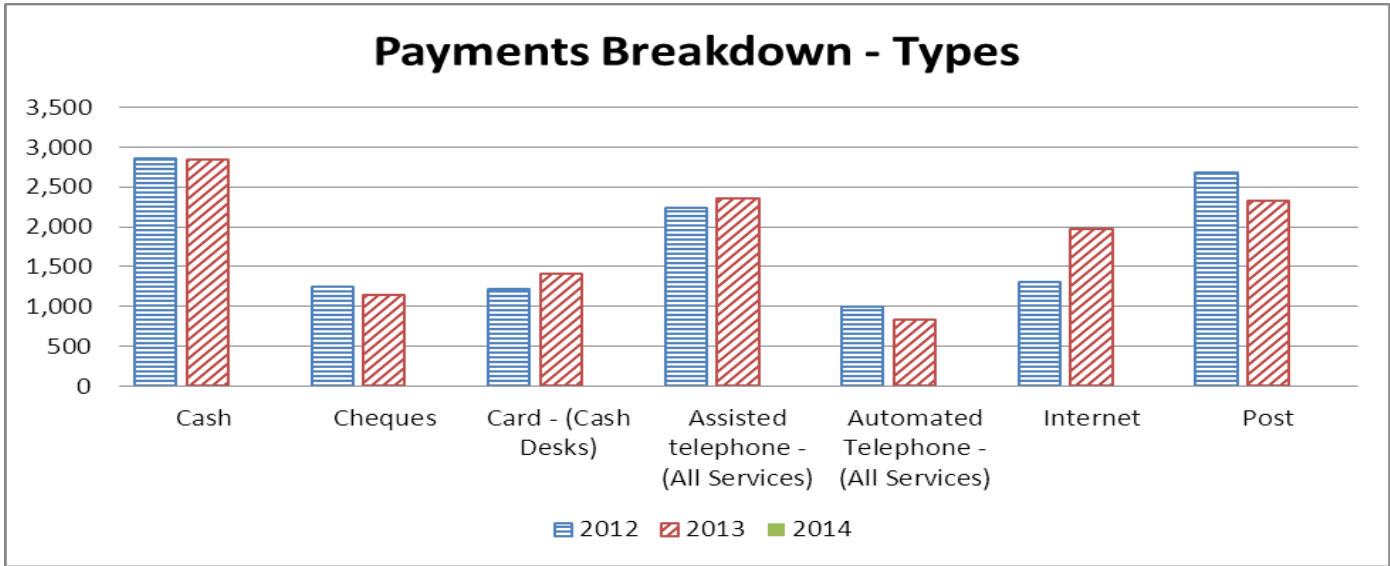
## Payments

The following chart shows a month by month comparison of payments received by the cash office and customer services staff during the period April 2012 – September 2013. The chart shows some consistency of payments compared with 2012.





The chart below shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels. Cash payments remain the same, card payments, telephone and internet payments all show a small increase. Postal payments are showing a small reduction compared with the same period in 2012.



Lynn Jones  
Customer Services Manager  
September 2013

## Appendix A

### Details of complaints received and outcomes

Complaint details	Days taken to respond	Action taken	Outcome update from Head of Service
<b>Customer Services</b>			
Customer unhappy that he had problems using the automated payment line and when he rang the Centre for help the advisor was unprofessional and rude.	3 days	Apology given.	Team members have since received further customer care training.
<b>Legal Services</b>			
3 Formal complaints regarding Norton Farm Application Planning Committee procedure.	9 days 14 days 1 day	Complaint not upheld- letter sent explaining the procedure.	Customers informed that they will be kept informed of the ongoing situation.
<b>Car Parking</b>			
Customer unhappy about parking changes in Rubery, enforcing that vehicles can only be parked for a certain amount of time. Is concerned about the tenants that live above the shops and their ability to park without the risk of receiving a parking ticket every day.	2 days	The customer wants the council to provide residential parking for the flats in New Road Rubery as we are now enforcing the limited waiting times. Parking spaces and RTO's are a County responsibility. Explained in response letter.	No further action.
Customer unhappy about a parking fine and that she couldn't challenge it as the online link was not working.	9 days	Apology given about the link not working. Parking Fine upheld as it was issued correctly	No further action
<b>Landscaping</b>			
Customer unhappy that plant containers are empty and that there is litter in the area.	15 days	Arrangement to plant containers had lapsed- this was rearranged and litter cleared. Apology given to customer.	No further action
Customer unhappy that when walking her dog it picked up pieces of a shredded beer can that was left behind by the mower	15 days	Apology given and new process put in place to ensure grass is cleaned of litter before being mown.	All areas to be mown will be checked for litter beforehand.
<b>Refuse</b>			
Customer is autistic and continually having problems getting his refuse in a black bag collected.	15 days	This customer has a particular problem unique to his personal situation so we have decided to treat it	No further action

		as a special case and provide a weekly sack collection, thus avoiding any further stress to the customer.	
Customer unhappy about the waste crew holding up the traffic and their attitude when challenged.	3 days	Discussed with customer that we are providing a service that sometimes can upset other road users. Resident now appreciates that we are carrying out our job to the best of our ability	No further action
Customer unhappy that bin was missed as they have a large family.	7 days	After investigation it was found that the customer's three bins were not out at time of collection. However they were collected on the next working day.	No further action
Customer unhappy that her bin went missing 8 weeks ago and it hasn't been replaced yet.	13 days	Error in process meant that the request wasn't put on the snagging list. The bin has now been replaced and apology given.	Process being refined.
Customer unhappy that bin has been continually missed.	13 days	Apology given and collection to be monitored.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy that bin has been missed.	15 days	It was found that the wrong type of bin had been delivered to customer – this has been rectified and apology given.	No further action
Customer very angry because the wheelie bins had been left outside his property all over the pavement. This is causing an obstruction for people walking along the road, and this included mothers with pushchairs and small children.	11 days	Apology given and crews will be making sure they place the bins back in a more sensitive position. This will resolve some of the problem but may not address the issues of residents themselves blocking the footpath when they themselves present the wheelie bins first thing in the morning.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy with the way a member of the refuse crew spoke to her and questioned why she had two large grey bins.	12 days	Apology given for the way she was spoken to and the approach the operative took with her regarding the additional bin. The bin was granted to accommodate medical waste which is not in question.	Operative has since made a personal apology to the customer and performance will be monitored.

Customer unhappy with the way a refuse wagon was being driven which nearly caused him to collide with another vehicle.	11 days	Driver will be re-assessed by our driving instructor.	Staff member currently on long term sickness absence so it will be discussed with him on his return to work.
Customer unhappy that since the routes have been changed she had had problems with her bin collections and has had to ring us several times to sort it out.	1 day	Apology given. Further information delivered to customer and other residents. Collection will be monitored.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy that bins have been missed a couple of times and that they still have recycling boxes and not bins.	1 day	Apology given, new bin delivered and collections will be monitored.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy that her bins have been missed several times.	8 days	On investigation it was found that part of the road was being missed. Apology given, collection sorted and monitoring ongoing.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy that her bins have been missed several times.	12 days	Changes to the bin rounds have caused this problem. We have now put a system in place to stop this happening again. Apology given.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy that his brown bin hasn't been collected after several requests.	12 days	Apology given and collection sorted. A new service to this road provided as part of the changes to the Waste Service. Unfortunately it has taken the collection crews a couple of occasions to remember to look for brown bins in this area.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
Customer unhappy about a missed bin collection.	10 days	Missed collection of recycling bins on one occasion. Apology given. This resident hasn't had any previous problems with the bin service.	No further action
Customer unhappy with the standard and aggressive manner of driving by a refuse operative.	1 day	Driver has been identified and taken to task about poor driving of a council vehicle. He will be assessed and monitored.	On going assessment.
Customer unhappy about missed brown bin collections	9 days	Apology given and collection to be monitored.	On going monitoring of new collection routes
<b>Development Control</b>			
Complaint regarding the planning section on the BDC	1 day	Customer contacted by Ruth Bamford to suggest	No further action

website not being updated in relation to community contributions for S106 monies.		that he contacts the Ombudsman if he is still not happy as she responded to his complaint 2 months ago and cannot assist him any further.	
Customer not happy as planning application was refused.	1 day	Process explained and advised of the appeal process to the Planning Inspectorate	No further action
2 complaints from customers- they were very annoyed that their e mail addresses were sent out to other people during a consultation process.	3 days	Apology given and taken steps to ensure all Council employees have been reminded to be constantly aware of the risks associated with multiple email communications	Issued an internal communication to all employees of the need to prevent disclosure of email addresses to multiple recipients We will be highlighting the issue in scheduled data protection training sessions. Delivered training to the Development Control team.
Customer unhappy that planning officer has not contacted him during the planning process and that it had missed the deadline.	24 days	Apologised and explained that there were delays due to the volume of applications.	No further action
Customer unhappy that he hasn't heard anything after submitting a request for pre application advice several weeks ago.	1	Apology given and advice forwarded	No further action
Customer unhappy that her planning application is taking longer than expected	8	Apology given	No further action
<b>Benefits</b>			
Customer unhappy that he had to leave a voicemail about his benefits claim after trying to get through several times and he hasn't heard anything.	15 days	Apology given and advice given about claim.	
Customer came in to change address for benefits - has now had to come in 5 times to sort things out. Has cost him £30 in bus fares which he cannot afford on his low income. Feels it should have been a lot more straightforward to do something so simple.	24	Apology given as we did fail to communicate properly with this customer	
<b>Revenues</b>			
Customer has received a second reminder notice for	1 day	Apology given and reminder removed	

non payment of council tax and he feels its too threatening.			
Customer unhappy that when she rang the Automated telephone service to pay her Council Tax bill it put her through to Redditch Council with a message which said they were closed.	15	Tried to ring customer several times but no answer. Letter sent to try and find out what number she was using as there isn't a RBC number on the Council Tax bill. Customer hasn't responded.	
Customer has had a council tax reminder notice and is very upset at the wording on it. He feels it is a bullying letter. He always pays his council tax on time and it should be obvious that it is an oversight this time.	6 days	Apology given	
Tried to call council tax and call was put through by switchboard to council tax. Message received was 'mail box is full' and then customer was cut off. Customer then had to redial to switchboard.	15	Apology given	
Customer telephoned several times to speak to Revenues regarding her Council Tax. She was disappointed that her calls were not answered and that there was no provision to leave a message.	13 days	Apology given	
Customer put through from switchboard to Council tax - no message could be left - line just went dead - rang back again still no answer the line went dead again.	1 day	Apology given	