

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

## Statistics Tables – Explanatory Notes and Commentary

Attached are summary details of the enquiries and complaints about your Council that the SPSO has received and determined.

The first document attached shows (in Table 1) details of total contacts (by complaint subject) received for your Council for 2006-07 and 2007-08, along with the total of local authority complaints for 2007-08. Table 2 shows the outcomes of complaints about your Council determined by the SPSO in 2007-08.

Please note that, as the notes accompanying the tables explain, we changed our incoming logging procedures in April 2007, which has implications for comparing 2007-08 complaints data with previous years. The total numbers of contacts (enquiries plus complaints) received for each year are not affected and are therefore directly comparable. However, the figures shown as 'complaints only' in Table 1 are recorded on a different basis in each year and are, therefore, not directly comparable. Similarly, the change to our logging procedure has affected comparison of cases determined between 2006-07 and 2007-08 in Table 2.

The second document attached is a visual representation of the information from the right side of Table 1. You will see that in 2007-08 your Council was above the national average in terms of complaints about legal and administrative issues and below the average for complaints about housing.

### Prematurity rates

A graph is also enclosed showing for each Council the percentage of complaints that we identified as premature, and the national average for all Councils. Your Council is number 28 on that graph. We consider a complaint to be premature when it reaches us before the complainant has been through the full complaints process of the organisation concerned. Please note that the graph does not reflect the number of premature complaints that we received about your Council, but shows how your Council, proportionally, compares against the average for all Scottish local authorities. The actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 18, representing 34% of the total determined, and proportionally a significant reduction on the previous year.

Please note that no adjustments have been made in the graph to estimate the impact of housing stock transfer. It is evident, however, that there is a tendency for authorities that retain housing stock to fall higher within the prematurity graph than those that have undertaken stock transfer – this is to be expected given that housing complaints are usually the largest category of complaint and that there is a disproportionately high incidence of prematurity with housing complaints.

The SPSO considers it important that organisations have the chance to resolve complaints through their own procedures and we are actively working with service providers with the aim of reducing the number of complaints that reach us prematurely. You will be aware that our Valuing Complaints website (<http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/>) contains information designed to assist with such issues, and that our Outreach Team ([ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk)) are pleased to answer enquiries about how we can support your Council.

### **Investigated Complaints and Recommendations**

We investigated six complaints about your Council in 2007-08, of which we partially upheld four and did not uphold two. We have attached a summary sheet showing these complaints, and summarising any recommendations made. As you are no doubt aware, where she thinks it appropriate, the Ombudsman may make recommendations even where a complaint is not upheld, if she believes that there are lessons that may be learned. You will also be aware that SPSO Complaints Investigators will be following up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations.

In 2007-08, three of the recommendations made related to communications or complaints handling.

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We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics provided, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or by emailing [awhite@spsso.org.uk](mailto:awhite@spsso.org.uk). Fuller statistical reports are available on the SPSO website at: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

## Perth and Kinross Council

Table 1

Received by Subject	2006/7		2007/8		complaints as % of total	All Local Authority		complaints as % of total
	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	Total Contacts	Complaints Only		Complaints		
Building Control	0	0	1	1	2%	20	2%	
Consumer protection	0	0	0	0	0%	3	0%	
Economic development	0	0	1	1	2%	4	0%	
Education	1	0	3	3	6%	67	5%	
Env Health & Cleansing	2	0	3	3	6%	69	5%	
Finance	3	0	4	3	6%	123	9%	
Fire & police boards	0	0	0	0	0%	1	0%	
Housing	13	8	9	7	15%	394	30%	
Land & Property	1	0	0	0	0%	31	2%	
Legal & admin	2	1	6	6	13%	66	5%	
National Park Authorities	0	0	0	0	0%	2	0%	
Other	3	0	2	1	2%	6	0%	
Personnel	0	0	3	1	2%	29	2%	
Planning	27	12	15	11	23%	243	18%	
Recreation & Leisure	1	1	1	1	2%	21	2%	
Roads	1	0	4	4	9%	71	5%	
Social Work	7	2	6	4	9%	148	11%	
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	0	0	0%	11	1%	
Out of jurisdiction	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	
Subject unknown	0	0	1	1	2%	20	2%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>47</b>		<b>1,329</b>		

Note about comparing 2007-08 complaint numbers to the previous year:

Please note that we made a change to our logging procedures in April 2007 which has implications for comparing 2007-08 complaints data with previous years. Of the total number of local authority complaints received in 2007-08, we estimate that approximately 33% could previously have been classed as enquiries. This does not affect the number of total contacts (enquiries + complaints) received.

For more information please see the full explanation at <http://www.spsa.org.uk/statistics>.

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		2006/7	2007/8
Assessment	Premature	14	18
	Out of jurisdiction	3	9
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	0	4
	Withdrawn / Failed to provide information before investigation	0	3
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	2	13
Investigation	Report Issued - Not Upheld	2	2
	Report Issued - Partially Upheld	2	4
	Report Issued - Fully Upheld	2	0
	Discontinued during investigation	0	0
	Withdrawn / Failed to provide information during investigation	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>53</b>

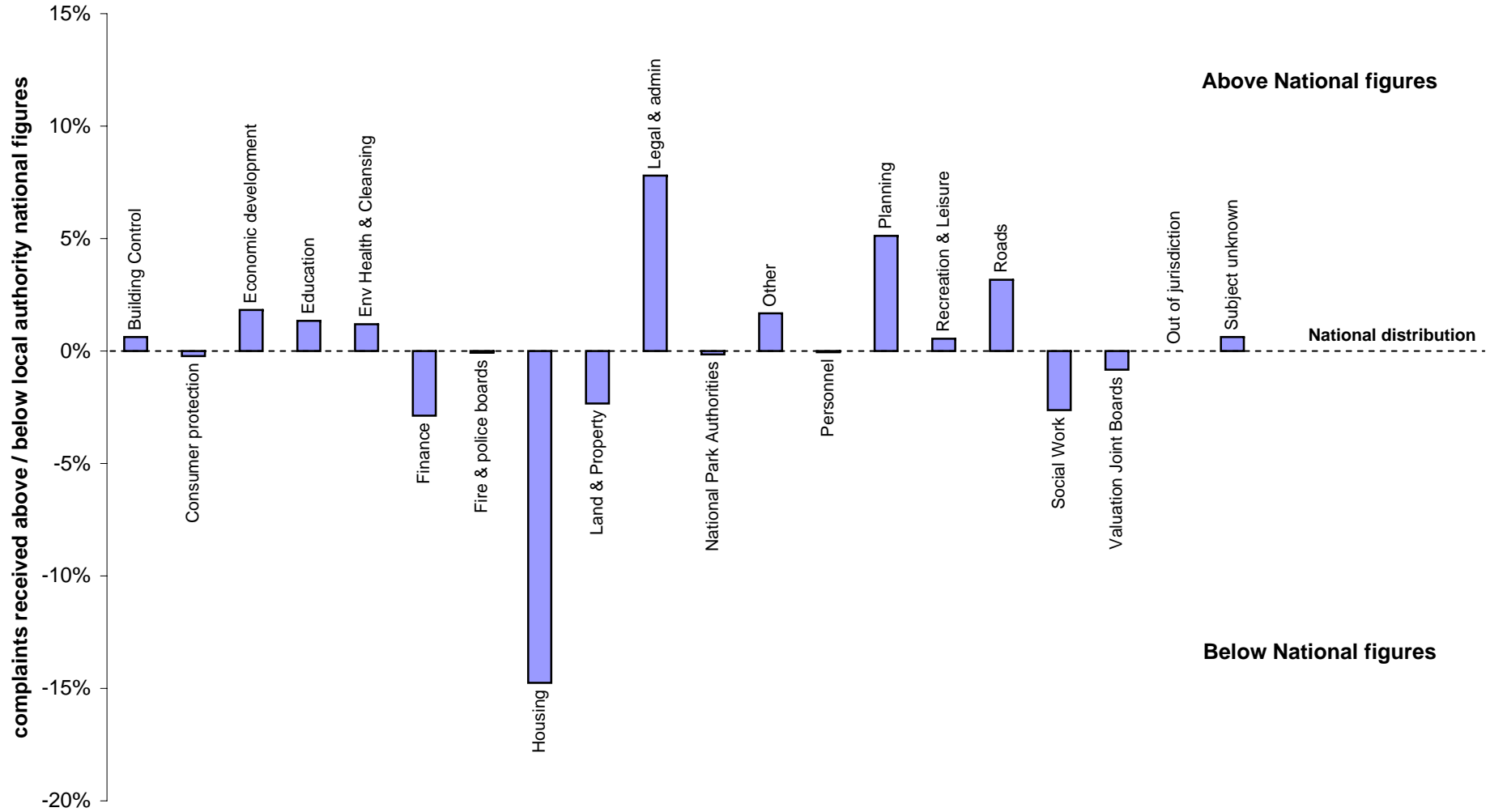
Note about comparing 2007-08 complaint numbers to the previous year:

Please note that we made a change to our logging procedures in April 2007 which has implications for comparing 2007-08 complaints data with previous years.

Of the total number of local authority complaints determined at the assessment stage in 2007-08, we estimate that approximately 39% could previously have been classed as enquiries. There has been no change to cases determined at examination or investigation stages.

For more information please see the full explanation at <http://www.spsa.org.uk/statistics>.

## Complaints received by subject in 2007/8: Perth and Kinross Council proportions compared to the distribution of all local authority complaints received



## Perth and Kinross Council

	Case Ref	Summary	Finding	Recs	Recommendation(s)
23/05/07	200600838	(a) Ms C was placed in care contrary to her wishes, and regardless of the fact that she had carers to look after her in her own home (not upheld); and (b) Council officers failed to respond to voice and email messages (not upheld).	Not upheld	NONE	The Ombudsman has no recommendations to make.
23/05/07	200402093 200500680	(a) delayed in attending to works which their surveyor considered necessary after an inspection at his home in 2003 (upheld); (b) unreasonably initiated legal proceedings (upheld); and (c) harassed and discriminated against Mr C (not upheld).	Partially upheld	YES	The Ombudsman is satisfied that the apologies already given by the Council and their offer of £800 in recognition of the time and trouble spent by Mr C in pursuing his complaints provided a suitable remedy to the matter. However, she recommends that: (i) when implementing repairs, the Council give careful consideration to the effects any disruption may have on those with health problems; and (ii) the Council reviews the channels of communication between the arrears and benefits sections of the Housing and Community Care Department. The Council have accepted the recommendations and will act on them accordingly.
24/10/07	200604086	the Council: (a) did not take effective action to prevent dog fouling on an area adjoining Mr C's home (not upheld); and (b) mishandled Mr C's formal complaint (partially upheld).	Partially upheld	YES	(i) continue to carry out appropriate surveillance of the area in question; and (ii) review their complaint handling in this instance with a view to clarifying to complainants at the outset the distinction between a request for a service and a complaint of dissatisfaction about delivery of a service. The Council have accepted the recommendations and will act on them accordingly.
21/11/07	200603238	(a) the Council failed to request that amended plans submitted by the applicant in September 2006 were the subject of further neighbour notification (not upheld); (b) although Mr C had himself submitted objections to earlier proposals on 17 July 2006, he was not personally informed that the Application would be considered by the Committee on 17 January 2007 (not upheld); and (c) the report to the Committee made reference to Mr C's letter of objection although he was not notified of the plans subsequently submitted and considered (not upheld).	Not upheld	NONE	The Ombudsman has no recommendations to make.
19/03/08	200701625	the Council failed to: (a) develop and implement an adequate strategy to support his daughter in school (not upheld); (b) substantiate their position that his daughter had made significant progress and that a high level of resources and support had been given to her (not upheld); (c) independently assess his complaints (not upheld); and (d) respond to his queries in a timely manner or provide an explanation for the delay (upheld).	Partially upheld	YES	advise her when their new complaints handling system is fully implemented The Council have accepted the recommendation and will act on it accordingly.