

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

2008-9 Statistics Tables – Explanatory Notes and Commentary

Tables: Attached are summary details of the contacts and complaints about your Council that the SPSO received and determined in 2008-09. Table 1 details total contacts (by our subject categories) received for your Council for 2007-08 and 2008-09, alongside the total of local authority complaints for these years. We recorded 46 complaints about the Council, compared to 26 in the previous year. Table 2 shows the outcomes of complaints determined by the SPSO in 2008-09.

Graphs: The first graph provides a visual representation of the information from the right side of Table 1. You'll see that in 2008-09 your Council was above the national average in terms of complaints about education and recreation & leisure. Your Council was below the average for complaints about finance, housing, planning and social work. We received more complaints for your Council about education and recreation & leisure, and none about finance, compared to the previous year.

The second graph shows for each Council the percentage of complaints that we received and determined as premature, against the national average in 2008-9 (60%). We consider a complaint to be premature when it reaches us before the complainant has been through the full complaints process of the organisation. The graph does not reflect the number of premature complaints that we received about your Council, but shows how your Council, proportionately, compares against the average for Scottish local authorities. Your Council is number 13 on the graph, just above the average. You'll see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 15 out of a total of 24 complaints determined (63% of the total for your Council). This was an increase on the previous year's figure of 10 out of 35 (29% of the total for your Council). This doesn't represent a large increase in numbers, but shows a significant increase in the *proportion* of complaints we determined to be premature. It seems likely that both this and the increase in complaints received relate to the number of complaints we have received about the Council's decision to close certain public facilities.

NB We don't adjust any of our figures to mitigate the impact of housing stock transfer. It's evident, however, that there's a tendency for authorities that retain housing stock to receive more complaints and 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's a disproportionately high incidence of prematurity with housing complaints.

Complaints and Recommendations Reported to Parliament

We reported on one complaint about your Council in 2008-09, which we partially upheld. Attached is a summary sheet showing this complaint, and summarising the recommendations made. As you are no doubt aware, in appropriate cases the Ombudsman may make recommendations where a complaint is not upheld, if he believes that there are lessons that may be learned. As you are no doubt aware, SPSO Complaints Investigators follow up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations.

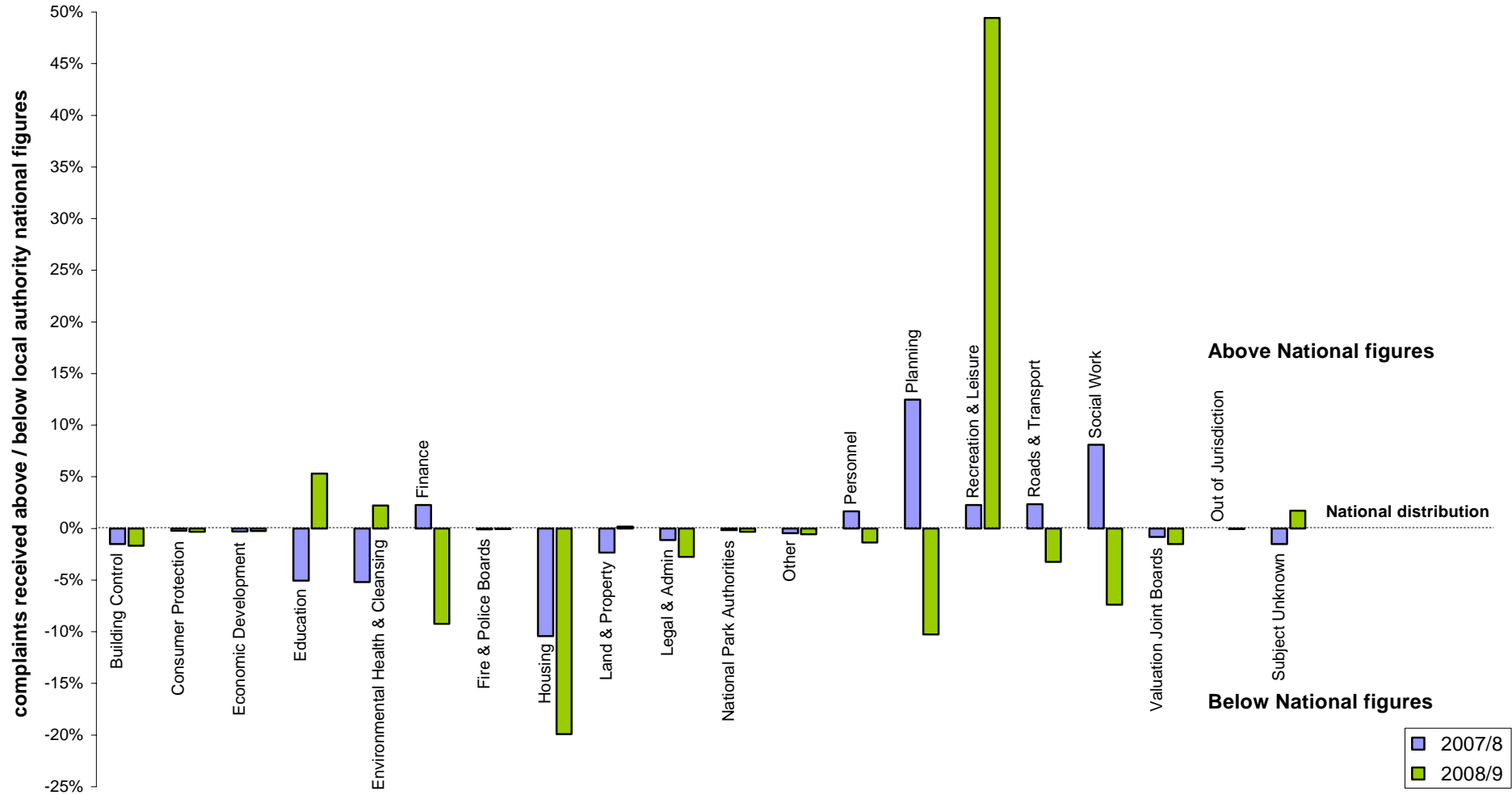
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We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or email awhite@spsso.org.uk. Fuller statistical reports are available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

South Ayrshire Council

Table 1

Received by Subject	2007/8			2008/9						
	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	complaints as % of total	All Local Authority Complaints	complaints as % of total	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	complaints as % of total	All Local Authority Complaints	complaints as % of total
Building Control	0	0	0%	20	2%	0	0	0%	27	2%
Consumer Protection	0	0	0%	3	0%	0	0	0%	5	0%
Economic Development	0	0	0%	4	0%	0	0	0%	4	0%
Education	0	0	0%	67	5%	5	5	11%	89	6%
Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	0	0%	69	5%	3	3	7%	69	4%
Finance	4	3	12%	123	9%	0	0	0%	148	9%
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	0%	1	0%	0	0	0%	1	0%
Housing	7	5	19%	394	30%	7	4	9%	459	29%
Land & Property	0	0	0%	31	2%	1	1	2%	32	2%
Legal & Admin	1	1	4%	66	5%	3	1	2%	79	5%
National Park Authorities	0	0	0%	2	0%	0	0	0%	5	0%
Other	1	0	0%	6	0%	0	0	0%	9	1%
Personnel	1	1	4%	29	2%	0	0	0%	22	1%
Planning	13	8	31%	243	18%	3	3	7%	269	17%
Recreation & Leisure	1	1	4%	21	2%	25	24	52%	44	3%
Roads & Transport	2	2	8%	71	5%	1	1	2%	87	5%
Social Work	5	5	19%	148	11%	2	2	4%	188	12%
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	0%	11	1%	0	0	0%	24	1%
Out of Jurisdiction	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0%	1	0%
Subject Unknown	0	0	0%	20	2%	2	2	4%	42	3%
Total	36	26		1,329		52	46		1,604	

Complaints received by subject: South Ayrshire Council proportions compared to the distribution of all local authority complaints received



South Ayrshire Council

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		2007/8		2008/9	
		<i>All Local Authority</i>		<i>All Local Authority</i>	
Assessment	Premature	10	760	15	923
	Out of Jurisdiction	8	154	0	102
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information before investigation	5	178	4	158
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	1	42	0	12
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	8	240	4	279
Investigation	Report issued: not upheld	1	82	0	25
	Report issued: partially upheld	1	62	1	22
	Report issued: fully upheld	1	23	0	15
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information during investigation	0	4	0	1
	Discontinued or suspended during investigation	0	13	0	9
Total		35	1,558	24	1,546

South Ayrshire Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Decision	Recommendation(s)
22/10/08	200700100	<p>the Council:</p> <p>(a) provided the Planning Committee (the Committee) and objectors with inaccurate information on a planning application for the erection of a telecommunications mast and associated equipment in a street near the complainants' homes (partially upheld); and</p> <p>(b) failed to take appropriate steps to ensure that the telecommunications mast and associated equipment erected by the applicants complied with planning consent (not upheld).</p>	partially upheld	<p>(i) apologise to the complainants for providing the Committee with inaccurate information on the planning application;</p> <p>(ii) ensure that, in future, more thorough checks are made on documentation for planning applications to ensure that those documents which are current and those which are superseded are clearly identified; and</p> <p>(iii) ensure that, in future, planning reports to Committee contain information on the history of the application, comparing the original scheme with the final proposal and outlining any significant changes which have been made.</p> <p>The Council have accepted the recommendations and will act on them accordingly.</p>