



STANDARDS AND ETHICS

QUARTER 3 REPORT

2017/2018

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This is the quarterly report to the Audit & Governance Committee detailing both the figures for the Ethical Indicators and the figures for the Local Determination of Complaints process for 2017/18.

For clarification purposes the months covered by the quarters are as follows:

Quarter 1 – 1 April to 30 June

Quarter 2 – 1 July to 30 September

Quarter 3 – 1 October to 31 December

Quarter 4 – 1 January to 31 March

The report is split into 2 parts for ease of reference; Part 1 refers to the local determination of complaints, part 2 is the table showing the ethical indicators figures.

The report will enable the Audit & Governance Committee to build up a picture over time of how many complaints are received and where these are coming from. The parts of the Code of Conduct which have been breached will also be recorded to enable training to be targeted effectively.

The Monitoring Officer received 0 complaints in Quarter 3 of 2017/18.

2.1 Assessment Sub-committee Decisions

There has been 0 Assessment Sub-committee meetings in this quarter.

As members will be aware, the Monitoring Officer now pursues an informal dispute resolution process prior to initiating formal proceedings via the Sub-committee route.

One complaint received in Quarter 2 have been resolved informally in Quarter 3.

2.2 Timeliness of Decision

The Standards for England Guidance stated that the Assessment Sub-committee should complete its initial assessment of an allegation “within an average of 20 working days” to reach a decision on what should happen with the complaint. The Council has taken this standard and adapted it under the new rules to aim to hold an Assessment Sub-committee within 20 working days of notifying the parties that informal resolution is not possible.

2.3 Review Requests

There have been no review requests in Quarter 3. Review requests can only be made following a decision of ‘No further Action’ by the Assessment Sub-committee where there is submission of new evidence or information by the complainant.

2.4 Subsequent Referrals

None to report – see above.

2.5 Outcome of Investigations

There were no investigations concluded in this period.

2.6 Parts of the Code Breached

This section is intended to show where there are patterns forming to enable the Audit and Governance Committee to determine where there needs to be further training for Councillors. Targeting training in this way makes it more sustainable and, hopefully, more effective.

So far this year, the following areas of the code were found to have been breached:

N/A

REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible For Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
1.0	Objections to the councils accounts	Head of Finance (and Section 151 Officer)	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1.1	Follow up action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (Members)	Head of Legal And Commercial Services / Monitoring Officer	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1.2	Disciplinary action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (staff)	Head of HR and Organisation Development	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1.3	Public interest reports	Senior Auditor	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1.4	Number of whistle blowing incidents reported		0	0	0	0	0	0		
1.5	No. of recommendations made to improve governance procedures/policies		11	17	3	19	9	22	17	
1.6	No. Of recommendations implemented		8	12	18	16	12	17	9	

Definition of a Stage 1 complaint:

First stage of a formal complaint. A formal complaint can be made if a customer believes a service within the Council has let them down, we did something wrong or a service we provided was unfair. We have 10 working days to provide to response to the complaint.

Complaints responded to on time in Q3 **87%**

We received an average of **10** Complaints a month in Q3

Our average response time was **11 days**

Top 3 types of Stage 1 complaints Q3

- Revenues & Benefits
- Housing Asset Management
- Planning & Development

The average response time was slightly above the target service standard due to two outlier cases:

- One case with Revs & Bens
- One case with Planning & Development.

The majority of cases were responded to within the target response time.

26 Stage 1 complaints were resolved in Q3, This is a increase of **8%** from Q3 16/17

REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Stage 1 Complaints Received			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
2.0	Total no. of Stage 1 complaints received	Corporate Complaints Officer	70	28	82	31	37	30		
2.1	No. of Stage 1 complaints Resolved		39	26	70	14	24	26		
2.2	No. of customers who raised their Stage 1 complaint to a Stage 2		10	5	10	3	8	4		
2.3	No. of Stage 1 complaints still open and within 10 days		31	2	12	17	13	4		

Definition of a Stage 2 complaint:

If the customer is dissatisfied with our response to their Stage 1 complaint, they can ask for this to be raised to a Stage 2 for further investigation. These investigations are carried out by Heads of Service. We have 10 working days to provide a response to the complaint.

One Stage 2 complaint was resolved in Q3. This is a decrease of 67% from Q3 last year

Number of Stage 2 Complaints resolved in Q3
1

We received an average of 1 Stage 2 Complaint a month in Q3

Top types of Stage 2 complaints Q3

- Environmental Protection
- Revenues & Benefits

The decrease in Stage 2 complaints resolved in Q3 this year can be attributed to a reduction in State 2 complaints being received due to:

- Stage 1 responses providing a satisfactory answer to the majority of complainants.
- Any actions that formed part of the Stage 1 response have fully resolved complaints.

Our average response time was **17 days**. This was due to two particularly complicated cases, one with Revs & Bens for Council Tax and one with Environmental Protection for fly tipping and alleged harassment.

REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Stage 2 Complaints Received			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
3.0	Total no. of Stage 2 complaints received	Corporate Complaints Officer	13	5	10	3	8	4		
3.1	No. of Stage 2 complaints Resolved		6	3	7	1	3	1		
3.2	% of stage 2 complaints answered on time		53	60	30	0	63	75		
3.3	No. of Stage 2 complaints still open and within 10 days		7	2	3	3	5	3		

Definition of an MP Enquiry:

These are enquiries sent in from local MP's on behalf of their constituent. These can be independent enquiries or could be linked to an earlier complaint which we may not have resolved to the customer's satisfaction. We have 10 working days to provide a response to the enquiry.

MP enquiries responded to on time in Q3
58%

We received an average of 6 MP enquiries per month in Q3

Our average response time was 11 days. This was slightly above the target timescale due to the availability of follow-up information requested from the constituent which formed part of an enquiry for Business Focus

What the MP Enquiries were about:

- Housing Asset Management
- Planning and Development
- Housing Choices
- Planning Policy

21 MP enquiries were resolved in Q3 This is an increase of 14% from 16/17. The can be attributed to dedicated staff resource within departments leading to a more efficient turnaround of enquiries.

REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
MP Enquiries received			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
4.0	Total no. of MP enquiries (req) received	Head of Legal and Commercial Services	28	19	31	32	23	19		
4.1	% of req responded to on time		64	63	63	44	52	58		

Definition of an Ombudsman complaint:

If the customer has followed our Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints procedure and is still unhappy with the outcome, they are entitled to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman for independent judgement. They will review the details and decide whether we, as a Council, have a case to answer in respect of the complainant.

Ombudsman complaints resolved in Q3 were 0

Ombudsman Complaints received in Q3 were 0

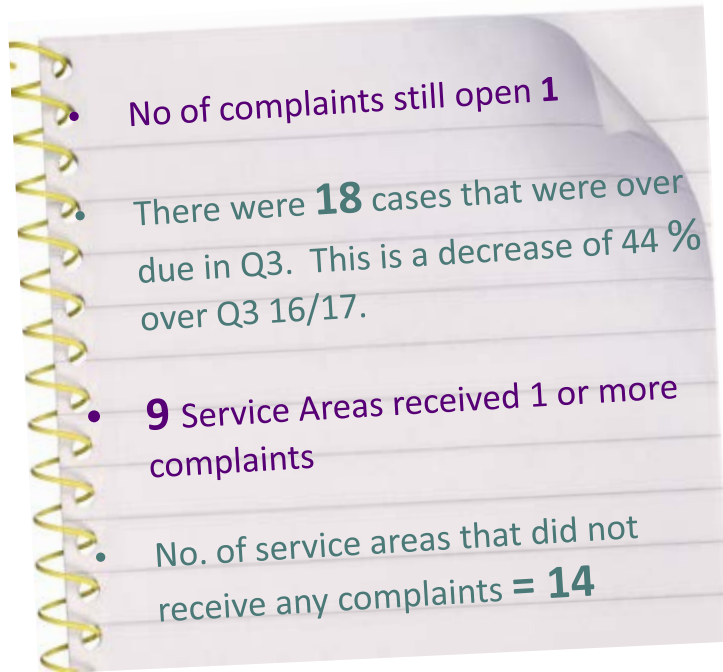
There are two Ombudsman complaints currently outstanding

Of the two outstanding cases, all information requested by the Ombudsman has been supplied and we are awaiting the final determination. With reference to the case which relates to housing and compensation, we have had a meeting with the tenant and after discussion they were happy with the outcome and our suggested action plan. We have written to the Ombudsman, asking for this to be taken into account when preparing their final determination.

What the Ombudsman complaints were/are about:

- Unhappy with repairs and communications
- Issues with housing and compensation request

REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Ombudsman Complaints received			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
5.0	Total no. of Ombudsman Complaints received	Head of Legal and Support Services	2	0	6	2	4	0		
5.1	No of Ombudsman Complaints Cases still open		NA	0	NA	2	NA	2		



The breakdown of Service Areas that received 1 or more complaints in Q3 are:

- Housing Asset Management
- Planning & Development
- Environmental Protection
- Housing Management
- Revenues & Benefits
- Environmental Health
- Planning Policy
- Waste Services
- Strategic Housing

Total number of complaints responded to in Q3
27

We received an average of 11 Complaints per month in Q3

Our average response time was 11 days. In the same quarter of 16/17 the average response time was 45 days. This shows a 76% difference in average response times between the two years.

27 complaints were resolved in Q3 for in both 16/17 and 17/18

What we do differently as a result of the complaints received:

- We are still ensuring that relationships between Feedback and the teams responsible for responding to complaints are open and supportive. This will help to continue to deal complaints efficiently and they are responded to, where possible, within 10 working days.
- When responding to complaints, making sure that the response provided covers all the points raised by the complainant. By providing a full and complete response, this may prevent a complaint being raised to the next level of management for investigation.

Type of FOI requests received:

Business as usual (BAU) requests:

If the requested information can be quickly and easily sent to the requester then it may be dealt with within the normal course of business and treated as BAU.

Total number of BAU requests in Q3 52

Transfers:

Are FOI requests received by us but do not fall within our remit– i.e. Adult Social Care, Children's Services or Highways are a few examples.

Total number of Transfers in Q3 8

Subject Access Requests (SAR):

A SAR is a request from an individual to see information an organisation holds on them.

Total number of SAR received in Q3 0

Land charges (LC) searches:

Specific information about a particular property and the surrounding area for buyers and sellers.

Total number of LC Searches in Q3 8

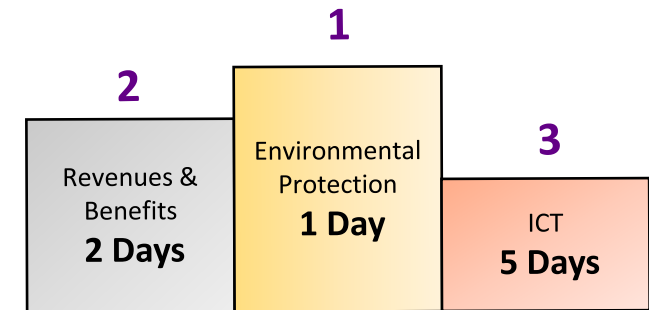
57 unique visitors to the council's open data page

We received an average of 13 FOI's a month in Q3

Our average response time was 11 days

We had a decrease of 77% compared to Q3 (16/17) for number of FOI's received

Top 3 service areas with the quickest response times FOI's



REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for providing information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Freedom of Information Act Indicators			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
6.0	Total no. of requests (req) received	Records Management Officer	143	120	170	82	172	40		
6.1	% req answered on time		%	100	100	100	100	95		
6.2	No. of non compliant req		9	9	13	2	31	0		
6.3	No of FOI appeals		0	0	0	0	0	1		
6.4	Number withheld due to exemptions/fees applied		10	5	13	0	1	1		

REF	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18	Actual 2016/17	2017/18
7.0	No. of directed surveillance authorisations granted during the quarter	Senior Auditor	0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.1	No. in force at the end of the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.2	No. of CHIS recruited during the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.3	No. ceased to be used during the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.4	No. active at the end of the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.5	No. of breaches (particularly unauthorised surveillance)		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.6	No. of applications submitted to obtain communications data which were rejected		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.7	No. of notices requiring disclosure of communications data		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.8	No. of authorisations for conduct to acquire communications data		0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.9	No. of recordable errors		0	0	0	0	0	0		