



STANDARDS AND ETHICS

QUARTER 4 REPORT 2014-2015

1. Introduction

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 2014/15.

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.

2. Part 1 – Local Determination of Complaints

The Monitoring Officer received 0 complaints in Quarter 4 of 2014/15.

2.1 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.

2.2 Review Requests

There have been no review requests this year. 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.

2.3 Subsequent Referrals

None to report – see above.

2.4 Outcome of Investigations

There were no investigations concluded in this period.

2.5 Parts of the Code Breached

This section is intended to show where there are patterns forming to enable the Audit & 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

4. Part 2 – Ethical Indicators

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15
SE1	Objections to the Councils Accounts	Financial Planning Team Manager	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE3	Follow up action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (Members)	Head of Legal and Support Services	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
SE3a	Disciplinary action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (staff)	Human Resources Team Manager	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE4	District Audit Public Interest Reports	Senior Auditor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE5	Number of Whistle blowing Incidents reported		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE6	No. of recommendations made to improve governance procedures / policies		4	5	5	1	0	2	17	0
SE6a	No. of recommendations implemented		5	5	2	7	1	10	9	5

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15
SE7	No. of Ombudsman complaints received	Corporate Complaints Officer	2	0	2	1	2	2	0	2
SE7a	No. of Ombudsman complaints resolved		1 (1 where LGO has sent further enquiries)	0	2 (1 awaiting final decision)	1	1 (1 awaiting final decision)	2	0	2 (awaiting final decision on 1 from Q3)
SE7b	No. of Ombudsman complaints where compensation paid		1	0	0	0	0 (based on 1 resolved in Q3)	0	0	0 (still awaiting final decision)
SE8	No. of Corporate Complaints received		72	75	75	104	53	70	84	94
SE8a	No. of Corporate Complaints resolved		68	69	71	113	50	91	79	74
SE8b	No. of Corporate Complaints where compensation paid		3	1	2	4	2	4	3	17

- A total of 94 corporate complaints were received during Q4 which is an increase of 12% when with the same period for Q4 13/14, and is the third highest period that the council have received complaints in, behind Q2 and Q3 respectively.
- Of the 3 complaints received from the Ombudsman, two were in relation to planning applications. Both of the decisions in relation to these cases have been received, and no fault has been found in the way the council handled the applications. We are still waiting for a decision on a case which was opened in Q3 in relation to the way the Council has handled an Anti-Social Behaviour case. The ombudsman made some further enquiries which we have responded to, but the ombudsman has not been able to make a judgement yet.
- 54 of the complaints (57%) were for the Housing Service. The most common reason for a tenant making a complaint against the Housing Service was delays in carrying out agreed work (23 complaints received, which equates to 42% of all Housing complaints). Most of these related to repair works which were delayed during the autumn/winter period of 2014 which are now being completed, and this situation is projected to be corrected in full by the end of Q1 of 2015/16.

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15
Freedom of Information Act Indicators										
SE9	Total no. of requests received	Head of Legal and Support Services	116	178	109	147	165	109	208	138
SE9a	No. of requests compliant		100	125	92	83	125	82	151	85
SE9b	No. of Non compliant requests		14	45	15	47	31	19	51	45
SE9c	No of requests still open and within the 20 working days		0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
SE9d	Number withheld due to exemptions/fees applied		5	10	4	29	5	27	6	18

- There has been a 34% reduction in FOI requests during Q4 this year compared to the same period of 2013/14.
- This financial year there has been a 4% decrease in FOI requests overall.
- The sustained increase in exemptions during quarter 2 and 3, and the tail off in quarter 4 reflects the fact that more information is being made available via the council's web pages, which are now easier to access following the redesign of our website. Moving forward the amount of information made available via the web pages will continue to increase. There has been an increase in the number of requests we have received that we have transferred to a different authority, and we are hoping that we can reduce this amount by constantly updating the information on our website.

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15	Actual 2013/14	2014/15
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Indicators										
SE10	No. of Directed Surveillance authorisations granted during the quarter	Senior Auditor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10a	No. in force at the end of the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10b	No. of CHIS recruited during the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10c	No. ceased to be used during the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10d	No. active at the end of the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10e	No. of breaches (particularly unauthorised surveillance)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10f	No. of applications submitted to obtain communications data which were rejected		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10g	No of notices requiring disclosure of communications data		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10h	No of authorisations for conduct to acquire communications data		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE10i	No of recordable errors		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0