

<b>GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
<b>7 NOVEMBER 2018</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Report of:	Peter Carpenter, Interim Corporate Director of Resources	
Cabinet Member (s) responsible:	Cabinet Member for Resources	
Contact Officer(s):	Belinda Evans, Complaint Manager	Tel. 01733 296324

**ANNUAL CORPORATE COMPLAINT REPORT 2017-18**

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
<b>FROM:</b> Peter Carpenter, Interim Corporate Director of Resources	<b>Deadline date:</b> N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the report and make recommendations for further scrutiny if deemed appropriate.</li> </ol>	

**1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

1.1 This report is brought to the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee following a request by the Customer Services Manager, after receiving the annual complaints summary letter from the Local Government Ombudsman found in Appendix B.

**2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

2.1 The effective management of complaints is important to ensure action is taken when customers express dissatisfaction about the delivery of any of our services. Complaints are also an important factor to aid in the identification of service improvements. Failing to take customers concerns seriously would impact the reputation of the Council and Scrutiny of the complaints process and performance on complaint handling across the Authority helps to identify areas for further scrutiny.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

10. Partnerships and Shared Services

2.3 This report links to all corporate priorities with the exception of '3. Safeguard vulnerable children and adults' as social care services have their own statutory complaints processes which are reported separately to other scrutiny committees.

2.4 This report does not link to the Children in care Pledge as complaints by Children in Care are handled under a separate Statutory procedure and the annual report on that process is presented to Children and Education Scrutiny Committee.

**3. TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	<b>N/A</b>
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#### **4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The corporate complaints process is used to facilitate complaints made by the general public about council services where an alternative form of appeal or dispute resolution process is not in existence. For many years a three stage complaint process was used but in 2015 a two stage complaints process was introduced following a successful pilot. The aim was to reduce the length of time taken for complaints processing both for the customer and the council, whilst ensuring more ownership of complaint resolution by the service areas. The management and monitoring of the complaints process is carried out by the Central Complaints office which is a small team, that has been situated within Customer Services for the past 10 years and is now part of the Serco partnership. This team are responsible for receiving complaints from the public, recording complaints and arranging for response by the appropriate service area. They also handle all contact with the Local Government Ombudsman.

The report contained at Appendix A provides detailed complaint monitoring for the 12 month period from April 2017 to March 2018.

Key areas highlighted are :

- The increasing volume of complaints .
- The low level of complaint escalations
- The changes to types of complaints being received

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

5.1 No consultation undertaken

#### **6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

6.1 Areas for further scrutiny may be identified

#### **7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 Further scrutiny of complaints can help to identify areas for service improvement

#### **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 N/A

#### **9. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Financial Implications**

9.1 The administration of complaints is undertaken by the central complaints team which is part of the wider Serco partnership. This work is undertaken by 3fte staff who also administer the statutory adult and children's social care schemes. The more significant cost is likely to be within the departments where complaints are investigated, however this cost is not separately recorded or easily estimated. Next year's report will include an estimate.

##### **Legal Implications**

9.2 *No Legal Implications*

##### **Equalities Implications**

9.3 *No Equality Implications*

**Rural Implications**

9.4 *No rural implications*

**10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 No Background documents

**APPENDICES**

**11.**

11.1 **Appendix A - Complaints Monitoring Report**

**Appendix B - LGO Annual Letter**

**Appendix C - Examples of Categories**

**Appendix D - Service Improvements 2017-18 Stage 1 & Stage 2**

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