

<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No. 6</b>
<b>28 NOVEMBER 2022</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Report of:	Cecilie Booth, Executive Director of Corporate Services	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance	
Contact Officer(s):	Belinda Evans Complaint Manager	Tel. 01733 296331

**ANNUAL REPORT OF CORPORATE COMPLAINTS 2021/22**

RECOMMENDATIONS	
<b>FROM: Belinda Evans Complaint Manager</b>	<b>Deadline date: N/A</b>
<p>It is recommended that Audit Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the changes to the complaints process required following a recommendation from the Local Government &amp; Social Care Ombudsman. – contained within Appendix B.</li> <li>2. Review the report and recommend areas for future scrutiny</li> </ol>	

**1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

1.1 This report has been an annual item, previously presented to the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee. After a gap of two years in reporting due to the pandemic, the previous Director of Legal & Governance confirmed that this report should be presented to Audit Committee annually going forward. The Chief Executive has asked that in future years the report includes an overview of complaints that follow the statutory social care processes also.

**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 customer 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 Audit Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.2.2.16

To monitor Council policies on "raising concerns at work" and the anti-fraud and anticorruption strategy and the Council's complaints process.

**3. TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
---	-----------	----------------------------------	--

## 4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The corporate complaints process is used to facilitate complaints made by members of the public about council services where an alternative form of appeal or dispute resolution process is not available. Since 2015 this has been a two-stage process involving local resolution by the appropriate service at the first stage and a review by the Chief Internal Auditor at the second stage.

The management and monitoring of the complaints process is carried out by the Central Complaints office which is part of the Customer services department. This team are responsible for receiving complaints from the public, registering complaints and arranging for response by the appropriate service area. They also handle all contact with the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman who provides an annual review of the council's performance on complaints which is attached.

The report contained at Appendix A provides detailed performance information for the 12 months period from April 2021 to March 2022.

Key areas highlighted are :

- Complaint volumes have returned to pre-covid levels
- High rate of resolution of complaints at the local service level
- The rate of Upheld and Partially Upheld cases indicates that service failures are recognized and rectified
- The Complaints process should be further improved

## 5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 *The report impacts a number of the Corporate Priorities and is outlined below:*

1. *Our Places & Communities*
  - *Places and Safety (including any rural implications)*
  - *Lives and Work*
  - *Health and Wellbeing*

***Many complaints are about problems with the physical environment and processing requests promptly helps support the councils ambition to provide and safe and healthy environment.***

2. *Prevention, Independence & Resilience*
  - *Educations and Skills for All*
  - *Adults*
  - *Children*

***Receiving complaints from people who are struggling helps us to intervene early and signpost customers to forms of support.***

3. *Sustainable Future City Council*
  - *How we Work*
  - *How we Serve*
  - *How we Enable*

***Complaints give us rich data & insight into how services are experienced by the people we serve and improvements that can be made.***

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 This report has been considered by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 who have approved the changes to the complaints process contained within Appendix B.

## **7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

- 7.1 Areas for further scrutiny may be identified. Improvements to the complaint procedure should ensure all complaints are complaint with timescales.

## **8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 Further scrutiny of complaints data can help to identify areas for service improvement, increase customer satisfaction with council services and may help to reduce service failures and inefficiencies. Process changes are required as requested by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

## **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 None Considered

## **10. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications

### **Legal Implications**

- 10.2 There are no legal implications

### **Equalities Implications**

- 10.3 There are no equality implications

## **11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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

- 11.1 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Letter 2022 – Peterborough City Council (<https://www.lgo.org.uk/documents/councilperformance/2022/peterborough%20city%20council.pdf>)  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review of Local Government Complaints 2021/22  
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/local-government-complaint-reviews>

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A - Complaints Monitoring Report 2021-22  
Appendix B – Improvements to existing Complaints Procedure  
Appendix C - Service Improvements 2021-22  
Appendix D - Compliments 2021-22

This page is intentionally left blank