

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 20 NOVEMBER 2024
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION)

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT
– 2023-24

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report introduces the council's Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for 2023-24.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC):

2.1.1 Note the contents of the report in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 Recommend to Cabinet to note the contents of the report and to approve the Action Plan as detailed in Section 7 of Appendix 1.

3 Explanation

3.1 Following an update to the council's constitution in October 2023, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is now responsible for monitoring and assessing complaints performance and subsequent actions plans.

3.2 Therefore, this is the first Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.

3.3 This report sets out the Council's annual complaints performance and service improvement for 2023-24. It also summarises key lessons learned, compliance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and action plan to ensure improvements identified are implemented to improve complaint handling and to continue to develop a positive complaints culture across the organisation.

3.4 The report is split into the following two key functions:

3.4.1 Tenant & Leaseholder (Housing)- related services; this includes complaints from tenants and leaseholders that fall within the Housing Ombudsman service.

3.4.2 Council-related services; this includes complaints from customers that fall within the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 In 2023-24, the council paid a total of £12,855 in compensation relating to Housing Ombudsman cases and £400 in compensation relating to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman cases.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 A high number of complaints and Ombudsman cases can help the council identify potential areas of service or process weakness and lessons learned can help identify areas where improvements can be made. The council uses this data on a regular basis as part of performance reporting to identify any new and emerging risks or changes to existing strategic risks.

7 Security and Terrorism Implications

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

8 Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

9 Climate Change Implications

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

10 Health and Wellbeing Implications

10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

11 Communication and Engagement Implications

11.1 The council's complaints policy is available on the website and will continue to be promoted to customers. Complaints performance will be published on a quarterly basis, as well as in the council's Annual Report. Housing complaints are also regularly discussed with the council's Resident's Panel (for tenants and leaseholders).

12 Human Resources Implications

12.1 There are no human resources implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 This report is linked to all the council's priority to 'Run an Effective Council'.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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Date

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Appendix 1

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement
Report 2023-24