

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ADJUDICATION AND REVIEW COMMITTEE
Town Hall
20 February 2018 (7.00 - 8.30 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Roger Westwood (Vice-Chair) and Joshua Chapman
Residents' Group	+Ray Morgon
East Havering Residents' Group	Alex Donald and Gillian Ford
UKIP Group	David Johnson
Independent Residents Group	Michael Deon Burton

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Garry Pain and Meg Davis.

+Substitute members: Councillor Ray Morgon (for Councillor Barbara Matthews)

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 UPDATE ON CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on complaint handling performance across all Council services.

The Council received 362 Stage 1 complaints during the period October to December 2017. 91% of them (330) were responded to within 15 days. A slight decrease compared to Quarter 2 performance of 92%

The council received 76 requests for escalation to Stage 2 of the process, 90% (68) of them dealt with within 20 days. A slight dip in performance compared to Quarter 2 performance of 96%. This was due to a number of complex complaints which covered a long time span and the depth to which the investigations were taken.

This equated to an escalation request rate of 21% however, this was reduced to 5.5% when considering the number of cases that were not escalated to Stage 2.

Appended to the report was a breakdown of cases that had been audited during quarter 3. The aim was to audit approximately ten percent of the total number of complaints received. Members noted that following an improvement in quarter 2 there had been a slip across all services during the period October to December 2017.

Also appended were details of decisions that had been taken by Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen. During quarter 3 twenty decisions had been taken.

There was consensus amongst Members that whilst the statistics were useful there needed to be more information in the narrative that explained what was working well and what was not working so well. It was felt that overview and scrutiny be used to assist with this.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note as follows:

- The Corporate Complaints Performance Statistics for Quarter 3
- The results following the Quarter 3 Audit of complaints
- Decisions made by both the Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen throughout the quarter.

17 **UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE ON MEMBER ENQUIRIES**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on Member Enquiries handling performance across all the Council's services.

The 3rd quarter performance statistics for all Member Enquiries was appended to the report.

Members made 727 enquiries of Services during the period October to December 2017. 98% of them (714) were responded to within time; compared to the previous Quarter when 926 enquiries were received and 904 responded to within time.

For the same period in the previous year, 2016, 768 were received and 744 (97%) were dealt with in time.

Members again re-iterated the point made at the last meeting of the Committee that it was felt that the number of Members/MP Enquiries data presented was not an accurate reflection as often Members approached officers directly which by-passed the CRM process. It was agreed that generic email addresses for services could be given to Members after the forthcoming local elections thus making it easier for officers to provide more accurate data in future.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the Member Enquiries Statistics for Quarter 3.

18 **ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on Adult Social Care complaints

Appended to the report for Members consideration was a breakdown of complaints, enquiries, compliments and Members correspondence.

Adult Social Care had seen an increase in the number of complaints in 2016/17 of 30% from 93 in 2015/16 to 121 in 2016/17, although there had been a decrease in the number of service users from 7,684 in 2015/16 to 7,519 in 2016/17. Complaints escalating to the Ombudsman, although decreased overall from 10 in 2015/16 to 8 in 2016/17, four decisions were for maladministration injustice with no penalty, which related to charging disputes.

Increases in formal and informal complaints were reflected across all teams and particularly within the community teams who had the most notable increases. The community teams, Adult Community Team (ACT) North and ACT South, went through a major relocation programme during 2016/17, moving into locality areas in partnership with North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT). This had impacted on the level of service, which was the main reason for complaint.

External provider complaints for home care and residential/nursing homes, increased slightly in 2016/17 by 19% and 11% respectively. Home care commissioned hours increased from 654,024 in 2015/16 to 711,679 in 2016/17 with the number of hours relating to home care complaints accounting for 1% of total care provided. For those within residential/nursing placements, the number of complaints accounted for 1% of the total number (1,098) using these provisions.

Members were advised that in the case of charging disputes these were now being eradicated due to more robust specific case notes being taken at the beginning of service provision which in turn lead to less disputes.

Members agreed that the appended Complaints Action plan was useful.

Members **noted** the contents of the report and the continued work in resolving and learning from complaints and the challenges faced by the service with increasing demands.

Members also **noted** the actions identified to improve services and the continued monitoring by the Service and the Complaints & Information Team to ensure these were implemented evidencing service improvements and with a view to reduce similar complaints.

Members also **noted** the positive feedback to services by way of compliments received and highlighting good practice.

19 **CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered a report that detailed the Children's Services Complaints Annual report for 2016/17. Appended to the report was information about the numbers and types of complaints handled by the Children's Service during 2016/17, as well as Members' correspondence.

Complaints increased from 74 in 2015/16 to 92 in 2016/17, with 15 of these complaints coming directly from young people, using the Mind Of my Own (MOMO) app. One Stage 1 complaint progressed to Stage 2 with no complaints progressing to Stage 3. Enquiries that fell outside the statutory process had more than doubled in 2016/17.

Members **noted** the contents of the attached report and the continued efforts made by the service to learn from complaints and enable young people to engage with the complaints process.

Members also **noted** the recommendations identified from complaints and continued monitoring of these to ensure that actions are implemented to evidence service improvements.

Members also **noted** the positive feedback to services received through compliments, highlighting good practice.

20 **EDUCATION SERVICES COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the Education Services complaints received during 2016/17.

Members noted that Maintained Schools and Academies had their own complaints procedure which were dealt with through their Governing Bodies and were not included within the report. Schools admissions and exclusions were dealt with through a statutory appeals process and were also not included in the report.

There had been one Ombudsman enquiry in 2016/17, which did not progress to investigation this had decreased from 3 in 2015/16. The number of complaints also decreased from 31 in 2015/16 to 18 in 2016/17.

The main reasons for complaint were related to quality and reliability, late delivery or slow service and availability of the service. This referred to delays in completing EHC Plans and implementing provision, placements at special units and general concerns about schools in particular penalty charges for non-attendance.

Of the complaints received 13 were upheld and 5 being partially upheld.

Members **noted** the content of the report for information.

Chairman