

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
ADJUDICATION & REVIEW COMMITTEE  
Town Hall  
19 August 2021 (7.00pm - 7.45 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS 5**

**Conservative Group** Ray Best (Vice-Chair), Joshua Chapman and Timothy Ryan (Vice-Chair)

**Residents' Group** Ray Morgon

**Labour Group**

**Upminster & Cranham Residents' Group** Linda Van den Hende

**North Havering Residents' Group** Martin Goode

**Independent Residents Group**

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Denis O'Flynn and Matt Sutton.

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

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

**5 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) - ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2020/21**

The report and appendices before Members provided the committee with details relating to the Annual Review letter of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Members noted that the LGSCO had made decisions on 44 complaints compared to 85 the previous year.

Officers advised that following the Ombudsman's recommendations Havering had a 100% compliance rate compared to 99% in other similar authorities.

The report gave further insight into how many of the complaints had been closed, not upheld and upheld with details of the financial penalties the council had to finance in upheld with maladministration cases.

Members noted that the activity in the report related to the LGSCO annual letter but there had also been 12 Housing Ombudsman decisions this information was clarified in appendix 2.

In response to a question relating to what lessons were learnt when the council had been financially penalised. Officers advised that learning from previous complaints was crucial in putting in checks and measures to ensure the same mistakes were not made again.

Recommendations were made to service areas and followed up by the complaints team to make sure they had been implemented.

Officers also advised that checks were made at stage 2 of the complaints process to make sure there was no trend of complaints being made.

Members **noted** the content of the report and appendices.

8 **QUARTER 1 2021/22 - UPDATE ON CORPORATE COMPLAINTS**

The report and appendices before members updated the committee on complaint handling performance across all Council services.

The report highlighted the number of stage 1 complaints (660) and those that had been escalated to stage 2 (131) during the period of April to June 2021.

The report would normally compare the number of complaints with the previous year's levels, however this was not possible as the previous year the complaints process was suspended during the 2020/21 quarter 1 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members noted that when compared to the same quarter in 2019 there had been an increase of almost 35% in the number of complaints raised.

During quarter 1 there had been 14 decisions made by the LGSCO.

During the debate members asked if the complaint details could be broken down with a narrative to see if there was a trend of service areas not performing well and what could be done to address issues going forward. Officers undertook to provide a more detailed report in the future.

Members were advised that if there were particular areas of concern that the relevant senior manager of the service could be invited to future meetings to discuss service issues.

Members also noted that there had been large number of complaints relating to waste and recycling.

Officers advised that a number of factors during the pandemic had led to an increase in complaints for that particular service these included:

There had been a large increase in household refuse due to more people working from home which led taking longer to complete collections as the refuse vehicles were having to return to the depot to empty before returning to collections.

Members noted that there had also been a shortage of staff at times due to staff having to self-isolate or being unwell from Covid-19.

Officers had been working closely with the contractors, (Serco), who had taken on an additional 2 vehicles to assist with the collections. Members were also advised that there was currently a national shortage of heavy goods drivers, however the Council continued to work closely with Serco to maintain an efficient service.

Members also suggested that the table showing the complaint reasons be expanded to show which complaints had been upheld and the non-upheld complaints.

The committee **noted** the contents of the report and the appendices.

