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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ADJUDICATION AND REVIEW COMMITTEE Town Hall Main Road Romford 26 November 2015 (7.30 - 8.30 pm)

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Garry Pain (Chairman), Roger Westwood (Vice-Chair) and Meg Davis
Residents' Group	John Mylod (Vice-Chair) and Julie Wilkes
East Havering Residents' Group	Alex Donald and Linda Van den Hende
UKIP Group	+Phil Martin
Independent Residents Group	

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Johnson (+Philip Martin substituted) and Michael Deon Burton.

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

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

7 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 August 2015 were accepted and signed by the Chairman.

8 CHILDREN, ADULTS & HOUSING, LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2014/15

The Committee had before it a report concerning the complaints report submitted to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 September 2015. Members stated that they were satisfied with the contents of the report and had no questions to ask officers, but thanked them for the effort involved in ensuring complaints were dealt with appropriately and were satisfied that the report showed that overall the direction of travel was in the right direction and the outlook was positive.

The report reminded Members that Maintained Schools and Academies had their own complaints procedures which were dealt with through their Governing Bodies and were not included within the report. In addition, schools admissions and exclusions were dealt with through a statutory appeals process and therefore were also not included in the report.

The Committee duly **noted** the report.

9 ADULTS ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee had before it a report concerning the complaints and compliments report relating to the Adult Care services submitted to the Individuals Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 September 2015.

Members reiterated that they were satisfied with the contents of the report and had no questions to ask officers, but thanked them for the effort involved in ensuring complaints were dealt with appropriately and were satisfied that the report showed that overall the direction of travel was in the right direction and the outlook was positive.

The Committee duly **noted** the report.

10 CHILDREN, ADULTS & HOUSING (C&YPS) COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2014/15

The Committee had before it a report concerning the complaints and compliments report relating to the Children and Young People's services submitted to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 September 2015.

Members reiterated that they were satisfied with the contents of the report and had no questions to ask officers, but thanked them for the effort involved in ensuring complaints were dealt with appropriately and were satisfied that the report showed that overall the direction of travel was in the right direction and the outlook was positive.

The Committee duly **noted** the report.

11 UPDATE ON CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The Committee received a report which sought to update it on the progress being made to secure improvements to the management and processing of corporate complaints arising from the revised Corporate Complaint policy and procedure that went live on 1 April 2015.

Attached to the report were a number of appendices which provided Members with written and graphic information concerning the way in which it was currently proposed to present complaint statistics along with a revised Member Review Panel procedure, a synopsis of lessons learned and proposals for next steps to be taken to refine and develop the process further.

Members were then given a detailed presentation from the Chief Executive's Executive Manager concerning the position after six months experience gained after the introduction of the revised procedure. She explained that since the start of the process there had been a steep learning curve for her and her team – which had now been expanded to oversee both the Corporate Complaints process as well as dealing with the various Ombudsmen.

Concerning the former elements, there had now been two audits and she was pleased to be able to report that progress had been made across most service areas and where there appeared to be issues still to resolve, it was found to be more a matter of the number of complaints and the availability of personnel to deal with them (typically StreetCare attracted the highest number of complaints and whilst Regulatory Services did not have that many, a single poor result could skew its overall position disproportionately).

Members were reassured that the new process was not simply recording for the sake of producing statistics, but had a definite purpose: to provide a platform on which change could be delivered by learning from issues and applying that knowledge positively to ensure that the problem did not reoccur in the future. By way of example she informed Members that it was discovered that many complaints arose because basic information was either not readily available or did not exist which could be used to “frame” service delivery appropriately. She explained that if – say StreetCare – stated that lights would be repaired within x number of days, as long as the service dealt with the matter within that time-frame there were no grounds for complaint – and members of the public could be directed to that. If the service failed to address the problem within the period, there was a clear failure and the appropriate steps could be taken.

Members expressed satisfaction with this pragmatic approach, though concern was raised that not all residents were computer literate and the Executive Manager reassured them by confirming that whilst the internet would be the main platform for disseminating information, members of the public could still speak with staff directly. The point was that having a single set of information available in different formats would ensure that the same standards were being applied in all cases and ought to radically reduce (if not eliminate) doubt or confusion by both public and staff.

The Committee **noted** the oral update.

The Committee also **noted** the following in respect of the report itself:

1. The Corporate Complaints Performance Statistics for quarter 2 (July – September 2015)
2. Future reporting on Local Government and Housing Ombudsman Statistics
3. Lessons learned from complaints
4. Member Review Panels - minor amendments to the process.

The Committee thanked the CE's Executive Manager for her lucid and informative presentation and for the work she had put into the development

of the current process wished her well for the future and looked forward to receiving future updates from her successors.

12 **LGO & STAGE THREE UPDATE**

The clerk informed the Committee that from 1 October 2015 the responsibility for managing issues considered by the Ombudsmen as well as the management of the Stage Three process had transferred from Committee Administration to the Chief Executive's office. This report before members sought to provide them with a summary of LGO and Stage Three activity from the last meeting of the Committee in August to date. He added that this would therefore be the final report he would be providing them on these matters.

The Committee:

Noted the report and thanked the clerk for his work in this area over the past decade.

Chairman