



ADJUDICATION AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

22 August 2018

Subject Heading:	Update on Corporate Complaints
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Policy context:	Corporate Complaint Policy and Procedure 1st April 2015
Financial summary:	There are no financial implications to this report.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	[]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	[]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	[X]

SUMMARY

This report updates Members of Adjudication and Review on complaint handling performance, across all Council services.

The Corporate Complaint Policy and Procedure was introduced on 1st April 2015. As part of the Policy, it was agreed that turnaround times be increased from 10 days to 15 days. It was further agreed that the percentage of cases responded to within time be increased from 90% to 95%. The purpose of the changes was to enable a full and proper investigation into a complaint, therefore ensuring the council response was right first time, most of the time; to ensure a higher quality response; that the Policy & Procedure was fully complied with and importantly, that Services learned from their complaints.

Statistics are reported to Committee on a quarterly basis.

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This report attaches written information for Members to consider on complaint statistics for Quarter 1, indicating numbers received and performance on timeliness and quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider and discuss any further action required on the following:

1. The Corporate Complaints Performance Statistics for Quarter 1 (April – June 2017).
2. The proposed change to response timescales for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.
3. Decisions made by both the Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen throughout the quarter.

REPORT DETAIL

The Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure has been in place since 1st April 2015. This report summarises the performance under the Council's complaints handling process, and identifies Services response turnaround times, together with those areas in need of additional attention.

Corporate Complaints Performance Statistics

The 1st quarter performance statistics for all complaints under the procedure is attached as **Appendix 1**.

In short, the council received 452 Stage 1 complaints during the period April to June 2018. 94% of them (427) were responded to within 15 days.

The council received 92 requests for escalation to Stage 2 of the process, 73% (67) of them dealt with within 20 days.

This equates to an escalation request rate of 20% however, this is reduced to 5% when considering the number of cases that were not escalated to Stage 2.

The following table provides an easy view of complaints completed at Stages 1 and 2.

	April	May	June
Stage 1 percentage to time	95%	96%	93%
Stage 2 percentage to time	73%	59%	89%
Cumulative percentage Stages 1 & 2	90%	90%	92%

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In recent months, it has become apparent that complaints received at Stage 2 of the process are far more complex than previously. This is reflected in the Stage 2 performance stats shown above and in the attached Appendix 1.

Many Stage 2 complaints require a robust investigation, which by their nature, cannot be completed within 20 days.

The purpose of the 15 day timescale given in April 2015 for Stage 1 complaints was to enable a full and comprehensive investigation to be carried out. In many cases, the full investigation is not being undertaken until the customer requests escalation to Stage 2 of the complaints process. While Stage 1 performance remains at reasonable levels, the Stage 2 process is clearly struggling.

As a result, it is therefore recommended that turnaround times for Stage 1 complaints be reduced from 15 days to 10 days, whilst increasing the Stage 2 target to 25 days.

Performance targets will remain at 95% for both stages.

Any revisions will be made to the Corporate Complaint Policy and Procedure and be signed off as an Executive Decision, with an effective date of 1st October 2018.

Ombudsmen Decisions

During Quarter 1 there were 14 decisions by Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen, as follows:

- 8 x Closed after initial enquiries: No further action
(Adult Services; Children's Services; Environment (3); Public Protection; Housing; Council Tax & Benefits)
- 2 x Closed after initial enquiries: Out of jurisdiction
(Environment; Council Tax & Benefits)
- 1 x Closed: Premature
(Housing)
- 1 x Not upheld: No maladministration
(Housing)
- 1 x Upheld: No further action
(Environment)
- 1 x Upheld: Maladministration, injustice with penalty **S**
(Adult Services)

There were no Housing Ombudsman decisions during the period.

See table below for comparison of significant (S) decisions made for Quarter 1 in 2017 and 2018:

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Significant decisions (where maladministration and injustice found)				
	Quarter 1 2017		Quarter 1 2018	
Maladministration, injustice with penalty	3	Adult Services Housing Services x 2	1	Adult Services
Maladministration, injustice, no penalty	0		0	

Quarter 1 Ombudsman decisions are shown in more detail on attached Appendix 2.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no financial, legal, human resource or equality implications or risks from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure is published on the internet and as it has been mentioned previously, may provide background to the information in this report.

Attached are two appendices:

Appendix 1 – Quarter 1 Complaints statistics

Appendix 2 – Ombudsman Activity Report for Quarter 1