

Date 6th February 2019

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints Working Group Report

Working Group Members

Cllr Naylor (for Cllr Chilvers)

Cllr Pound

Cllr Reed

Cllr Russell

Apologies

Cllr Barrett

Supporting Officers

Steve Summers – Chief Operating Officer

Scope

The scope of the Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints Working Group is set out below:

1. To monitor and consider the Council's service Performance Indicators.
2. To consider in detail Formal Complaints received by the Council.
3. To consider how Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints are reported to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee
4. To make recommendations to the appropriate Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

Meeting Date

6th February 2019

Attached as Addendum 1 are the notes of the meeting.

Terms of Reference

The Working Groups Terms of Reference are attached at Addendum 2

1. Report Recommendations

The report recommendations are set out in full below.

R.1 To note the agreed changes to the Council's Formal Complaints Policy.

R.2 That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Formal Complaints for the fourth quarter 2018/19.

R.3. That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Performance Indicators for the fourth quarter 2018/19.

2. Introduction

2.1 Following a review in 2015 of its complaints procedures, the Council currently operates a three stage complaints process for customers to take issue with any perceived failure to provide a service, failure to respond to requests or failure to adhere to standards on the part of the Council and its officers.

2.2 The council uses a variety of performance indicators to monitor how well services are performing in meeting the needs of service users. The council has set of key indicators of performance, the "toplines". The topline includes a variety of indicators that relate to the delivery of the Council's priorities.

2.3 The topline measures performance across a range of council activity including: planning, housing, streetscene and revenue and benefits.

3. Explanation of Recommendations

Explanation

The working group were advised that officers had reviewed the Council's Formal Complaints Policy and the amended policy was approved at R&G committee in October. The new policy will come into effect on the 1st April 2019.

The key changes are:

- Changed from three stages to two.
- Changed the response time from 20 working days to 10/15 working days
- Introduction of Unreasonable & Persistent Behaviour Policy

Recommendation 1

To note the agreed changes to the Council's Formal Complaints Policy.

Explanation

The working group noted the following:

- There had been 27 Housing complaints so far for 2018/19. Officers advised that regular meetings are held with the Housing service to review issues arising.
- There had been 21 Revenue & Benefits complaints so far for 2018/19. Officers advised that regular meeting were held between Brentwood and Basildon to identify issues and possible solutions. It was also noted that previous resource issues within the service have now been resolved and that only 2 complaints have been received for Q3 which was a significant improvement on previous quarters.

LGO complaints

- 3 Housing complaints have been made to the LGO and are under investigation. Progress will be reported at future working group meetings.

Recommendation 2

That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Formal Complaints for the fourth quarter 2018/19.

Explanation

Officers advised the working group on actions that have been developed for Housing and Streetscene with regards to Performance Indicators as set out below.

Housing

- Level of Arrears at the end of quarter

Arrears do fluctuate throughout the quarter; however, the current figure is high. The Estates team has recently increased in size and a successful arrears drive was held in November 2018. The Council is seeing a larger number of people moving to Universal Credit which is impacting greatly on the arrears figure.

- Households living in temporary accommodation

The figure has increased for several quarters. National figures, however, suggest a 65% increase since 2010 and Brentwood's figures have remained relatively static in comparison.

Streetscene

- Officers are developing a new Waste Strategy for 2019 which will identify options for future recycling and waste improvements.

Recommendation 3
That the working group continue to monitor the outcomes of the Performance Indicators for the fourth quarter 2018/19.

**Performance Indicators and Formal Complaints Working Group
Minutes of Meeting 6 March 2019
Seven Arches Road**

Present: Cllr Dominic Naylor (DN), Cllr Jan Pound (JP)
Cllr Mark Reed (MR) and Cllr Will Russell (WR)

Also present: Steve Summers (SS) – Chief Operating Officer

Apologies: Cllr Barrett (GB)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, which was the third meeting of the group for this financial year.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Barrett.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

Officers reminded the working group that following the previous Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee a document detailing what actions have been developed for Housing, Planning Services and Revenue and Benefits with regards to Formal Complaints had been sent to Committee members.

5. Terms of Reference

These are attached to these minutes.

6. Review of reports provided

6.1 Formal Complaints

An overview of the key aspects of the Councils Formal Complaints Policy was provided by SS to the Working Group. A revised complaints policy was approved by committee in October 2018.

Action: To implement the revised complaints policy in April 2019.

6.2 A presentation was provided to the Working Group on Formal Complaints (Addendum 3) received by the Council for the previous four years. This

identified an increase in formal complaints made over this period, but it was acknowledged that the new policy in 2015 had provided greater access for complainants.

The Working Group reviewed individually the complaints received for the period September to December 2018 and noted and welcomed by the Working Group that there had been a significant reduction in the number of complaints received for Revenue & Benefits compared to previous quarters.

Following a request at a previous working group data was provided on Basildon Borough Council's complaints to review as a comparison against Brentwood's. The Working Group were advised that the amount of complaints received for Basildon was 90 from April 2018 to present.

Based on the current caseload of Basildon's Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Tenants and the Council Tax Base = 86,146 = 0.10% of complaints received.

Brentwood's complaints received; 25 from April 2018 to present. Total caseload = 37,104. Complaints received as a percentage = 0.06%.

The Working Group noted that there was an increase in Formal Complaints with regard to Streetscene which was unusual. It was agreed that information in relation to this would be provided to the next Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the 13th March 2019 as part of the committee's consideration of the item.

Action: For the Working Group to monitor these complaints against future quarters to identify concerns or themes.

Action: SB continues to obtain Basildon's complaints data and provide a comparison at the next Working Group meeting.

Action: SS to provide an update to the next Audit Scrutiny Committee on the 13th March 2019 on the streetscene complaints received in the third quarter.

6.3 Performance Indicators

The Working Group were provided with data for the Council's topline Performance Indicators for Sept to Dec 2018 (Addendum 4) and went through them individually.

Action: For the Working Group to continue to review progress of Performance Indicators each quarter.

Action: SB to prepare annual trends for PI H04.

7. Any Other Business

None.

8. Date of next meeting

Next meeting– date to be finalised.

Addendum 2

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Performance Indicators & Formal Complaints Working Group – February 2019

Members of Working Group

Crs. Pound, Chilvers, Barrett, Reed and Russell.

Terms of Reference

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