

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
8 OCTOBER 2018**

**Review of Complaints and Feedback Policy**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Margaret Squires  
**Responsible Officer:** Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement

**Reason for Report:** Review of the Complaints and Feedback Policy

**RECOMMENDATION:** To recommend to the Cabinet the content of the reviewed Complaints and Feedback Policy

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** To ensure that the Council provides access to services for customers in whatever way they choose to transact with us. Ensuring extended access via digital means and improving the way that we hold information and deliver our services to customers, placing them at the centre of what we do.

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** Accurate recording and monitoring of complaints is good practice and ensures openness and accountability to all customers.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Complaints are received by a variety of means which ensures that there is equality of opportunity for all customers. In addition, and where there is a need, Customer First staff will assist in the recording of complaints. There is also an interpretation service available through Language Line.

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The complaints and feedback policy was last reviewed in September 2015. The key requirements for recording, and dealing with complaints remains unchanged; the policy is therefore little changed.

1.2 The policy sets out the standards and timescales that customers can expect when providing feedback to the authority. It also provides standards for staff in dealing with complaints and feedback received.

1.3 The policy has been updated to reflect the changes in structure and show stage 1 complaints being dealt with by service managers and stage 2 by Group Managers or member of Leadership Team.

**2.0 Good Practice**

2.1 Good practice advice from the Ombudsman states that:

- Customers should be aware that they have the right to make a complaint and feel confident to do so.

- All staff should be able to help a customer raise a complaint and that the process of making a complaint is simple.
- Customers should be kept updated of what is happening with their complaint throughout the process.
- Customers should always be informed of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint, including details of any actions to be taken as a result of their complaint.
- Customers should be aware of the right to ask for a second review of their complaint and feel confident to use the system again if needed.

2.2 Our complaints policy follows all the guidance as set out in paragraph 2.1. Our complaints leaflet explains how to make a complaint; this is also available on line and all staff are provided with details about our complaints policy at induction. Complaints can be made in writing (paper and email), over the phone, on-line or in person. They are recorded and monitored to ensure a response is made within the agreed timescale. When the complaint has been investigated and resolved, the customer is informed of the outcome and provided with information on what they can do next if they are still dissatisfied.

### 3.0 **Ombudsman**

3.1 When someone is unhappy with the investigation carried out by the local authority, they can contact the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) who will carry out an independent review of our actions. There is currently also a Housing Ombudsman for complaints from Local Authority Tenants.

### 4.0 **Looking forward**

4.1 Our complaints policy will be reviewed again in 3 years unless any changes are needed before then. The review has ensured that the policy is still following the ombudsman's good practice guide. This ensures that it is easy to make a complaint using the access channel that suits each person best, that the process is clear, relevant, unbiased and the outcome of each complaint is notified to the complainant.

4.2 The annual report to Members ensures that monitoring and the outcome of complaints remain high profile. Complaints, comments and compliments form part of our continued improvement and inform how we design and change service delivery.

**Contact for more Information:** Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement, Tel 01884 234981, email: llewis@middevon.gov.uk

**Circulation of the Report:** Councillor Margaret Squires, Group Managers, Leadership Team and Scrutiny Committee.

**List of Background Papers: Complaints and Feedback Policy 2015, Annual complaints report to members, Customer Care Policy**