

## **REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Nikki Woollatt, Working Environment  
**Responsible Officer:** Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement

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

**Recommendation:** To approve the content of the reviewed Complaints and Feedback Policy

**Financial Implications:** Failure to deal with service failures and complaints promptly and appropriately may result in compensation being due to the complainant.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** None

**Legal Implications:** Failure to deal with service failures and complaints promptly and appropriately as identified in our policies may have legal implications.

**Risk Assessment:** None

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Complaints are received by a variety of means that 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.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The Complaints and Feedback policy underpins the core values of MDDC relating to People and Performance and outlines the process to measure our success with service delivery.

**Impact on Climate Change:** None

### **1.0 Introduction/Background**

**1.1** The complaints and feedback policy was last reviewed in October 2018. 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 Operational or Corporate Managers or member of Leadership Team. Additional guidance has been included around complaints about named officers as part of any perceived service failure.

## **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 this good practice. Information about the process is available to customers across all relevant channels and can be provided in alternative formats if requested. Complaints are recorded and reported on an annual basis to Scrutiny and Cabinet and the performance metrics included within the Audit cycle.

## **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.

**3.2** Information on how to complain to the Ombudsman is provided on our website and as part of our response to Stage two complaints. The Ombudsman also provides a video on how to make a complaint to them which can be found [here](#).

**3.3** Housing complaints are dealt with slightly differently as there is a specific [Housing Ombudsman](#) for complaints from Local Authority Tenants. The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code can be found [here](#).

**3.4.** Housing have a dedicated Complaints Officer who takes all housing Stage One complaints. The response times are currently in line with MDDC corporate times and are referred to within the Complaints policy alongside standard corporate times. Housing report on these separately to the general Annual Complaints report.

**3.5** Housing tenants may have a right to redress. The current compensation policy is under review but can be found [here](#) for further information.

## **4.0 Looking forward**

**4.1** Our complaints policy will be reviewed again in 2 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.

**4.3** At the point that we are able to replace the technical system an additional internal review will be done including members to identify opportunities for improving reporting and analysis of complaints received by the authority.

**4.4** Within the period since the last review a new Portfolio for Continuous Improvement has been created. Activities within this portfolio may in time feed into a revised ongoing review of complaints and customer feedback.

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

**Circulation of the Report:** Portfolio Holder Working Environment, Corporate and Operational Managers, Leadership Team

**List of Background Papers:**