

**Corporate Complaints – Annual Report 2017-18**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The report provides information on how the Council has dealt with complaints during the period between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 and performed against the statutory indicators which have been agreed between the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Local Authorities Complaint Handlers Network.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee review and endorse the content of this report.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 3.1 All council services follows the SPSO's model complaint handling procedure (CHP). A requirement of the CHP is that the Council report to the SPSO on the set of statutory performance indicators, agreed between the SPSO and the Local Authorities Complaints Handlers Network, and prepare an annual report for consideration by Members.
- 3.2 The annual report for the period between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Council received 498 complaints over the course of the year and page 7 of the report advises that the Council closed (dealt with) 403 complaints at stage 1 and 84 complaints at stage 2. 11 complaints were closed after escalation by the customer to stage 2. This low number of escalations (2%) indicates that most customers were content with the stage 1 response. Where appropriate stage 1 responses would include an apology and confirmation of the actions taken by the Council to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence.
- 3.4 Page 11 of the report advises that the Council on average took 6.2 working days to respond to stage 1 complaints and on average 18.4 working days to respond to stage 2 complaints, these figures are only slightly higher than in 2016/17 (6 working days and 17.2 working days respectively)

- 3.5 Page 12 of the report advises on performance against timescales. Across the Council we closed 68.2% of stage 1 complaints within the 5 working day timescale, which is slightly lower than in 2016/17 (68.7%). We closed 75% of stage 2 complaints within the 20 working day timescale which is an increase on 2016/17 (72.6%).
- 3.6 A breakdown across Council services of the number of complaints dealt with by each service at stage 1 and stage 2 and their respective performance against timescales is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.7 Page 17 of the report advises that 20 complaints were received by the SPSO which is a reduction in the number received by them in 2016/17 (33) and as in 2016/17 only 3 went to a full investigation. This low number of referrals to the SPSO (4%) of the total number of complaints received indicates that customers are generally content with the responses provided.
- 3.8 Pages 18 to 20 of the report provides a summary of the Council's performance when benchmarked against Scotland as a whole and Councils that are similar in terms of population and geographical area. On the whole we are performing well against the national averages and when compared with our benchmarked Councils.
- 3.9 The complaints procedure is administered centrally by the Governance Unit within Customer Services who prepare quarterly reports which are considered by the SMT. Each Department also has Complaints Officers / Complaints Coordinators who are responsible for ensuring that the procedure is followed.
- 3.10 The quarterly reports are available to the public via the complaints page on the Council's website at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/do-it-online/comments-and-complaints>

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Council has dealt with the complaints it has received in a way which is compatible with the ethos of the CHP and complied with its statutory obligation to provide an annual report.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	None
5.2	Financial	None
5.3	Legal	Statutory requirement to prepare report
5.4	HR	None
5.5	Equalities	None

5.6	Risk	None
5.7	Customer Service	None

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Annual Complaints Report 2017 -18  
Appendix 2 – Services performance against timescales