

Scrutiny Report

Committee: Scrutiny Communities
Meeting Date – 22 January 2025
Key Decision – No



Complaints Policy Review

Chair of Committee: Cllr Gwil Wren
Executive Member(s): Cllr Liz Leyshon
Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected: All
Executive Director: Alyn Jones - Executive Director Resources, Strategy & Transformation

Executive Summary

Scrutiny of proposed revisions to the Somerset Council Customer Complaints Policy ahead of adoption and publication via Executive Committee.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment upon the proposed changes to the complaints policy and consider whether there is a need for any additional recommendations that should be made to the Executive to consider.

Reasons for Proposals

The council's Customer Complaints Policy is reviewed annually, and at this review, we are recommending some changes to ensure compliance and alignment with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman's new Handling Codes. The council is required to be compliant by April 2026 but advised to work towards this sooner.

Report Author:

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Main report and supporting information

Background and purpose of report

1. The council's complaints policy is reviewed annually and this year we are proposing changes to ensure that the policy complies with and aligns to the new handling codes issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

2. The complaints policy helps ensure that the council operates in a customer centric manner and that we address and remedy mistakes. There is no measurable financial impacts associated.

Other options considered

3. N/A.

Key considerations for the Council

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

4. TBC

Consultation and feedback

5. Consultation with council's liaison officer from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Financial and Risk Implications

6. No financial risks. Reputation risk if council does not align with the Ombudsman handling code and potential for increase in fault decisions. Proposed change to policy mitigates this risk.

Legal and Procurement Implications

7. None

HR / Workforce Implications

8. None

Equalities Implications

9. None – EIA previously undertaken for policy (at vesting) and changes are minor

Community Safety Implications

10. None

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

11. None

Health and Safety Implications

12. None

Health and Wellbeing Implications

13. None

Social Value

14. None

Background Papers

15. None

Appendices

- None