

Attendance

Members of the Scrutiny Board

Cllr Paul Sweet (Chair)
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Ellis Turrell

In Attendance

David Pattison	Director of Governance
Julia Cleary	Scrutiny and Systems Manager
Earl Piggott Smith	Scrutiny Officer
Martin Stevens	Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Quarter 3 Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints Report 2020/21**
Scrutiny Board received a report from Director of Governance requesting them to review complaints management and performance for the period 1 October to 31 December 2020.

The report provided an overview of Quarter Three Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints report for the following areas:
 - Corporate

- Children's
- Adults and Public Health
- Ombudsman enquiries

In relation to corporate stage one complaints the Council had received 43 stage one corporate complaints; this was a consistent number of cases in comparison to 2019/20 as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report. Out of the 43 cases received, 19 were upheld (at fault). The highest figure of 24 complaints received referred to Waste Management and out of 24 received, 15 were upheld. This was in comparison to 13 stage one complaints received during quarter three 2019/20. The Complaints Team had worked closely with the service to improve complaint handling and ensure appropriate remedies were put in place to achieve the best outcomes for customers.

In relation to corporate stage two complaints it was explained that if a customer remained dissatisfied, they could escalate to stage two of the complaints procedure. In this period the council had received five stage two cases and out of the five cases received, two cases were upheld (at fault) and three cases were not upheld (not at fault).

In relation to Children's complaints, the council had received 10 stage one children's services complaints, which was a consistent number of cases (10) received in comparison to quarter three in 2019/20. There had been three stage two complaints received during this period and no stage three complaints. There had been nine cases closed and resolved during this period, four cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and five cases were not upheld (not at fault).

In relation to Adult's and Public Health complaints, the council had received seven stage one adult services complaints which was a decrease of 10 cases in comparison to quarter three in 2019/20. There had been five cases closed and resolved during this period, two cases were upheld, one case was partially upheld and two cases were not upheld.

The council had received 14 assessment enquiries from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and two assessment enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman (HO). The council had received three LGSCO full enquiries, two for Adult Services (both upheld) and one for Planning Department (not upheld).

The council had also received one full enquiry from the HO for Wolverhampton Homes in relation to a landlord's handling of a repair to the boiler and damage to possessions. The outcome concluded service failure and appropriate remedies/resolutions had now been put in place.

The Board understood that the council sought to learn from the complaints made and that when a complaint was upheld (council at fault) and the finding of a subsequent investigation was for a financial remedy, change to policy or service delivery; the Customer Feedback Team produced an action plan report. Recommendations within these reports were agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Service Manager/Director to ensure appropriate remedies and changes to policy/service delivery were implemented. The Customer Feedback Team also attended regular quality assurance meetings for Adults and Children's Services to ensure they used the learning from complaints to drive service improvements.

The Customer Feedback Team had also received a total of 94 compliments (Corporate, Public Health, Adults and Children's) for this period and an example in relation to Waste Management was discussed.

A question was raised in relation to the average time that it took for a member of the public to reach the Council and it was agreed that information would be provided in relation to this at a future meeting. A Board member also mentioned the tree services and that issues such as smaller gardens being overshadowed by very large trees were of great concern and occasionally expense to some homeowners.

Some concerns were raised in relation to waste management complaints which appeared to have increased since the last quarter. It was accepted that the nature of the pandemic was in some way to blame for this and that complaints in relation to this would continue to be closely monitored.

A comment was raised in relation to Appendix 3 where 214 service request enquiries had been logged. The Board asked under what situation an issue was logged as a complaint and when it was deemed to be an enquiry and if it was logged as an enquiry how were lessons learnt from this. The Director for Governance stated that it was vital to be open and transparent and that this was why the information in relation to enquiries was included in the report and provided an example whereby an enquiry into why a bin had not been collected might be due to it not having been put outside by the homeowner so would not constitute a complaint. This meant that it would be dealt with in a more timely manner. In relation to the figures for waste management it was asked whether it was possible to see separate figures for the general and recycling waste against the green garden waste.

The Board also queried as to whether in the future it might be worth considering a benchmarking exercise in relation to waste collection with other local authorities of a similar nature, size and geography. The Director of Governance agreed to consider this for a future meeting.

A question was raised in the chat as to what the 15 upheld waste management complaints were, what these covered, what the common themes were and that if they were repeated complaints about similar themes what actions had been taken.

The question was also raised in the chat as to how a complaint could be a positive experience for a customer.

Resolved: That a report be brought to a future meeting of Scrutiny Board in relation to Customer Services and waiting times.

5 **Work Planning and Work Programmes**

Scrutiny Board considered a presentation on work planning.

A board member referred to a previous scrutiny task and finish group that had considered the issue of flash flooding in the City. It was suggested that a follow up piece of work could be carried out to follow up on this and Seven Trent Water invited to an enquiry day to provide evidence in relation to the current situation.

A board member asked whether information could be provided showing all the different government grants that had been received by the Council and where the grant money had been allocated.

A report was requested to be brought before the Board in relation to the current situation with private sector rented accommodation.

It was noted that performance reports in relation to Wolverhampton Homes and WV Living were being considered for inclusion on the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel work programme.

A query was also raised as to where educational achievement would be scrutinised.

Resolved: That the work plan be updated, and feedback be provided at the next meeting.