

The Arc  
High Street  
Clowne  
S43 4JY

To: Chair & Members of the Standards  
Committee

Contact: Angelika Kaufhold  
Telephone: 01246 242529

Email: [angelika.kaufhold@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:angelika.kaufhold@bolsover.gov.uk)

Friday, 17 January 2025

Dear Councillor

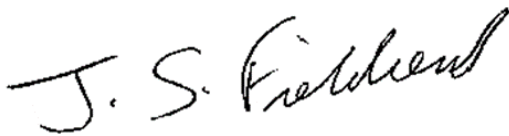
**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Standards Committee of the Bolsover District Council to be held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 27th January, 2025 at 14:00 hours.

Register of Members' Interests - Members are reminded that a Member must within 28 days of becoming aware of any changes to their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests provide written notification to the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

You will find the contents of the agenda itemised on page 3 onwards.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. S. Fielden".

Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer

### **Equalities Statement**

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

#### **Access for All statement**

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or **language** or contact us by:

- **Phone:** [01246 242424](tel:01246242424)
- **Email:** [enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk)
- **BSL Video Call:** A three-way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with Sign Solutions, you just need WiFi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) - a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real-time conversation with us by text.
- **Visiting** one of our [offices](#) at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**

***Monday, 27th January, 2025 at 14:00 hours taking place in the Council Chamber, The Arc,  
Clowne***

<b>Item No.</b>		<b>Page No.(s)</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies For Absence</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Urgent Items of Business</b>  To note any urgent items of business which the Chairman has consented to being considered under the provisions of Section 100(B) 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  Members should declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Non Statutory Interest as defined by the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of:  a) any business on the agenda b) any urgent additional items to be considered c) any matters arising out of those items and if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting at the relevant time.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes</b>  To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2024.	<b>5 - 8</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Compliments, Comments and Complaints Annual Summary</b>	<b>9 - 115</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Reduction in number of Standards Committee meetings per year</b>	<b>116 - 119</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Gifts and Hospitality Annual Report</b>	<b>120 - 129</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Annual Report</b>	<b>130 - 133</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Whistleblowing Policy Annual Report</b>	<b>134 - 147</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Request for Dispensation</b>	<b>148 - 152</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Update of Standards Investigation</b>	<b>153 - 176</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Complaints Update</b>  Update on statistics of complaints received by the Council against District and Parish Councillors	<b>177 - 179</b>

To consider the Standards Committee Work Programme for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year.



## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 4 November 2024 at 14:00 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor R. Jaffray in the Chair

Councillors Jane Yates (Vice-Chair), Anne Clarke, Louise Fox, Justin Gilbody, Duncan Haywood and Tom Kirkham.

Officers:- Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer) and Angelika Kaufhold (Governance and Civic Manager).

### **STA10-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

### **STA11-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to be considered at the meeting.

### **STA12-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

### **STA13-24/25 MINUTES**

Moved by Councillor Janet Tait and seconded by Councillor Anne Clark

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

### **STA14-24/25 COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer relating to the Councillor Complaint Procedure.

The report proposed a change to the procedure for the Monitoring Officer to recommend a local resolution to a complaint or refer it to a formal hearing without the approval of the complainant. The existing scheme was imbalanced with a disproportionate level of control in the hands of complainants who had to agree to any proposed resolutions by the

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monitoring Officer.

*Councillor Justin Gilbody arrived at this point in the meeting.*

The proposed change below (excerpt from the Councillor Complaint Procedure paragraph 7.2. “you” relates to the complainant) was in line with guidance issued by the Local Government Association:

*“if the Monitoring Officer considers that local resolution is not appropriate, ~~or you are not satisfied by the proposed resolution,~~ or the member concerned is not prepared to undertake any proposed remedial action, such as giving an apology, then the Monitoring Officer will report the Investigating Officer’s report to the Sub-Committee which will conduct a hearing before deciding whether the member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so, whether to take any action in respect of the member.”*

During discussion the following additional information was provided in response to Members’ questions:

- The Sub-Committee would be convened in the event of a member complaint being referred by the Monitoring Officer for further investigation. The Sub-Committee would then review the complaint and decide whether any sanctions were appropriate. The Monitoring Officer did not have the authority to impose sanctions this was within the remit of the Sub-Committee.
- Local Resolution decisions made by the Monitoring Officer were reported to the Standards Committee at each meeting.

Moved by Councillor Duncan Haywood and seconded by Councillor Anne Clarke

**RESOLVED** that the amendment to the Councillor Complaint Procedure be approved.

### **STA15-24/25      DELEGATION OF THE DECISION TO GRANT DISPENSATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer relating to the proposal to delegate authority for the granting of dispensations.

At the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 Members requested that a benchmarking exercise be carried out by the Monitoring Officer to establish practice by other local authorities in respect of delegating authority to grant dispensations. The results detailed in the report highlighted the different approaches taken and where authority was delegated to the Monitoring Officer this was restricted to certain circumstances only.

Any decision which required a more objective view on whether the dispensation was justified would be reserved to the Standards Committee to avoid the risk of undue pressure being placed on the officer with the delegated authority.

It was confirmed that requests for dispensation were rare and in recent times only applied to the Councillor Directors of Dragonfly. It depended on the nature of the dispensation request whether it would be best placed either by referral to the Standards Committee or

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

decided by the Monitoring Officer through delegated authority.

Some Members' raised concerns that by granting delegated authority it could place the Monitoring Officer in a difficult position and that as there were so few requests then these should always be considered by the Standards Committee itself.

It was suggested that all councillors be reminded that any requests for dispensations had to be submitted to the Monitoring Officer in a timely fashion so that the Standards Committee could be convened to make its decision.

Councillor Tom Kirkham moved to reject the recommendations within the report which was seconded by Councillor Justin Gilbody and following a vote it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report be rejected and not to change the rules relating to the granting of dispensations.

### STA16-24/25 COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer provided an update on complaints made against Councillors.

It was confirmed that there had been an influx of complaints recently with four new complaints relating to Cresswell Parish Council and one against Shirebrook Town Council as well as earlier complaints which were still ongoing. Once reviewed the outcomes/decisions relating to completed complaints would be reported to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed the process for reviewing complaints included:

- Initial assessment of the complaint to confirm if the individual was acting in their councillor role/capacity and if the issue fell within the jurisdiction of the Councillor Complaint Procedure.
- Whether a Local Resolution for example an apology could be applied or whether the complaint justified further investigation.
- Convening a Sub-Committee to consider the complaint including a hearing for the facts to be put by the complainant, the councillor and for the Investigation report to be considered.
- In the event of a breach being found the Sub-Committee had a range of sanctions to consider including:
  - Censure where the findings of the Sub-Committee had to be publicised by the relevant Parish/District Council;
  - Removal of the councillor from a position of office within the Parish/District council.

At present there was no power to suspend councillors following serious breaches but the Government was looking to review and enhance these powers which were considered to be too low at present.

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **STA17-24/25      WORK PROGRAMME - SEPTEMBER 2024 TO MARCH 2025**

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year. The Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that Annual Summary of Compliments, Comments and Complaints which had originally be scheduled for today's meeting had been moved to the January 2025 meeting.

The meeting concluded at 14:32 hours.



## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

### **Customer Service Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report and Annual Summary 2023/24**

### **Report of the Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	Lesley Botham Customer Service, Complaints and Standards Manager

### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- To provide information on the Council's performance in relation to its customer service standards, Compliments, Comments and Complaints.
  - To provide information on the effective management of complaints and customer requests which is central to excellent customer service and which the Council can use to improve its services.
  - To provide information on the number of compliments, comments, and complaints for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
  - To provide an Annual Summary on the above.
  - To make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to Customer Service Standards and the effective management of complaints.
- 

### **REPORT DETAILS**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to the effective management of complaints.

#### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

##### **2.1 Compliments, Comments and Complaints**

##### Compliments

In total **203** written compliments were received during 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Compliments were received from customers who appreciated excellent service.

##### Comments

The number of written comments received for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 was **33**, 100% were acknowledged and passed to the respective department within the target time of 3 working days, for consideration when reviewing their service.

### Complaints

#### Frontline resolution (stage one)

The number of Frontline Resolution complaints received by the Contact Centre service; in total **265** complaints were recorded from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

**93%** of which were responded to within our customer standard of 3 working days.

#### Formal Investigation (stage two)

The number of Formal Investigation complaints and M.P. enquiries received by department was **103** formal complaints for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. **213** M.P. enquiries were also received during this same period.

**98%** Formal complaints and **98%** M.P. enquiries were responded to within our customer service standard of 15 working days, for which the target was 97%.

#### Internal Review (stage three)

The number of stage three complaints received for the period by department. These are complainants who have already made a stage two complaint and still feel dissatisfied.

During 2023/24, **27** stage three complaints were received of which, **100%** were responded to within the standard of 20 working days.

### Ombudsman

By way of background information, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) upheld 80% of complaints submitted to them in 2023/24 (up from 74% in 2022/23) with the average being 63% for similar authorities.

For 2023/24, 2 complaints were received, and none were investigated by the LGSCO due to no evidence of fault, and information provided insufficient or speculative.

Housing Ombudsman (HO) - 1 complaint was received regarding the Council's handling of alleged anti-social behaviour but was it was decided by the HO that they have no legal jurisdiction to investigate the matter.

### **Summary for 2023/24**

The following table provides a summary of performance for compliments, comments, and complaints for 2023/24, with comparative data from previous years.

**Appendix (1)** provides a summary of performance by % of compliments, comments and complaints received for each service area and responses within timescale.

### Volume and Performance

<b>Volume by type</b>	<b>2023/24 Total</b>	<b>2022/23 Total</b>	<b>2021/22 Total</b>	<b>2020/21 Total</b>
Compliments	<b>203</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>228</b>
Comments	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>97</b>
M.P. enquiries	<b>213</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>28</b>
Stage 1 Complaints (S1)	<b>265</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>217</b>
Stage 2 Formal Investigation Complaints (S2)	<b>103</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>175</b>
Stage 3 Internal Review Complaints (S3)	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>780</b>
% Comments acknowledged within standard (target 3 working days)	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
% Stage 1 responded to within standard (target 100%)	<b>93%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>Data not recorded</b>	<b>Data not recorded</b>
Average response in days (target 3 working days)	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Data not recorded</b>	<b>Data not recorded</b>
% Stage 2 responded to within standard (target 97%)	<b>98%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Average response in days (target 15 working days)	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
% Stage 3 responded to within standard (target 100%)	<b>100%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Average response in days (target 20 working days)	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>

When comparing 2023/24 to the previous year of 2022/23, the following is noted:

- There were more written compliments received.
- We have received slightly more comments.
- We have received slightly less frontline resolution (S1) complaints.
- Slightly less formal investigation (S2) complaints and M.P. enquiries were received.
- The same amount of internal review (S3) complaints were received.

The above would appear to indicate that the Council has an easy to access complaints system, as recommended by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

A separate report is submitted for Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service complaints.

## Complaints Feedback

Whilst there were no real trends leading to service improvements during the 2023/24 financial year, we agreed to deal with 'general enquiries' from the MPs office where appropriate as opposed to escalating through the complaints process.

There has been a reduction in the average response time and an increase in the percentage of complaints meeting their 'responded within timescale' target. Therefore, it is acknowledged positive improvements have been made to the administration of complaints and that service areas have been proactive in investigations which have enabled the Complaints Officer to produce a response for the complainant within timescales.

A revised Compliments, Comments, and Complaints Policy which was approved and implemented in April 2024, may have had an impact on performance due to the reduction in response timeframes and requirements by the LGSCO & HO. In addition, the Social Housing Regulator identified an error within the Policy at paragraph 4.14, there is no longer a timeframe of 8 weeks elapsed time before the HO will investigate. A Delegated decision is to be submitted for approval to amend the Policy in the future.

A first Self-Assessment and Annual Complaint Handling / Service Improvement Report was submitted to the HO in June 2024, a copy for reference is at (**Appendix 2 and 3**).

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 To note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints.

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 None

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Standards Committee note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints for 2023/24.

Approved by Councillor M Dooley Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing

---

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
<b>Details:</b>	12	



Whilst there are no direct financial implications with regard to the report, the Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well. In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

**Legal (including Data Protection)**      Yes ☒      No ☐

**Details:**

The Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman and, in the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information requests, the Information Commissioner's Office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines. There are no Data Protection implications.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

**Staffing**      Yes ☐      No ☒      **Details:**

Not applicable as the report is to keep Elected Members informed.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

**Equality and Diversity Impact and Consultation**      Yes ☐      No ☒

**Details:**

Any complaints linked to E&D issues are dealt with in line with our policies.

On behalf of the Information, Engagement and Performance Manager

**Environment**      Yes ☐      No ☒

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment. *(Please speak to Richard Winter, Climate Change Officer, for advice)*

**Details:**

Any complaints linked to environmental issues are dealt with in line with our policies.

## DECISION INFORMATION

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:  <b>Revenue - £75,000   <input type="checkbox"/>   Capital - £150,000   <input type="checkbox"/></b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
<b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i>	No

<b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>	All
<b>Consultation:</b> <b>Leader / Deputy Leader   <input type="checkbox"/>   Executive   <input type="checkbox"/></b> <b>SLT   <input type="checkbox"/>   Relevant Service Manager   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> <b>Members   <input type="checkbox"/>   Public   <input type="checkbox"/>   Other   <input type="checkbox"/></b>	Yes  Details:

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, and Environment.</b>
Increasing customer satisfaction with our services Improving customer contact and removing barriers to accessing information Actively engaging with partners to benefit our customers Promoting equality and diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people

<b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Compliments, Comments and Complaints for 2023/24: - A. Compliments by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24 B. Comments by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24 C. Frontline resolution complaints (S1) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24 D. Formal Investigation complaints (S2) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24 E. M.P. Enquiries by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24 F. Internal Review complaints (S3) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24 G. Ombudsman complaints summary for 2023/24
2	Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code – Self
3	Assessment 2024 Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code – Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024

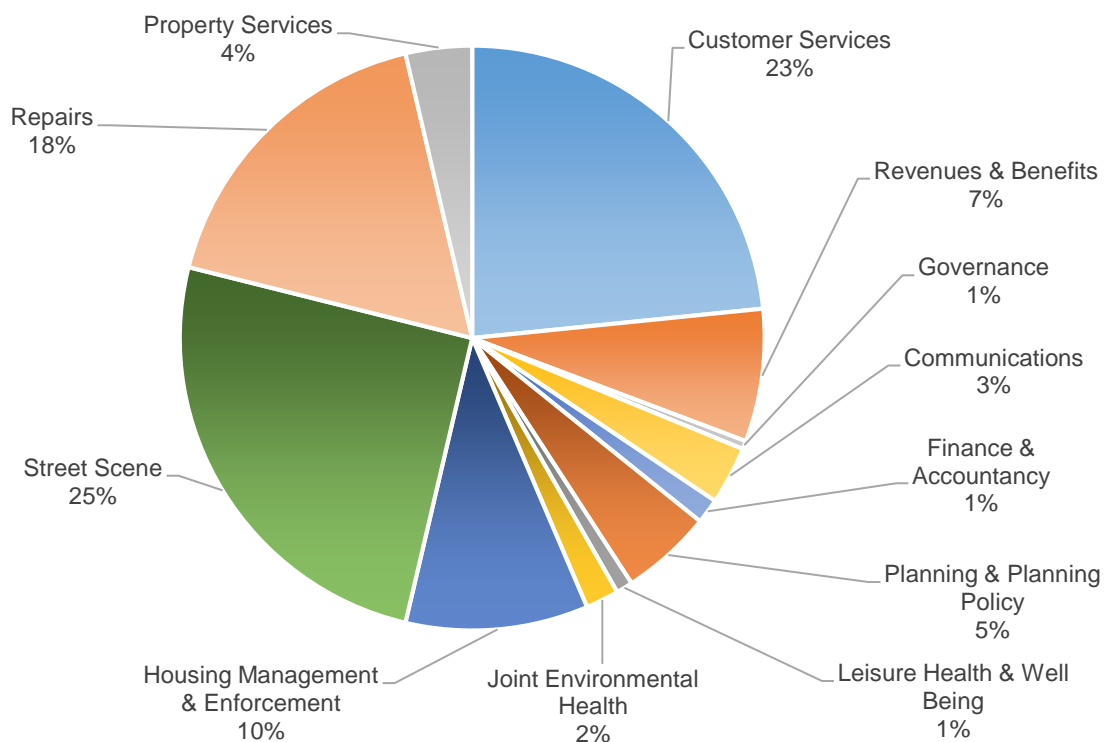
<b>Background Papers</b>
None

## Appendix 1. Compliments, Comments and Complaints for 2023/24

### A. Compliments by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

<b>A - Compliments 1/4/23 - 31/3/24</b>		
<b>Services Directorate</b>	Customer Services	51
	Revenues & Benefits	16
	Governance	1
	Communications	7
	Finance & Accountancy	3
<b>Strategy Directorate</b>	Planning & Planning Policy	11
	Leisure Health & Well Being	2
	Joint Environmental Health	4
	Housing Management & Enforcement	22
	Street Scene	55
<b>Dragonfly Development Ltd</b>	Repairs	38
	Property Services	8

**Percentage of Compliments by department**

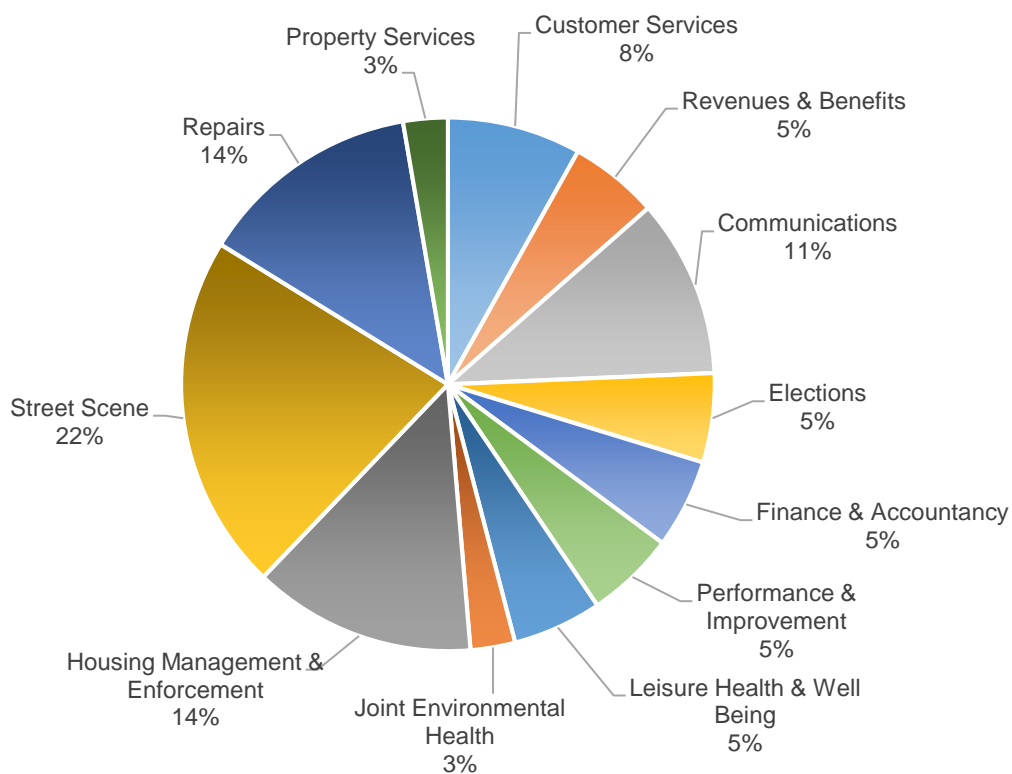


Compliments Included:	
Customer would like to thank the Council's Communications team; they are very appreciative to have the support of the Council promoting and sharing events and information. It helps them connect all together, it is really an invaluable service. It bridges the 'gap' between the Council and residents/businesses.	Communications.
Customer would like to thank the Customer advised for their help with their housing application. The advisor was wonderful and listened very well.	Contact Centre
Customer has complimented the Customer Advisors. They said it's easy to get the help needed, staff are always very friendly, helpful and nothing is too much trouble. No bad attitudes.	Contact Centre
Customer would like to pass on their commendation the Outreach worker who has been out to their property to help them. The worker was very kind, helpful and went above and beyond for them and they were very happy for the help received.	Environmental Health
Customer would like to thank the ranger for fitting the safe and secure system at their property as they felt really vulnerable with anti-social behaviour teenagers around. They are amazed that the council do this and were also really happy with their advice.	Housing
Would like to thank the Planning Officer for their quick work and has commented that the way the application has been managed is the best they have experienced from a local authority in some time.	Planning
Customer would like to thank the Business Centres Manager and the Business Estate Officer for providing an exceptional experience during the tenancy. Their dedication and care were evident from day one, and they consistently went above and beyond to ensure the needs were met. From prompt communication to resolving any issues efficiently, their professionalism and attention to detail were truly commendable.	Property Services
Would like to thank the operative who fixed their radiators this morning, they were lovely, chatty, respectful, and overall, just amazing.	Repairs
Customer would like to pass on their compliments to the two plumbers who attended their property for work to be carried out. They were polite, did a good job and cleaned up after themselves. Superb is the word they wish to use!	Repairs
Customer would like to thank the Recovery section for always being so understanding and helping them to pay off their balance. They are very grateful for everything the team has done for them. Customer teared up on the phone as the Council have always been so lovely.	Revenues
Customer would like to thank the recycling coordinator as they went above and beyond their duties, they were helpful, listened and solved the customers problems in one visit. Customer commented that they are an invaluable asset to Bolsover District Council.	Street Scene
Wanted to thank the Refuse member of staff who assessed their broken bin. Their manner was lovely, and they explained both options (repair or replace). They are very happy with the service, and they were very attentive. They also made the customer feel at ease.	Street Scene

## B. Comments by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

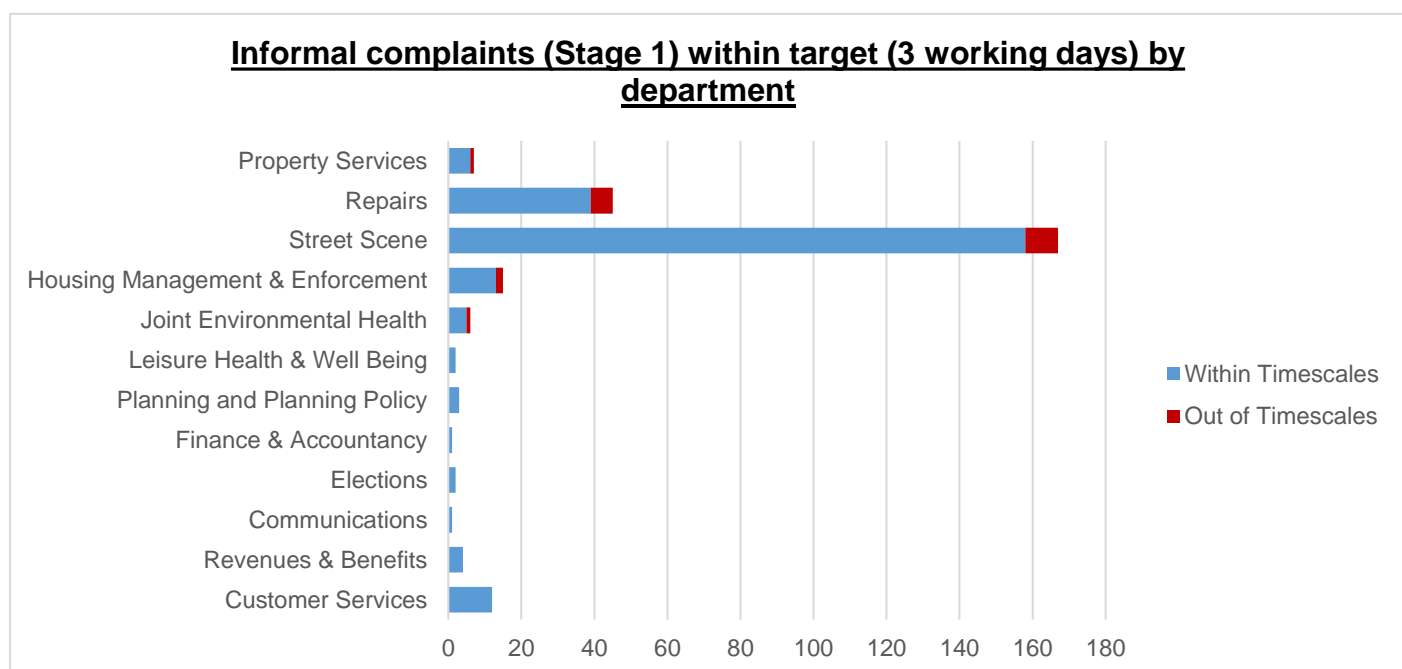
B- Comments 1/4/23 - 31/3/24		Number
Services	Customer Services	3
	Revenues & Benefits	2
	Communications	4
	Elections	2
	Finance & Accountancy	2
Strategy	Leisure Health & Well Being	2
	Joint Environmental Health	1
	Housing Management & Enforcement	5
	Street Scene	8
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	5
	Property Services	1

**Percentage of Comments by department**



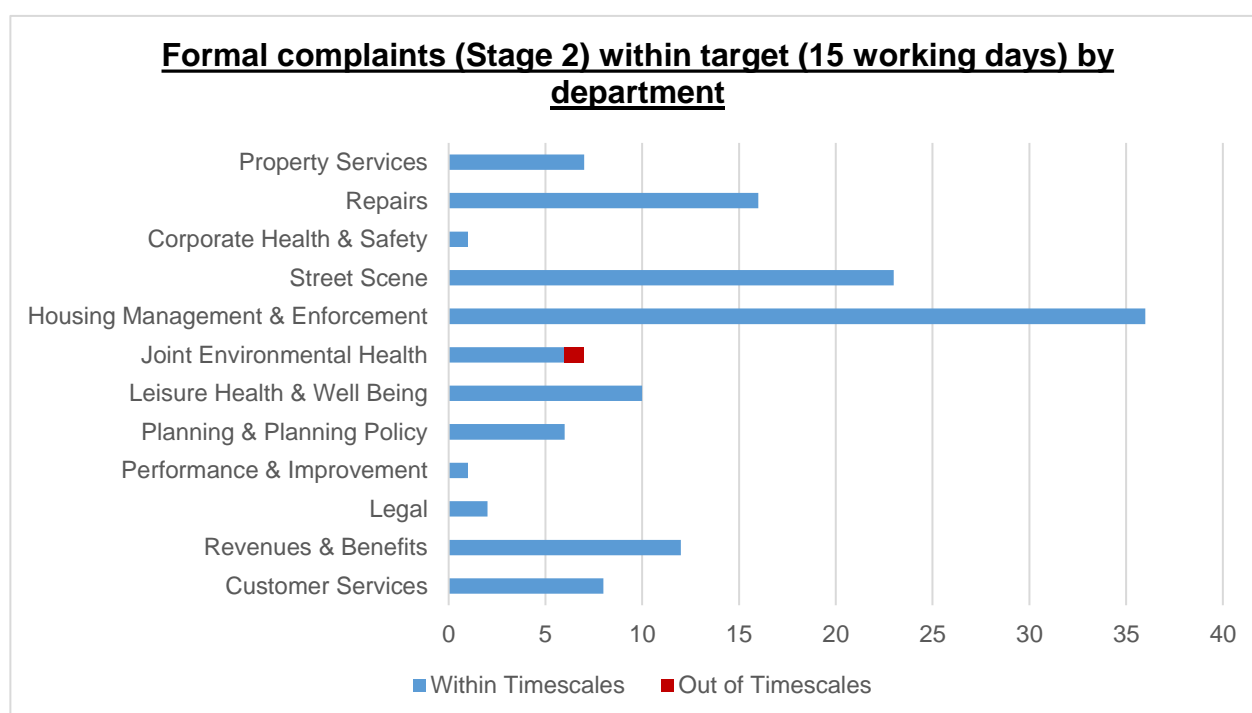
## C. Frontline resolution complaints (S1) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

C - Frontline Resolutions (Stage 1) complaints via Contact Centre 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within Timescale (3 working days)	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	12	12	0
	Revenues & Benefits	4	4	0
	Communications	1	1	0
	Elections	2	2	0
	Finance & Accountancy	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning and Planning Policy	3	3	0
	Leisure Health & Well Being	2	2	0
	Joint Environmental Health	6	5	1
	Housing Management & Enforcement	15	13	2
	Street Scene	167	158	9
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	45	39	6
	Property Services	7	6	1



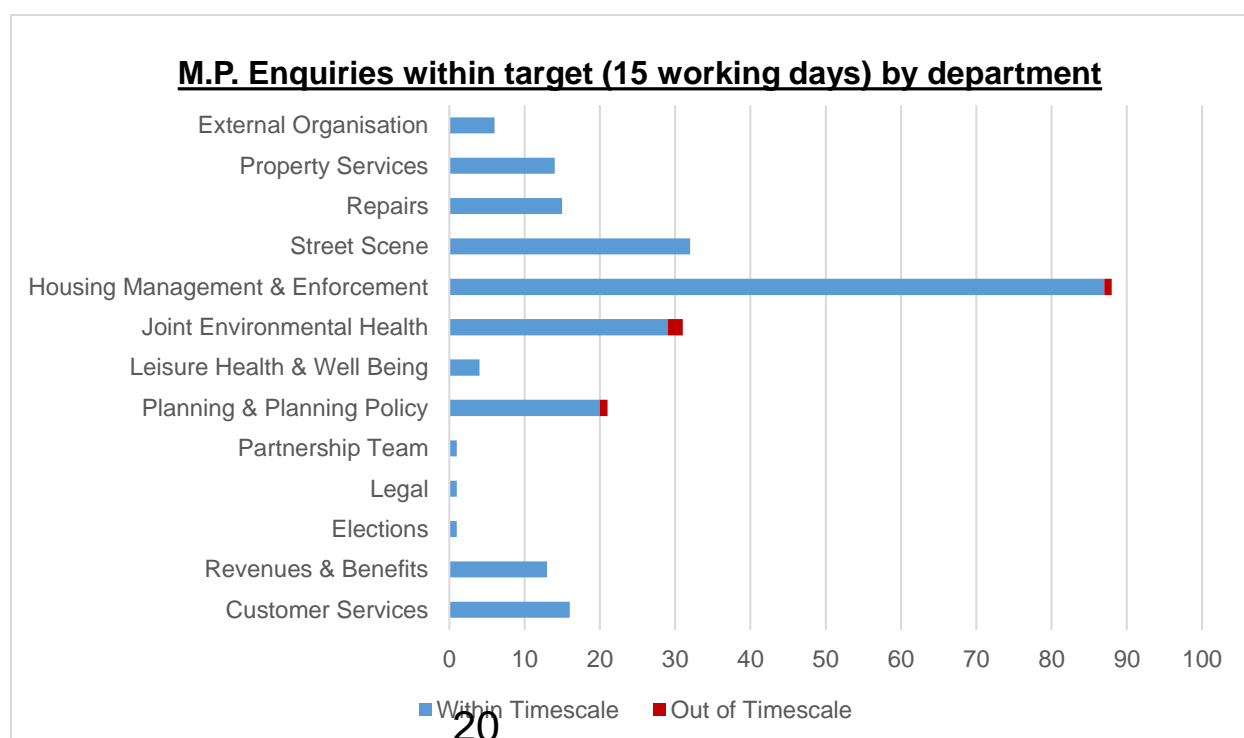
## D. Formal Investigation complaints (S2) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

D - Formal Investigations (Stage 2) complaints 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within timescale of 15 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	8	8	0
	Revenues & Benefits	12	12	0
	Legal	2	2	0
	Performance & Improvement	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	6	6	0
	Leisure Health & Well Being	10	10	0
	Joint Environmental Health	7	6	1
	Housing Management & Enforcement	36	36	0
	Street Scene	23	23	0
	Corporate Health & Safety	1	1	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	16	16	0
	Property Services	7	7	0



## E. M.P. Enquiries by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

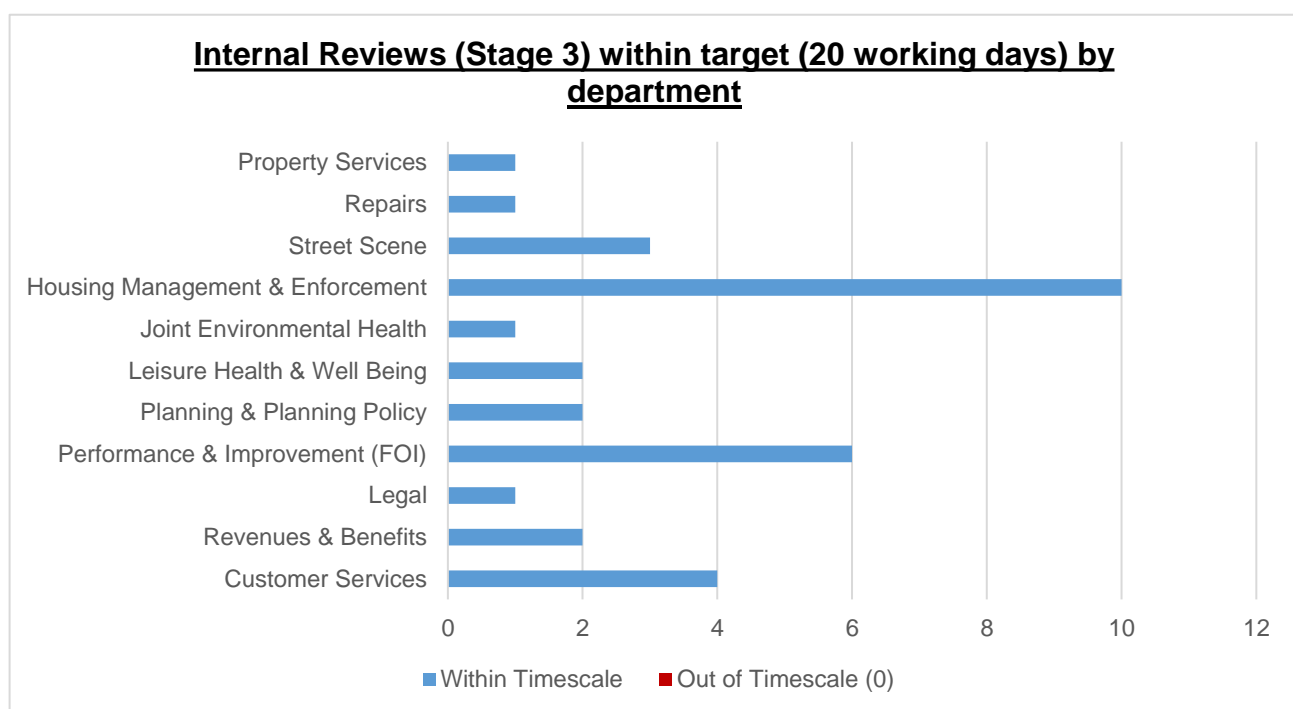
E - M.P. Enquiries 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within timescale of 15 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	16	16	0
	Revenues & Benefits	13	13	0
	Elections	1	1	0
	Legal	1	1	0
	Partnership Team	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	21	20	1
	Leisure Health & Well Being	4	4	0
	Joint Environmental Health	31	29	2
	Housing Management & Enforcement	88	87	1
	Street Scene	32	32	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	15	15	0
	Property Services	14	14	0
External Organisation		6	6	0





## F. Internal Review complaints (S3) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

F - Internal Reviews (Stage 3) complaints 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within timescale of 20 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	4	4	0
	Revenues & Benefits	2	2	0
	Legal	1	1	0
	Performance & Improvement (FOI)	6	6	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	2	2	0
	Leisure Health & Well Being	2	2	0
	Joint Environmental Health	1	1	0
	Housing Management & Enforcement	10	10	0
	Street Scene	3	3	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	1	1	0
	Property Services	1	1	0



## G. Ombudsman complaints summary for 2023/24

G – Ombudsman's Summary	Ombudsman	Date Received	Departments Involved	Date Decision Letter Received	Ombudsman Decision
Mrs X says the Council failed to follow due process when assessing her neighbour's planning applications for a boiler flue as it did not properly consider the impact of the smoke of residential amenity.	LGSCO	24/07/2023	Environmental Health	17/08/2023	We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's consideration of planning applications for a boiler flue. It is reasonable to expect the complainant to have contacted us sooner. Updated letter 7/9/23 We will not investigate Mrs X's complaint because there is not enough evidence of fault in the way the Council handled the planning applications, and the claimed injustice does not directly flow from the alleged fault.
			Planning		
Mr X complained about the conduct of a councillor which Mr X said could result in sensitive information being available to the public under freedom of information rights. Mr X is unhappy that the Council decided not to progress the complaint.	LGSCO	Not given	Councillors	08/11/23	The injustice Mr X claims from his complaint is speculative and not sufficient to justify our further involvement. In addition, the concerns Mr X raises about data security are best dealt with by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) which is the UK's independent regulator in respect of data protection matters.

The complainant (Miss R) complains about the Council's handling of alleged antisocial behaviour being perpetrated by her neighbour. She says this is causing her to feel unsafe in her home and wants the Council to remove its tenants.	HO	19/02/24	Housing	27/03/2024	The Housing Ombudsman deals with these types of complaints. We cannot by law investigate the issues Miss R raises and the restriction I outline at Paragraph 2 (above) applies. We cannot investigate this complaint as we have no legal jurisdiction to do so.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----	----------	---------	------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

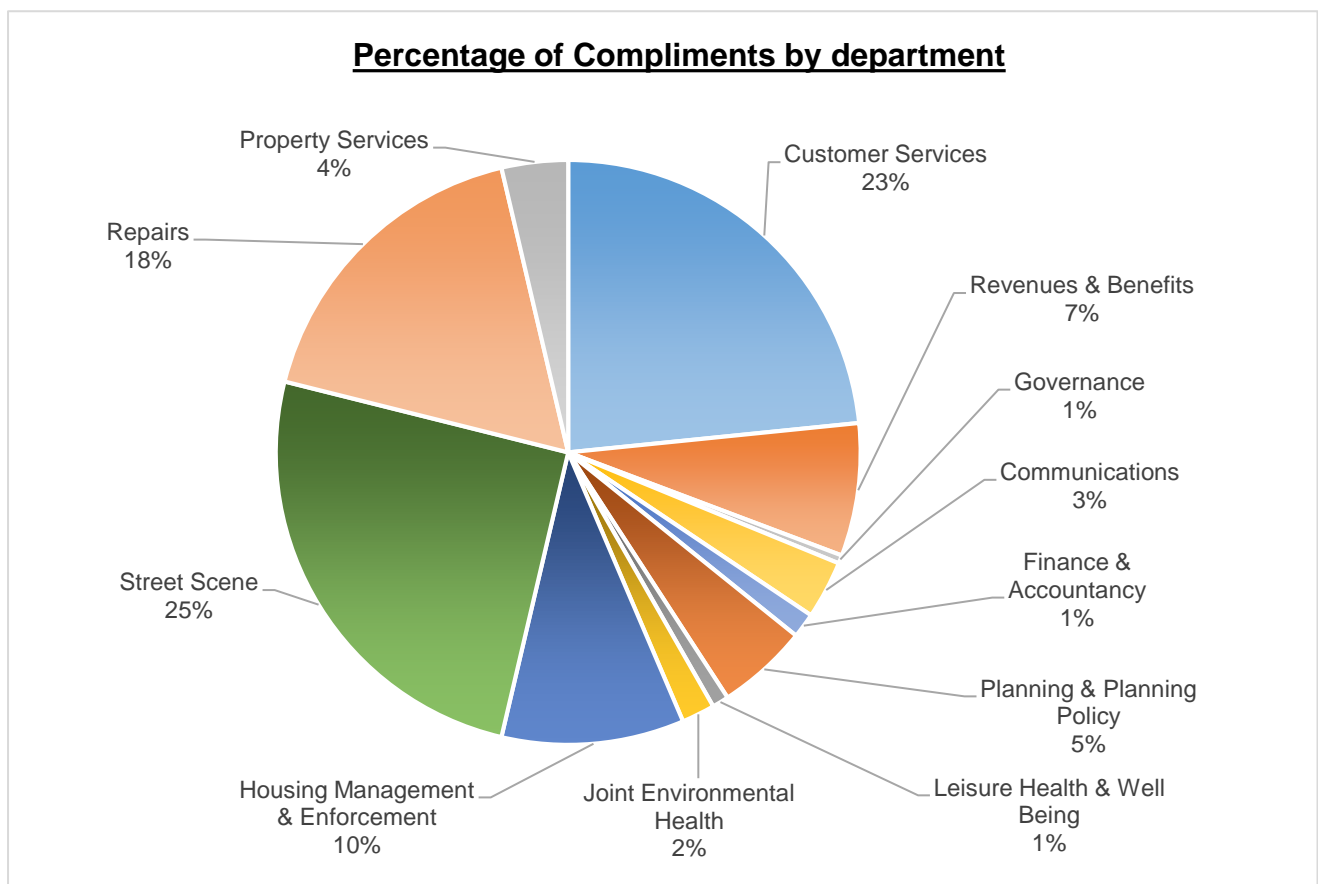
23

**LGSCO\* Local Government Ombudsman**  
**HO\* Housing Ombudsman**

## Appendix 1. Compliments, Comments and Complaints for 2023/24

### A. Compliments by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

A - Compliments 1/4/23 - 31/3/24		
Services Directorate	Customer Services	51
	Revenues & Benefits	16
	Governance	1
	Communications	7
	Finance & Accountancy	3
Strategy Directorate	Planning & Planning Policy	11
	Leisure Health & Well Being	2
	Joint Environmental Health	4
	Housing Management & Enforcement	22
	Street Scene	55
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	38
	Property Services	8

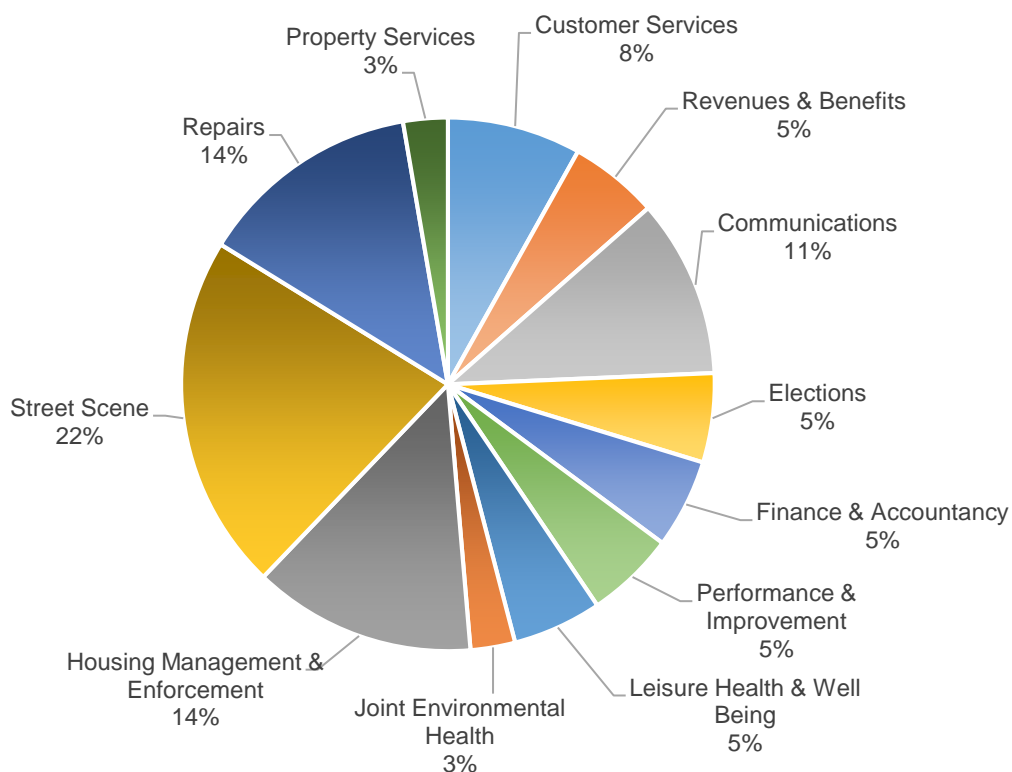


Compliments Included:	
Customer would like to thank the Council's Communications team; they are very appreciative to have the support of the Council promoting and sharing events and information. It helps them connect all together, it is really an invaluable service. It bridges the 'gap' between the Council and residents/businesses.	Communications.
Customer would like to thank the Customer advised for their help with their housing application. The advisor was wonderful and listened very well.	Contact Centre
Customer has complimented the Customer Advisors. They said it's easy to get the help needed, staff are always very friendly, helpful and nothing is too much trouble. No bad attitudes.	Contact Centre
Customer would like to pass on their commendation the Outreach worker who has been out to their property to help them. The worker was very kind, helpful and went above and beyond for them and they were very happy for the help received.	Environmental Health
Customer would like to thank the ranger for fitting the safe and secure system at their property as they felt really vulnerable with anti-social behaviour teenagers around. They are amazed that the council do this and were also really happy with their advice.	Housing
Would like to thank the Planning Officer for their quick work and has commented that the way the application has been managed is the best they have experienced from a local authority in some time.	Planning
Customer would like to thank the Business Centres Manager and the Business Estate Officer for providing an exceptional experience during the tenancy. Their dedication and care were evident from day one, and they consistently went above and beyond to ensure the needs were met. From prompt communication to resolving any issues efficiently, their professionalism and attention to detail were truly commendable.	Property Services
Would like to thank the operative who fixed their radiators this morning, they were lovely, chatty, respectful, and overall, just amazing.	Repairs
Customer would like to pass on their compliments to the two plumbers who attended their property for work to be carried out. They were polite, did a good job and cleaned up after themselves. Superb is the word they wish to use!	Repairs
Customer would like to thank the Recovery section for always being so understanding and helping them to pay off their balance. They are very grateful for everything the team has done for them. Customer teared up on the phone as the Council have always been so lovely.	Revenues
Customer would like to thank the recycling coordinator as they went above and beyond their duties, they were helpful, listened and solved the customers problems in one visit. Customer commented that they are an invaluable asset to Bolsover District Council.	Street Scene
Wanted to thank the Refuse member of staff who assessed their broken bin. Their manner was lovely, and they explained both options (repair or replace). They are very happy with the service, and they were very attentive. They also made the customer feel at ease.	Street Scene

## B. Comments by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

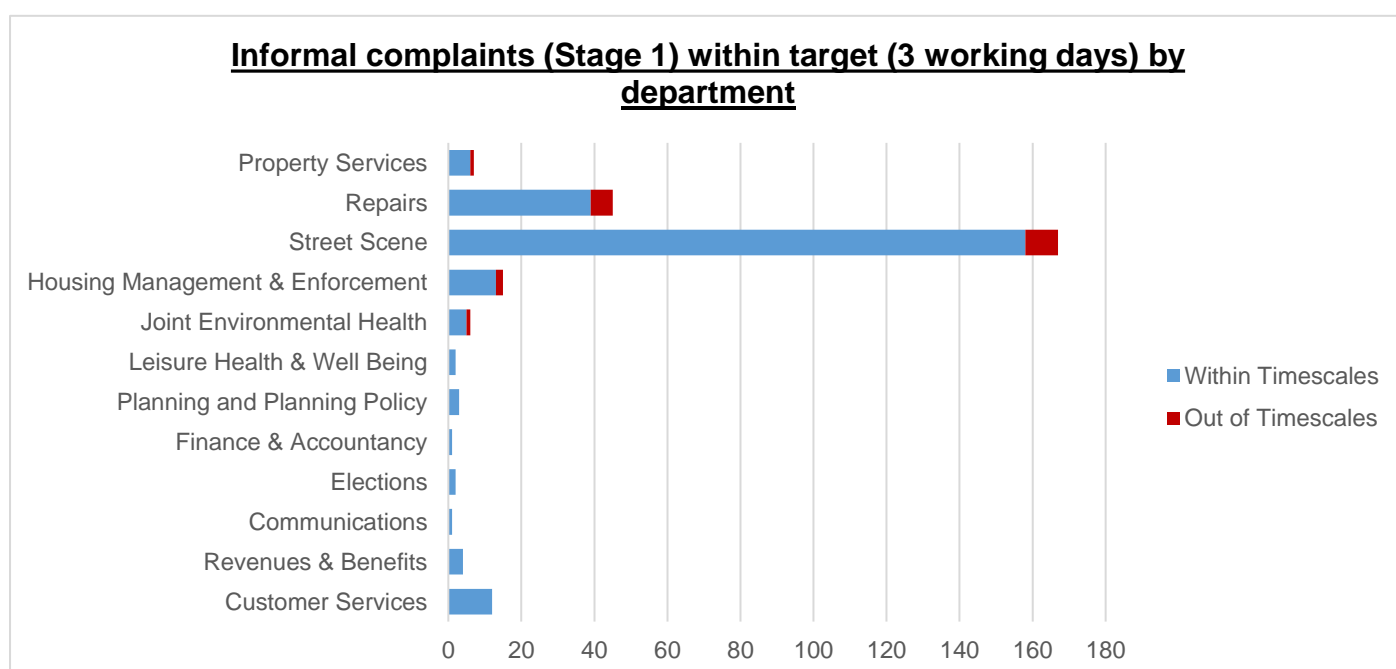
B- Comments 1/4/23 - 31/3/24		Number
Services	Customer Services	3
	Revenues & Benefits	2
	Communications	4
	Elections	2
	Finance & Accountancy	2
Strategy	Leisure Health & Well Being	2
	Joint Environmental Health	1
	Housing Management & Enforcement	5
	Street Scene	8
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	5
	Property Services	1

**Percentage of Comments by department**



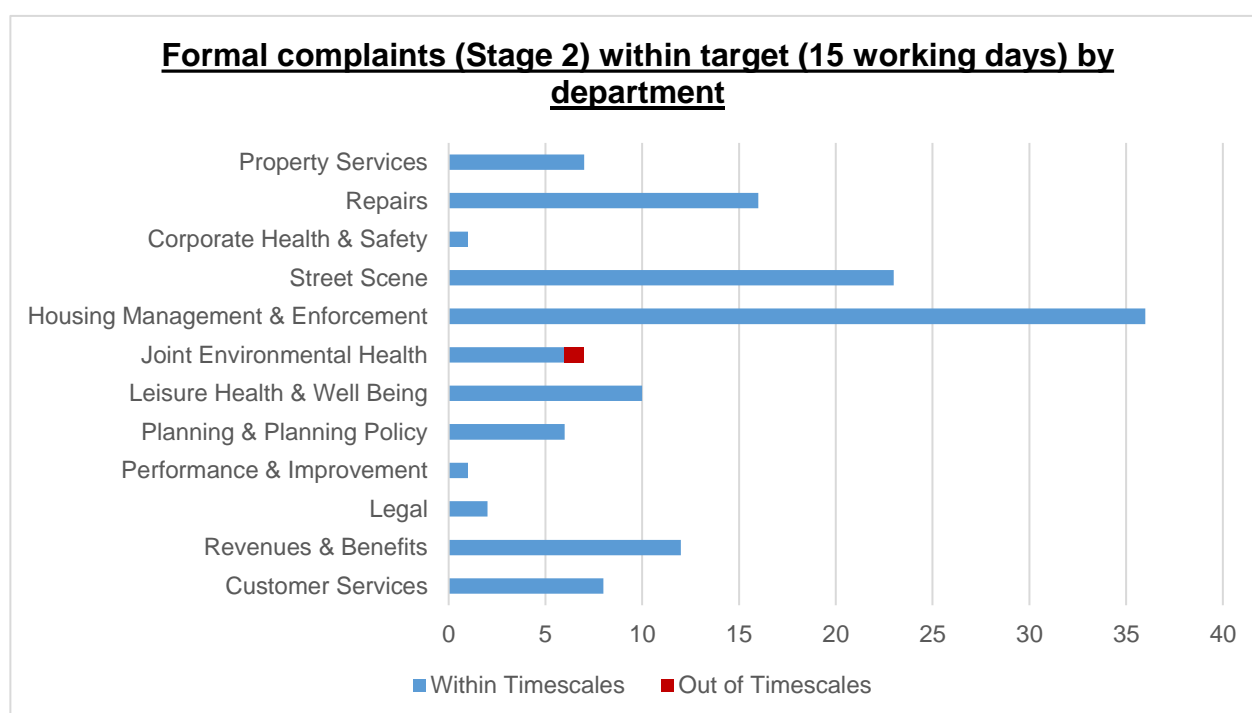
## C. Frontline resolution complaints (S1) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

C - Frontline Resolutions (Stage 1) complaints via Contact Centre 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within Timescale (3 working days)	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	12	12	0
	Revenues & Benefits	4	4	0
	Communications	1	1	0
	Elections	2	2	0
	Finance & Accountancy	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning and Planning Policy	3	3	0
	Leisure Health & Well Being	2	2	0
	Joint Environmental Health	6	5	1
	Housing Management & Enforcement	15	13	2
	Street Scene	167	158	9
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	45	39	6
	Property Services	7	6	1



## D. Formal Investigation complaints (S2) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

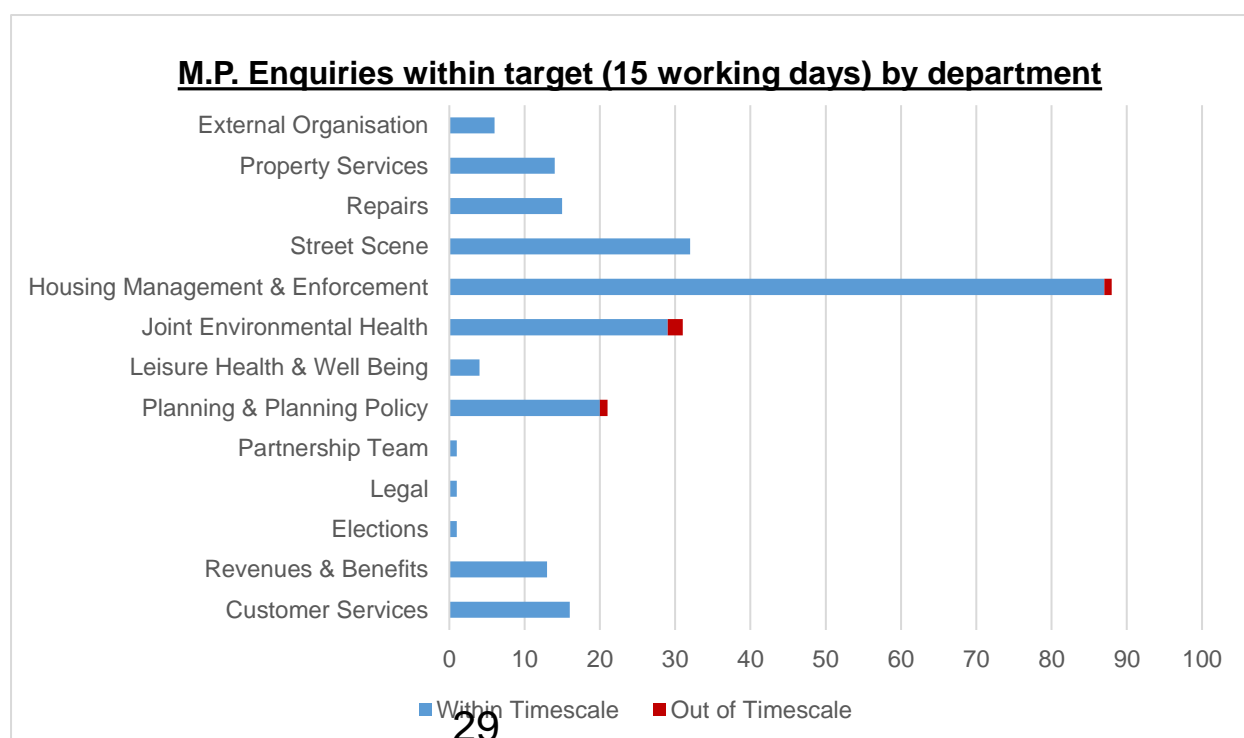
D - Formal Investigations (Stage 2) complaints 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within timescale of 15 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	8	8	0
	Revenues & Benefits	12	12	0
	Legal	2	2	0
	Performance & Improvement	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	6	6	0
	Leisure Health & Well Being	10	10	0
	Joint Environmental Health	7	6	1
	Housing Management & Enforcement	36	36	0
	Street Scene	23	23	0
	Corporate Health & Safety	1	1	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	16	16	0
	Property Services	7	7	0





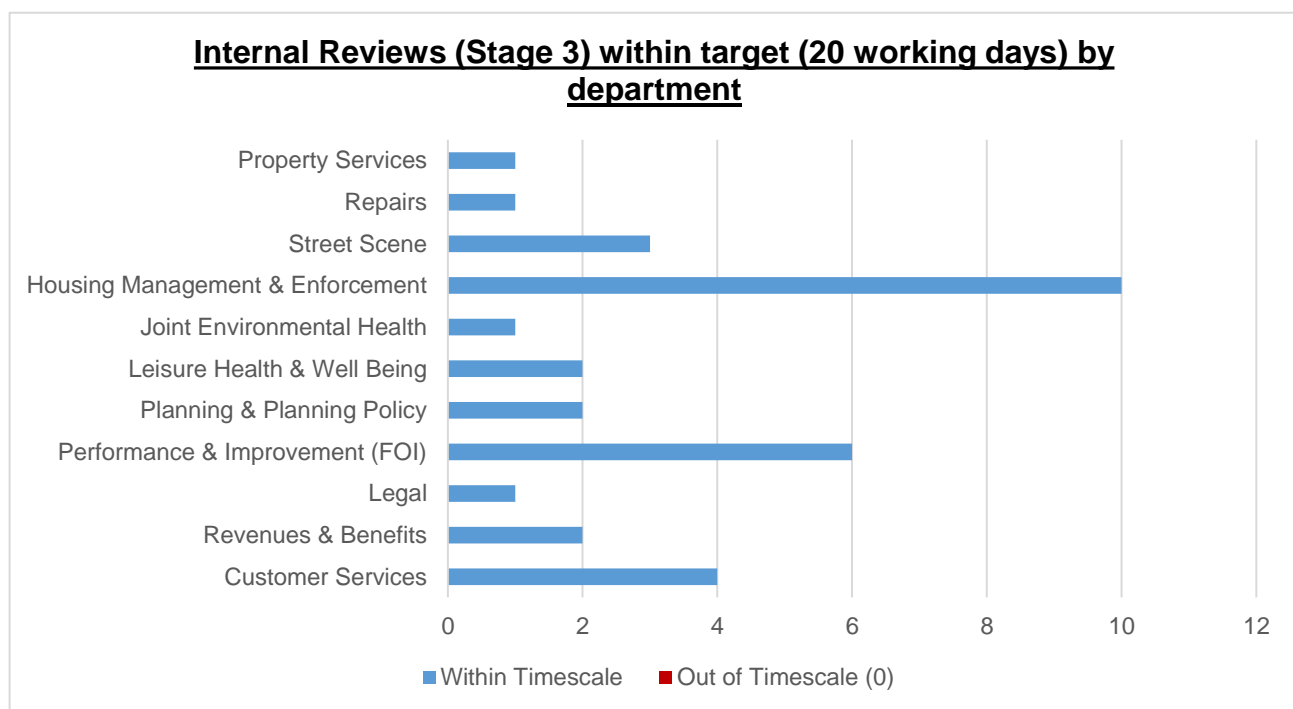
## E. M.P. Enquiries by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

E - M.P. Enquiries 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within timescale of 15 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	16	16	0
	Revenues & Benefits	13	13	0
	Elections	1	1	0
	Legal	1	1	0
	Partnership Team	1	1	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	21	20	1
	Leisure Health & Well Being	4	4	0
	Joint Environmental Health	31	29	2
	Housing Management & Enforcement	88	87	1
	Street Scene	32	32	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	15	15	0
	Property Services	14	14	0
External Organisation		6	6	0



## F. Internal Review complaints (S3) by department 1/04/23 – 31/03/24

F - Internal Reviews (Stage 3) complaints 1/4/23 – 31/3/24		Number	Within timescale of 20 working days	Out of Timescale
Services	Customer Services	4	4	0
	Revenues & Benefits	2	2	0
	Legal	1	1	0
	Performance & Improvement (FOI)	6	6	0
Strategy	Planning & Planning Policy	2	2	0
	Leisure Health & Well Being	2	2	0
	Joint Environmental Health	1	1	0
	Housing Management & Enforcement	10	10	0
	Street Scene	3	3	0
Dragonfly Development Ltd	Repairs	1	1	0
	Property Services	1	1	0



## G. Ombudsman complaints summary for 2023/24

G – Ombudsman's Summary	Ombudsman	Date Received	Departments Involved	Date Decision Letter Received	Ombudsman Decision
Mrs X says the Council failed to follow due process when assessing her neighbour's planning applications for a boiler flue as it did not properly consider the impact of the smoke of residential amenity.	LGSCO	24/07/2023	Environmental Health	17/08/2023	We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's consideration of planning applications for a boiler flue. It is reasonable to expect the complainant to have contacted us sooner. Updated letter 7/9/23 We will not investigate Mrs X's complaint because there is not enough evidence of fault in the way the Council handled the planning applications, and the claimed injustice does not directly flow from the alleged fault.
			Planning		
Mr X complained about the conduct of a councillor which Mr X said could result in sensitive information being available to the public under freedom of information rights. Mr X is unhappy that the Council decided not to progress the complaint.	LGSCO	Not given	Councillors	08/11/23	The injustice Mr X claims from his complaint is speculative and not sufficient to justify our further involvement. In addition, the concerns Mr X raises about data security are best dealt with by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) which is the UK's independent regulator in respect of data protection matters.

The complainant (Miss R) complains about the Council's handling of alleged antisocial behaviour being perpetrated by her neighbour. She says this is causing her to feel unsafe in her home and wants the Council to remove its tenants.	HO	19/02/24	Housing	27/03/2024	The Housing Ombudsman deals with these types of complaints. We cannot by law investigate the issues Miss R raises and the restriction I outline at Paragraph 2 (above) applies. We cannot investigate this complaint as we have no legal jurisdiction to do so.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----	----------	---------	------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

3  
N

**LGSCO\* Local Government Ombudsman**  
**HO\* Housing Ombudsman**



33



## Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment 2024



DRAGONFLY  
MANAGEMENT

**A:** The Arc, High Street, Clowne, S43 4JY  
**T:** 01246 242424  
**E:** [enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk)  
**W:** [www.bolsover.gov.uk](http://www.bolsover.gov.uk)

## **Equalities Statement**

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

## **Access for All statement**

34

You can request this document or information in another format such as **large print** or **language** or contact us by:

- **Phone** - [01246 242424](tel:01246 242424)
- **Email** – [enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk)
- **BSL Video Call** – a three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with [Sign Solutions](#), you just need wifi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) via textphone or app on **0800 500 888** - a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real time conversation with us by text.
- **Visiting** one of our [offices](#) at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton

## Contents

35

Foreword.....	4
Governing Body Response.....	4
Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group Response .....	4
Section 1: Definition of a complaint .....	5
Section 2: Exclusions .....	8
Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness .....	10
Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff.....	13
Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process .....	15
Section 6: Complaints Stages .....	20
Stage 1 .....	20
Stage 2 .....	23
Section 7: Putting things right.....	26
Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance.....	28
Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement.....	31



## Foreword

### Governing Body Response

The Council is very proud of the Housing Department and is committed to delivering excellent customer services. We recognise the importance of complaints, and always strive to listen to our tenants' ensuring complaints are dealt with appropriately. We learn from complaints and tenant feedback, and take action to implement service improvements.

The self-assessment demonstrates that Bolsover District Council is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and that any complaints received from our tenants will be dealt with in accordance with the Code.

The updated Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy further ensures we are meeting the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman, by aligning our processes and procedures with the Code. This has been embedded through staff training.



Cllr Mary Dooley  
Portfolio Holder for Health and  
Wellbeing  
(Including Customer Services)



Cllr Sandra Peake  
Portfolio Holder for Housing

### Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group Response

As tenants, we are pleased to see that the annual complaints performance and service improvement report for 2023/24, together with the Council's self-assessments against the Complaint Handling Code, show that we are compliant.

We are pleased that going forward there will be a quarterly complaint performance report being presented at the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group meeting which will give tenants the opportunity to monitor and scrutinise the Council's complaints handling and provide constructive challenge where required.



This self-assessment form has been completed by the complaints and housing management services teams, and has been reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body (Executive) and Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group (tenant scrutiny).

The Council have published this self-assessment as both a standalone document and as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on the website, with hard copies available in each contact centre.

## Section 1: Definition of a complaint

37

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i></p>	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.1 page 6 and page 9.</p> <p>Portfolio Member updated and Policy approved at Customer Services Scrutiny 25.03.24, Executive 15.04.24.</p> <p>CCC Overview refresher training delivered via 'Teams' 18.04.24 to key service area Managers, Officers, Directors Recorded training available on staff portal.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team updated at a number of team meetings via P. Brown, Service Director for Complaint handling.</p> <p>Policy uploaded to website.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2 page 6.</p> <p>CIS (customer information system) scripts updated to reflect CCC Policy changes.</p> <p>Third party authorisation form is completed.</p> <p>CLRs and the MP have been updated with CCC Policy and changes.</p> <p>Customer Advisors updated via team meetings and attending overview training 12.06.24 regarding the changes to policy and new 2 stage process. Customer advisors aware to give tenants the choice to make a complaint if dissatisfied with an outcome. Must fall within scope of policy.</p>
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.1 page 6.</p> <p>Training has been delivered to all assistant Directors and Heads of service. They have cascaded this to staff which includes a detailed explanation as to the difference between a Service request and a complaint.</p> <p>CCC Overview refresher training delivered via 'Teams' 18.04.24 to key service area Managers, Officers, Directors. Senior Leadership Team updated at a number</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
			of team meetings via P. Brown, Service Director for Complaint handling. Recording of training available on staff portal.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	This is not specifically stated within the policy, but the Council do this in practice. The CCC Procedures to be updated for Service Areas to follow to meet policy requirements and will be included here.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2 page 6.  Advice and or link to how to make a complaint has been added to external satisfaction surveys and the Realtime Satisfaction survey. Performance team updated.

## Section 2: Exclusions

40

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 9.  CCC Procedures to be updated for Service Areas to follow and meet policy requirements.
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</li> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 9-11.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 9.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedures to be updated.  Corporate procedures to be updated to reflect advice to CSCO and Service areas.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –page 9.

### Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

42

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.3 page 6.</p> <p>Multiple channels – letter, email, face to face, via staff.</p> <p>Policy includes Equality Act 2010 and catering for individual needs. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to support the updated policy.</p>
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5.4 page 18.</p> <p>CCC Overview refresher training delivered via 'Teams' 18.04.24 to key service area Managers, Officers, Directors. Senior Leadership Team updated at a number of team meetings via P Brown Service Director for Complaint handling.</p> <p>Recording of training available on staff portal.</p>
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a	Yes	<p>Performance reporting monitored by Scrutiny, and Executive.</p> <p>Service Review meetings are held annually and biannually depending on the service are requirements, Corporate Complaints and Customer Service Standards</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	sign that residents are unable to complain.		are to be introduces as an agenda item to discus CCC volumes and type, information will be shared and service areas will be required to provide any updates to recurring complaints and evidence any improvements. In addition any Complaints that also result in a compliment will be recorded. Through the training for CCC/Customer Service Standards the message is to not view a complaint a negative but as a mechanism for learning.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	The Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 is on the website in an accessible format, information leaflets have been reviewed to incorporate the Policy changes and timeframes.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5.2 page 18, the role of the ombudsman page 15-16, the Regulators code page 17-18.
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2 page 6.  Third party authorisation form includes section for complaints.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	<p>The Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 is on the website and staff portal in an accessible format, the information leaflet has been reviewed to incorporate the Policy changes and timeframes.</p> <p>Customer Service Standards Leaflet also to be updated Changes have been passed to the Communications Officer to include within the next In Touch district Publication and the Tenants Magazine. Included within Stage Two response template.</p>



## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

45

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager Customer Standards and Complaints Officer (CSCO)  These officers present Complaints handling and performance monitoring reports to Customer Services Scrutiny Committee.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	<a href="mailto:CCCAadmin@bolsover.gov.uk">CCCAadmin@bolsover.gov.uk</a>  Complaints are a key priority for the authority, emails come from a designated CCC Admin email address. Customers can make a complaint via a number of channels which are also forwarded directly to a CCC Admin email inbox for the attn of the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer (CSCO).  Updates to portfolio holder monthly.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –Section 5 page 17-18.  Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager and the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer attend relevant Ombudsman training. Cover and additional

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively		resource for the service is in place with a Customer Advisor working temporarily 1 day per week and covering any absence to maintain effective complaint handling. Service reviews meetings held with the key service areas monthly, biannually or annually depending on service needs agenda to include Customer Service Standards and Complaints. CSCO to update re performance and services areas to update re improvements to service delivery following comment or complaint.

## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – 2 stage process only.  Officers advised in recent training of new CCC Policy and Procedure that informal stages are not appropriate.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – 2 stage process only.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be	Yes	The Council allow 3rd party complaints and complaints from the local MP. These are carried out in accordance with the 2-stage process as set out in the policy.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	expected to go through two complaints processes.		
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Policy shared with 3 <sup>rd</sup> party organisations and also available on website. 3rd party auth is now included within the CCC form.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 4.9 page 11.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 4.9 page 11.  Included within Stage 1 and Stage 2 Template.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024, Page 5 Introduction.  Corporate procedures to be updated to reflect advice to CSCO and Service areas

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.		
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 3.3 page 6-7.  CCC Leaflet includes access for all statement. The Housing department records any disabilities a resident has disclosed, record not kept by the Complaints Officer. If a disability is disclosed during a complaint the Housing department will be informed and the Council will ensure that any reasonable adjustments are met.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 18 explains this

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.		
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Excel Spreadsheets with all complaint data. CCC system keeps a record. Folders within a dedicated drive on the system where all correspondence is saved.  Bespoke admin system for recording all stages of Complaints and monitoring response timeframes, templates embedded within system and golden thread of hierarchy for responding to complaints dependent on level. 3 year data retention for all records.
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Remedies for a complaint page 13-14.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 17-19 Vexatious/habitual complaints

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence Commentary / explanation</b>
	must keep restrictions under regular review.		
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 17-19 Vexatious/habitual complaints.

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11-12.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9 page 11-13.



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9 Page 11.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.  Updates are logged within an Excel document and are monitored to provide regular updates to the customer.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Acknowledgement Stage 1 and Stage 2 templates.  Include within procedure advice.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10 page 13.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.</p> <p>This is included as standard in all Stage 1 responses.</p>

## Stage 2

55

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – complaints handling process, page 12.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Introduction, Page 5.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – The Complaints handling process page 12.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –page 11.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –page 11.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Not explicitly stated within the CCC Policy but responses are monitored by the CSCO and service areas are made aware they must ensure all actions are completed and update the CSCO.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.  This is included as standard in all Stage 2 responses.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.

## Section 7: Putting things right

58

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – remedies page 14.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11 page 13- 4.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11 page 13- 4.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence Commentary / explanation</b>
	appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.		
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	The CCC Policy has been edited to include Remedies which were suggested within the HO Complaint Handling Code.

## Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> </ol>	Yes	<p>Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.</p> <p>Performance reporting quarterly to the Customer Services Scrutiny.</p> <p>From April 2024, this will also be reported to the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group (a Cllr and Tenant meeting).</p> <p>Annual Performance report and Ombudsman decisions presented Scrutiny, Standards Committee and to Executive.</p> <p>Service Review Meetings for Complaints to discuss service improvements.</p>



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.		
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	The Assessment 23-24 will be presented to the Customer Services Scrutiny meeting on 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2024, executive on 24 <sup>th</sup> June, submitted to the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	The Council will fully comply with this requirement.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	The Council would fully comply with any request.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords	Yes	The Council will fully comply with this requirement.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.		

## Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

93

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.  Presented at Customer services scrutiny quarterly, trends analysed.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Updates in the In Touch & Tenants Magazine, Updates on the websites reports and Self Assessments, Performance posters.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues,	Yes	Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager.  Presented at Customer Services Scrutiny quarterly, trends analysed.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence Commentary / explanation</b>
	serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.		From April 24 this will also be presented and discussed in the Tenant Review and Development Meetings.
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for complaints. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 7.8 page 23
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for complaints.  Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 7.8 page 23.  Monthly meetings with Customer Services & Complaints manager and the MRC, discussed in 121s with Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> </ul>	Yes	Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.  Performance reporting quarterly to the Customer Services Scrutiny.  Annual Performance report and Ombudsman decision presented to Scrutiny, Standards Committee and to Executive.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.		Monthly meetings with Customer Services & Complaints manager and the MRC, discussed in 121s with Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships.
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>	Yes	Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.  Mandatory training for all new employees.



## Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code

### Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024



## **Equalities Statement**

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community. The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

## **Access for All statement**

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or **language** or contact us by:

- **Phone** - [01246 242424](tel:01246 242424)
- **Email** – [enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk)
- **BSL Video Call** – a three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with [Sign Solutions](#), you just need wifi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) via textphone or app on **0800 500 888** - a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real time conversation with us by text.
- **Visiting** one of our [offices](#) at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton

## Contents

Foreword .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Analysis of complaints performance for 2023/24.....	6
Types of complaints .....	6
Volume of complaints (as per Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) figures).....	6
Satisfaction with the complaints handling process (as per TSM figures) .....	7
Volume of complaints by contact centre area .....	9
Satisfaction by contact centre area .....	10
Themes and trends in the complaints received.....	11
Volume of compliments, comments and M.P. enquiries .....	14
Method of contact .....	16
Benchmark data.....	17
Comparison in volume of complaints received – 2022/2023.....	17
Comparison with national trends on themes for complaint .....	18
Comparison with national trends in reasons for complaints 2023/24 .....	18
Findings of non-compliance .....	19
Service improvements.....	20
Improvements 2023/24 .....	20
Forward Improvements 2024/25 .....	21
Tenant scrutiny of complaints .....	22
Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) reports to landlord.....	22
Appendix A: Self-assessment form 2024 .....	23
Section 1: Definition of a complaint.....	23
Section 2: Exclusions.....	26
Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness.....	28
Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff .....	31
Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process.....	33
Section 6: Complaints Stages .....	38
Stage 1 .....	38
Stage 2 .....	41
Section 7: Putting things right .....	44
Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance .....	46
Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement.....	48



## Foreword

### Governing Body Response

The Council is very proud of the Housing Department and is committed to delivering excellent customer services. We recognise the importance of complaints, and always strive to listen to our tenants' ensuring complaints are dealt with appropriately. We learn from complaints and tenant feedback, and take action to implement service improvements.

The self-assessment demonstrates that Bolsover District Council is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and that any complaints received from our tenants will be dealt with in accordance with the Code.

The updated Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy further ensures we are meeting the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman, by aligning our processes and procedures with the Code. This has been embedded through staff training.



Cllr Mary Dooley  
Portfolio Holder for Health and  
Wellbeing  
(Including Customer Services)



Cllr Sandra Peake  
Portfolio Holder for Housing

### Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group Response

As tenants, we are pleased to see that the annual complaints performance and service improvement report for 2023/24, together with the Council's self-assessments against the Complaint Handling Code, show that we are compliant.

We are pleased that going forward there will be a quarterly complaint performance report being presented at the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group meeting which will give tenants the opportunity to monitor and scrutinise the Council's complaints handling and provide constructive challenge where required.

## Introduction

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory from 1 April 2024, which means that social housing landlords are now obliged by law to follow its requirements.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 places a legal duty on the Ombudsman to monitor social housing landlord's compliance with the Code. Section 8 of the HOS Complaint Handling Code requires that landlords must produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for scrutiny and challenge.

This annual report provides an analysis of the complaints, comments and compliments received by the Council during 2023/24.

This report seeks to provide information on the performance of the Council's complaint handling in terms of the volume and timeliness of the responses. In addition, the report seeks to identify themes, trends and lessons learnt that drive service improvements.

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) has a two-stage complaint handling process which requires:

- All Complaint Acknowledgements responded within 5 working days.
- Stage One complaints must be responded to within 10 working days.
- Stage Two within 20 working days.

During 2023/24, the Council's Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy (CCC Policy) had a 3-stage procedure:

- Stage One Informal – 3 working days
- Stage Two Formal – 15 working days
- Stage Three Internal Reviews – 20 working days

For the purpose of this report, HOS Stage One complaints consist of the Informal and Formal stages.

Whilst the report must show the Council's performance against the new HOS Complaint Handling Code, some of the tables and charts present the data to enable analysis against the CCC Policy which was in operation during the transition period.

Whilst the main driver for the report is to look at complaints, the Council can learn a lot from the comments, compliments and M.P. enquires received and therefore this report also seeks to analyse this data.

## **Analysis of complaints performance for 2023/24**

### **Types of complaints**

The Customer Advisors have all had thorough training of the CCC Policy. Following this training the Council's Customer Advisors can appropriately determine whether the issue raised is a service request/enquiry or a complaint.

The CCC Policy defines a complaint as an "expression of dissatisfaction", however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals. However, a service request is defined as a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.

The Council also receives Member of Parliament enquiries (M.P. enquiries) which are dealt with under the CCC Policy. The M.P. has been updated with the changes to the CCC Policy to follow the Housing Ombudsman Statutory Code. Within this training, the M.P.'s Office agreed to determine whether a customer would like to raise their enquiry as an M.P. enquiry or as a complaint. The M.P. was given a copy of the CCC Policy and an explanation of the stages of a complaint, so their constituents can be appropriately informed.

Currently, if a customer makes a complaint which does not fall within the CCC Policy the customer is appropriately directed to the correct place to complain or be assisted with their enquiry/request. For example, the Council has the right to deal with service requests for the first time before a complaint is made.

### **Volume of complaints (as per Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) figures)**

Tenant Satisfaction Measures form part of a new system developed by the Regulator of Social Housing to assess how well social housing landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services, with one specific measure being around effective handling of complaints. There are 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures in total which include 12 Tenant Perception Measures and 10 Management Information Measures.

Each Registered Provider will be required to complete the Tenant Satisfaction Measures annually and upload the data to the Regulator of Social Housing. The Council are also required to publish the result on the Councils' website so it is accessible to tenants.

The data below summarises the Council's compliance with the Housing Ombudsman response times. As mentioned previously, during 2023/24 the Council's complaints policy was a 3 stage process and these figures reflect performance in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Code and the CCC Policy.

While the Council's handling of HOS Stage Two complaints was compliant, 16 of the Stage One complaints received exceeded the HOS response times. For those that exceeded the 10 days, no formal extensions were agreed. While 7 Informal complaints were outside of the Council's local response timescales, all the Informal complaints met the HOS response times.

**Table 1 – Number of Housing related complaints received and compliance with response times**

<b>Complaint Stage</b>	<b>Number received</b>	<b>Within BDC timescales</b>	<b>Within HOS timescales</b>
Informal (HOS Stage One)	60	53 (88.3%)	60 (100%)
Formal (HOS Stage One)	44	44 (100%)	28 (63.6%)
HOS Stage One – Total	104	97 (93.3%)	88 (84.6%)
Internal Review (HOS Stage Two)	10	10 (100%)	10 (100%)

This data is used to calculate one of the Management Information Measures

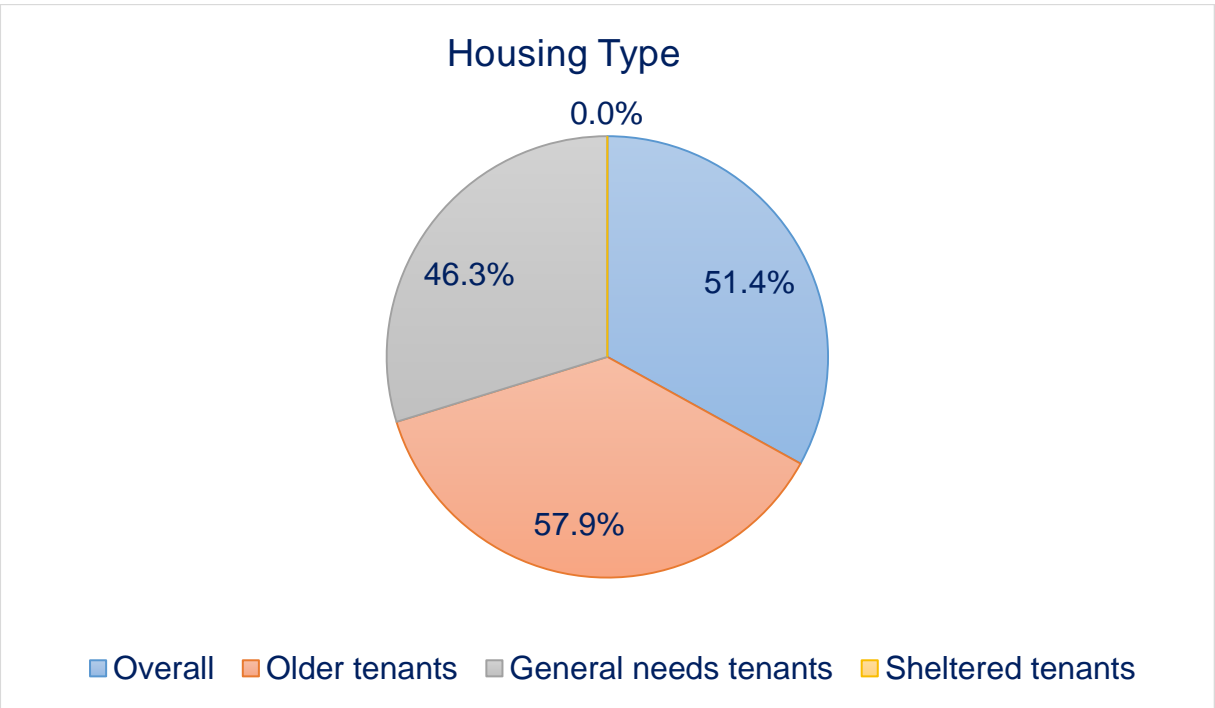
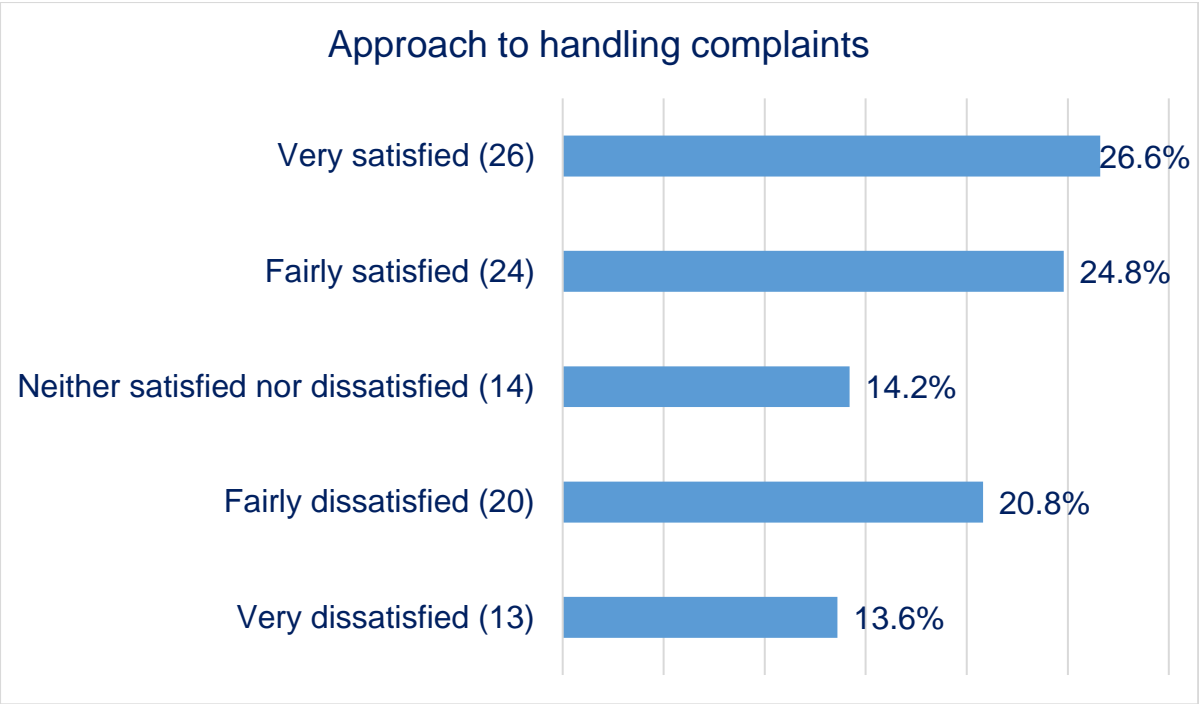
<b>Management Information Measures</b>	
CH01(1) Number of Stage One complaints received per 1000 homes	20.8
CH02(2) Number of Stage Two complaints received per 1000 homes	2.0

### **Satisfaction with the complaints handling process (as per TSM figures)**

As part of the Tenant Perception Survey element of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, respondents who had made a complaint within the last 12 months were asked to declare their level of satisfaction with the complaints handling process. 95 out of the 547 valid respondents had made a complaint in the last 12 months.

When adding together those that were 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' out of the 95, this represents a 51.4% satisfaction level.

The charts below show the satisfaction levels of those making complaints by housing type, indicating that those in general needs housing are less satisfied. This low number of complainants is reflective of the fact that traditionally the Council receives a low level of complaints.

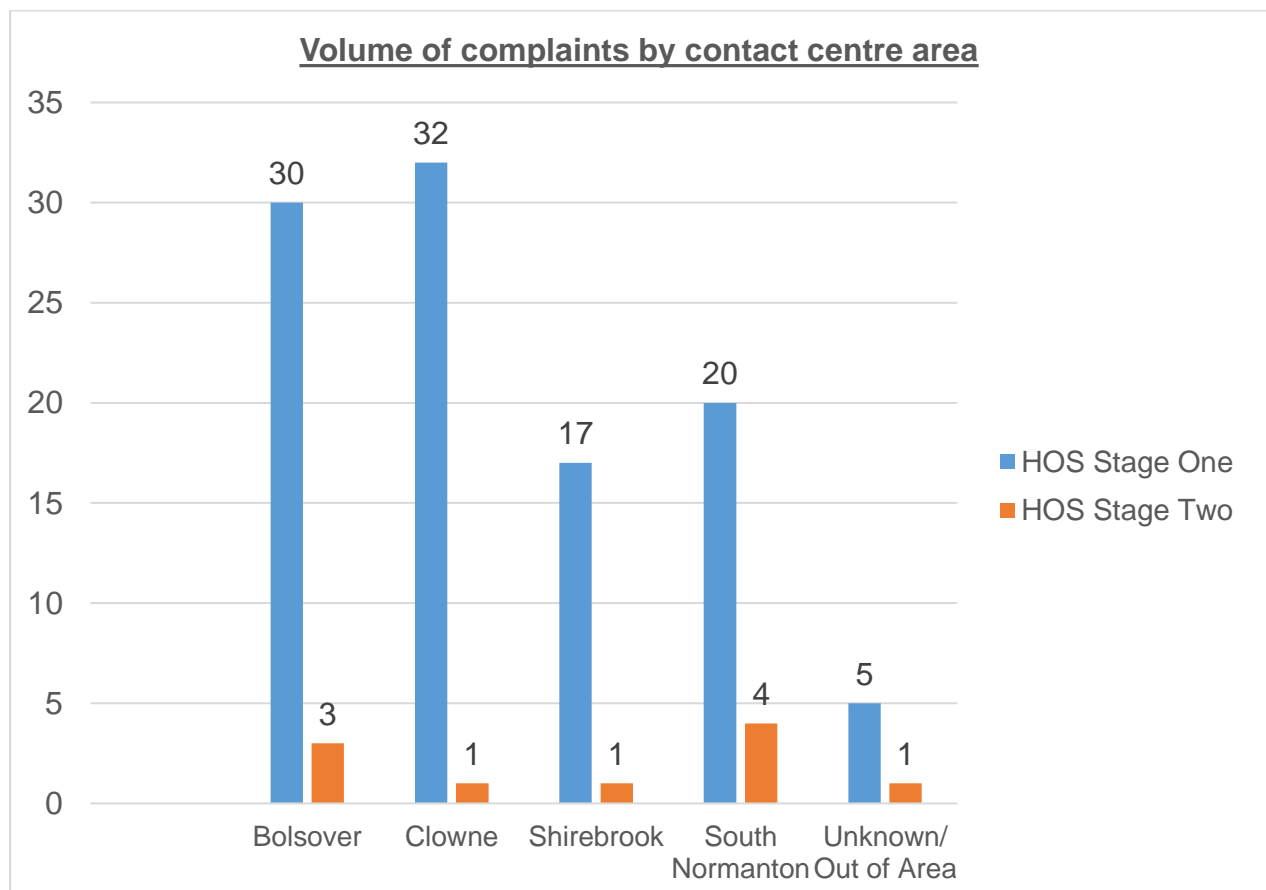


## Volume of complaints by contact centre area

When analysing the complaints received by contact centre area, a larger proportion in total are received from the Bolsover and Clowne areas. This mirrors the TSM Perception Measures survey responses indicating that tenants in those areas are more likely to complain. This requires further investigation into whether this is related to property types found in those areas or whether dissatisfaction can be attributed to the teams operating in those patches. According to the complaints data for 2023/24, tenants in the Shirebrook area have complained the least and the difference in volume of complaints in Shirebrook and South Normanton is the reverse of that found from TSM survey respondents. See analysis on satisfaction with complaint handling by contact centre area further on in the report.

**Table 2 – Volume of complaints received by contact centre area**

Contact Centre Area	HOS Stage One	HOS Stage Two	Total
Bolsover	30	3	33
Clowne	32	1	33
Shirebrook	17	1	18
South Normanton	20	4	24
Unknown/ Out of Area	5	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>114</b>



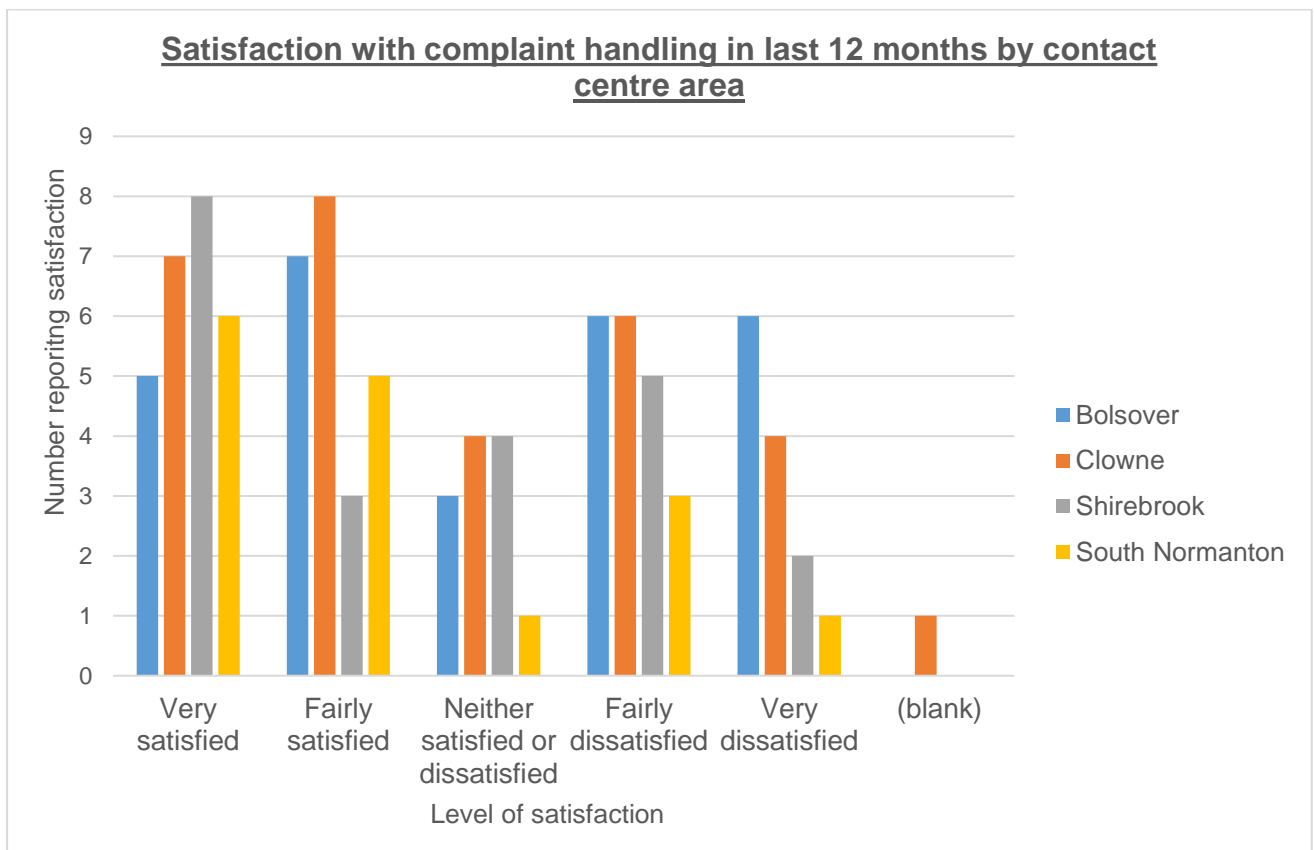
## Satisfaction by contact centre area

Those indicating their satisfaction with complaints handling can also be broken down by contact centre area, via the responses to the Tenant Perception Survey. There were a higher number of survey respondents within the Bolsover and Clowne areas making a complaint with the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Bolsover split equally at 44.4% each, the highest dissatisfaction.

Tenants in Clowne had higher satisfaction (50%) compared to dissatisfaction (33.3%). Within Shirebrook 50% were satisfied compared to 31.8% dissatisfied and South Normanton tenants were most satisfied at 68.8% satisfaction, with dissatisfaction significantly lower at 25%.

**Table 3 – Satisfaction with complaint handling in the last 12 months by contact centre area**

Level of Satisfaction	Bolsover	Clowne	Shirebrook	South Normanton	Grand Total
Very satisfied	5	7	8	6	26
Fairly satisfied	7	8	3	5	23
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	4	4	1	12
Fairly dissatisfied	6	6	5	3	20
Very dissatisfied	6	4	2	1	13
(blank)	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>95</b>



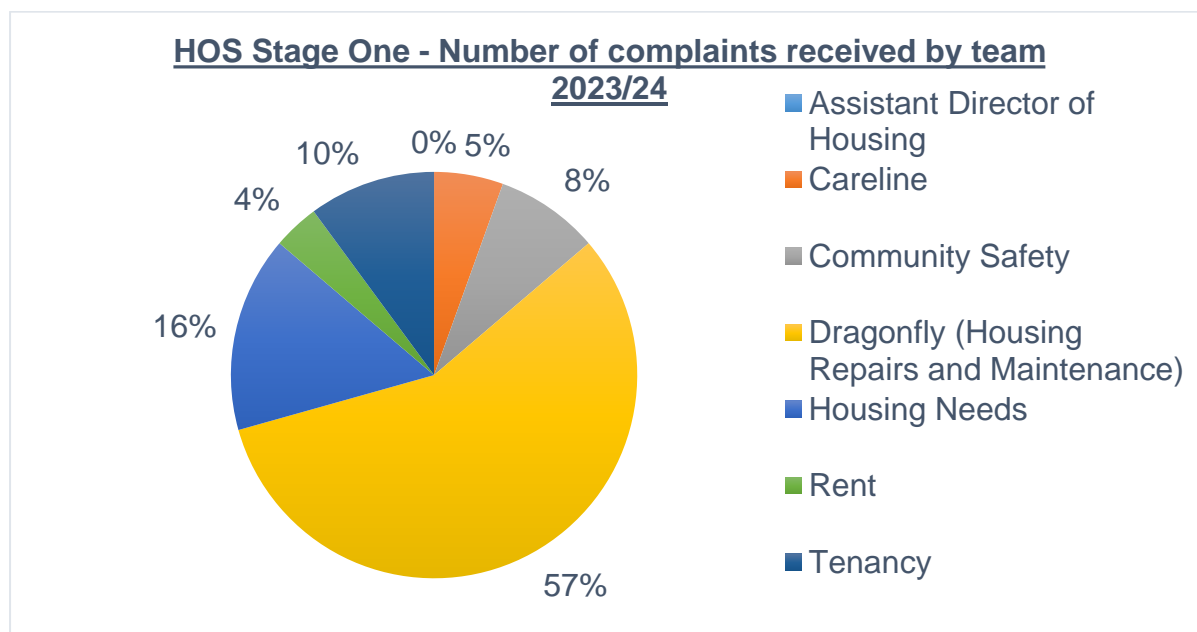
## Themes and trends in the complaints received

Some customer contacts/complaints received during 2023/24 covered more than one service area, therefore the totals below do not mirror the actual volume of contacts received. Out of 114 complaints, 63 (55%) related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). The next most common service area was Housing Needs (19, 17%) followed by Tenancy (15, 13%).

**Table 4 – Breakdown of customer contact by team – complaints**

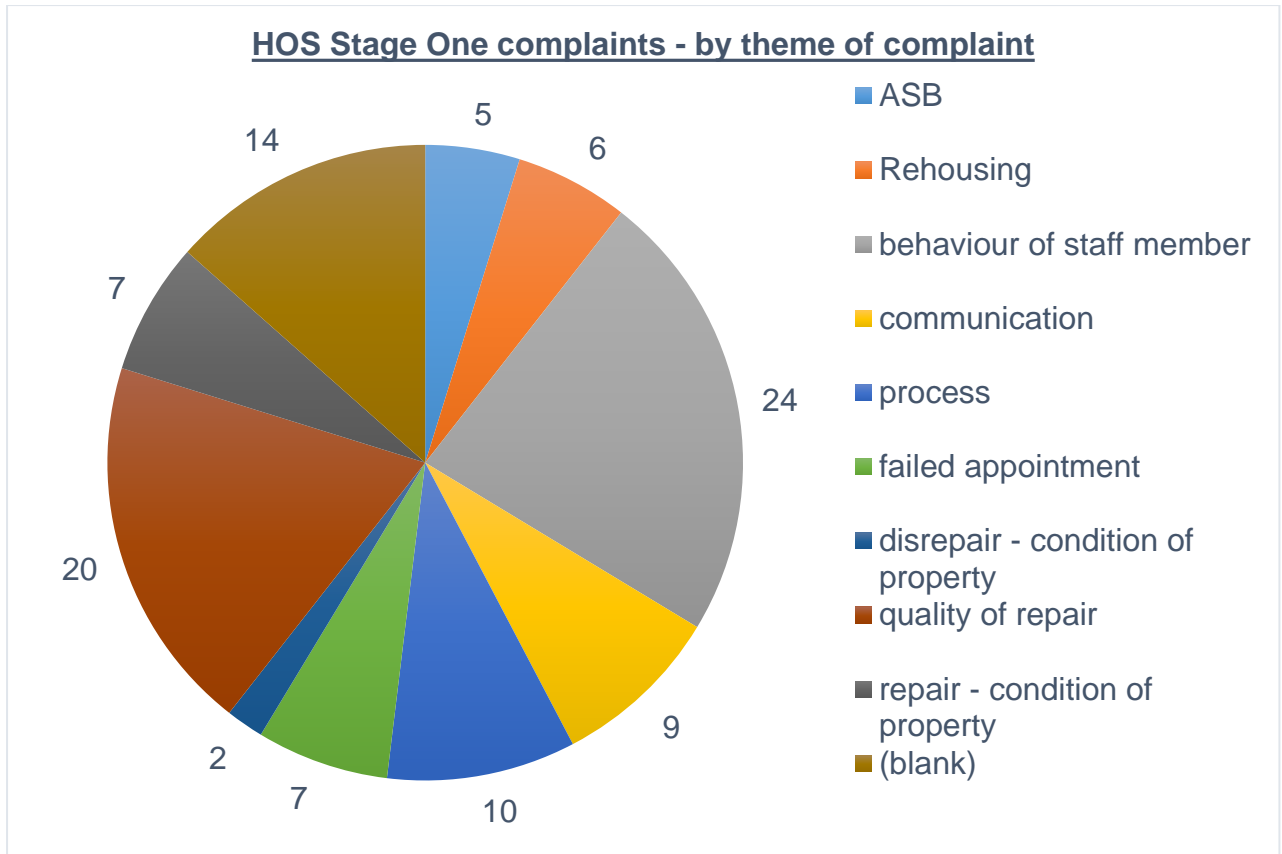
Team	HOS Stage One	HOS Stage Two	Total for Team
Assistant Director of Housing	0	1	1 (1%)
Careline	6	1	7 (6%)
Community Safety	9	3	12 (11%)
Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance)	62	1	63 (55%)
Housing Needs	17	2	19 (17%)
Rent	4	1	5 (4%)
Tenancy	11	4	15 (13%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>
Total (excluding cross cutting)	104 (5 cross cutting)	10 (3 cross cutting)	

The chart below shows the breakdown of complaints received by team for those at HOS Stage 1. The largest proportion related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance).



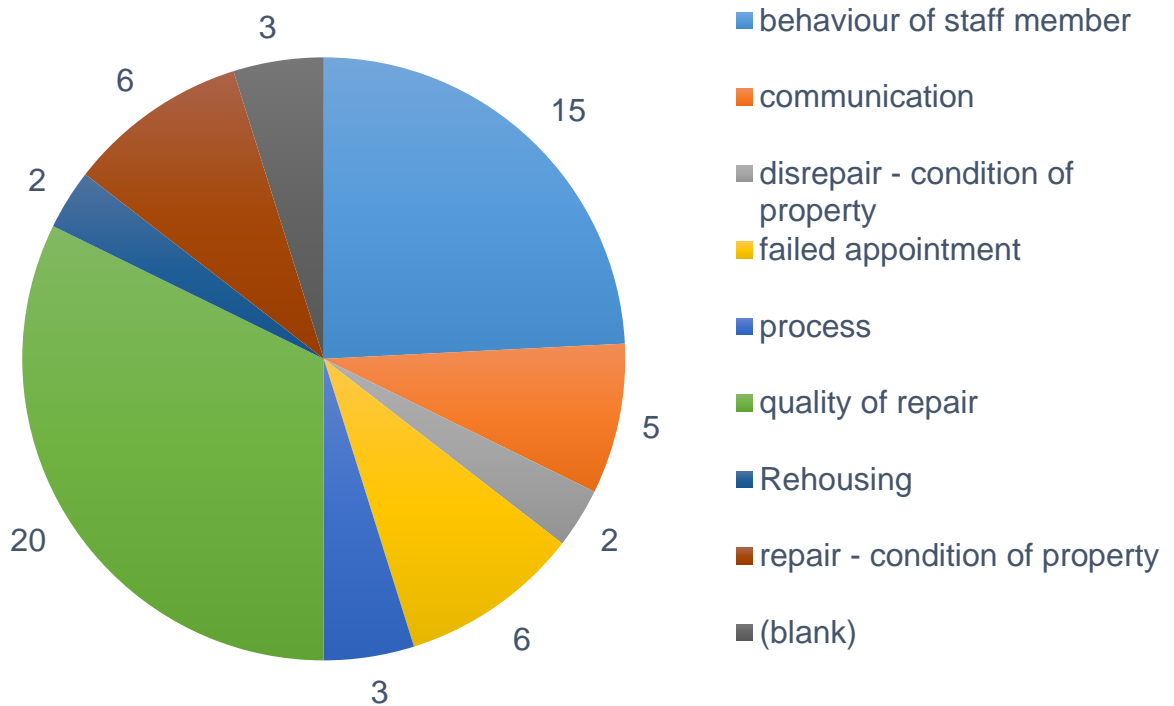


When analysing the themes of the HOS Stage One complaints, the most common factor was behaviour of staff member, followed by quality of repair. However, there were two further themes related to condition of property adding further weight to the investigation on the quality of the repairs service. 14 of the complaints had no clear theme.



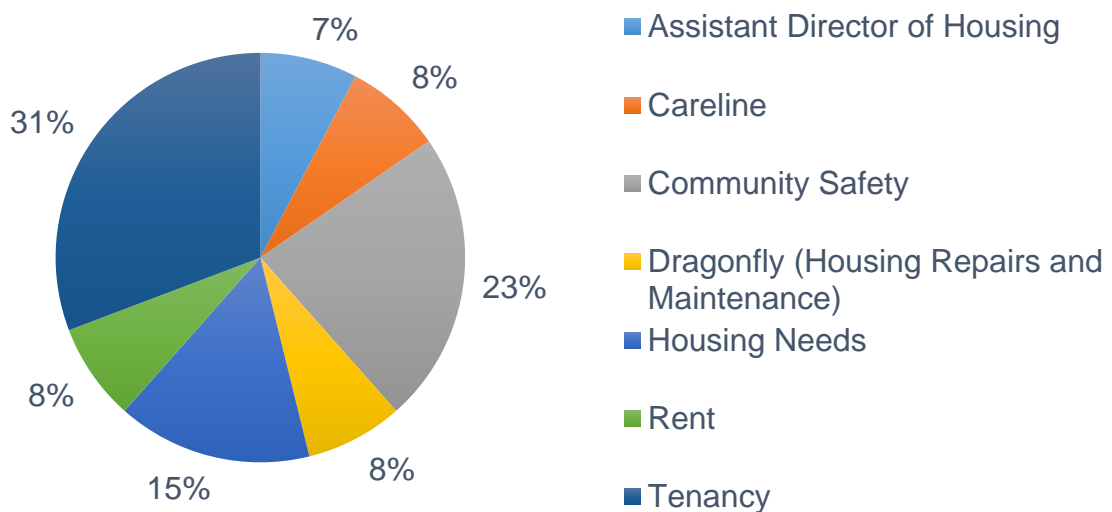
57% of the HOS Stage One complaints related to the Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) team. When assessing those complaints by theme, they account for nearly two thirds of the complaints related to 'behaviour of staff member'.

**HOS Stage One complaints Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance - by theme of complaint)**



For the complaints received at HOS Stage Two, (as outlined in Table 4), the largest proportion related to Tenancy, closely followed by Community Safety and Housing Needs (homelessness).

**Percentage of HOS Stage Two complaints received for each Housing Team 2023/24**



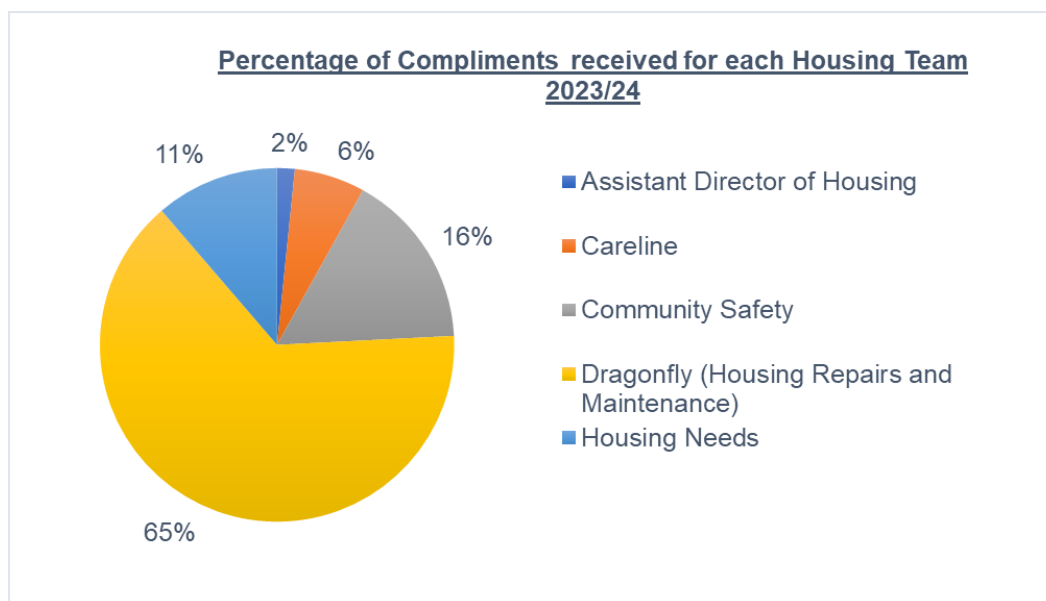
## Volume of compliments, comments and M.P. enquiries

The following charts show the volume of compliments, comments and M.P. enquires received by team. For compliments and comments the largest proportion related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). However, for M.P. enquiries the majority related to Housing Needs (homelessness).

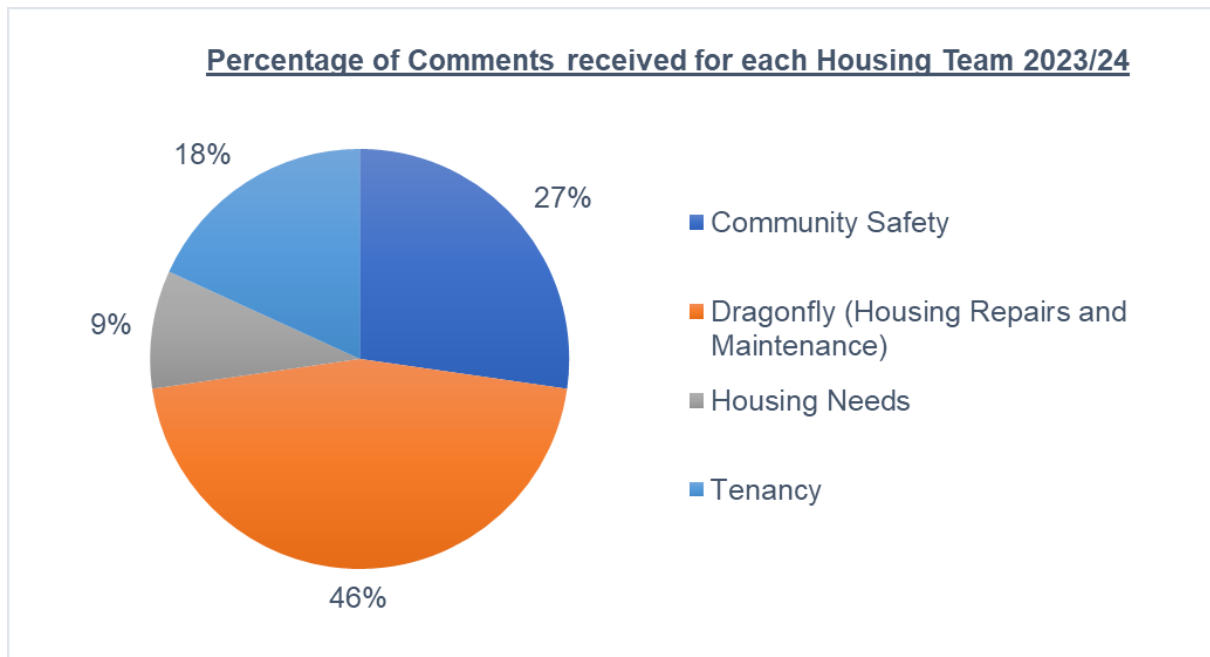
**Table 5 – Breakdown of customer contact by team – compliments, comments and M.P. enquiries**

Team	Compliments	Comments	M.P. enquiries	Total for Team
Assistant Director of Housing	1	0	1	2
Careline	4	0	0	4
Community Safety	10	3	19	32
Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance)	40	5	15	60
Housing Needs	7	1	59	67
Rent	0	0	3	3
Tenancy	0	2	11	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>-</b>
Total (excluding cross cutting)	61 (1 cross cutting)	10 (1 cross cutting)	95 (13 cross cutting)	

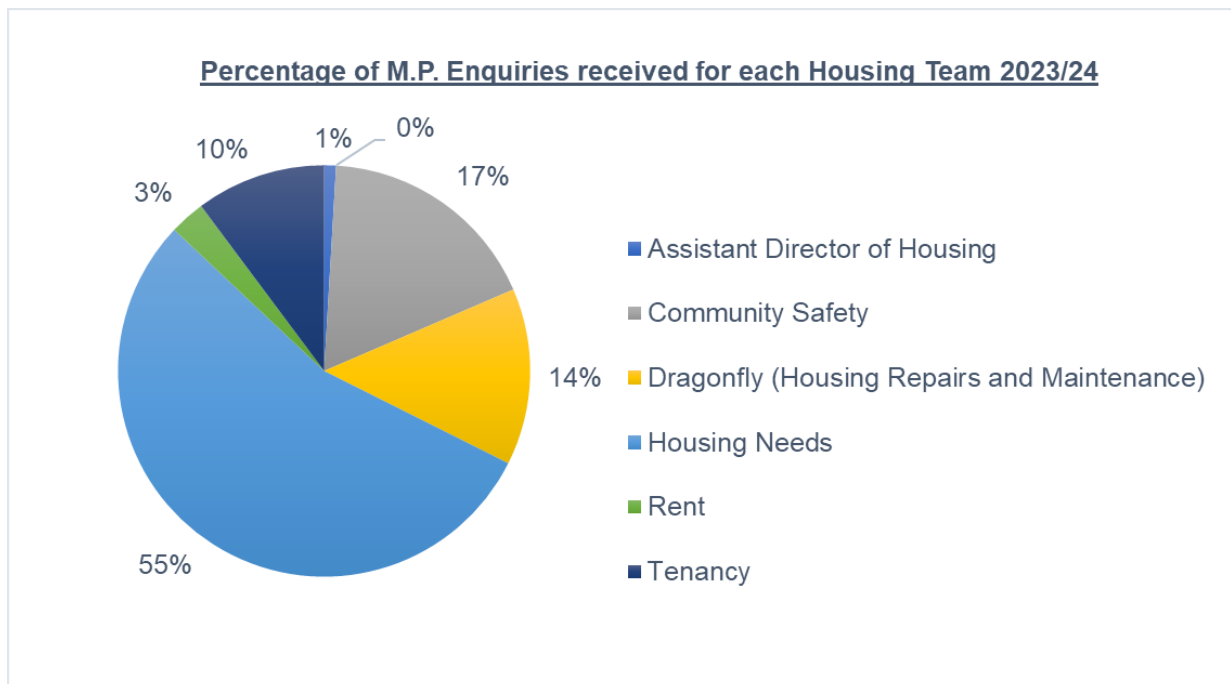
When analysing the compliments received in 2023/24, Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) received the most compliments, followed by the Community Safety team and Housing Needs, respectively. This is useful to note as whilst repairs and maintenance has featured heavily as a core reason for complaint, this shows that a tenant's personal experience of the service by the team appears to influence their bias in response to the Council. There are clearly positives to be taken from the service delivered, as well as areas for improvement.



The Council received a limited number of comments from tenants during 2023/24 and all were passed back to the teams for further action where required.



The chart below shows volume of M.P. enquires by team. When analysing the M.P. enquiries received during 2023/24, the highest number related to the Housing Needs team and the most common themes were rehousing applications, ASB and disrepair (condition of property).

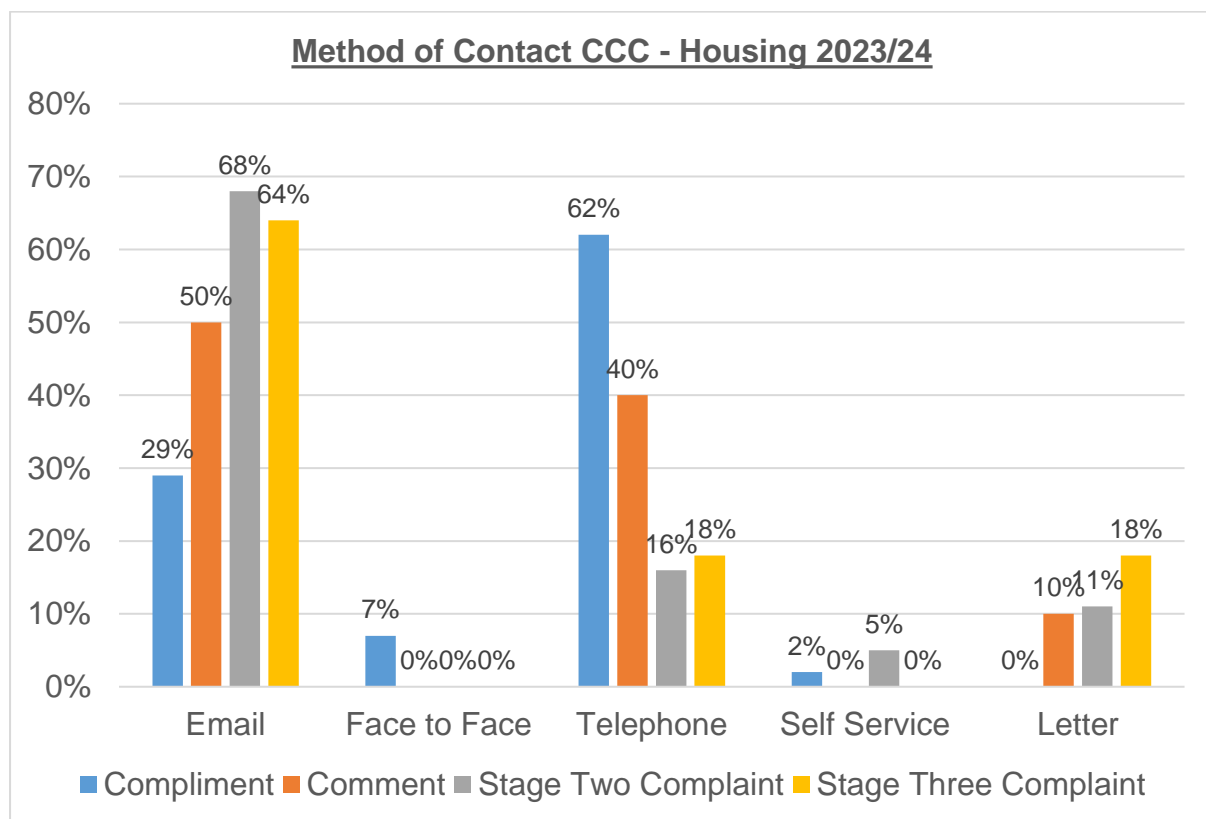


## Method of contact

When analysing how tenants contact the Council to pass on a compliment or make a complaint, most compliments were via telephone, but Stage Two and Stage Three complaints were mostly via email followed by telephone and letter, respectively. This is interesting as through previous tenant surveys it has shown that tenants prefer contact via post/letter however the preferred method of contacting the Council in relation to complaints is clearly email.

The Council have had a significant move towards increasing digital transactions over the last four years and made several changes to the self-serve functions on the Council website. It is therefore encouraging to see tenants choosing to use this method of contact.

For 2023/24 data was not gathered in relation to the method of contact for complaints classified as 'Stage One Informal' (equivalent to HOS Stage One). This will be rectified for 2024/25 under the new statutory code and revised local policy, as this type of complaint no longer exists within the new CCC Policy.



## Benchmark data

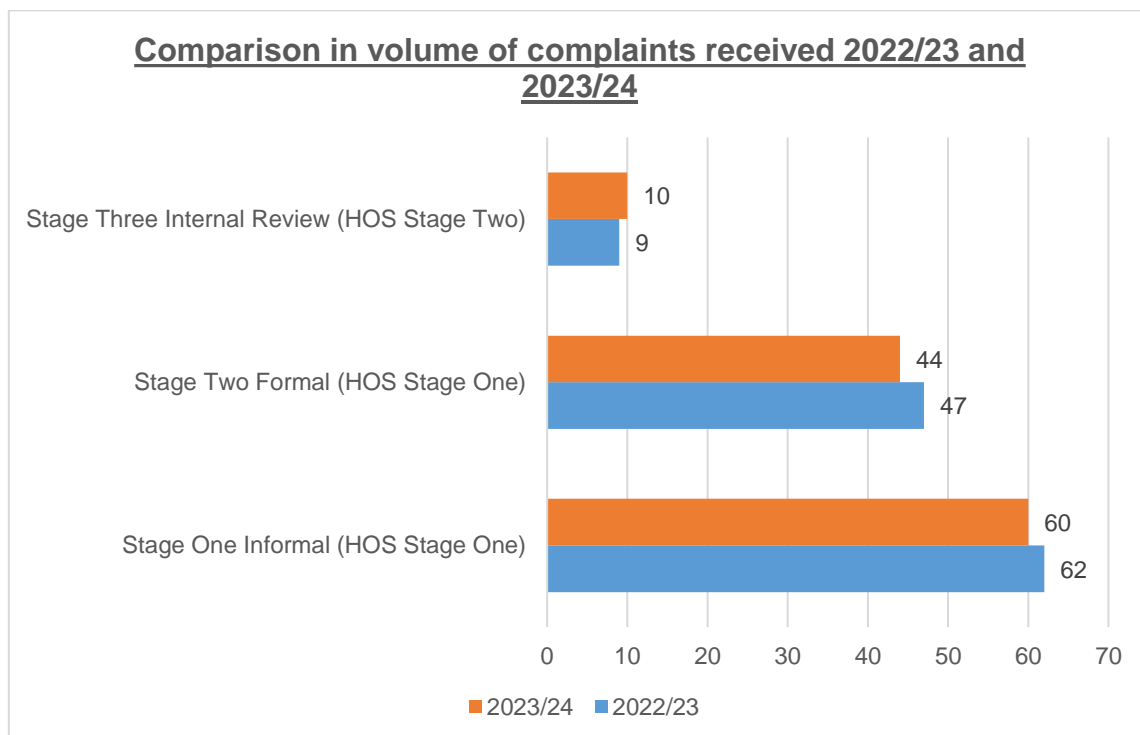
### Comparison in volume of complaints received – 2022/2023

When comparing changes in local complaints data, this is in relation to the Council's 3-stage CCC Policy in place at the time, not the HOS code. In 2022/2023 there were 62 Stage One Informal complaints made. 33 of these were related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). The other 29 were categorised as Housing Management and Enforcement.

For Stage Two Formal complaints in 2022/2023 there were 47. 18 of these were related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). The other 29 were categorised as Housing Management and Enforcement.

There were 9 Stage Three complaints in 2022/2023. 2 of these were related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). The other 7 were categorised as Housing Management and Enforcement.

In comparison to the 2023/2024 data both Stage One and Stage Two complaints have decreased from 62 to 60 and 47 to 44, respectively. Stage Three complaints have increased slightly from 9 to 10.



### Comparison with national trends on themes for complaint

A HOS Spotlight report on complaints about repairs from March 2019 acknowledges that repairs is "...year on year,...consistently the biggest category of complaint we deal with...". The report indicates that the most common causes of complaints about repairs fall in to four areas:

- "
1. New lettings
  2. Responsibility for the repair
  3. The time taken to carry out repairs
  4. Record-keeping "

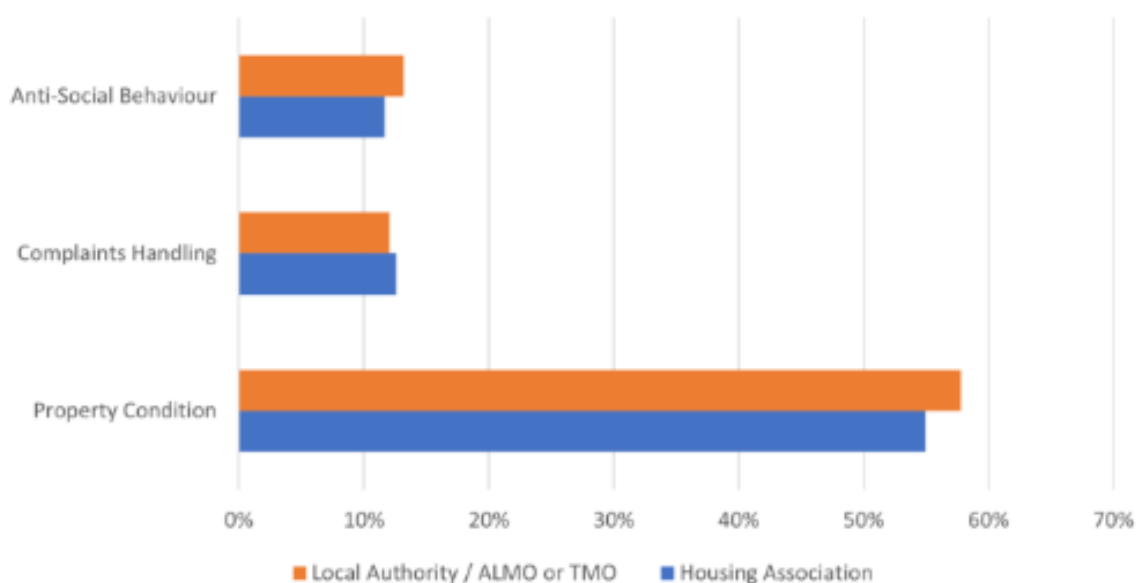
(HOS, (March 2019), Room for improvement: Spotlight on repairs, p7)

When reviewing repairs complaints for 2023/24, they do not typically fall into any of these areas, and most commonly relate to the quality of the repair, staff conduct, timing of the repair, and contact with the tenant during the repair process.

### Comparison with national trends in reasons for complaints 2023/24

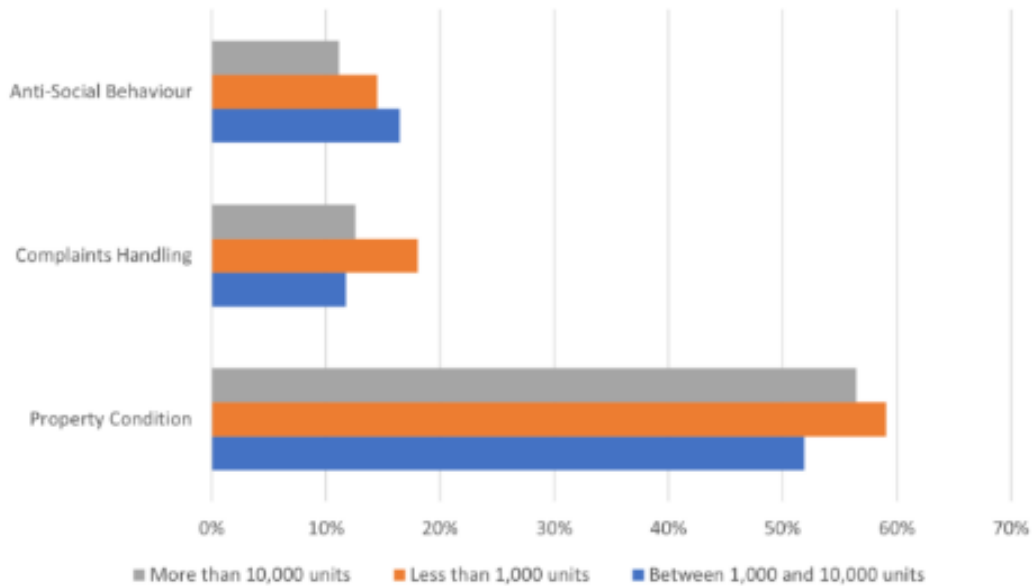
At the time of producing this report, the HOS have not yet published their analysis of Q4 2023/24 data. However, when looking at their analysis at Q3 2023/24 and previous quarters for the year, by landlord type and size of landlord, 'property condition' was the top category of complaint they received, with anti-social behaviour at a similar rate to the Council's complaints related to community safety. This indicates that the reasons for tenants complaining is comparable with the national picture.

## Type of landlord



[Q3 Quarterly Data 23-24 | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## Size of landlord



\*Note: The Council have between 1,000 and 10,000 units

[Q3 Quarterly Data 23-24 | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## Findings of non-compliance

In 2023/24, there were 16 Complaints categorised as HOS Stage One which were responded to outside of Housing Ombudsman timescales (10 working days), however all were within the CCC Policy timescale of 15 working days.

The Housing Ombudsman Code became statutory on the 1 April 2024 and the Council updated its CCC policy to reflect these timescales.

In the future, any complaints which are out of the Housing Ombudsman timescales the reasons will be documented and the Council will investigate. Measures will be put into place to ensure that complaints can be answered within the Housing Ombudsman timescales contained within the Statutory Code.



## Service improvements

### Improvements 2023/24

- 1) As a result of the statutory changes from 1 April 2024, the Customer Service, Complaints and Standards department have reviewed and aligned the CCC Policy and Customer Service Standards to meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This is to ensure the process is effective for both the Council and the Ombudsman whilst resolving complaints quickly and improving services through learning. The approach to complaint handling offers an emphasis on early intervention and being proactive with the customer to ensure their issues and concerns wherever possible, are resolved at the earliest opportunity.
- 2) Acknowledgement and response templates have been adapted to meet the new requirements ensuring the Council is being open, transparent and communication is clear. The template ensures the Council demonstrates an understanding of the issues, the expected outcome or remedy, or clear reason for decisions, timeframes and the escalation process if a resolution is not met are clearly set out.
- 3) A revised Complaints, Comments and Compliments leaflet has been updated to reflect the new CCC Policy and the Customer Service Standards Leaflet is also updated. The leaflets will be available in paper format at each of the contact centres and online via the Councils website in accessible format by request. The 3rd Party Authorisation has been added as an improvement to streamline the process alongside the new timescales, escalation process and contact details for the Council and the Housing Ombudsman.
- 4) Mandatory corporate Customer Service, Standards and Complaints training has been adapted to reflect the updated CCC Policy and Customer Service Standards. Training will also be delivered to all new Council employees. Customer Advisors have also had training to ensure upon first point of contact they establish whether the enquiry is a complaint or service request and adapted to ensure that all relevant data can be gathered clearly.
- 5) One of the main improvements is that the Council have streamlined complaints onto one corporate system for effective monitoring. Previously initial repairs complaints were reported separately within the main Housing system.
- 6) Accessibility of making and escalating a complaint has where improved as complaints can now be raised or escalated verbally or in writing. Previously this was just in writing. Customers can request a verbal response following Housing Ombudsman guidance; however the Council will also give a written response together with a verbal response.

- 7) The Customer Service, Complaints and Standards department have biannual service review meetings with the Housing Management department and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover). Complaints and Standards reporting have been added to the agenda to enable discussion on performance and updates in relation to any complaints trends or improvements identified.
- 8) In February 2024, all tenants were written to, advising them of the annual rent change which included information about the 53 week year, and the need for an extra weeks rent. This generated some complaints in the way the monthly rent had been calculated. As a result of 2 complaints being received from tenants, an article was placed in the Bolsover Homes Newsletter Issue 9 to all tenants, together with an explanation on the Council's website to limit any further complaints. Since this the Council have not received any further complaints
- 9) Following an increase in reports of attacks by XL bullies and the change in legislation the Council received some comments and complaints about tenants with suspected XL Bullies. Officers arranged for information to be sent to all tenants in the February rent letter, as well as an article in the Bolsover Homes Newsletter to inform tenants on the reporting procedure.

### **Forward Improvements 2024/25**

- 1) The Council intend to collate data on areas of complaints received to gain meaningful information and analysis and to be able to identify trends and make improvements. This information will be fed back to Council tenants quarterly in reporting at the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group Meetings, and with Councillors at the Customer Services Scrutiny Committees. These meeting reports and minutes are published on the Council's website which will ensure customers are kept informed.
- 2) Where the Council have made changes as a result of customer feedback or complaints, officers will ensure that this is fed back, this will be in the form of articles within the Bolsover Homes Tenants Newsletter and via the Council's website.
- 3) Officers will capture the method of contact preferred by tenants to report an issue, complaint or compliment, and any reasonable adjustments or 3rd Party authorisations required to ensure all tenants have access to the Council's services.
- 4) Due to the revised consumer standards that became operational as of 1 April 2024, the Council are required to ensure under the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard to ensure that officers are addressing complaints fairly, effectively and promptly to build trust with the Council's tenants. From April 2024, all tenants will be informed of the complaints process as part of the property sign-up procedure and new tenancy visits and given advice on how to

contact the Council should they wish to make a complaint. The Council endeavour to ensure that regular updates are provided to the tenant throughout the complaints process, so they are aware of steps to be taken by the Council and the clear timescales.

- 5) From 1 April 2024, the Council will keep a formal record of any complaints refused. While this is something that rarely occurs, if at all, to improve transparency all such contact will be recorded including where a complaint is redirected elsewhere when the complaint falls outside the scope of the CCC Policy or relates to a service by another provider.

## **Tenant scrutiny of complaints**

The Council will include complaints reports as part of the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group meetings. This group is the most strategic consultative group and consists of an equal mix of Tenants, Councillors and Officers.

Tenants were consulted in March 2024 as to potential future report formats and reviewed the information currently presented to Councillors via Customer Services Scrutiny Committee. Tenants were happy with the format and understood that the report will be specific to Housing related complaints rather than all services across the Council.

Tenants will use the data presented to assess any trends related to service areas/teams, any changes in volume, identify areas that need to be considered by the Challenge and Change Group (tenant scrutiny group), and compliance/non-compliance with response times.

Tenants involved in Challenge and Change work (tenant scrutiny) were also engaged in the production of this report, reviewing the presentation of the data and providing tenant feedback on service performance and areas for improvement.

## **Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) reports to landlord**

No formal determination was made by the HOS for 2022/23 in relation to Bolsover District Council complaints handling. The HOS only create individual reports for landlords with five or more findings of maladministration to ensure meaningful interpretation can be achieved. During 2022/23 the Council had no findings of maladministration.

Whilst the HOS are yet to publish their reports for 2023/24, officers are aware that no cases were escalated to the HOS during 2023/24.

## Appendix A: Self-assessment form 2024

This self-assessment form has been completed by the Complaints and Housing Management Services Teams, and has been reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body (Executive) and Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group (tenant scrutiny).

The Council have published this self-assessment as both a standalone document and as part of the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report on the website, with hard copies available in each contact centre.



### Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.1 page 6 and page 9.</p> <p>Portfolio Member updated and Policy approved at Customer Services Scrutiny 25.03.24, Executive 15.04.24.</p> <p>CCC Overview refresher training delivered via 'Teams' 18.04.24 to key service area Managers, Officers, Directors Recorded training available on staff portal.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team updated at a number of team meetings via P. Brown, Service Director for Complaint handling.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
			Policy uploaded to website.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2 page 6.</p> <p>CIS (customer information system) scripts updated to reflect CCC Policy changes.</p> <p>Third party authorisation form is completed.</p> <p>Cllrs and the MP have been updated with CCC Policy and changes.</p> <p>Customer Advisors updated via team meetings and attending overview training 12.06.24 regarding the changes to policy and new 2 stage process. Customer advisors aware to give tenants the choice to make a complaint if dissatisfied with an outcome. Must fall within scope of policy.</p>
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.1 page 6.</p> <p>Training has been delivered to all assistant Directors and Heads of service. They have cascaded this to staff which includes a detailed explanation as to the difference between a Service request and a complaint.</p> <p>CCC Overview refresher training delivered via 'Teams' 18.04.24 to key service area Managers, Officers, Directors. Senior Leadership Team updated at a number</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
			of team meetings via P. Brown, Service Director for Complaint handling. Recording of training available on staff portal.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	This is not specifically stated within the policy, but the Council do this in practice. The CCC Procedures to be updated for Service Areas to follow to meet policy requirements and will be included here.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2 page 6.  Advice and or link to how to make a complaint has been added to external satisfaction surveys and the Realtime Satisfaction survey. Performance team updated.

## Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 9.  CCC Procedures to be updated for Service Areas to follow and meet policy requirements.
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</li> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 9-11.
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 9.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	aware of the issue unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.		
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedures to be updated.  Corporate procedures to be updated to reflect advice to CSCO and Service areas.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –page 9.



### Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

63

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.3 page 6.</p> <p>Multiple channels – letter, email, face to face, via staff.</p> <p>Policy includes Equality Act 2010 and catering for individual needs. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to support the updated policy.</p>
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	<p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5.4 page 18.</p> <p>CCC Overview refresher training delivered via 'Teams' 18.04.24 to key service area Managers, Officers, Directors. Senior Leadership Team updated at a number of team meetings via P Brown Service Director for Complaint handling.</p> <p>Recording of training available on staff portal.</p>
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	<p>Performance reporting monitored by Scrutiny, and Executive.</p> <p>Service Review meetings are held annually and biannually depending on the service are requirements, Corporate Complaints and Customer Service Standards are to be introduces as an agenda item to discuss CCC</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
			volumes and type, information will be shared and service areas will be required to provide any updates to recurring complaints and evidence any improvements. In addition any Complaints that also result in a compliment will be recorded. Through the training for CCC/Customer Service Standards the message is to not view a complaint a negative but as a mechanism for learning.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the 2 stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	The Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 is on the website in an accessible format, information leaflets have been reviewed to incorporate the Policy changes and timeframes.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5.2 page 18, the role of the ombudsman page 15-16, the Regulators code page 17-18.
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2 page 6.  Third party authorisation form includes section for complaints.
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the	Yes	The Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 is on the website and staff portal in an accessible format, the information leaflet

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.		<p>has been reviewed to incorporate the Policy changes and timeframes.</p> <p>Customer Service Standards Leaflet also to be updated Changes have been passed to the Communications Officer to include within the next In Touch district Publication and the Tenants Magazine. Included within Stage 2 response template.</p>

## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

96

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager Customer Standards and Complaints Officer (CSCO)  These officers present Complaints handling and performance monitoring reports to Customer Services Scrutiny Committee.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	<a href="mailto:CCAdmin@bolsover.gov.uk">CCAdmin@bolsover.gov.uk</a>  Complaints are a key priority for the authority, emails come from a designated CCC Admin email address. Customers can make a complaint via a number of channels which are also forwarded directly to a CCC Admin email inbox for the attn of the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer (CSCO).  Updates to portfolio holder monthly.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –Section 5 page 17-18.  Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager and the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer attend relevant Ombudsman training. Cover and additional resource for the service is in place with a Customer Advisor

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively		working temporarily 1 day per week and covering any absence to maintain effective complaint handling. Service reviews meetings held with the key service areas monthly, biannually or annually depending on service needs agenda to include Customer Service Standards and Complaints. CSCO to update re performance and services areas to update re improvements to service delivery following comment or complaint.

## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – 2 stage process only.  Officers advised in recent training of new CCC Policy and Procedure that informal stages are not appropriate.
5.3	A process with more than 2 stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – 2 stage process only.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the 2 stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through 2 complaints processes.	Yes	The Council allow 3rd party complaints and complaints from the local MP. These are carried out in accordance with the 2-stage process as set out in the policy.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence Commentary / explanation</b>
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Policy shared with 3 <sup>rd</sup> party organisations and also available on website. 3rd party auth is now included within the CCC form.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 4.9 page 11.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 4.9 page 11.  Included within Stage 1 and Stage 2 Template.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024, Page 5 Introduction.  Corporate procedures to be updated to reflect advice to CSCO and Service areas

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.		
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 3.3 page 6-7.  CCC Leaflet includes access for all statement. The Housing department records any disabilities a resident has disclosed, record not kept by the Complaints Officer. If a disability is disclosed during a complaint the Housing department will be informed and the Council will ensure that any reasonable adjustments are met.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 18 explains this



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Excel Spreadsheets with all complaint data. CCC system keeps a record. Folders within a dedicated drive on the system where all correspondence is saved.  Bespoke admin system for recording all stages of Complaints and monitoring response timeframes, templates embedded within system and golden thread of hierarchy for responding to complaints dependent on level. 3 year data retention for all records.
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Remedies for a complaint page 13-14.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 17-19 Vexatious/habitual complaints
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 17-19 Vexatious/habitual complaints.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.		

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11-12.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9 page 11-13.
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9 Page 11.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.		
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.  Updates are logged within an Excel document and are monitored to provide regular updates to the customer.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Acknowledgement Stage 1 and Stage 2 templates.  Include within procedure advice.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10 page 13.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.		
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.  This is included as standard in all Stage 1 responses.

## Stage 2

106

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – complaints handling process, page 12.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Introduction, Page 5.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – The Complaints handling process page 12.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –page 11.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 –page 11.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.		
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – page 11.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Not explicitly stated within the CCC Policy but responses are monitored by the CSCO and service areas are made aware they must ensure all actions are completed and update the CSCO.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage;	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.  This is included as standard in all Stage 2 responses.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.		
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – responses page 13.



## Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – remedies page 14.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11 page 13- 4.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11 page 13- 4.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence Commentary / explanation</b>
	appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.		
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	The CCC Policy has been edited to include Remedies which were suggested within the HO Complaint Handling Code.

## Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>any other relevant reports or publications produced by the</li> </ol>	Yes	<p>Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.</p> <p>Performance reporting quarterly to the Customer Services Scrutiny.</p> <p>From April 2024, this will also be reported to the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group (a Cllr and Tenant meeting).</p> <p>Annual Performance report and Ombudsman decisions presented Scrutiny, Standards Committee and to Executive.</p> <p>Service Review Meetings for Complaints to discuss service improvements.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.		
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	The Assessment 23-24 will be presented to the Customer Services Scrutiny meeting on 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2024, executive on 24 <sup>th</sup> June, submitted to the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	The Council will fully comply with this requirement.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	The Council would fully comply with any request.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	The Council will fully comply with this requirement.

## Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

113

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.  Presented at Customer services scrutiny quarterly, trends analysed.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Updates in the In Touch & Tenants Magazine, Updates on the websites reports and Self Assessments, Performance posters.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager.  Presented at Customer Services Scrutiny quarterly, trends analysed.  From April 24 this will also be presented and discussed in the Tenant Review and Development Meetings.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for complaints. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 7.8 page 23
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for complaints.  Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 7.8 page 23.  Monthly meetings with Customer Services & Complaints manager and the MRC, discussed in 121s with Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress</li> </ul>	Yes	Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.  Performance reporting quarterly to the Customer Services Scrutiny.  Annual Performance report and Ombudsman decision presented to Scrutiny, Standards Committee and to Executive.  Monthly meetings with Customer Services & Complaints manager and the MRC, discussed in 121s with Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence Commentary / explanation
	made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.		
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5 page 17-18.  Mandatory training for all new employees.

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **Reduction in number of Standards Committee meetings per year**

#### **Report of the Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Jim Fieldsend, Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To propose that Standards Committee is scheduled to meet 4 times per year.

---

### **REPORT DETAILS**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Currently Standards Committee is scheduled to meet six times a year. Meetings are generally quite short with only a few items on each agenda. The Monitoring Officer has been in discussions with other monitoring officers locally and nationally and whereas some councils hold Standards Committees bi-monthly many others hold them quarterly or even less frequently.

#### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 The Monitoring Officer is proposing that from the 2025/26 civic year Standards Committee meets quarterly. The same standard items will be discussed throughout the year, therefore the Committee will fulfil its duties in full but in a more efficient way.
- 2.2 If the need arises for a Standard Committee to meet in between scheduled meetings an extraordinary meeting can be held. For instance if a member with a declarable interest wishes to apply for a dispensation to take part in a meeting and the meeting is to take place before a scheduled Standards Committee.



### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 Scheduling four meetings instead of six will result in a reduction in administration time but without affecting the effectiveness of the Committee.

### 4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Not to change the numbers of scheduled committees. This is rejected as the proposal to reduce the number of committees will result in far more meaningful meetings for Members but with less work for officers

---

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To recommend to Council to reduce the number of Standard Committee meetings from six to four.

Approved by Councillor Duncan McGregor, Portfolio Holder for Governance

---

### IMPLICATIONS:

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		
<b><u>Staffing</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service		
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
<b><u>Environment</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment		
Details:		

**DECISION INFORMATION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:	All <input type="checkbox"/>

If Yes, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing**

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title

<b>Background Papers</b>
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **Gifts and Hospitality Annual Report**

#### **Report of the Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Jim Fieldsend, Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To advise the Committee of the details of all entries in the Council's Gifts and Hospitality Register in respect of offers of gifts and hospitality made to Members and officers of the District Council during the period January 2024 to December 2024.

### **REPORT DETAILS**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution, Part 5 specifies detailed arrangements for the registering of gifts and hospitality made to Members and officers.

#### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 A copy of the provisions of the Constitution in respect of gifts and hospitality are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Details of the entries in the Council's Gifts and Hospitality Register for the period January 2024 to December 2024 are attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is important that there is a clear process for the recording and reporting of gifts and offers of hospitality offered to Members and officers of the Council.
- 3.2 The annual reporting of offers of gifts and hospitality made to Members and officers ensures that the Council's performance on this matter is monitored on a regular basis and that any changes in procedure can be introduced if necessary.

#### 4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 There are no alternative options. This report is for notification purpose only

---

#### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Committee note the content of this Annual Report for the period January 2023 to December 2024 in respect of offers of gifts and hospitality made to Members and officers.

---

#### IMPLICATIONS:

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Details:</b>		
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Details:</b>		
The Council has set a threshold of £25 for the declaration of gifts and hospitality as set out in its Constitution.		
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		
<b><u>Staffing</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Details:</b>		
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service		
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Details:</b>		
<b><u>Environment</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment		
<b>Details:</b>		

## **DECISION INFORMATION:**

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b></p> <p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p><b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p><b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>All</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>If Yes, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p><b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p><b>Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing</b>

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title
1	Extract from the Council's Constitution: Protocol on gifts and hospitality
2	Schedule of Gifts and Hospitality January 2024 to December 2024

**Background Papers**

*(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).*

## APPENDIX 1

### GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY GUIDANCE

- (1) In many areas of the commercial world it is common practice to offer and accept gifts, hospitality and other benefits. This practice is frequently used to influence a decision when one company is seeking business with another and it is perfectly legal to do so – but it can be quite the contrary in public service.
- (2) The acceptance of gifts, hospitality or other benefits, even on a modest scale, may arouse suspicion of impropriety and extreme caution and discretion should be exercised in accepting either. In principle you should refuse any personal gift offered to you or your family by any person or company who has or seeks dealings of any kind with the Council.
- (3) The only reasonable exceptions to the guidance given in (2) above are:-
  - (a) Small gifts of a purely token value given by way of trade advertisements (e.g., calendars, diaries, articles for general use in the office).
  - (b) Small articles, again purely of a token value given at the conclusion of courtesy visits (e.g. to a factory).
  - (c) A small gift offered without warning and where refusal would give particular offence.
- (4) Should you receive an unexpected gift, which falls outside the categories (see 3 above) you should consult your Director or Head of Service, as appropriate, who will decide the course of action. This may include:-
  - (a) returning the gift, ensuring that the donor is told in a polite way why this has been necessary;
  - (b) passing the gift on to some charitable cause if it is appropriate to do so;
  - (c) agree that the gift may be kept by the recipient.
- (5) Details of all gifts covered by the above categories must be recorded in a book kept for this purpose by the Monitoring Officer.
- (6) Hospitality is sometimes offered to employees and it is not always possible or desirable to reject offers of a moderate nature. Examples of acceptable hospitality include a working lunch of a modest standard, provided to allow business discussion to continue.



- (7) Some offers of hospitality are clearly unacceptable and these would include offers of holiday accommodation, individual offer of theatre tickets for yourself or your family and individual invitation to dinner.
- (8) You should be particularly cautious when any form of hospitality is offered by an individual or organisation seeking to do business with, or a decision from, the Council as acceptance might affect your relations with the party offering it and how this might be viewed. If in any doubt at all you should consult with your Director or Head of Service as appropriate before acceptance. Directors/Head of Service must consult with Monitoring Officer or Chief Financial Officer.
- (9) Acceptance of offers of hospitality must be recorded in the book kept for the purpose.
- (10) These guidelines are intended as a general overview on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality but cannot cover every eventuality. If you are in any doubt you should consult your Director or Head of Service, as appropriate.
- (11) **The procedure for registering offers of gifts and hospitality to officers will be as follows:**
  - When a gift/hospitality arises it is the responsibility of the recipient to use the Gifts and Hospitality Declaration form which can be located on the intranet.
  - There will be two versions of the Declaration form –
    - **Gifts and Hospitality Corporate Declaration form** – to be completed by all Bolsover District Council Employees
    - **Gifts and Hospitality Members Declaration form** – to be completed by any District Councillor.
  - Note for officers only: Complete the relevant form and get the Authorising Officer to sign the document (if the gift or hospitality is being accepted).

**REMEMBER**

- The entry needs to be made within a reasonable period of time from the offer of the gift or hospitality. ***Members have 28 days to do this.***
- Members are required to declare any gift or hospitality that is above the value of £25. However, there is nothing to stop you from declaring any gift or hospitality that is below the stated value if you prefer to have this on record.

- The entry needs to be made within a reasonable period of time from the offer of the gift or hospitality.
- Give an approximate value of the offer. You can say “*de minimis*” or “*less than £10*” if the gift is small.
- Name the donor, including where the Authority provides hospitality.
- It must be clear from the entry whether the offer is accepted or refused.
- The name and extension number of the individual who received the offer must be provided on the form.
- A reason for acceptance must be given and the Line Manager’s authorisation (signature) obtained.
- Line Managers should not authorise their own acceptance of gifts and hospitality. A Director or Head of Service should be asked to authorise.
- Scan the signed and completed document and email the form to the Monitoring Officer.
- The register will be checked annually by the Monitoring Officer, on behalf of the Standards Committee, to ensure that the system is being used and to monitor the frequency of any gifts and hospitalities during the calendar year.

Gifts & Hospitalities Inspection - January 2024 to December 2024				
Department	Total amount of declared gifts	Description of gifts/hospitalities	Electronic Declarations - Total	Paper Declarations - total
Members				
GROWTH DIRECTORATE				
CEO				
Joint Strategic Directors				
CEPT				
Economic Growth				
Planning & Env. Health				
Legal & Governance				
OPERATIONS				
Finance				
Revenues				
Street Scene				

Gifts & Hospitalities Inspection - January 2024 to December 2024				
Department	Total amount of declared gifts	Description of gifts/hospitalities	Electronic Declarations - Total	Paper Declarations - total
Housing	15	Travel size bottle of body spray (less than £10); <b>Bottle of sparkly wine and a bar of diary milk chocolate (less than £10)</b> ; Small bag of dog biscuits (£2); <b>small bag of dog biscuits (£2)</b> ; Merci Chocolates (approx £2); <b>Mesco Chocolates (approx £3)</b> ; Box of chocolates (Estimated at £5); <b>£30.00 Cash given to purchase flowers ACCEPTED AND THEN RETURNED TO DONOR VIA POST</b> ; <b>£25 Amazon Gift Card</b> ; Flowers (£10 approx); <b>£20 Amazon Gift Voucher</b> ; Amazon Gift Card for £20; <b>Tub of Hereos Chocolates</b> ; Amazon £20 Gift Card;		
Community Safety	17	Notebook, pen and plastic cup; <b>4 x home made scones, 2 small approx 50g packs of home made butter</b> ; Christmas Pen, Badge stating "you make a difference" and chocloate square stating "thank you" x4;		
Property & Estates				
TRANSFORMATION				
ICT				
Health & Wellbeing				
Leisure				
Human Resources				

Gifts & Hospitalities Inspection - January 2024 to December 2024				
Department	Total amount of declared gifts	Description of gifts/hospitalities	Electronic Declarations - Total	Paper Declarations - total
<b>Shirebrook Contact Centre</b>	1	Chocolate Bar (Approx £1);		
<b>Bolsover Contact Centre</b>				
<b>Clowne Contact Centre</b>	3	6 Eggs; <b>2x bunches of flowers</b> ; Millionaires shortbread in a sealed box;		
<b>South Normanton Contact Centre</b>	4	Lindt Easter Egg & Cadbury bar of chocolate; <b>6 Chicken eggs</b> ; Dairy Milk & Lindt chocolates; <b>2 boxes of chocolates (£7 approx)</b> ;		
<b>Customer Service &amp; Improvement</b>				

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **RIPA Annual Report**

#### **Report of the Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Jim Fieldsend, Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

#### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To provide an update on Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) applications.

---

#### **REPORT DETAILS**

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 One of Standard Committee's terms of reference is to review the operation of the Council's RIPA policy. This is the policy that determines how officers of the Council may undertake covert surveillance.

##### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 At its meeting on September 2024 Standards Committee approved changes to the Council's RIPA policy. It is however extremely rare for the Council to need to carry out covert surveillance and no applications have been applied for or granted in a number of years.
- 2.2 Despite this it is important that staff are properly trained and steps are currently been taken to ensure that appropriate training are provided to authorising officers and investigating officers. As a number of staff from Environmental Health will require training this is likely to be arranged jointly with North East Derbyshire.

##### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 Standard Committee need to understand the extent of RIPA authorisations each year.

#### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 There are no alternative options. This report is for notification purpose only

---

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That the Committee note the content of this report.

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		
<b><u>Staffing</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service		
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details:		
<b><u>Environment</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment		
Details:		

**DECISION INFORMATION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:	All <input type="checkbox"/>

If Yes, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing</b>

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title



<b>Background Papers</b>
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **Whistleblowing Policy- Annual Report**

#### **Report of the Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Jim Fieldsend, Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To provide an annual update to Members on use of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

### **REPORT DETAILS**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Whistleblowing is a report from an employee, member or other person about suspected wrongdoing within the organisation. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 requires employers to refrain from dismissing workers and employees or subjecting them to any other detriment because they have made a protected disclosure.
- 1.2 Whistleblowing policies should foster a climate of openness and transparency in which individuals in the workplace do not feel that they will be victimised, harassed or suffer any reprisals if they raise concerns about wrongdoing within the organisation. The Government expects all public bodies to have adequate whistleblowing procedures in place.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to updating policies on a regular basis to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The last review of the Whistleblowing Policy took place in January 2024.

#### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 The Whistleblowing Policy shown in the Appendix has been reviewed in the preparation of writing this report and a minor amendment is proposed. This is to

change the name and contact number for the external whistleblowing hotline at paragraph 8.6 of the policy.

- 2.2 In accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy, the Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Policy and will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes. The Monitoring Officer is also required to report as necessary to the Council on instances of Whistleblowing. There have been no instances to report for the 2023 calendar year

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Whistleblowing Policy has been reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, and it is concluded that the existing version is satisfactory, subject to the change referred to in paragraph 2.1, and up to date with current legislation and best practice.
- 3.2 There are no instances of Whistleblowing to report to Members.

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options.

---

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That the Committee agree the current Whistleblowing Policy is fit for purpose subject to the change referred to in paragraph 2.1.
2. That the Committee note that no instances of Whistleblowing have been made during 2024.

---

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
The legal implications in relation to whistleblowing are contained within the policy and no further implications arise from this report.		
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		

<b><u>Staffing</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Details:</b>	On behalf of the Head of Paid Service
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Details:</b>	
<b><u>Environment</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment <b>Details:</b>	

**DECISION INFORMATION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b><i>Please indicate which threshold applies:</i></b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:  <b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.  <b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.  <b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:	<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <b>All</b> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>

<p>If Yes, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p><b>Consultation carried out:</b>  <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p> <b>Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/> </p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>      <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing</b>

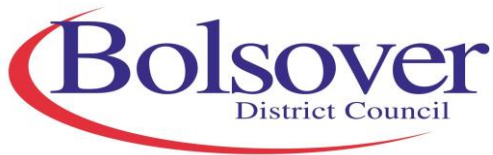
**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title
1	Whistleblowing Policy

<b>Background Papers</b>
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>

# **Bolsover District Council**

## **Whistleblowing Policy**



## CONTROL SHEET FOR WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Policy Details	Comments/Confirmation (to be updated as the document progresses)
Policy title	Whistleblowing Policy
Current status –	Agreed 2021 version, with housekeeping changes only.
Location of Policy –	Corporate Governance
Member route for approval	Standards, then Council
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	N/A
Equality Impact Assessment (approval date)	N/A
Partnership Involvement (if applicable)	N/A
Final Policy approval route (i.e. Executive/Council Committee)	Council
Date Policy approved	14/04/21 (BDC)
Date Policy due for review	Annually
Date Policy forwarded to Strategy and Performance (to include on Intranet and Internet, if applicable to the public)	

## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within a local authority. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Council. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances employees may feel that it is easier to ignore the concern, rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment the Council encourages employees, Members and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 1.3 Whistleblowing is the term used when someone who works in or for an organisation raises a concern about a possible fraud, crime, danger or other serious risk that could threaten customers, colleagues, the public or the organisation's own reputation. For example instances of theft from the Council, accepting or offering a bribe, and failure by colleagues to adhere to Health & Safety directives could all be the subject of a Whistleblow.
- 1.4 This policy document makes it clear that concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns within either Council in person, rather than overlooking a problem or using other methods to report concerns.
- 1.5 This policy applies to Council employees and other workers, including freelance staff, temporary and agency staff, trainers, volunteers, consultants, contractors, employees of another Local Authority with whom the Council has entered into joint working arrangements and Members.
- 1.6 This policy also applies to all employees in organisations who work in partnership with the Councils and suppliers who wish to raise a concern.
- 1.7 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects Council employees who report concerns from subsequent harassment, victimisation and other unfair treatment. Potential informants should feel reassured that it is illegal for the Council to consider any action against them should their concerns not prove to be verifiable.



## **2. Aims and Scope of this Policy**

### **2.1 This policy aims to:-**

- encourage persons to feel confident in raising serious concerns that they may have about practices and procedures
- provide avenues to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- allow persons to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response
- reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosure

### **2.2 Areas covered by the Whistleblowing Policy include:-**

- criminal or other misconduct
- breaches of the Council's Standing Orders or Financial Regulations
- contravention of the Council's accepted standards, policies or procedures
- disclosures relating to miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks
- damage to the environment
- unauthorised use of public funds
- fraud, bribery and corruption
- sexual, physical and/or verbal abuse of any person or group
- other unethical conduct
- the concealment of any of the above

### **2.3 Any concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of officers or Elected Members of the Council, or others acting on behalf of the Council, can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy. This may be about something that:-**

- Makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the Council subscribes to; or
- Is against the Council's constitution and policies; or
- Falls below established standards of practice; or
- Amounts to improper conduct

## **3. When this Policy may not be appropriate**

### **3.1 This policy is not a substitute for the Council's other policies and procedures on such matters as personal grievances, bullying and harassment, health and safety, safeguarding issues (children and/or adults) or complaints. It should also not be used to raise matters relating to an employee's own terms and conditions of service.**

### **3.2 It is important to know the difference between a 'Whistleblow' and a 'grievance.' A Whistleblow has a public interest aspect to it, as it puts others at risk.**

- 3.3 A grievance by contrast has no public interest factors, as it is a complaint about a particular employment situation. A grievance should be reported using the Grievance Policy, not this policy.
- 3.4 For example, a member of staff being formally interviewed on capability grounds, without previously having had any indication that their performance was not acceptable, may lead to a grievance complaint being made. Whilst a member of staff who observes colleagues sharing/selling confidential data to un-authorised others, should lead to a Whistleblow.
- 3.5 The policy is not to be used by members of the public to pursue complaints about services. These should be dealt with through the Council's Complaints Procedures.
- 3.6 This Policy is not to be used by members of the public to pursue complaints against councillors conduct. They should direct complaints in the first instance to the Monitoring Officer who will deal with their complaints under the Members Code of Conduct procedure.

#### **4. Safeguards against Harassment or Victimisation**

- 4.1 The Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. However, the Council will not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation, and will take appropriate action to protect persons who have made a disclosure.
- 4.2 The Council is committed to good practice and high standards and endeavours to be supportive of persons who raise concerns under this Policy.
- 4.3 In all cases, the provisions of The Public Interest Disclosure 1998 (PIDA) will be adhered to.
- 4.4 The Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (ERRA) introduced a Public Interest test requirement on Whistleblowers. In order to receive the protection of PIDA, Whistleblowers will now have to show that they reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is in the public Interest.

#### **5. Confidentiality**

- 5.1 All concerns will be treated in confidence and the identity of the person raising the concern will not be revealed without his or her consent (subject to any legal requirements or decisions). At the appropriate time, however, the person may be expected to come forward as a witness.

#### **6. Anonymous Allegations**

- 6.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to any allegation wherever possible and receive the protection of PIDA as anonymous complaints are likely to be difficult to deal with effectively.

6.2 Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the Council. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:-

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## **7. Untrue Allegations & Legal Protection**

7.1 If you are a Council employee you are given legal protection by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. You will qualify for this protection if you reasonably believe that the disclosure is in the public interest.

7.2 If you make what is known as a “qualifying disclosure” under the 1998 Act to your employer or certain other persons/bodies, it will be unlawful for the Council to subject you to any detriment (such as denial of promotion or withdrawal of a training opportunity), or to dismiss you, because of the disclosure.

7.3 Qualifying disclosures are disclosures of information where a Council employee reasonably believes (and it is in the public interest) that one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future.

- A criminal offence
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above.

7.4 Compensation may be awarded to you by an Employment Tribunal if the Council breaches the 1998 Act, following a successful claim for ‘detrimental treatment’.

## **8. How to raise a Concern under this Policy**

8.1 Concerns may be raised normally in writing. Persons who wish to raise a concern should provide details of the nature of the concern or allegation in the following format:

- The background and history of the concern giving names, dates and places where possible.
- The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.
- Submit any relevant evidence or documentation.

8.2 The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.

8.3 Although you are not expected to prove beyond reasonable doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

8.4 Employees may choose to be represented by a colleague or Trade Union representative.

## Employees

- 8.5 Employees should normally raise concerns in the first instance with their Line Manager. Alternatively, dependent upon the nature, seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and the person suspected of malpractice you could approach;
- the Service Manager whom you feel would be the most appropriate
  - Internal Audit
  - the Head of Paid Service (responsible Officer for Safeguarding)
  - the Monitoring Officer
  - The Section 151 Officer
- 8.6 You may choose to contact a Prescribed Person. Prescribed persons, as prescribed under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, are independent bodies or individuals that can be approached by whistleblowers where an approach to their employers would not be appropriate. Prescribed persons, which usually have an authoritative relationship with the whistleblowers' organizations, can be regulatory or legislative bodies, central government departments, arm's length bodies or charities and include all Members of Parliament. You may also contact the "Public Concern at Work" helpline if you wish to remain anonymous. The telephone number for this service is: 020 7404 6609.

## Other Persons (including Elected Members)

- 8.7 Other persons can contact any of the following officers of the Councils directly:
- the Service Manager whom you feel would be the most appropriate
  - Internal Audit
  - the Head of Paid Service (responsible Officer for safeguarding)
  - the Monitoring Officer
  - The Section 151 Officer
- 8.8 Officers of the Councils can be contacted in writing, by telephone or by going through one of the Contact Centres. You can contact the Council through your elected Councillor if this is preferable or more convenient.
- 8.9 You may also choose to contact a body external to the Council such as the External Auditor or the Police or a Prescribed Person.

## **9 How the Council will respond to a concern raised under this Policy**

- 9.1 The Officer with whom the concern was initially raised will respond in writing within ten working days:
- acknowledging that the concern has been received
  - indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter
  - stating whether any initial enquiries have been made
  - supplying information on what support is available and stating whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not

- 9.2 Concerns raised under this Policy will be investigated by the investigating officer who will be appointed at the Council's discretion.
- 9.3 When conducting the investigation, the investigating officer may involve:-
- Internal Audit
  - Legal & Governance Services
  - Human Resources
  - the Police (in some circumstances the Council will have no choice but to inform the Police if it believes a criminal offence has been committed and may do so without informing the whistle blower)
  - an external auditor
  - The Monitoring Officer
  - The S 151 Officer
  - The Head of Paid Service (responsible Officer for safeguarding)
  - Any other person at the discretion of the investigating officer
- 9.4 The investigating officer should in the first instance inform any employee who is the subject of a Whistleblowing allegation of the allegation before a decision is taken as to what will happen with it. If the investigating officer determines that this would not be appropriate in the circumstances then he should seek guidance from the Monitoring Officer who may advise not to inform the employee at this stage of the process.
- 9.5 The investigating officer will make initial enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take having regard to the law and the public interest.
- 9.6 If the investigating officer decides that a disciplinary investigation is the appropriate course of action to take, he/she will advise Human Resources who will instruct an appropriate person to conduct the disciplinary investigation and ensure that the investigation is carried out in accordance with the Councils' Disciplinary Policy.
- 9.7 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- 9.8 It may be necessary to take urgent action before any investigation is completed.
- 9.9 The Council will take steps to minimise any difficulties that persons may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if he or she is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the Council will arrange for advice to be given about the procedure (but not about what answers to give).
- 9.10 The Councils accept that persons need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, the Council will inform the Whistleblower of the progress and outcome of any investigation.
- 9.11 It is important for persons to understand that making a Whistleblowing allegation doesn't give them anonymity, but does give them protection from harassment or victimisation.

## **10 The Responsible Officer**

- 10.1 The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Policy, and will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes. This record will be in a form which does not compromise confidentiality and substantially in the form attached.
- 10.2 The Monitoring Officer will report as necessary to the Council.
- 10.3 The Investigating Officer must inform the Monitoring Officer of the receipt of a concern raised under this Policy, how they intend to deal with it and how the matter was concluded.

## **11. How the Matter Can Be Taken Further**

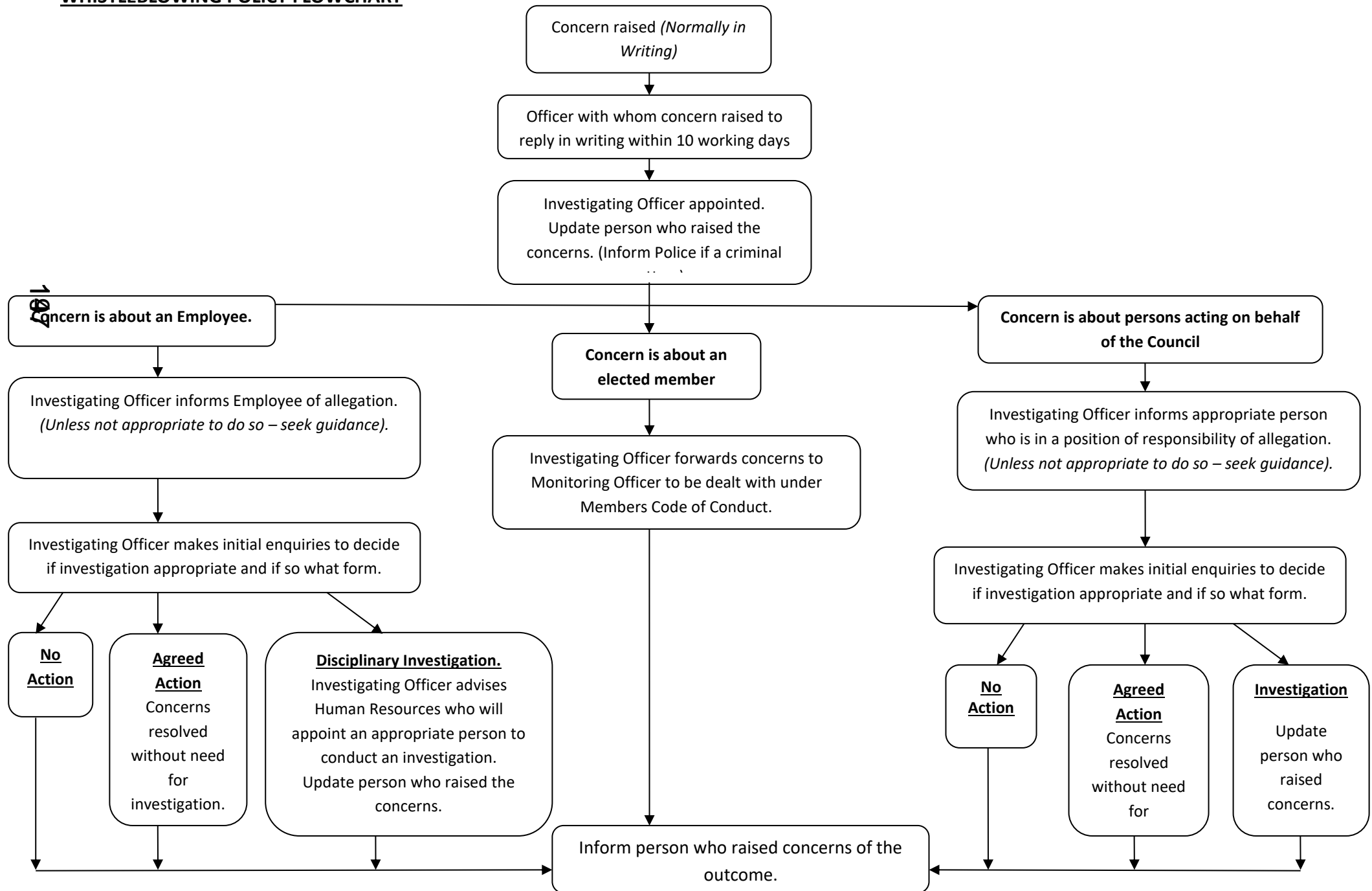
- 11.1 This Policy is intended to provide a process within the Council, through which appropriate persons may raise concerns. If at the conclusion of this process the person is not satisfied with any action taken or feels that the action taken is inappropriate, the following are suggested as further referral points:
- the Councils external auditor
  - Your Trade Union
  - Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Relevant professional body or regulatory organisation
  - A relevant voluntary organisation
  - The Police
  - Your Solicitor
  - The Audit Commission
- 11.2 Advice should be taken before making an external disclosure and the internal procedure should normally have been followed first.
- 11.3 The Councils would not normally expect Whistleblowers to make disclosures to the press.

## **12. Whistleblowing Register**

- 12.1 The Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy of Bolsover District Council has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Policy, and will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes. This record will be in a form which does not compromise confidentiality and substantially in the form below.

Number	Council	Details	Outcome
1/20xx			

## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY FLOWCHART



## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **Request for Dispensation**

#### **Report of the Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Jim Fieldsend, Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

#### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To seek Standard Committees decision on a request for dispensation.

---

#### **REPORT DETAILS**

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 One of Standard Committee's terms of reference is to consider requests for dispensations from councillors who have a declarable interest in an item to be considered at a meeting and who wish to remain in the meeting and vote on the item.
- 1.2 Councillors who are also directors of Dragonfly Development Ltd and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd would generally have an interest in matters discussed in Council meetings which affect either or both of the companies and would normally be required to leave the meeting and not take part in any debate or vote.
- 1.3 The Council has received a request from Cllr Deborah Watson on behalf of herself and the other councillor directors of both companies for dispensations.

##### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 On 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 the Monitoring Officer received the following request from Cllr Deborah Watson:

*"I would like to formally request a dispensation to allow all Dragonfly Board members (who undertake this role on behalf of the Council), to remain in*



*meetings, take part in any debates, and ultimately vote, on matters pertaining to the setting of the Council's future budgets.*

*As Council members, it is imperative that we as Board members are able to fulfil our original role of representing the people of our District and that we should not lose our democratic right to participate in the process of budget setting.*

*Furthermore, at a time when the very future of Bolsover District Council is clearly limited by the newly released MCHCLG English Devolution White Paper, which, of course, will dramatically affect the people we represent as District Councillors, I would additionally request that Dragonfly Board members be granted a dispensation to remain in meeting, take part in debates, and also vote on matters which pertain to any preparations for Devolution and the role of BDC and Dragonfly as part of this process.*

*I believe that this dispensation should fall under two grounds, firstly, that it would be otherwise appropriate for the Council to grant a dispensation, and secondly, that the Council considers that the dispensation is in the interest of persons living in the Authority's area".*

- 2.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution a dispensation may be granted for a number of reasons. These are set out as follows:
- That so many members of the decision-making body have interests in a matter that it would impede the transaction of the business.
  - That, without the dispensation, the representation of different political groups on the body transacting the business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote on the matter.
  - That the District Council considers that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Authority's area;
  - That, without a dispensation, no member of the Cabinet would be able to participate in the matter; or
  - That the District Council considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant dispensation.
- 2.3 The above request is seeking a specific dispensation to remain in Council when it considers setting its budget, part of which includes the budget it will make available for Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Limited. The budget is set annually following recommendations from the Section 151 Officer and this request is seeking approval of dispensation at all annual budget meetings. The Council's budget is one of the most important decisions a councillor is involved in and so it is likely to be in the interests of council tax payers to allow his or her councillor to take an active part in budget setting. The risk of a conflict of interest with this is small.

- 2.4 In addition Cllr Watson is seeking a wider dispensation to enable the directors of the Dragonfly companies to remain in the meeting and vote on items relating to local government reorganisation, even though the proposed decision may have an impact on the Dragonfly companies. This is not as straight forward as the budget setting dispensation as we don't know what decisions Member will be asked to consider and the extent of any conflict of interest. Standard Committee therefore may decide that rather than grant such a blanket dispensation that they consider that dispensations should be requested on an 'as and when' basis so that each request can be determined on its merits.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Standard Committee are required to determine whether to grant dispensations.

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options.

---

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That the Committee decide whether to grant:
  - (a) a dispensation to allow all Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd members to remain in meetings, take part in any debates, and ultimately vote, on matters pertaining to the setting of the Council's future budgets; and;
  - (b) a dispensation to allow Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd and Dragonfly Development Ltd members remain in meeting, take part in debates, and also vote on matters which pertain to any preparations for Devolution and the role of BDC and Dragonfly as part of this process.

---

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b>		
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		

<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b> The Council's Constitution enables the Standard Committee to grant dispensations on the grounds referred to in the report.	
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council	
<b><u>Staffing</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>  	
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service	
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>  	
<b><u>Environment</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment <b>Details:</b>  	

**DECISION INFORMATION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:  <b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.  <b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.  <b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:	<div style="text-align: right;"> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;"> <b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;"> <b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 40px;"> <b>All</b> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>

<p>If Yes, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p><b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p> Leader <input type="checkbox"/>   Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/>   Executive <input type="checkbox"/>   SLT <input type="checkbox"/>  Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/>   Members <input type="checkbox"/>   Public <input type="checkbox"/>  Other <input type="checkbox"/> </p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing</b>

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title

<b>Background Papers</b>
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **Update of Standards Investigation**

#### **Report of the Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Jim Fieldsend, Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

#### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To update Standards Committee on the outcome of a code of conduct investigation.

---

#### **REPORT DETAILS**

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Where a complaint is made against a councillor and a formal investigation is undertaken which recommends there has been a breach of the code of conduct the Monitoring Officer has two options. One option is to refer the matter to a Standards Committee hearing which will determine whether there has been a breach. The other option is to agree to an informal resolution, for example where the councillor concerned accepts the findings of the investigation and is prepared to offer an apology. If the latter option is taken the Monitoring Officer is required to report to Standards Committee with an update.

##### **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 the Monitoring Officer received a complaint from Mr Mark Fletcher, former Member of Parliament for Bolsover, who at the time was a parliamentary candidate for Bolsover. Mr Fletcher's complaint was that Cllr Steve Fritchley had used homophobic language in a meeting at the Council offices which had been convened to discuss a neighbour dispute. This was reported to Mr Fletcher by a resident of Bolsover who was present at the meeting.
- 2.2 The Monitoring Officer decided that the complaint justified an investigation and appointed external investigators from Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. The

investigation took place in August and involved interviews with all the people who were present at the meeting. At the conclusion of the investigation the investigators provided the Monitoring Officer with their report a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1. Please note the names of the members of public who were present at the meeting have been redacted.

- 2.3 In summary the report found that Cllr Fritchley used words that may be perceived to be homophobic by someone who did not understand the context of why the words had been said. Details of the context are set out in Appendix However the investigators did not feel that there was any evidence to suggest any homophobic intention. Consequently the investigators did not find that Cllr Fritchley had breached Bolsover District Council's code of conduct in terms of treating members of the public with respect and promoting equalities and not discriminating unlawfully against any person.
- 2.4 However the investigators did find that by using a term that could be perceived to be homophobic by someone who did not understand the context of words breached the Nolan Principle which requires councillors to lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of a councillor and that he had brought the Council into disrepute contrary to paragraph 5.1 of the Council's code of conduct.
- 2.5 At the Council meeting on 2nd December 2024 Cllr Fritchley read out a statement explaining the findings of the investigators' report and apologising for his actions.
- 2.6 The Monitoring Officer considers this apology to be an appropriate resolution in response to the specific findings. There was no evidence of homophobia. Instead Cllr Fritchley has been found to have used ill-judged language. As Cllr Fritchley has accepted he was wrong to use that language and was prepared to apologise for doing so, it would be disproportionate in the circumstances to refer the matter to a Standards hearing.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is important for members of Standard Committee to be notified where an investigation has found that a councillor has breached the code of conduct and where the Monitoring Officer considers that informal action is the appropriate action.

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options. This report is for notification purpose only

---

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. To note the contents of the report.
-

**IMPLICATIONS:**

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details:			
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer			
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details:			
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council			
<b><u>Staffing</u></b>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details:			
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service			
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details:			
<b><u>Environment</u></b>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment			
Details:			

**DECISION INFORMATION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b><i>Please indicate which threshold applies:</i></b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p><b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b>  <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i>  Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:</p>	<p><b>All</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

<p>If Yes, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p><b>Consultation carried out:</b>  <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p> Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/>  Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/>  Other <input type="checkbox"/> </p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p><b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing</b></p>

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title
1	Investigating Officers Report

<p><b>Background Papers</b></p> <p><i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i></p>





<b>Member Standards &amp; Complaints</b>	<b>Thursday, 26 September 2024</b>	<b>Matter for Information and Decision</b>
----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------

**Report Title:** **Investigation of Complaint under Members' Code of Conduct  
(Alleged Use of Homophobic Language)**

**Report Author(s):** **David Gill (Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer)  
Samuel Ball (Legal & Democratic Services Manager /  
Deputy Monitoring Officer)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To summarise the outcome of an external independent investigation undertaken by the Monitoring Officer ("OWBC MO") and Deputy Monitoring Officer ("OWBC DMO") of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council ("OWBC") into a complaint made to the Monitoring Officer ("BDC MO") of Bolsover District Council ("BDC") under the Members' Code of Conduct ("the Code") dated and received on 23 June 2024 by Mark Fletcher ("the Complainant") against the Leader and Member of BDC, Councillor Steve Fritchley ("the Member"), to allow the BDC MO, following consultation the Independent Person (IP), to determine if any further action is required under the Code accordingly.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	On the balance of probabilities, upon review of the documents, interview/telephone summaries and information before the Investigators, and having considered and being guided by the other matters and considerations, the Investigation concludes and recommends that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A.</b> There is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code by the Member in respect of the allegations set out at paragraphs 2.2.1, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 below and therefore the Complaint, as far as they relate to these allegations only, be dismissed; and</li> <li><b>B.</b> There is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code by the Member in respect of the allegations set out at paragraph 2.2.2 and paragraph 2.2.5 below requiring further action by the BDC MO under the Code as recommended (as set out below).</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>The Investigators recommend that the Complaint, as far as they relate to the allegations set out at paragraph 2.2.2 and paragraph 2.2.5 below, proceed to a hearing before a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee or, after consulting the Independent Person, seek local resolution.</b>
<b>Contacts:</b>	<b>Oadby &amp; Wigston Borough Council</b>  David Gill (Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer / Solicitor) (0116) 257 2626 <a href="mailto:david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a>  Samuel Ball (Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer / Solicitor) (0116) 257 2643 <a href="mailto:samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a>  <b>Bolsover District Council</b>

	<p>Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance / Monitoring Officer) (01246) 242 472 <a href="mailto:jim.fieldsend@bolsover.gov.uk">jim.fieldsend@bolsover.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Independent Person</b></p> <p>Ian Kirk (Independent Person)</p>
<b>Consultees:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ian Kirk (Independent Person)</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>BDC Members' Code of Conduct (Revised 2020)</u></li> <li><u>BDC Councillor Complaints Procedure (Detailed) (Revised 2020)</u></li> <li><u>Definitions, Meanings &amp; Uses of Words 'Homophobic', 'Homophobe' And 'Homophobia' (Oxford English Dictionary) (July 2023)</u></li> <li><u>Flagging of Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Crime - Guidance (Crown Prosecution Service) (October 2019)</u></li> </ul>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter from Complainant (23 June 2024)</li> <li>Letter from Informant (22 June 2024)</li> <li>Letter to Complainant (25 June 2024)</li> <li>Letter to Member (26 June 2024)</li> <li>Prepared Statement - Member (1 August 2024)</li> </ol>

## 1. Complaint

- 1.1 On 23 June 2024, the BDC MO received a complaint under the Code ("the Complaint"). The Complaint was made by a Parliamentary Candidate for the Bolsover Constituency for the UK Parliamentary (General) Election on 4 July 2024 ("the Election"), Mark Fletcher ("the Complainant"). The Complaint is made against the Leader and Member of BDC, Councillor Steve Fritchley ("the Member"). A copy of the Letter of Complaint is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## 2. Allegation(s)

- 2.1 The Complaint alleges that the Member breached the Code by repeatedly using homophobic language by referring to the Complainant on more than one occasion as a "puff" and commenting "that's what we call him [the Complainant] here" during a meeting with a Bolsover resident discussing Council business as it related to a neighbour dispute.
- 2.2 If the Complaint has been correctly understood and characterised in outline as set out in paragraph 2.1, the alleged breaches of the Code, and as stated by the Complainant, are:

<b>Allegation(s)</b>	<b>Code Provision(s)</b>
2.2.1 To treat all persons fairly and with respect	General Principle
2.2.2 To lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor	General Principle
2.2.3 To treat other Councillors and members of the public with respect (including other representatives)	Paragraphs 1.1 & 1.2
2.2.4 To promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person	Paragraph 2.3
2.2.5 To not bring their role or the District Council into disrepute	Paragraph 5.1

### 3. Investigation

- 3.1 Upon the BDC MO's instruction, the Complaint was independently investigated by the OWBC MO and OWBC DMO ("the Investigators") on 1, 2 and 22 August 2024 ("the Investigation").
- 3.2 On 1 August 2024, the Investigators attended Bolsover District Council situated at The Arc, High Street, Clowne, Chesterfield, S43 4JY ("the Council Offices") and interviewed the following witnesses and/or persons, summaries of which have been produced below.

Interviewee (chronological)	Capacity	Paragraph
3.2.1 ("the Informant")	Witness & Informant	6.1.3
3.2.2 ("the Other Neighbour")	Witness	6.1.2
3.2.3 Karen Hanson ("the Chief Executive")	Witness	6.1.6
3.2.4 Samantha Bentley ("the Manager")	Witness	6.1.1
3.2.5 Steve Fritchley ("the Member")	Respondent	6.1.5

- 3.3 At the start of the Member's interview, the Member provided the Investigators with a prepared statement ("the Statement") which has been produced and marked as **Appendix 5**.
- 3.4 On 2 August 2024, the Investigators held a remote audio-visual conference on Microsoft Teams and interviewed the following person, a summary of which has been produced below.

Interviewee	Capacity	Paragraph
3.4.1. Mark Fletcher ("the Complainant")	Complainant	6.1.4

- 3.5 On 22 August 2024, the OWBC DMO made a telephone call and interviewed the following person on a point(s) of clarification, a summary of which has been produced below.

Interviewee	Capacity	Paragraph
3.5.1 ("the Informant")	Witness & Informant	6.1.3

- 3.6 Prior to the Investigation, on 26 June 2024, the following documents were made available by and/or requested of the BDC MO and sent to the Investigators by e-mail.

Document(s)	Reference
3.6.1 A letter of complaint sent by the Complainant to the BDC MO dated 23 June 2024 ("the Complainant's Letter")	<b>Appendix 1</b>
3.6.2 3.6.2 A letter sent by the Informant to the Complainant dated 22 June 2024 ("the Informant's Letter")	<b>Appendix 2</b>
3.6.3 A letter sent by the BDC MO to the Complainant dated 25 June 2024 ("the BDC MO's Complainant Letter")	<b>Appendix 3</b>
3.6.4 A letter sent by the BDC MO to the Member dated 26 June 2024 ("the BDC MO's Member Letter")	<b>Appendix 4</b>

### 4. Investigators' Qualifications

#### 4.1 David Gill ("the OWBC MO")

- 4.1.1 The OWBC MO is a Solicitor of the Senior Courts of England & Wales and is employed by OWBC as the Head of Law & Democracy and Monitoring Officer. He qualified and

was admitted as a Solicitor in 2008 after which he worked in-house for North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) before joining OWBC in November 2017.

- 4.1.2 From January 2011 until November 2017, whilst working at NWLDC, he occupied the position(s) of (Acting) Deputy Monitoring Officer, (Temporary) Deputy Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer. Since 2017, he has held the position of Monitoring Officer at OWBC. He has substantial experience in the application of the Code and Member Standards investigations thereunder.

#### 4.2 **Samuel Ball ("the OWBC DMO")**

- 4.1.3 The OWBC DMO is a Solicitor of the Senior Courts of England & Wales and is employed by OWBC as the Legal & Democratic Services Manager (including elections and electoral registration functions) and Deputy Monitoring Officer. He qualified and was admitted as a Solicitor in 2021 after which he worked in-house for OWBC.
- 4.1.4 From June 2015 until March 2022, whilst working at OWBC, the OWBC DMO occupied the position(s) of Legal & Democratic Assistant, Senior Legal & Democratic Services Officer and Solicitor. Since 2022, he has held the position of Deputy Monitoring Officer at OWBC. He has experience in the application of the Code and Member Standards investigations thereunder.

### 5. **Findings of Fact**

- 5.1 Upon review of the documents, interview/telephone summaries and information before the Investigators, the Investigation was able to establish the following findings of fact.
  - 5.1.1 On 25 April 2024, a remote audio-visual conference on Microsoft Teams was hosted by the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to resolve an apparent impasse in relation to the allocation of £15m in regeneration funding awarded to the District of Bolsover ("the DLUHC Meeting").
  - 5.1.2 The DLUHC Meeting was attended by: the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DLUHC, Jacob Young ("the Under Secretary"); the then Member of Parliament for the Bolsover Constituency, the Complainant; BDC's Chief Executive; and various other DLUHC officials.
  - 5.1.3 During the DLUHC Meeting, the Complainant took a draw of his vape (electronic cigarette) and exhaled the resulting vapour (or smoke) whilst on-screen and in view of all other attendees. The Under Secretary advised the Complainant that he should not be vaping in the offices (or words or advice to that effect) and commented that the Complainant looked like 'Puff, the Magic Dragon' ("the Vaping Incident").
  - 5.1.4 Shortly after the DLUHC Meeting, the Chief Executive reported back to BDC's Leader, the Member, the outcome of that meeting regarding the allocation of the £15m and, in passing, relayed what she witnessed of the Vaping Incident to the Member. The Chief Executive so relayed the details of the Vaping Incident because of its peculiarity.
  - 5.1.5 On 26 April 2024, an in-person meeting was hosted by BDC at the Council Offices to discuss a long-standing neighbour dispute (20+ years) affecting the Informant and the Other Neighbour in relation to the ongoing impact of run-off sprung spring water caused by the actions of a mutual neighbour and, amongst other things, the nature, extent and limitations of BDC's involvement and intervention ("the BDC Meeting").

5.1.6 The BDC Meeting was attended by: the Informant; the Other Neighbour (and a former BDC Member); BDC's Chief Executive; BDC's Leader, the Member; and BDC's Environmental Health Manager, the Manager.

5.1.7 Towards the end of the BDC Meeting, and in the context of the topic being raised regarding progress made in relation to the allocation of the £15m with the Other Neighbour, the Member recited the Vaping Incident from the DLUHC Meeting in earshot of other attendees. During the recitation, the Member did use, amongst other things, the phrase and word 'Puff, the Magic Dragon' and 'Puff' interchangeably and respectively on more than one occasion ("the Complained-Of Language").

5.1.8 On/around 22 June 2024, the Complainant was approached by the Informant whilst delivering door-to-door campaign material ahead of the Election. The Informant verbally relayed to the Complainant what she had witnessed of the Complained-Of Language used by the Member at the BDC Meeting. The Complainant asked the Informant to put into writing, and did put in writing, to him what she witnessed.

## 6. Summary of Witnesses' and Complainant's Account(s)

6.1 Upon the Investigators undertaking the interviews and telephone calls of those witnesses at the BDC meeting and of the Complainant, the Investigation can summarise their respective accounts as it materially relates to the Member's use of the Complained-Of Language only.

Account (alphabetical)	Summary
6.1.1. The Manager	This witness did not recall the Member using any (if at all) the Complained-Of Language, or any other or similar iteration of it. This witness did recall hearing part of a conversation (albeit limited) between the Member and The Other Neighbour (referred to by the witness as "chitchat") in which reference to the details of the Vaping Incident were discussed (recalled by the witness as "something about him [the Complainant] smoking").
6.1.2 The Other Neighbour	This witness did engage with the Member in an informal conversation in which general details of the allocation of the £15m in regeneration funding was discussed. During this conversation, this witness did not recall the Member using any (if at all) the Complained-Of Language, or any other or similar iteration of it (as stated by the witness as recalling "not one word of it").
6.1.3 The Informant	This witness recalled the Member using the Complained-Of Language on more than one occasion, with such language being the use of the word "puff" only, and perceived by this witness to be homophobic in nature and intent. This witness recalled the Member using the Complained-Of Language as described without any reference by the Member to any context or details relating to the Vaping Incident (as stated by the witness as recalling there being "none [context] whatsoever").
6.1.4 The Complainant	The Complainant recalled being approached by the Informant whilst delivering door-to-door campaign material ahead of the Election. The Informant verbally relayed to the Complainant what she had witnessed of the Complained-Of Language used by the Member at the BDC Meeting. The Complainant asked the Informant to put into writing to him what she witnessed. The Complainant was not in attendance at the BDC Meeting and was not in a position to materially comment any further.

6.1.5 The Member	The Member did admit using the Complained-Of Language but could not recall if he did so on more than one occasion (as stated by the Member as recalling "Yes, I said 'puff'"). The Member used such language within the context and whilst reciting details relating to the Vaping Incident during an informal conversation with The Other Neighbour regarding the £15m in regeneration funding. In doing so, the Member did not intend the use of such language to be homophobic in nature: but, context-permitting, and when raised by the Investigators with the Member, the Member did at least recognise how such language could have been perceived, and perceived only, differently by other attendees, particularly the Informant, at the BDC meeting had the Informant not been aware and/or understood the context in which the Complained-Of Language was being used by the Member (as stated by the Member as opining "Yes. I understand exactly what you're saying").
6.1.6 The Chief Executive	This witness did recall the Member using the Complained-Of Language, or other or similar iterations of it, and on more than one occasion (as stated by the witness as recalling "he then went on to say something like, "And we call him Puff, the Magic Dragon (...) then said puff on its own (...) [and] that he said it on more than one occasion"). This witness recalled the Member using the Complained-Of Language within the context and whilst reciting details relating to the Vaping Incident during an informal conversation with The Other Neighbour regarding the £15m in regeneration funding. When asked by the Investigators whether there was a potential for the use of the Complained-Of Language to have been perceived to have been homophobic in intent and nature by other attendees at the BDC meeting, who as such might not been aware and/or understood the context in which the Complained-Of Language was being used by the Member, this witness agreed that potentially, taken out of context, it could have been perceived, and perceived only, as being such (as stated by the witness "without the context (...) [it] could have been perceived to have been that [a homophobic slur against the Complainant]").

## 7. Other Matters and Considerations

- 7.1 The Investigators have considered and are guided by the Oxford English Dictionary's definitions of the meanings and uses of 'homophobic', 'homophobe' and 'homophobia':
- 7.1.1 Homophobic – *'Relating to, characterized by, or exhibiting homophobia; hostile towards, prejudiced against, or (less commonly) fearful of homosexual people or homosexuality'*<sup>1</sup>
  - 7.1.2 Homophobe – *'A person who is hostile towards, prejudiced against, or (less commonly) fearful of homosexual people or homosexuality; a homophobic person'*<sup>2</sup>
  - 7.1.3 Homophobia – *'Hostility towards, prejudice against, or (less commonly) fear of homosexual people or homosexuality'*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Homophobic, Adj." Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7991578934>.

<sup>2</sup> "Homophobe, N." Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1051943355>.

<sup>3</sup> "Homophobia, N. (2), Sense 2." Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9859460163>.

- 7.2 The Investigators have considered and are guided by the Crown Prosecution Service's 'Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Hate Crime - Prosecution Guidance' (October 2019) and, in particular, its use of agreed definitions with the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify incidents involving an element of hostility on the grounds of sexual orientation (under the heading entitled 'Flagging of Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic crime'):
- 7.2.1 *'Any incident/criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation' whilst noting that 'flagging is a subjective question'.<sup>4</sup>*
- 7.3 The Investigators are aware that "Puff, the Magic Dragon" (or just "Puff") is a song written by Peter Yarrow of 'Peter, Paul and Mary' from a poem by Leonard Lipton, released in 1963.
- 7.4 The Investigators were made aware, were particularly conscious of and noted the fact that The Other Neighbour was a former Labour Party BDC Member between 1987 and 2015 (inclusive) which might have given rise to a partisan witness account (or perception thereof) vis-à-vis the Member also being a Labour Party BDC Member during (and after) this time.
- 7.5 On balance, the Investigators are satisfied that, having undertaken and reviewed the interview summaries and, in particular, having explored in interview the Member's and The Other Neighbour's nature and extent of their working relationship, both past and present, there is no apparent bias in their respective accounts which would otherwise call into serious question the accuracy and/or validity of the Investigation nor impact its conclusion(s).
- 8. Conclusion(s)**
- 8.1 On the balance of probabilities, and upon review of the documents, interview/telephone summaries and information before the Investigators, the Investigation concludes as follows:
- 8.1.1 In accordance with the Code (under the heading entitled 'Application of the Code of Conduct'), the Code applies when a Member:
- (a) acts in their capacity as a Councillor of BDC (i.e. attending to Council business); and
  - (b) applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including, but not limited to, face-to-face meetings.
- 8.1.2 Insofar as the Member did attend the BDC Meeting as BDC's Leader to discuss, amongst other things, the nature, extent and limitations of BDC's involvement and intervention in the neighbour dispute in question affecting the Informant and the Other Neighbour, it is axiomatic the Member was acting in his capacity as a Member, and therefore, in the circumstances, the Code did apply accordingly.
- 8.2 The admissions made by the Member and the account given by the Chief Executive confirms that, more likely than not, the Member:
- 8.2.1 Did use the Complained-Of Language, or other or similar iterations of it, and did use such language on at least more than one occasion at the BDC Meeting; but
- 8.2.2 Did use such language at the BDC Meeting within the context and whilst reciting details relating to the Vaping Incident at the DLUHC Meeting as it arose during and as part of a discussion regarding the £15m in regeneration funding; and in doing so

<sup>4</sup> CPS. "Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Hate Crime - Prosecution Guidance | the Crown Prosecution Service." Cps.gov.uk, 25 Oct. 2019, [www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/homophobic-biphobic-and-transphobic-hate-crime-prosecution-guidance](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/homophobic-biphobic-and-transphobic-hate-crime-prosecution-guidance).

- 8.2.3 Did not use or intend the use of such language to be homophobic in nature insofar as it did not intentionally exhibit hostility towards or prejudice against homosexual people or homosexuality (with the Complainant being a homosexual person).
- 8.3 Whilst the accounts given by the Manager and The Other Neighbour do not confirm that the Member used any (if at all) the Complained-Of Language, or any other or similar iteration of it, they do corroborate the conclusions set out in paragraphs 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 above in that:
- 8.3.1 A conversation between the Member and The Other Neighbour took place discussing, amongst other things, the £15m in regeneration funding at the BDC Meeting; and
- 8.3.2 During and as part of a discussion, the Member did make reference(s) to the details of the Vaping Incident (or as recalled, a "smoking incident") at the DLUHC Meeting.
- 8.4 Whilst the account given by the Informant does not confirm that the Member used the Complained-Of Language at the BDC Meeting with reference(s) by the Member to the details of the Vaping Incident at the DLUHC Meeting, it does confirm that:
- 8.4.1 A conversation between the Member and The Other Neighbour took place discussing, amongst other things, the £15m in regeneration funding at the BDC Meeting; and
- 8.4.2 The Member did use part of the Complained-Of Language (or as recalled, limited to the word "puff" only) and corroborates in part the conclusion set out in paragraphs 8.2.1 above only.
- 8.5 Notwithstanding the conclusions set out in paragraphs 8.1 to 8.4 above, the finding(s) that:
- 8.5.1. The Member's more likely than not use (or even part use) of the Complained-Of Language, or other or similar iterations of it, and the more likely than not use of such language on at least more than one occasion at the BDC Meeting; and moreover
- 8.5.2. Such language was spoken in the presence and/or earshot of the Informant (being an ordinary lay member of the public) who was unaware and/or misunderstood the context in which the Complained-Of Language was being used by the Member
- does, and did, give the Informant cause to reasonably and legitimately perceive the Member's use of such language as being motivated by an apparent hostility or prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation, irrespective of the Member's intention and purposes.

## 9. Recommendation(s)

### 9.1. The Investigators recommend insofar as:

- 9.1.1. Applying the findings of fact set out in paragraph 5 above, and for the conclusions set out in paragraphs 8.1 to 8.4 above, and having considered and being guided by the other matters and considerations set out in paragraphs 7.1 above, it is concluded that there is **NO (OR INSUFFICIENT) EVIDENCE** of a failure to comply with the Code by the Member in respect of the allegations set out at **PARAGRAPHS 2.2.1, 2.2.3 AND 2.2.4** above and therefore the Complaint, as far as they relate to these allegations only, be **DISMISSED**.
- 9.2.1 Applying the findings of fact set out in paragraph 5 above, and for the conclusions set out in paragraphs 8.5 above, and having considered and being guided by the other matters and considerations set out in paragraphs 7.2 above, it is concluded that there **IS EVIDENCE** of a **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE CODE** by the Member in respect of the allegations set out at **PARAGRAPH 2.2.2** and **PARAGRAPH 2.2.5** above and therefore the Complaint, as far as they relate to



these allegations and for the reason(s) set out in paragraph 8.5 above, **PROCEED TO A HEARING** before a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee or, after consulting the Independent Person ("the IP"), **SEEK LOCAL RESOLUTION**.

#### **10. Independent Person**

- 10.1. On 3 September 2024, the contents of this report and its appendices was sent to an IP, in this case being Ian Kirk ("the IP"), for their independent review and consideration.
- 10.2. In an email of 8 September 2024, the IP feedback to BDC MO and made the following comments:

*The complaint was investigated by two Senior Officers from another Midlands local authority.*

*Interviews were conducted with all parties concerned, there were six interviews in total.*

*Councillor Fritchley supplied a written background of interactions and communications he had with Mark Fletcher since Mr Fletcher was elected as Constituency Member of Parliament in 2019.*

*In November 2023 £15 million regeneration funding was announced for the district council by the then government. It appears a dispute developed between the Council and Mark Fletcher over where the funding was to be distributed.*

*The external investigation report outlines that on 25 April 2024 an on-line meeting was held with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This was an attempt to resolve the funding distribution. It was attended by Jacob Young (Under Secretary at the department), Bolsover District Council Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mark Fletcher and DLUHC departmental officials. Councillor Fritchley did not attend the meeting.*

*It is said that at the start of the meeting Jacob Young told Mark Fletcher that he looked like 'Puff the Magic Dragon' presumably because of the prevalence of vaping smoke. He admonished him as vaping is apparently not allowed in Parliamentary Offices.*

*Puff the Magic Dragon is the title of a song by musicians Peter, Paul and Mary released in 1963.*

*The CEO reported back to Councillor Fritchley concerning the meeting. It is said that comments made to Mark Fletcher by Jacob Young were mentioned to Councillor Fritchley during this feedback meeting.*

*On 26 April 2024, a meeting was held at Bolsover DC offices concerning a neighbour dispute. It was attended by The Informant The Environmental Health Manager, CEO, Councillor Fritchley and the Other Neighbour*

*(in the letter to Mark Fletcher) states that at the meeting she heard Councillor Fritchley make references to Puff which referred to Mr Fletcher.*

*was a long-standing former Councillor and resident of Bolsover. It is not unreasonable to assume he and Councillor Fritchley knew each other well. It appears during the meeting that talk between Councillor Fritchley and turned to the Regeneration Funding.*

*The CEO has confirmed she heard Puff/Magic Dragon phrases spoken by Councillor Fritchley, indeed he himself confirms he used the complained of phrases. It is probable*

*that the complained of phrase was used to refer to the words said to have been spoken by Jacob Young to Mark Fletcher about his vaping at the start of the DLUHC video meeting.*

*The DLUHC video meeting was held only the day before the meeting attended on 26 April 2024 by the parties named above.*

*It is understandable that [redacted] 'couldn't believe what I was hearing' because she was unaware of the comments made to Mr Fletcher by Mr Young and so could not be expected to understand the context in which the complained of phrases were being used by Councillor Fritchley.*

*Taken out of context, a reasonable person would be offended by such comments and could interpret them as homophobic language against Mark Fletcher.*

*Councillor Fritchley outlines in his background information that he attended an interview with the Police accompanied by his Solicitor. Later the same day the interviewing officer contacted him and told him he would face no further action.*

#### Conclusion

*Councillor Fritchley was unwise to use the phrases that he was heard to say by several attendees at the meeting on 26 April 2024. He admits that he used the phrase in the meeting. It was disrespectful and completely inappropriate.*

*[redacted] would be unlikely to understand the context in which they were said, i.e. from comments said to have been made at the start of the DLUHC video meeting and relayed third hand to Councillor Fritchley. The phrases have the potential to be offensive to her.*

*Councillor Fritchley was acting in his capacity as a Councillor at the meeting on 26 April 2024, so he is subject to the Code of Conduct for Bolsover District Council.*

*The external report finds that there is no or insufficient evidence that Councillor Fritchley's comments were intentionally homophobic in nature.*

*It is my opinion that there are two criteria in the Code of Conduct which have been breached:*

#### General Principles

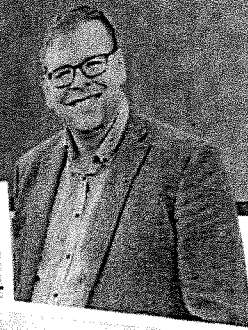
***I lead by example and act on a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.***

#### General Conduct

***I do not bring my role or the District Council into disrepute.***

# Mark FLETCHER

Parliamentary Candidate for the Bolsover Constituency



Jim Fieldsend  
Monitoring Officer, Bolsover District Council

Sent via email

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024

Dear Jim,

I am writing to request that you begin an urgent investigation into Councillor Steve Fritchley regarding his use of homophobic language.

I was recently contacted by Mrs [redacted], a Bolsover resident, who met with Councillor Fritchley on official Council business about a neighbour dispute. During that meeting, Councillor Fritchley repeatedly referred to me as a 'puff' and stated "that's what we call him here".

For full transparency, I had never met Mrs [redacted] before this situation. She spoke to me about Cllr Fritchley because I was leafletting her house. I asked her to write down, in her own words, what happened. I have enclosed a copy of that letter for your investigation. I am also able to contact her, should you wish to speak to her directly.

I am aware that BDC is proud of its approach to matters of equality and diversity, its robust Member Code of Conduct and its approach to standards. I believe that it is right and proper that Councillor Fritchley should be suspended from his role pending a full investigation. Particularly as Councillor Fritchley's comments ("that is what we call him here") indicate that the use of this language within Bolsover District Council is not solely limited to him.

Given this concern that the use of such language may be widespread, I believe it is essential that a thorough investigation is undertaken to determine whether other members and/or council officers have used homophobic language in relation to me or indeed anyone else. It is vital that the Council can provide assurance not just to me, but to LGBT Councillors, staff and residents across the District that this type of language cannot and will not be tolerated.

Alongside this complaint to Bolsover District Council, I have also this evening made a complaint to the Labour Party and asked them to undertake a similar investigation into Cllr Fritchley's behaviour and into whether such behaviour is widespread within the constituency Labour Party.

With respect to Bolsover District Council In particular, I believe that Councillor Fritchley's behaviour has breached the following parts of the Member Code of Conduct:

- The general principle to treat all persons fairly and with respect;
- The general principle to lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor;
- The requirement to treat me with respect (1.1 and 1.2);
- The requirement to promote equalities and not to discriminate unlawfully against any person (2.3); and
- The requirement not to bring his role or the District Council into disrepute (5.1).

I also note that the Member Code of Conduct specifies that 'Code of Conduct / Ethical Governance' and 'Equalities and Diversity' are mandatory training courses that every Councillor must undertake, including retaking the training after each election. Clearly these two pieces of training should cover the inappropriateness of this type of behaviour.

Please can you confirm whether Councillor Fritchley has undertaken this mandatory training since he was last re-elected in May 2023? If not, please can you outline what process the Council will be undertaking to ensure that members have undertaken such important mandatory training, so that you can prevent behaviour like this from occurring in future.

I hope your investigation will be thorough and speedy, and that appropriate action is taken. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



**Mark Fletcher**  
Parliamentary Candidate for the Bolsover Constituency

22-6-24.

Dear Mark,

I am writing this letter to you because I think you have a right to know

A few weeks ago I made an appointment for myself and neighbour

to see Steve Fitchley about a long running problem with our neighbour at

We went to his house signed it and were shown to a room where Mr. Fitchley and two young women were waiting. After being asked what they could do for us and being told Mr. Fitchley in his usual manner told us that he was sick of this

job. He was quite short shrift

from the last night.

After much wrangling from him  
holding that as usual we will get  
nothing done I am ready for business.

Then someone mentioned this money  
that you secured for Bolson and  
now all that was going. Well that  
Steve Dredley stated to me as  
calling you a Puff (that's what  
we call the free Puff) and so the  
Bill of the and his committee think  
that is done and right then I don't

I couldn't believe what I was  
hearing from someone who is in  
charge of a council.

What a complete dinosaur!

Well I thought at only night that  
you should know what you are called  
by Mr. Dredley and his crew.

I am angry but by this and I am  
not sure it is appropriate. His crew  
should be left to himself and at

is a shame that some of his  
co-workers haven't got the guts to  
tell him so.

Anyway I felt bound to tell  
you this because it really got to  
me. If he spent as much time  
trying to help people (as you have  
done) instead of acting like a silly  
little schoolboy who has just found  
another naughty word then people in  
Butser might have more respect  
for the council.

I hope you do well in the  
future.

(inks)





Our Ref: JF/- MC 3 June 2024  
 Please Ask For: Mr J.Fieldsend  
 E-mail: jim.fieldsend@bolsover.gov.uk  
 Direct Line: 01246 242472  
 Date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024

The Arc  
 High Street  
 Clowne  
 Derbyshire  
 S43 4JY

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
 Councillor Steve Fritchley

By email- steve.fritchley@bolsover.gov.uk

**Mr J.Fieldsend**  
**Solicitor to the Council**  
**and Monitoring Officer**

Dear Cllr Fritchley,

**Allegation of breach of Code of Conduct MC 3 June 202**  
**Bolsover District Council**

I write to inform you that I have received a complaint against you as a Bolsover District Councillor. The nature of the complaint is as outlined below.

Complainant	Complaint
Mark Fletcher	<p>That you used homophobic language in a meeting with Mrs _____, in particular you referred to Mark Fletcher as a "puff" and stated "that's what we call him here".</p> <p>If proven this is likely to amount to a breach of part of the Council's code of conduct which states:</p> <p><b>1.1 I treat other Councillors and members of the public with respect.</b></p> <p><b>2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person</b></p> <p><b>5.1 I do not bring my role or the District Council into disrepute.</b></p>

	The Arc
	High Street

I will now assess this complaint to decide whether it should proceed to a formal investigation. As part of my assessment I will consult with one of the Council's Independent Persons on this matter. S43 4JY

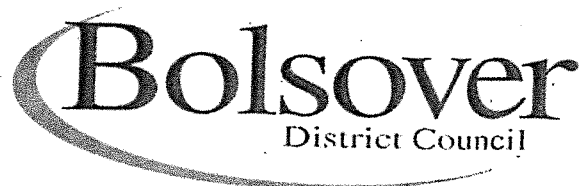
I attach a copy of the Councillor Complaint Procedure to assist you with understanding the process that is adhered to when considering a possible complaint.

You have the right to consult one of the Independent Persons. If you wish to do so please let me know.

Yours sincerely

*J. S. Fieldsend*

Jim Fieldsend  
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer



**Our Ref: JF/- MC 3 June-2024**  
**Please Ask For: Mr J.Fieldsend**  
**E-mail: jim.fieldsend@bolsover.gov.uk**  
**Direct Line: 01246 242472**  
**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

The Arc  
High Street  
Clowne  
Derbyshire  
S43 4JY

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
Mark Fletcher MP

By email to – fletcher.mark@me.com

**Mr J.Fieldsend**  
**Solicitor to the Council**  
**and Monitoring Officer**

Dear Mark,

**Allegation of breach of Code of Conduct MC3 June -2024**

**Bolsover District Council**

I write to acknowledge receipt of your complaint against Councillor Steve Fritchley, as Bolsover District Councillor. I intend to initially deal with the complaint against Cllr Fritchley. I can then assess the need for a wider investigation at a later date.

You have described the behaviour of Councillor Fritchley. If proven this is likely to amount to a breach of part of the Council's code of conduct which states:

- 1.1 I treat other Councillors and members of the public with respect.**
- 2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person**
- 5.1 I do not bring my role or the District Council into disrepute.**

The complaints process is explained in the Bolsover District Council Councillors Complaint Procedure which is attached. You will note in part 4 at page 2 that I will now consult with one of the Council's Independent Persons on this matter before doing anything further.

I will write to you again once I have concluded my initial assessment. The next stage, will be a formal investigation. Please note I intend to appoint an external person to undertake this investigation. The investigator will no doubt wish to interview you and Mrs [redacted] As you offered in your letter can I ask you to contact [redacted] to ask her to contact me.

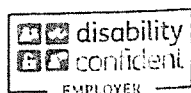


The Arc  
High Street  
Clowne  
Derbyshire  
S43 4JY

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. S. Fieldsend".

Jim Fieldsend  
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer



**BDC COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST** Agenda Item 12  
**COMPLAINTS RECEIVED 2024/2025**

DATE OF RECEIPT	PART OF CODE OF CONDUCT ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN BREACHED	NAME OF COUNCIL	WHETHER A POTENTIAL BREACH WAS FOUND	REASONS FOR DECISION/ ACTION
13/05	Respect	Scarcliffe Parish Council	N/A (ongoing)	
24/06	Respect	Bolsover District Council	Yes.	Full details of the decision is set out in a report to Standards Committee on 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
11/07	Breach of confidentiality	South Normanton Parish Council	No	Lack of evidence
17/08	Breach of confidentiality	Tibshelf Parish Council	No	Councillor not working in capacity
22/08	Bringing the Council into disrepute	Shirebrook Town Council	N/A (ongoing)	
03/10	Respect Failure to lead by example	Creswell Parish Council	Yes	The Councillor concerned has apologised for any offence caused.

03/10	Respect Failure to lead by example	Creswell Parish Council	N/A	No evidence of disrespect
03/10	Respect Failure to lead by example	Creswell Parish Council	N/A	No evidence of disrespect
22/10	Respect Failure to lead by example	Creswell Parish Council	Yes	The Councillor concerned has apologised for any offence caused.
24/10	Respect Bullying & harassment Breach of confidentiality Misuse of position Bringing the Council into disrepute Failure to declare interests.	Shirebrook Town Council	N/A (ongoing)	
28/10	Respect Failure to lead by example	Creswell Parish Council	No	The complaint concerned a decision to go into exempt items at the Parish Council. This was a procedural issue rather than a conduct one.

8/10	Failure to follow rules regarding declaration of interest Respect	Shirebrook Town Council	N/A (ongoing)	
13/12	Respect	Shirebrook Town Council	N/A	
02/01	Failure to act with impartiality Respect	Bolsover District Council	N/A	
12/01	Respect	Bolsover District Council		

Bolsover District Council Standards Committee Work Programme.

From 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Date of Committee	
17 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Cancelled
2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Constitution- Dispensations</li> <li>▪ RIPA Policy Review</li> <li>▪ LGSCO Annual Letter and Report</li> <li>▪ Complaints update</li> </ul>
4 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Constitution</li> <li>▪ Compliments Comments and Complaints Annual Summary</li> <li>▪ Complaints update</li> </ul>
27 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Constitution (TBD)</li> <li>▪ Gifts and Hospitality Review</li> <li>▪ Whistleblowing Policy Review</li> <li>▪ RIPA Review</li> <li>▪ Complaints update</li> </ul>
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Constitution (TBD)</li> <li>▪ Members Training Attendance 2024/25</li> <li>▪ Annual Standards Committee Report</li> <li>▪ Complaints update</li> </ul>
12/05/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Constitution (TBD)</li> <li>▪ Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2024/25</li> <li>▪ Complaints update</li> </ul>