

CUSTOMER SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room 1 on Tuesday, 19th August 2025 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Vicky Waplington in the Chair

Councillors Louise Fox, Jeanne Raspin, Emma Stevenson and Rita Turner (from CS16-25/26).

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Lesley Botham (Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager), Victoria Dawson (Assistant Director (Housing and Enforcement)), Mark Giles (Assistant Director (Streetscene, Community Safety and Enforcement)), Alice Willoughby (Customer Standards and Complaints Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, was Councillor Cathy Jeffery (Junior Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing).

CS12-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Amanda Davis, Mary Dooley (Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing) and Phil Smith (Portfolio Holder for Housing), and Ian Barber (Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Dragonfly Companies).

CS13-25/26 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

CS14-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

CS15-25/26 MINUTES

The Governance and Civic Officer informed of corrections required including: CS7-25/26 – the addition of ‘Housing’ before ‘Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)’; CS8-25/26 – the replacement of the word ‘planning’ with ‘planting’ with regards the new trees not being maintained well; and CS&LG4-25/26 – the removal of the word ‘also’ on the feeling of security in the Council Chamber being appropriately addressed.

Moved by Councillor Emma Stevenson and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin

RESOLVED that, following the corrections listed above, the minutes of a Customer Services Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16th June 2025 and the minutes of an Extraordinary Joint Scrutiny Committee (Customer Services Scrutiny

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Committee and Local Growth Scrutiny Committee) meeting held on 12th June 2025 be approved as true and correct records.

CS16-25/26 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

The Committee considered the updated List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private.

The Strategic Director of Services informed the Committee on the introduction of separate weekly food waste collection, which would be presented to Council for discussion in October 2025.

Staffing levels of the new service would be increased and the changes to the Waste and Recycling Collection Policy was on the agenda for Member's review.

To a question on the size of the new caddy / bins, the Strategic Director of Services momentarily left the meeting to bring an example for demonstration.

The Assistant Director of Streetscene, Community Safety and Enforcement informed only food waste would be permitted in these caddy / bins and would be collected once a week.

Deliveries of the new caddy / bins were expected from January 2026 for the commencement of the new service after 31st March 2026.

The Strategic Director of Services stated the caddy / bins would hold 23 Litres and were 10% the size of a normal waste / recycling bin.

Promotional material would be published in the summer edition of InTouch magazine, with social media utilised in the lead up to the rollout of the service. National material would be available for the Council to print / post as required.

The collection vehicles for this new service would be delivered November 2025.

The food waste collected would be treated by aerobic digestion which breaks down organic waste and speeds up the natural decomposition process. The byproduct gas could be used as fuel and the output material likely suitable for uses such as agricultural fertiliser.

The collection and treatment of food waste was to avoid landfill disposal and create unsustainable amounts of methane (which was up to 37 times more potent to the climate than carbon dioxide).

It was understood the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs would not include additional financial support for bin liners. The Council would be asked in October 2025 if it wanted to provide a free one-off issue of bin liners or not.

The Committee was informed another local authority had provided free bin liners for their food waste caddy / bins but had subsequently taken them away – there was found to be little to no evidence that providing bin liners would promote the new service.

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The Committee was informed it was intended for the caddy / bins to be kept outside, with the handle acting as a lock to prevent wildlife accessing the food waste.

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private document be noted.

CS17-25/26 ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN 2024/25 & ANNUAL HOUSING OMBUDSMAN REPORT INCLUDING SELF ASSESSMENT 2024/25

The Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager presented the report to the Committee.

The Annual Letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) contained an annual summary of statistics on the complaints made against the Council for the financial year ending 31st March 2025. The Annual Letter 2024 was attached at Appendix 1.

Between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, the LGSCO had received 9 Enquiries and Complaints during 2024/25. Of these 7 were closed after initial enquiries and 2 were not for the LGSCO to investigate. This supporting information was attached at Appendix 2.

The report detailed the Council's performance in relation to neighbouring authorities:

	Detailed investigations:	Upheld complaints (average for similar authorities - 66%)	Compliance rate	Satisfactory Remedy before complaint reached the Ombudsman
Ashfield District Council	2	0	(No recommendations were due for compliance in this period)	0
Bassetlaw District Council	0	0	0	0
Bolsover District Council	0	0	0	0
Chesterfield Borough Council	1	1 (100%)	100%	0
Erewash District Council	4	3 (75%)	100%	2
Mansfield District Council	2	0	100%	0
North East Derbyshire District Council	0	0	0	0

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To a question on the details of the 9 Complaints escalated, the Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager informed the Council would have been informed if the Ombudsman had upheld these Complaints against the Council – as it had not, these were not known. However, one could review the Stage 1 to Stage 2 Complaints and determine which ones would likely have been escalated to the Ombudsman.

The Customer Standards and Complaints Officer informed the Annual Housing Ombudsman Complaints Report and Self-Assessment were required to be submitted by the Council by 30th September 2025. The report provided information to the Housing Ombudsman on the performance of the Council's complaint handling, in terms of the volume and timeliness of responses, and it identified themes and lessons learned to drive improvements.

The Self-Assessment ensured the Council's Complaints and Standards Team had reviewed and aligned the Council's Policy and Procedures to meet the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code requirements for 2024/25.

Due to changes in data collection, 2024/25 would be the first year of compliance.

The Annual Housing Ombudsman Complaints Report was attached at Appendix 3. The Self-Assessment was attached at Appendix 4.

The Customer Standards and Complaints Officer highlighted a typo on page 118 of the agenda – the Evidence Commentary / explanation of 8.2 should not include 'June' after 'Executive on 8th September [2025]'.

The pictures on the front cover of the Annual Housing Ombudsman Complaints Report would also be changed following input from the Council's tenants.

A Member thanked the Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager and Customer Standards and Complaints Officer for the report. The Chair echoed thanks, stating there was a considerable amount of information to review. The Strategic Director of Services stated a lot of work had been clearly undertaken.

To a question on additional information being provided to private landlords on the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and proposed Renters' Rights Bill, the Assistant Director of Housing and Enforcement informed the Council part funded a 'call before you serve' (an Eviction Notice) service in an attempt to prevent cases of homelessness, and the Council also signposted to DASH Services (a provider of support for the private rented sector) for advice.

Signposting would also take place to the Derbyshire Law Centre (a representative of whom attended The Arc, Clowne, every fortnight).

The Assistant Director of Housing and Enforcement agreed to provide links and information of the above organisations to all Members after the meeting.

Moved by Councillor Louise Fox and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson

RESOLVED that Members note the Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and approve the Annual submission Housing Ombudsman Report and Self-Assessment 2024/25.

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CS18-25/26 REVIEW OF WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION POLICY

The Strategic Director of Services presented the report to the Committee.

The Waste and Recycling Collection Policy (the 'Policy') had been adopted by the Council 30th September 2013 (subsequent reviews had been undertaken by way of officer delegated authority for any required minor changes).

The Policy now needed to incorporate arrangement for the separate weekly collection of food waste no later than 31st March 2026. The Policy had therefore been updated to reflect this requirement and was attached at Appendix 1.

The Council currently collected food waste mixed with garden waste by way of the provided green bins on a fortnightly basis (between March and November of each year).

However, from 1st April 2026 food waste would need to be collected on a weekly frequency throughout the year in separate 23 Litre caddy / bins. This would represent a large change, requiring the Committee's assistance in developing any policy changes prior to seeking Executive approval.

Food waste caddy / bins had been purchased and stored at one of the Council's business centres. They would be distributed in early 2026 in anticipation of new service commencement.

The Council would be asked in October 2025 if one-off free bin liners would be provided.

Overall changes to the Policy remained limited.

The price of biodegradable bin liners was discussed. While the caddy / bins could be used without bin liners, it was said contents could appear grim.

Moved by Councillor Louise Fox and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson

RESOLVED that Committee note changes to the Waste and Recycling Collection Policy and provide comment in its further development prior to seeking Executive approval.

CS19-25/26 CUSTOMER SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Work Programme 2025/25 attached at Appendix 1.

The Committee was informed the Scrutiny Officer would be leaving his role for a new one outside the Council.

The Committee's review work would be paused while the recruitment for a replacement was progressed (by the Monitoring Officer).

The Chair spoke for Members of the Committee and shared sadness at seeing the Scrutiny Officer leave the Council.

The Strategic Director of Services shared congratulations for the new role.

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Moved by Councillor Louise Fox and seconded by Councillor Rita Turner

RESOLVED that Members review this report and the Programme attached at Appendix 1 for approval and amendment as required. All Members are advised to contact the Scrutiny Officer should they have any queries regarding future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 10:38 hours.