

**Bolsover District Council**

**Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Complaints , Comments & Compliments Policy Review**

**Report of the Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships**

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

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is for Customer Services Scrutiny Committee to consider and feedback on the revised Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy (CCC Policy). Committee's comments will be considered prior to Executive approval of the policy.

---

**REPORT DETAILS**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman (HO) undertook a consultation in November 2023 with a view to align both requirements for Local Authorities to respond to complaints effectively and fairly – Joint Complaint Handling Code ('the Code') which will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Code is to enable resolution of complaints from individuals quickly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive improvements.
- 1.3 Although a Joint Code was not agreed following the consultation, there will be a statutory duty for the LGSCO and HO to monitor compliance of the Code and non-compliance could result in taking further action (Complaint Handling Failure Order) which places a risk to the Council's reputation.
- 1.4 To comply with the recommendations set out by the LGSCO and HO the CCC Policy has been reviewed to strengthen and clarify the requirements of the Council to meet compliance.

**2. Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 The updated CCC Policy outlines Bolsover District Council's approach to administrating, monitoring and service area duty to meet the requirements of the Code and provide effective complaint handling.

- 2.2 The Policy provides an updated definition of what is a service request and a complaint. It sets out the internal procedure in terms of assessing a service request, complaints and the process that will be followed.
- 2.3 In addition, there is a section on what will be excluded and falls out of scope of the Policy.
- 2.4 The LGCSO and HO have agreed a two stage Complaint handling process which the Council will need to implement to meet the requirement;
- All Complaint Acknowledgements responded within 5 working days.
  - Stage 1 complaints must be responded to within 10 working days.
  - Stage 2, within 20 working days.

the Policy will therefore up be amended to reflect the complaint acknowledgement and response time frames in the Code.

- 2.5 A copy of the draft, updated Policy is attached as **Appendix 1**. The previous Policy is attached at **Appendix 2** with track changes for comparison.

### **3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is considered good practice to have a policy which sets out the Councils approach to Complaint handling. This updated policy will ensure we are compliant with the LGSCO & HO codes.
- 3.2 The policy which sits alongside the Customer Service Standards and Procedures will ensure the Council sets out a good complaint handling process and promotes a positive relationship between the organisation and service users.

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

- 4.1 The updated Policy is considered necessary so that members of the public are aware of the Councils approach to meeting the LGSCO & HO Code for handling complaints which allows the Council to resolve complaints quickly, effectively, and fairly and use the data to drive service improvements, providing a positive culture for complaint handling.

---

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That Members review the attached updated Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and provide comments for consideration as part of the development of the Policy in advance of formal Executive approval and implementation.

Approved by Councillor Mary Dooley, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Health & Wellbeing

**IMPLICATIONS.**

**Finance and Risk:**            Yes             No

**Details:**

There are no financial implications in the Report or arising from the updated Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

**Legal (including Data Protection):**            Yes             No

**Details:**

There are no financial implications in the Report or arising from the updated Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

**Environment:**            Yes             No

**Details:**

There are no environmental implications in the Report or arising from the updated Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

On Behalf of the Climate Change Lead Officer

**Staffing:**            Yes             No

**Details:**

There are no staffing implications in the Report or arising from the updated Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

**DECISION INFORMATION**

<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 District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><b>Revenue - £75,000</b>   <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Capital - £150,000</b>   <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No

<b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>	All
<b>Consultation:</b> <b>Leader / 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"/>	Details: Statutory change N/A

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.</b>
Customer Services - Providing Excellent and Accessible services

<b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Draft Complaint Comments and Compliments Policy – April 2024
2	Complaint Comments and Compliments Policy – revised March 2023
3	Summary of Changes

<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>
LGSCO & HO Codes