

**Bolsover District Council**

**Meeting of the Executive on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report**

**2023-2024**

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Victoria Dawson Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report provides an overview of the complaints received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, for the Housing Service, and the Council's performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, in the form of the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report.

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**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints.
- 1.2 Following a period of consultation, the Complaints Handling Code ("the Code") became a statutory requirement from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, with the Housing Ombudsman having a duty to monitor compliance with the Code.
- 1.3 In addition, The Regulator for Social Housing has, after a period of consultation, published its new set of consumer standards and regulatory approach to deliver a "well-governed social housing sector" which provides quality homes and services for tenants. These four standards are effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and all Registered Providers will be expected to meet these standards.
- 1.4 The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, requires all Registered Providers ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly. The Council also needs to demonstrate that there is sufficient information for tenants to make complaints. The Council also needs to demonstrate what lessons are being learnt from complaints to enable continuous improvement.

- 1.5 The Housing Ombudsman intends to monitor compliance with the Code by way of an annual submission. This ensures that all landlords provide information in a consistent way that allows effective analysis and insight into compliance with the Code. The required documents must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This date aligns with the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements for the publication and submission of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) outcomes, of which complaint handling is included.
- 1.6 The Annual Submission, whilst doesn't need to be in a prescribed form must include the following;
- The self-assessment against the Code
  - The annual complaint performance and service improvement report
  - The governing body's response to the report
  - The complaints policy

There is also a requirement that as well as being submitted to the Ombudsman, these documents must be available on the Council's website by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

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

- 2.1 The Report, which is attached at Appendix 1, provides an analysis of the complaints and compliments received by the Housing Department for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> April 2024, this includes the services delivered on behalf of the Council by Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd.
- 2.2 This report seeks to provide information on the performance of our complaint handling in terms of the volume and timeliness of the responses. In addition, the report seeks to identify themes and lessons learnt that drive service improvements.
- 2.3 The self-assessment is annexed to the report and the proposal is to include within the foreword of the report, the Executives response to the Report.
- 2.4 The Report provides an explanation of the Council's performance against the Housing Ombudsman's Code. It also notes the performance against the Council's own Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy, which during 2023-24 had different time frames to the Ombudsman. This was updated in April 2024 so they are now both aligned.
- 2.4 In summary the Council's Housing Department, including repairs and maintenance provided by Dragonfly Management (Bolsover Ltd) receive the following
- 61 Compliments – the majority of which relate to speed of response and conduct of officers
  - 95 MP Enquiries – of which 48 related to rehousing applications and 20 related to incidents around anti-social behaviour.
  - 60 - Informal Complaints
  - 44 - Formal Complaints
  - 10 - Internal Reviews

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

3.1 It is a statutory requirement that the Council complies with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and the requirements to provide an annual submission, including an Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report, and annual self-assessment.

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

4.1 If the Council is unable to provide the annual submission by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the Council may be issued with a Type 3 Complaint Handling Failure Order. If there is non-compliance with the order, the Housing Ombudsman has the option of making a referral to the governing body or the Regulator of Social Housing as required.

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That Executive approves the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report, and annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Approved by Councillor Sandra Peake, Portfolio Holder for Housing

#### **IMPLICATIONS.**

**Finance and Risk:**            Yes             No

**Details:**

There are no financial implications arising from the report.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

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

**Details:**

As contained in the report

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

**Environment:**            Yes             No

**Details:**

**Staffing:**            Yes             No

**Details:**

There are no staffing implications arising from the report.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Capital - £150,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <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

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

<p><b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing</b></p>
<p>Customers - Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers</p> <p>Housing – Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord</p>

<p><b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b></p>	
<p><b>Appendix No</b></p>	<p><b>Title</b></p>
<p>1</p>	<p>The Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report</p>

<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>