

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee – 30 April 2024
SUBJECT:	Corporate Complaints Performance 2023/24
LEAD OFFICER:	Lindsey Reeves, Information Governance Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Francis Oppler – Chair of Corporate Support Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/CORPORATE VISION: As this report covers the complaints process corporately, it feeds into all key themes of the Council Vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving the wellbeing of Arun• Delivering the right homes in the right places• Supporting our environment to support us• Fulfilling Arun’s economic potential The report provides members with determinations from both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO) along with complaints performance for the financial year 2023/24.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The LGSCO and HO Complaint Handling Codes both set out that local authorities/landlords should provide their governing bodies with information on their performance on complaint handling. The report provides members transparency around how we are managing our activity in relation to our Feedback & Complaints policy.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: There are no direct financial implications – any compensation paid is made directly from service budgets.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To present an overview of activity on corporate complaints for the year 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 to provide transparency and understanding.
- 1.2. To advise on cases escalated to both Ombudsmen.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That the Corporate Support Committee note the contents of the report.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. The Corporate Management Team have requested that this information is presented to the Corporate Support Committee on an annual basis to support transparency and understanding of matters impacting council service delivery.

3.2. This is supported by the Complaint Handling Codes published by the [LGSCO](#) and [HO](#) in February 2024.

4. DETAIL

4.1 The corporate complaints process is managed by the Information Management Team, under the direction of the Group Head of Law & Governance.

4.2 In line with the Complaint Handling Codes, the Committee will receive (in future meetings):

- a) regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance
- b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and
- c) the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

4.3 The council have two Key Performance Indicators relating to complaints handling, both with a target of 80%:

- a) CP1 - % of Stage 2 responses responded to within 20 working days (landlord/tenant) or 25 working days (all other)
- b) CP2 - % of Stage 1 responses responded to within 10 working days

4.4 Failure to adhere to the Codes, our council policy and effective complaint handling can result in both financial and reputational risk to the council (eg compensation payments, news stories).

4.5 Below is a table summarising our complaints performance for the year:

Period	No. of Stage 1 Responses sent	No. of Stage 1 Responses overdue	% Stage 1 Responses on time	No. of Stage 2 Responses sent	No. of Stage 2 responses overdue	% Stage 2 Responses on time
Q1	82	50	39%	19	9	53%
Q2	123	55	55%	15	8	47%
Q3	114	38	67%	21	11	48%
Q4	125	35	72%	33	5	85%
23/24	444	178	60%	88	33	63%

4.6 The services involved in these complaints are broken down as follows (please note these figures are for complaints received so will not directly correlate with figures in 4.5):

Directorate	Group	Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Growth	Economy	Regeneration	0			
	Technical	Car Parks	2			16
		Private Sector Housing	7		1	9
		Licensing	0			
		Property & Estates		1	1	3
		Environmental Health	1		1	6
		Building Control	2	2	1	1
	Planning	Planning	4	3	5	8
Organisational Excellence	Finance	Revenues & Benefits	1	3	2	16
		Customer Service			1	3
	Law & Governance	Information Management		1		3
		Committees		1		
		Communications				1
Environment & Communities	Housing	Repairs	67	84	85	123
		Options	8	5	19	21
		Neighbourhoods	12	17	17	29
		Leasehold	6	7	8	8
	Wellbeing	Community Safety	1			
		Lifeline	1			
		Wellbeing	0	1		1
	Environment & Climate Change	Coastal Engineers	0	5		3
		Cleansing		2	5	23
		Parks			1	4
TOTAL			112	92	147	278

4.7 Whilst 16 cases have been submitted this year to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO), only 2 decisions were made following investigations. They were:

Decision Date	Ombudsman	Service	Outcome	Compensation
29.02.24	Housing	Repairs	Service Failure	Pay £900.00
07.03.24	Housing	Repairs	Service Failure	Pay £850.00

4.8 Actions in hand to improve complaint management performance:

- Recruitment of full-time Corporate Complaints Manager
- Update to Feedback & Complaints Policy to ensure in line with updated Ombudsman codes
- Regular reporting to Corporate Support Committee to provide transparency and understanding
- Improved complaint recording processes to capture more information than historically maintained

5. CONSULTATION

There is no requirement for public consultation in relation to the information set out in this report.

6. OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

This report is for noting only

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report with officer time included in approved budgets.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Officers have not identified the need for any additional risk assessment process to be conducted in relation to this report.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

None

11 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

None

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

None.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

The increased transparency of complaints performance will improve Members understanding of the complaints traffic being managed by the Council. This is supported by both Ombudsman codes as well as the Information Commissioners drive for transparency in public authorities.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

None.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

None.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

None.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

With transparency increasing around complaint management, this should reduce the need for Freedom of Information requests on this subject, as we also plan to publish more information on our website.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS *[Part A reports only]:*

[Feedback & complaints policy](#)

[LGSCO Complaint Handling Code](#)

[HO Complaint Handling Code](#)