# Arun District Council

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| **REPORT TO:** | **Corporate Support Committee – 6 February 2025** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **Corporate Complaints Performance Oct-Dec 2024** |
| **LEAD OFFICER:** | **Mandy Redman, Corporate Complaints 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:

- 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 2024/25.

**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 period October to December 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 Leadership Team have requested that this information is presented to the Corporate Support Committee 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apr | 35 | 17 | 51% | 9 | 5 | 44% |
| May | 34 | 9 | 74% | 9 | 4 | 56% |
| Jun | 19 | 8 | 58% | 13 | 3 | 77% |
| Jul | 44 | 20 | 54% | 5 | 2 | 60% |
| Aug | 18 | 6 | 67% | 6 | 2 | 67% |
| Sept | 23 | 6 | 74% | 5 | 3 | 40% |
| Oct | 27 | 11 | 59% | 8 | 3 | 63% |
| Nov | 24 | 7 | 71% | 11 | 6 | 45% |
| Dec | 39 | 16 | 59% | 10 | 6 | 40% |
| **24/25** | **263** | **100** | **62%** | **76** | **34** | **55%** |

4.6 The services involved in Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints are broken down as follows:

| Directorate | Group | Service | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Growth | Economy | Regeneration | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Technical | Car Parks | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Private Sector Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Licensing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Property & Estates | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Environmental Health | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Building Control | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | General | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Planning | Planning | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Org Excellence | Communications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Director | General | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Chief Execs | Finance | Revenues & Benefits | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| | | Customer Service | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Law & Governance | Information Management | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Committees | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Elections | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Environment & Communities | Housing | Repairs | 9 | 17 | 16 | 32 |
| | | Options | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| | | Neighbourhoods | 7 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Leasehold | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | General | 2 | 4 | 8 | 4 |
| | Wellbeing | Community Safety | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Lifeline | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Wellbeing | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Environment & Climate Change | Foreshores | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Cleansing | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Parks | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Cemeteries | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | | | **28** | **35** | **35** | **49** |

4.7 As of the 15 January 2025 there are 4 cases open with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), 1 with Revenues and 3 with Planning. All of these are still under investigation and waiting for instruction from the LGSCO.

18 cases are open with the Housing Ombudsman. 4 of these are within Aruns internal complaints procedure, 4 are under assessment, 1 has been referred for assessment, 3 are evidence gathering and 6 are awaiting full investigation.

During Q3 the Housing Ombudsman made 5 decisions following investigations.

They were:

| Case | Decision Date | Date of initial complaint | Service | Outcome | Comp |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 01-10-24 | 01-02-22 | Housing-Repairs | Upheld - Service failure in handling request for single point of contact, handling of anti-social behaviour claims and complaint handling | £300 |
| B | 18-10-24 | 30-06-23 | Housing - Repairs | Upheld – Service failure in the handling of repairs and maladministration in complaint handling | £350 |
| c | 06-11-24 | 27-03-23 | Housing - Repairs | Upheld - Service failure in the handling of repairs and complaint handling | £150 |
| C | 14-11-24 | 05-09-22 | Housing - Neighbourhoods | Upheld - Maladministration of handling of anti-social behaviour claims and service failure in complaint handling | £850 |
| E | 28-11-24 | 14-02-24 | Housing - Repairs | Upheld - Maladministration in the handling of damp and mould | £1810.73 |

For investigation reports please see appendix.

4.8 Actions taken.

- Mandatory complaints training for all Housing staff designed and undertaken by the service
- All new Housing staff to undertake mandatory complaints training as part of the induction process led by the Housing Service

4.9 Ongoing actions to improve complaint management performance:

- 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
- Investigation by Corporate Complaints Manager into availability of management systems to streamline process, improve performance, improve reporting capability

## 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.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

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**Job Title:** Corporate Complaints Manager
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**Appendix**
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS** *[Part A reports only]:*

Feedback & complaints policy
LGSCO Complaint Handling Code
HO Complaint Handling Code

Investigation reports for Ombudsman determinations

Investigation Report Case A.pdf [pdf] 583KB

Investigation Report Case B.pdf [pdf] 340KB

Investigation Report Case C.pdf [pdf] 125KB

Investigation Report Case D.pdf [pdf] 410KB

Investigation Report Case E.pdf [pdf] 317KB