

Response from Governing Body to the Housing Complaints Report 2023/24

1. Housing Landlord Board

This was an agenda item at Hillingdon Landlord Board Meeting on 18 June 2024 and the relevant extract from that meeting is set out below.

“Complaints return to the Housing Ombudsman Service – June 24

DW updated Board on the progress of the [first] annual complaints return to the HoS. Ian A [Complaints Manager] has registered online and has essentially completed the form. Work is progressing well on the Annual Complaints performance and service improvement report and the annual self-assessment against the Code. Drafts circulated.

DW outlined the key issues and actions which had been identified as part of this annual discipline, including but not limited to:

- *Staff resources issues to support approved outcomes and learning*
- *Include standard objectives / form of words relating to complaint handling into the JDs of all Officers who deal with complaints*
- *Make clear that surveys [including STAR] is a channel by which complaints are collected/processed.*
- *Improving / expanding the way we promote / publicise complaints*
- *Review standard letters and introduce centralised logs for data capture around reasonable adjustments and ‘extensions’*
- *Develop a ‘checklist’ to support staff / managers around complaint investigations and comprehensive responses*
- *Document an annual ‘complaints timeline’ for the Landlord Service*

Drafts noted and submission agreed with recommendation from Board that a Complaints Action Plan be produced for Board to ‘sign-off’ along with an ‘annual complaints timeline’. Board to then track progress.”

2. Cabinet

The Cabinet met on 27 June 2024 and considered the changes made to the Council’s Corporate complaints Procedure which included reducing the number of formal complaint stages from three to two and that this made the process more efficient. It also clarified that informal complaints should be treated as service requests. These amendments, amongst others, were agreed to be incorporated into the revised policy Corporate complaints policy, enabling the Council to operate more efficiently and address complaints requiring further investigation.

Cabinet accepted that the Council’s approach to managing complaints is in line with the new statutory codes issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service and focuses on accessibility, transparency, and fairness. As part of the change, Cabinet also approved that the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Committee would act as the Member Responsible for Complaints.

3. Residents Services Select Committee

As part of our governance arrangements this was brought before the above select committee on 18 July 2024 and I attach below the extract from the minutes of that meeting.

“COMPLAINTS TO THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE BY THE COUNCIL'S 'LANDLORD SERVICE' FOR 2023/2024 (Agenda Item 7)

Members raised no concerns or queries in relation to the report on the complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service by the Council's 'Landlord Service' for 2024/2025.

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:

- 1. Noted the 2023/24 submission to the Housing Ombudsman Service by the Council's 'Landlord Service' as part of meeting new Regulatory requirements; and*
- 2. Noted the recommendation to report to the Residents' Services Select Committee as part of the governance process on future annual submissions to the Housing Ombudsman Service, effective from 2024/25.”*

4. Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee

The Council's Annual Complaint Monitoring and Service Improvement report for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is being presented to the above Select Committee for consideration after which it will be published on our web site at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaint The report contains information and analysis of complaints and Members' Enquiries received between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 including any lessons learnt and service improvements made during this period.