

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
24 JANUARY 2022

DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Committee approval of the revised Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy, subject to final approval by the Policy & Finance Committee.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 At the November 2020 committee, members approved the revised Customer Feedback Report and in January 2021, slight amends to the policy were approved to reflect the Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment.

2.2 The Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and provide a high quality service to those who make them. Occasionally a complainant may display behaviour which is unacceptable, for example, abusive, offensive or threatening or repetitive and demanding. This type of behaviour cannot be tolerated and the Council will take action to protect its staff from such abuse.

2.3 Generally, dealing with a complaint is a straightforward process, however occasionally complainants become persistent complainers or make complaints which are vexatious, in that they persist unreasonably with their complaints, or make a high number of complaints which can make it difficult for the Council to provide services to others.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The revised policy detailed in the attached appendix explains how the Council will manage unacceptable behaviour.

3.2 These cases are the exception and each case will be dealt with on its own merit. The Policy clearly explains how the Council will apply the policy and how it operates.

3.3 It is recognised that a complainant has displayed unacceptable behaviour may still need to be in contact with the Council, particularly where we offer landlord or other services. The Policy defines controls which may be put into place as a last resort to manage further contact for example, restricting contact to one person or restricting the number of contacts within a specific time period.

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 There are no specific digital implications and customers have the option of submitting their feedback online.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 The Policy is designed to be equal to all complainants. Each case will be considered on its own merit, taking into consideration any known characteristic of the particular complainant and equality impact assessments will be conducted to identify any unmet need.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN-22/7045

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 The associated customer Feedback Policy aligns with the following objectives:

- Increasing participation with the Council
- Increase residents satisfaction with the Council

8.0 Comments of Directors/ HAG

8.1 Housing Advisory Group at their meeting on 6th January 2022 agreed with the policy as being a key way of supporting customers through adjusting our services.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

That members of the committee support the revised Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy, and recommend it to the Policy and Finance Committee for final approval.

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy is fit for purpose.

For further information please contact Jill Baker – Business Manager Customer Services on Ext 5810.

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

And

Deborah Johnson
Director Customer Services and Organisational Development