



Report to: Portfolio Holder – Strategy, Performance and Finance
 Decision Date: 30 July 2024
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Peacock
 Director Lead: Deborah Johnson, Director of Customer Services and Organisational Development
 Lead Officers: Jill Baker, Customer Services Business Manager, Ext.5810

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open, Non-key decision
Report Title	Managing Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
Purpose of Report	To seek a Portfolio Holder decision on the revised Managing Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
Recommendations	That the revised policy is approved by the Portfolio Holder – Strategy, Performance and Finance
Alternative Options Considered	No alternative options available
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure the Policy remains up to date and meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
Decision Taken	As per recommendation

1.0 Background

1.1 The current Managing Unreasonable Behaviour Policy was approved in February 2022 and is due to be reviewed.

1.2 The Council is committed to dealing with all enquires fairly and impartially and to provide a high-quality service to all of our customers. Occasionally some people 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.

1.3 One of our values is to be “Welcoming and Responsive”. To achieve this we strive to be approachable, open to feedback and challenge and swift to act.

1.4 Occasionally individuals pursue their enquires or complaints in a way which is unreasonable or unreasonably persistent or take a “scattergun” approach by making multiple contacts to numerous different officers across the council about the same or similar complaint, often using various contact channels. They may make demands which are unreasonable or make a high

number of complaints such as making serial complaints about different matters or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly which can have significant resource implications for us in delivering its services to all.

- 1.5 However, some individuals may have justified complaints but may pursue them in inappropriate ways. Others may pursue complaints which appear to have no substance, or which have already been investigated and determined. Their contacts with the Council, via one or various contact channels, may be amicable but still place heavy demands on staff time, or they may be emotionally charged and distressing for all involved.
- 1.6 This policy details how we respond to such unreasonable behaviour. This can be one or two isolated incidents, as well as unreasonably persistent behaviour, which is usually a build-up of incidents or behaviour over a longer period. This behaviour can be linked to general enquires or unreasonable actions by complainants.

2.0 Proposals

- 2.1 The 2022 policy has been reviewed alongside guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service. The existing policy met their requirements. Minimal enhancements were made to the wording.
- 2.2 As no significant changes were made to the policy, it does not need go through the committee process.
- 2.3 The policy will be published on our website for public viewing and on the internal SharePoint site for staff.

3.0 Engagement

- 3.1 The Local Influence Network chairs were asked for their comments on this Policy and where appropriate their comments have been incorporated into the Policy.
- 3.2 The Local Influence Network will be contributing to the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment for this Policy.

4.0 Implications

- 4.1 The Council is required to have a Managing Unreasonable Behaviour Policy. Without an approved Policy, the Council will not be able to meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- 4.2 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

