

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

Managing Abusive, Persistent and/or Vexatious Customers Policy1. Purpose of Report

To consider the Managing Abusive, Persistent and/or Vexatious Customers Policy. This is in accordance with all of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the Managing Abusive, Persistent and/or Vexatious Customers Policy be approved.

3. Detail

The Council receives complaints as a matter of routine. Some of these can involve persistent or vexatious complainants. The Managing Abusive, Persistent and/or Vexatious Customers Policy, included at **Appendix 1**, is intended to deal with those complainants and has been updated due to the length of time since its last review. This is the last of the Complaints Policy suite to be updated or reviewed following the introduction of the Compensation Policy in December 2023 and the introduction of a new Complaints Policy in March 2024.

The Policy has been updated based on the best practice recommendations suggested by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to provide a more robust system for managing individuals who contact the Council inappropriately.

A change table has not been included with the Policy as the changes have fundamentally altered the Policy as a whole. However, the key changes within the refreshed document state that an individual can be placed within the ambit of the new Policy without having made a complaint, in addition to the Policy being extending to contact made to Members by individuals.

A copy of the current Policy can be found on the link below:

[Unreasonable behaviour](#)

The General Management Team has the overall responsibility to determine whether an individual's behaviour warrants restrictions placed on them. Due consideration is given to the vulnerabilities that an individual may have, in addition to not disadvantaging an individual from accessing Council services or restricting an individual from submitting new and valid complaints.

The Council currently has three individuals subjected to the existing Policy. The individuals have been restricted due to the excessive number of demands they

have placed on Council Officers when dealing with substantially the same complaint. They will continue under the terms of the current Policy until the expiry of their current restrictions, although the use of the existing Policy will not disadvantage either the complainants or the Officers in these cases.

The General Management Team reviews these individuals' restrictions on a quarterly basis.

The Policy does not restrict an individual from making complaints to the Council. All correspondence received from an individual who is subjected to the Policy is reviewed and any new complaints are dealt with on their individual merit.

Following its approval, the Policy will be reviewed annually.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

At its meeting on 13 March 2025 the Policy Overview Working Group considered the Policy and queried whether Members could be updated whenever a resident is subjected to the Policy. It was stated that, where appropriate, Members could be informed subject to there being no issues over breaches of GDPR. A sentence has been added to the Policy to reflect this. Furthermore, it was requested that Members receive updates on the number of individuals subjected to the Policy through the quarterly complaints reports submitted to the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee and Cabinet.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The cost of the new Policy will be contained within existing budgets. It is not anticipated that the adoption will have any resource implications at this stage.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Whilst there are no direct legal implications due to there being no legal requirement to have a policy on abusive, persistent or vexatious complainants. However, the adoption of such a policy provides a transparent and consistent basis for decision making. This in turn should reduce the risks of decisions being overturned by the Local Government Ombudsman.

8. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is a change to policy an equality impact assessment is included in the **Appendix 2** to this report.

13. Background Papers

Nil.