

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy****Complaint Self-Assessment Approval****1. Purpose of Report**

To review and approve the Housing Ombudsman's Self-Assessment against the Complaint Handling Code.

**2. Recommendation**

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the Housing Ombudsman's Self-Assessment form be approved.**

**3. Detail**

The Housing Ombudsman's (HO) Complaint Handling Code (Code) promotes the progressive use of complaints, providing a high-level framework to support effective handling and prevention alongside learning and development.

The Code aims to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by tenants quickly and to use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements.

The HO requires landlords to carry out regular self-assessments and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with the Code.

There is a requirement to publish the Self-Assessment Form (included at **Appendix 1**) annually, as from April 2024. The form has been published since 2024 with the introduction of the Code and there is a requirement to self-assess against this Code to ensure that it is being complied with.

The form has been published on the Council's website. However, following Councils' nationwide initial publication of the self-assessment form in 2024, the Housing Ombudsman informed authorities that it would not hold them to account until 2025 for their performance against the form. The Council is currently fully compliant with all areas of the self-assessment form.

Throughout 2025/26 the Council has continued to embed with employees the treatment of complaints as opportunities for learning and to treat expressions of dissatisfaction as complaint submissions. More resource has been dedicated to the role through a Democratic Services restructure to allow further time to be committed to complaints.

All investigating Officers are trained to prioritise and respond to complaints in a timely manner. To achieve this a dedicated role has been established in Housing to facilitate the stage 1 process.

Further training has been given to officers at stage 1 in offering appropriate remedies. The Council has widened its consideration of dealing with complaints through the formation a Housing Improvement Board which now has Member representation. There is also a Tenants' Complaints Panel which provides feedback on the complaints process.

4. Key Decision

Not applicable.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

The cost of completing the Housing Ombudsman's Self-Assessment against the Complaint Handling Code will be contained within existing budgets. It is not anticipated that its adoption will have any resource implications at this stage.

7. Legal Implications

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

The Ombudsman has the power to issue "advice and guidance about good administrative practice" to organisations under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. Therefore, the Code will be considered statutory guidance. It is statutory already for members of the Housing Ombudsman scheme, therefore the Code will be statutory for all local Councils. The Complaints policy has incorporated the recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman to adopt the Code which will ensure a consistent approach when dealing with complaints and to support this duty. The Code will apply to any complaint made about a local council where there isn't already a statutory process in place for dealing with complaints.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

Nil.