

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Corporate Performance Panel		
DATE:	20 December 2021		
TITLE:	Review of the Unreasonable Complainants Policy		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Policy development		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Leader of the Council		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Alexa Baker, Monitoring Officer		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

REPORT SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
To report back on the work of the Informal Working Group (“IWG”) established to consider the Unreasonable Complainants Policy so that the Panel may consider whether to recommend some or all of the proposed changes to Cabinet
KEY ISSUES:
The IWG agreed proposed changes to the current Unreasonable Complainants Policy which are set out as tracked changes at Appendix 1. Proposed connected changes to the Constitution are also set out at Appendix 4. The Panel is requested to consider Appendices 1 and 4 in particular, with a view to considering whether they wish to recommend some or all of the proposed changes onwards to Cabinet.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
The Panel may resolve that all, some or none of the proposed changes proposed by the IWG are recommended to Cabinet for consideration.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
To consider the proposed changes set out at Appendices 1 and 4 and resolve whether to recommend all, some or none of the proposed changes onwards to Cabinet.
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
The IWG was constituted by the Panel to review of the Unreasonable Complainants Policy and the Panel should consider the work carried out by the IWG as set out in this report and whether it wishes to make any recommendations to Cabinet for changes to one of the Council’s policies.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

On 8 November 2021 the Corporate Performance Panel resolved as follows with regards to the review of the Unreasonable Complainants Policy:

RESOLVED: An informal working group be set up to consider the proposals put forward by Councillor Nash and to report back the findings at a future meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel.

The purpose of this report is to set out the work of the duly constituted Informal Working Group ("IWG") consisting of Cllr Ayres, Cllr Manning, Cllr Moriarty and Cllr Nash who met as a group on 24 November 2021 and 1 December 2021.

2. Proposal

During the two meetings held, the IWG came to an agreement on proposed changes that it wished to recommend to CPP for consideration which are set out as tracked changes to the current Unreasonable Complainants Policy. This tracked changed document is attached as Appendix 1.

The minutes for the IWG are set out as Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

3. Issues for the Panel to Consider

The Panel is recommended to review the content of the draft changes to the Unreasonable Complainants Policy attached at Appendix 1 and consider whether some or all of those changes should be recommended onwards to Cabinet.

If the Panel are minded to recommend changes to the terms of reference of the Standards Committee, this would ultimately require a change to the Constitution. In anticipation of this, proposed changes are set out at Appendix 4 and it is suggested that any recommendation to Cabinet to amend the Unreasonable Complainants Policy also contain a recommendation that the Constitution be duly amended in accordance with the proposed changes at Appendix 4.

4. Corporate Priorities

The purpose behind adopting an Unreasonable and Persistent Complainers Policy is to support good governance and fair treatment towards complainants that fall within the definition of the policy.

5. Financial Implications

None

6. Any other Implications/Risks

Having a policy in place which is applied to complainants falling under the definition of the policy will form part of any relevant responses to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, where complaints are progressed to them.

7. Equal Opportunity Considerations

The Council's Equality Policy would apply to the consideration of any complainant under the Unreasonable and Persistent Complainers Policy.

8. Environmental Considerations

None

9. Consultation

None as reporting back on the work of a duly constituted informal working group.

10. Conclusion

The Panel review the proposed changes to the Unreasonable Complainants Policy attached at Appendix 1 and proposed changes to the Constitution at Appendix 4 and consider whether to recommend some or all of these changes to Cabinet.

11. Background Papers

Guidance on managing unreasonable complainant behaviour from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman at <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/guidance-notes/guidance-on-managing-unreasonable-complainant-behaviour>