

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

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| REPORT TO:      | <i>Corporate Performance Panel</i>  |   |    |
| DATE:           | 17 October 2022   |   |    |
| TITLE:          | Complaints against the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 |   |    |
| TYPE OF REPORT: | <i>For information only</i>   |   |    |
| PORTFOLIO(S):   | Cllr Brian Long   |   |    |
| REPORT AUTHOR:  | Honor Howell – Assistant to the Chief Executive   |   |    |
| OPEN/EXEMPT     | Open  | WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT: | No |

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| SUMMARY:  |
| <p>This report is produced on an annual basis for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and sets out the breakdown of MP Enquiries, Corporate Complaints, complaints made to the Ombudsman and details on compliments received from members of the public. For the first time, it also includes the number of Freedom of Information requests made in the same period as well as Data Protection Breaches, together with any reported to the Information Commissioners office. The report is presented to Corporate Performance Panel members for information only.</p>  |
| ANALYSIS:   |
| <p><u>MP Enquiries</u></p> <p>In total, 81 MP Enquiries were dealt with during 2021/22, compared with 107 during the previous year. The breakdown between MP's are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liz Truss MP (22)</li> <li>• James Wild MP (57)</li> <li>• Jerome Mayhew MP (1)</li> <li>• Kate Green MP (1)</li> </ul> <p>The enquiries are broken down by service area with Leisure (9), Planning (19), Central Services (5) and Chief Executive (48). MPs are often contacted by their constituents for help and advice on a range of local issues or individual problems with a service delivered by the council. These are then passed to the relevant Assistant Director or Service Head for a response.</p> <p><u>Corporate Complaints</u></p> <p>54 Corporate Complaints were received during 2021/22, compared with 22 during the previous year. Of these complaints during 2021/22, 5 were considered to be justified and 7 were partly justified at stage 1 of the complaints process.</p> <p>Of the 54 Corporate Complaints which were received, 15 went to an Appeal to the Chief Executive or their representative (Stage 2). These complaints are investigated by the Assistant to the Chief Executive under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive. Out of the 15 complaints, 0 were considered to be justified and 2 were partly justified.</p> <p>A breakdown of the complaints received and the service area they relate to is</p> |

attached at **Appendix A**.

The complaints relating to Finance include those made in respect of Revenues and Benefits. Some areas already have well established statutory processes for appeals on decisions e.g. Planning and Housing Benefits and these are not classed as corporate complaints unless the complaint is in respect of something the council or a member of staff has done. Complaints about decisions are directed via the usual appeals process.

#### Ombudsman Complaints

In total, 4 complaints relating to complaints against the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk were received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and out of these, none of the complaints that were investigated were upheld.

Attached at **Appendix B** is the brief Ombudsman Annual Report 2021/22 for information. Of these 4 complaints, 0 were upheld. Again, the Ombudsman will usually only investigate certain complaints in respect of **process**. For example, a complaint about a planning decision will only be investigated if a process has not been correctly followed, not about the decision made as planning is so subjective.

#### Compliments

Whilst we receive complaints about a range of issues, we also receive compliments from customers, visitors and businesses expressing their gratitude and thanks for the service they received. This information is captured and published in the staff monthly magazine 'Internal Affairs' to share good feedback with colleagues and to acknowledge the service provided by that individual/team.

For the year 2021/2022, we received 57 compliments from our customers. This is slightly down from the 65 received in 2020/2021.

#### Freedom of Information

For the period April 21 and March 22, a total of 590 Freedom of Information requests were made via the council's legal provider, Eastlaw.

#### Data Protection

Reports of a breach of data protection are recorded by the council. Each breach is then assessed by the councils Data Protection Officer to establish if the breach is reportable to the Information Commissioners Officer (ICO). In 21/22, the number of breaches recorded was 22, none of which were reportable to the ICO.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are no recommendations; it is an annual report for Members to note.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A