

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER 2016

COMPLAINTS

REPORT BY RICHARD STIFF, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to highlight the complaints received from 1 April to 30 September 2016 and to update members on the action being taken to ensure the effectiveness of the complaints handling procedure and to learn from complaints.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee:-

- (i) to note the complaints closed between 1 April to 30 September 2016; and
- (ii) to note the learning as a result of the complaints.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a place where a first class quality of life can be enjoyed by all.

3. BACKGROUND

Since 1 April 2013, the council has been operating the new Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities as required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

During the period 1 April – 31 March 2016 a total of 207 complaints were recorded as closed off during the year.

4. COMPLAINTS STATISTICS

The analysis of the figures during the first two quarters, 1 April-30 June and 1 July-30 September have shown that complaints are, in the main, being addressed at the front line resolution stage (Stage 1).

Of the 111 Complaints received during the period, 95 were closed at the front line (Stage 1):

- 28 were upheld
- 26 partially upheld, and
- 41 not upheld

Angus Alive are also using the Council's system and 13 of the complaints related to the ALO.

Appendix 1 and 2 details the investigation complaints and the lessons that the Council have taken from these complaints.

Fourteen complaints are registered for the period, four of which escalated from Stage 1 (front line) to Stage 2 (investigation) and two registered that were not corporate complaints.

5. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Each Directorate has been asked to identify and act on the key learning points from the complaints received about their service.

Complaints are detailed in the attached Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 along with key learning points and procedures/processes that have changed as a result of the complaint.

6. COMPLIMENTS

As requested by the Committee, service areas have been making a note of positive and complimentary comments received from citizens since April 2016. There is at present no facility for recording these comments within the council's complaints handling system but the following examples are provided from the main service areas to give a flavour of the nature of the compliments received. Where appropriate the contribution of individual employees and teams have been recognised through the council's commendation scheme.

Children and Learning

- Assessment centres are held as part of the recruitment process for Head Teachers. Candidates for headship have the opportunity to meet with senior officers and Parent Council representatives and undertake a range of assessment activities linked to the role they are applying for. Parents who have participated in the assessment centres have reported that they valued the opportunity and that they thought it gave them a fuller sense of a candidate's ability and suitability for their school context. They praised the organisation of these events and the level of support they were given by senior officers.
- Mother contacted the service by telephone to say that she was very thankful for the hardwork and dedication of Resource Worker and the Team in support provided to herself and her son. She felt this was "invaluable"
- Thank you for the support from the family support team from a parent receiving services.

Communities

- Acknowledgement and support through homeless application and rehousing process by a couple.
- Acknowledgement by residents of ground maintenance work carried out at Andy Stewart Court.
- To ECP staff for the relationship and help over the years – it is the best example of how it should all work between business and authorities.

Resources

- Acknowledgement of the format of a citizenship ceremony and staff being welcoming and friendly.
- Acknowledgment of the work carried out by the election team in delivering a successful referendum process in Angus.
- Acknowledgment of assistance with hotel bookings for a conference which arose after 5pm. The issue was fixed and conference attendees happy.

Chief Executive's Unit

- Acknowledgement of time, advice and help given to a frustrated tenant who was experiencing difficulties finding suitable accommodation.
- Numerous letters of thanks in relation to the work on Festival of House event at Panmure Estate,
- Praise of Angus Council's Economic Development Department. He compared our support very favourably to other councils he has dealt with.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATION

The Strategic Directors of People, Communities and Resources, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:-

Appendix 1 – Learning from Complaints – Resources
Appendix 2 – Learning from Complaints – Communities

